



RESEARCH MANAGER (POLICY), ESSA

JOB OVERVIEW

POST TITLE: Research Policy Manager

HOURS OF WORK: Full time (as a Consultant)

PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT: Initially six months from January 2021, with potential for extension

LOCATION: Accra, Ghana (other countries in sub-Saharan Africa could be considered)

TRAVEL: 25%

REPORTING TO: Head of Research and Insight

DIRECT REPORTS: None

ABOUT ESSA

ESSA's vision is to transform education: increasing employment for young people in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). We bring together a network of young people, educators and decision makers. Together, we use evidence to improve the tertiary education system, hence equipping millions of young people in sub-Saharan Africa with the skills they need for work. This is a great opportunity to join a small but driven and enthusiastic team that works remotely in SSA and Europe, and to play a key role in expanding our work. To find out more about our work, visit our website essa-africa.org.

ROLE PURPOSE

The Research Manager (Policy) role is an exciting new position within the ESSA team that will help us to reach and engage with policy makers and practitioners in SSA and the rest of the world. The successful applicant will ensure that ESSA develops key relationships with such external policy stakeholders and decision-makers. (S)he will then provide them with relevant research data and insight to use in making well-informed and evidence-based policy decisions that can increase the impact of education for young people in SSA, with an emphasis on the link between tertiary education and finding decent employment. In addition, the Research Manager (Policy) will monitor new policy and political developments in tertiary education in SSA and beyond, respond to government/policy-related consultations, and brief ESSA colleagues as appropriate.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead and/or support the development and management of ongoing policy-focused tertiary education research projects at ESSA. Conduct background research, quantitative and qualitative analyses, and ensure effective translation of evidence generated, for positive impact in SSA.
- Prepare compelling tertiary education policy briefings, papers, reports, messages, blogs, infographics, and other tools for use by policy decision-makers and government officials.
- Organise or contribute to ESSA's policy-focused events such as webinars, focus group discussions, surveys, and interviews, to communicate ESSA's work and increase its impact.



- Seek opportunities to represent ESSA and its ground-breaking work at external events.
- Keep track of trends in tertiary education policymaking in SSA, identify and build a network of key national government officials, policy influencers and partners whom ESSA could engage with to increase use of our research evidence and impact, and to leverage additional funding.
- Build ESSA's knowledge and understanding of policymaking in tertiary education and plans or concerns for youth employment in SSA. Identify priority areas for further research, partnerships, and translation of academic research. Engage external consultants and interns, if needed.
- Provide policy expertise to help shape how ESSA could be most effective in closing the gap between research and policy/practice for tertiary education and youth employment in SSA.
- Collaborate with ESSA's research team and other staff members, and with partner organisations.
- Contribute to the production of evidence-based policy-related funding proposals and other material for ESSA's donors, in line with our organisational strategy and goals.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Knowledge, Experience, Skills and Personal Qualities

- A degree and post-graduate degree in education, politics, economics or other social science, international development, or a related discipline.
- Significant experience (>5 years) of conducting and/or supporting primary and secondary research, policy-focused survey design and implementation, as well as the processing and analyses of data to capture evidence-based research knowledge and insights.
- Proven ability to develop and/or improve the translation of research evidence into practical guidance, planning tools, policy briefs, papers and reports for education policymakers and practitioners, government officials and other leaders, as well as proposals for donors.
- Ability to communicate research policy findings to diverse audiences through excellent writing, and speaking, to raise awareness of important issues and influence social and political events.
- Experience of analysing current policy studies/issues, evaluating the potential effects of proposed interventions and report findings.
- Demonstrable ability to organise and/or participate in conferences, workshops, and webinars, engaging with policy makers and people at all levels from different backgrounds and viewpoints.
- Ability to build and manage work relationships internally, as well as with external agencies.
- Work experience in a not-for-profit, government or commercial sector in a developing country.
- A team player who has cultural awareness/sensitivity, is committed to respecting and valuing equality, diversity, and inclusion, and understands how these apply to their own area of work.
- Ability to work independently with accuracy, using own initiative and under minimal supervision.
- Excellent attention to detail, commitment to high standards and able to meet tight deadlines.
- Proactive, efficient, creative, collaborative, ethical, entrepreneurial and a problem-solver with strong communication, excellent interpersonal, organisational and project management skills.
- Computer literate, including familiarity with information databases and Microsoft Office suite.
- Comfortable working in a remote and internationally dispersed team.

Desirable Experience, Skills and Personal Qualities

- Knowledge of research in international education, particularly tertiary education policy, in Africa.
- Educated to PhD level in a relevant discipline.
- Resident in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Experience of working in a cross-functional team, and/or with large employers of youth in SSA.
- French speaking.
- Willingness to embrace use of technology and automation in education research and translation.