JOB OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POST TITLE</th>
<th>Monitoring Evaluation Research and Learning (MERL) Officer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOURS OF WORK</td>
<td>Full-time - 35 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT</td>
<td>1.0 years (with possibility of extension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>Kenya, Uganda, Ghana (other countries in sub-Saharan Africa considered)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRAVEL</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
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<tr>
<td>REPORTING TO</td>
<td>Senior Research Manager- Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIRECT REPORTS</td>
<td>None at present</td>
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<tr>
<td>SALARY</td>
<td>Competitive - dependent on experience</td>
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</tbody>
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ABOUT ESSA

Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA)'s vision is high-quality education that equips millions of young people in sub-Saharan Africa with the skills they need for work, enables them to achieve their ambitions, and strengthens society. Therefore, we bring together a network of young people, educators, funders, and policymakers and provide them with data and evidence to make good decisions and to change the system. This is an exciting opportunity to join a small but passionate and driven team based in Africa and Europe, to play a key role in advancing our work, impact, and partnerships in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

ESSA’s values are at the heart of everything we do, and they are:

- Evidence-driven: We are driven by data and evidence to find what works best, building an evidence alliance for education in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Solutions-focused: We seek the highest impact for young people and educators in sub-Saharan Africa with the cost-effective funds we invest.
- Strengthening Trust: We strive to create supportive environments, building trust with the communities we work with.
- Always learning: Everyone’s opinion is valuable; we develop solutions through teamwork.

To find out more about ESSA, visit essa-africa.org.

ABOUT THE ROLE

The Monitoring Evaluation Research and Learning (MERL) Officer is a vital member of the ESSA team. (S)he will be responsible for driving our commitment to evidence-based practice and assessing our impact. As the MERL Officer, you will contribute to the learning culture within ESSA, using evidence from our own projects, programmes, and other sources to improve our impact. You will assist in generating information/documentation for research, collection of impact data during project implementation, and the compilation and application of lessons learned. This role is ideal for an ambitious researcher looking for the opportunity to see immediate impact from their work and combine their research and MEL skills.

The MERL Officer will also use his or her expertise in understanding and translating research to conduct and support research for the new “Unlocking Data: Scaling up uses and users of data in education systems” project that is led by ESSA’s and partner organisations. The Unlocking Data project aims to strengthen education data systems and use by expanding uses and users of data. The project will do this by scaling up and out the Unlocking Data approach to increase use of data on foundational learning by, and between, policymakers and researchers. The scaling up and out will involve including sub-nationals, more stakeholders and also more policy-relevant questions. At the heart of our approach is the objective to strengthen the capacities of knowledge producers and users (policymakers, researchers and broader data ecosystem stakeholders) to scale use of data in planning, policy and practice. ESSA’s specific role in the consortium is the provision of mentorship to local researchers and data expertise across the project, lead on MEL activities, lead on cross-cutting strategy, support on communications and developing a Pan-African community of learning.

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:
• **Research, Learning and Documentation**
  - Coordinate the project’s research and outcomes gathering events to document the project’s impact and outcomes.
  - Liaise with the MEL team and partners to document the most significant change stories or success stories for the project.
  - Document project implementation challenges, learning, and reflections, for effective decision making.
  - Ensure gender-sensitive and inclusive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for the project.
  - Use Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) principles for the project.
  - Develop the project’s Theory of Change and related frameworks.

• **Project Data Collection, Collation and Analysis**
  - Lead the development and implementation of the project’s Results-Based Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan.
  - Coordinate data collection and outcomes harvesting for the Project.
  - Conduct data quality checks and verification of project activities to ensure compliance with the funder’s standards.
  - Monitor and update on regular basis the project’s risks and assumptions register, to guide project implementation.

• **Reporting**
  - Engage with project partners to prepare a timely and high-quality monitoring, evaluation and learning report quarterly and annually, in a standardised reporting format.
  - Support the project management to compile, analyse and synthesise reports from the project implementation partners and universities.
  - Update the project Performance Indicator Tracking Sheet (PITS) to support ESSA’s Key Performance Areas (KPAs).

• Perform other duties as assigned by the line manager and/or others within ESSA’s Senior Leadership Team.

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**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**ESSENTIAL**

- Trained to Bachelor’s degree level in a relevant subject e.g., education, international development, economics, or other social science.
- Practical experience working in the field of international development and/or the non-profit sector.
- Passionate about the role of education in development.
- At least three years’ experience of using evidence-based learning to improve project design and implementation.
- Strong research and analytical skills, including the ability to translate academic research for a non-specialist audience.
- Excellent communication skills and able to diplomatically engage with a range of stakeholders to undertake important activities.
- Experience of contributing to the development of research proposals for submission to donors.
- Proactive, efficient, creative, collaborative, ethical, network-inclined and a problem-solver who can meet tight deadlines.
- Self-motivated, strong interpersonal, organisational, project and stakeholder management skills.
- Computer literate, able to develop and/or use information databases and Microsoft Office suite. (S)he should possess a powerful drive to pursue responsible data management and storage.
- As a representative of ESSA, the postholder should be a sincere independent worker, but also a team player and respectful of diversity.

**DESIRABLE**

- Knowledge of data systems in sub–Saharan African countries.
- Educated to master’s degree level in a relevant discipline (see above).
- Experience of working in a cross-functional team, or with a large employer of youth in Africa.
- French speaking.

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**EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

The importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) underpins our mission and values at ESSA. We prioritise inclusion and celebrate the breadth of knowledge and experience working across different cultures brings to the organisation.

EDI at ESSA is embodied in the current composition of our Board of Trustees and our workforce, which strongly reflects the communities we work in, and we actively encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and cultures.

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**HOW TO APPLY**

To apply please complete the form by clicking on the link. Please ensure that your CV and cover letter are saved using your given name and surname. For example, firstname.surname CV.

The closing date for applications is 3rd June 2024 at 0900hrs GMT.