



Director of Finance and Operations

February 2024



About ESSA

ESSA (Education Sub Saharan Africa) improves education using evidence and data from Africa in research, advocacy and programme design.

We take a systems approach by identifying challenges and co-designing solutions in partnership with local education researchers, higher education leaders, policymakers, funders and employers to improve education outcomes for young people. Our research generates actionable insights that inform decisions, policies and practice and strengthen education systems.

In relation to its geographic focus, whilst the relevance of its work applies across the continent, its main country focus is around Ghana and Kenya in particular.

ESSA, a not-for-profit organization is registered both in the UK and in Ghana and has a team and board members in Kenya, Senegal, Togo, Uganda and Germany. The diverse team of professionals has the expertise to think differently combining high quality educational research with a focus on working in partnership and advocacy for evidence-based solutions. the organisation is looking for the opportunity to have more of its core management team based in Ghana / East Africa and this recruitment process should be seen in that light.

Vision

High-quality education in sub-Saharan Africa enables young people to achieve their ambitions and strengthens society.

Mission

Our mission starts by working with universities and colleges: using evidence to drive a dramatic improvement in education for young people.

Why We Do Our Work

The potential of young people in sub-Saharan Africa: By 2050, Africa's young population will increase by nearly 50%, and 450 million workers are projected to join the workforce in the next decade. Quality education and jobs for the world's largest youth population could lift millions from poverty and strengthen societies globally. But without these opportunities, the world faces the risk of migration and unrest.

Filling the knowledge gap: Decisions should be taken based on evidence to maximise scarce resources and improve young people's lives. Yet, there are big gaps in data and evidence about education for young people and its relevance for work.

We do not know: Where young people go after they leave college or university, the number of university and college staff and academics needed to educate students, and how COVID-19 has impacted the financial strength of universities and colleges and their ability to teach. This leads to low, badly targeted investment. We want to change this.

Our Approach

1. We conduct research in partnership with universities, employers and policymakers to understand the significant systemic challenges within African education. It serves as our guiding principle, directing us toward sustainable change.
2. We collaborate with like-minded partners, using evidence from Africa to understand the data required for improving education outcomes.
3. We engage in collaborative education research; we bridge data and evidence gaps, contributing to a strong base of evidence to inform decision-making processes.
4. We bring together educators, education researchers, policy makers, and higher education leaders to co-create solutions and advocate, using evidence, for improved education outcomes for young people in Africa.



The Role

Role: Director of Finance and Operations

Location: Accra, Ghana/London, UK

Salary: Competitive

Job Summary

General objective of the job

The Director of Finance and Operations shall be responsible for providing relevant financial and accounting, planning and administrative information, insights and outputs to high professional standards. The Director of Finance and Operations shall proactively embed processes that ensure this information is relevant and drives good decision-making at all levels. This is a strategic role, critical to enabling this small and growing organisation to achieve organisational effectiveness, resilience and control. The Director of Finance and Operations will also support the Chief Executive in all board reporting. The Director of Finance and Operations is responsible to the Chief Executive and is a critical member of the Senior Leadership team, contributing to the overall running of the organisation.

Responsibilities

Policy

To anticipate and contribute to the development of required and appropriate policy formulation; and to ensure timely review and approval arrangements. To frame for approval policy and associated practice specifically to do with financial and management accounting procedures, authorities & approvals. To provide guidance for and drive implementation of for essential administrative processes across the organisation.

Compliance

To ensure that ESSA is statutorily compliant with its obligations to the Charities Commission, Companies House, the Information Commissioner, regulatory audit organizations in Ghana and any other legal requirements.

Advice

To advise the Chief Executive regularly on all aspects of financial and management control, in particular in respect of performance against plan, so as to provide timely insight for well-founded management decisions.

To advise other employees, consultants and contractors of the implications for appropriate action derived from detailed understanding of all operations.

Planning

- To prepare the planning cycle for approval by the Chief Executive and to lead the co-ordination of the planning process. To interpret all operational plans in management accounting terms, including cash forecasting.

- To produce the draft annual operating plan for review by the Chief Executive and other members of management, and subsequent presentation to the board.
- To plan the updating of annual and longer-term operating plans.
- To plan the audit process in collaboration with external auditors and members of the Risk & Audit committee, leading to timely approval of the report & accounts by the Board.

Operations

- To ensure that staff across the charity receive quality support and tools to deliver our organisational objectives.
- Work together with the Finance Assistant, Finance Officer, HR and Operations Manager and Admin Assistant to ensure smooth running of all office operations.
- Effectively manage relationships with service providers (e.g. office, legal, accountancy)
- IT systems and facilities oversight including needs for homeworking.
- Oversight of any offices set up in other countries.

Human Resources

- Work with the HR and Operations Manager to recruit and onboard new staff and contracting of external consultants.
- Lead on salary structure, benefits and policies reviews as required.
- Lead on other human resource processes as required.

Authorities

As per the current authorities & approvals schedule.





Main Executive Tasks

In fulfilment of the overall responsibility of the job, the Director of Finance and Operations will undertake, amongst other duties:

- The effective provision of all financial and management accounting activity to ensure satisfactory control, treasury management and insightful provision of management information across the organisation.
- Control, including cost control, measures sufficient for continuous reassurance to the Chief Executive, Risk and Audit Committee and Board of Trustees.
- Timely preparation and issuance of monthly and ad hoc management reporting on all required aspects of operational performance, including variance analysis and recommendations for action.
- Oversight of the financial implications of all funding (and potential) relationships, contribution to funding pitches and appropriate representative engagement on behalf of the Chief Executive.
- Preparation and updating of all relevant board papers.
- Supporting and servicing the needs of the Risk and Audit Committee.
- Preparing the Schedule of Risks for the Chief Executive, Risk and Audit Committee and subsequent Board approval.
- Management and motivation of all employees in relation to own functional leadership, and supervision of any direct reports.
- Oversight of relevant, cost effective bought-in services, e.g. legal, audit, HR.
- Providing appropriate functional guidance and direction to other employees, consultants and contractors.
- Delegated project activity.
- Ensuring effective HR processes.
- Management of all operations.
- Acting on behalf of the Chief Executive as may be required.

Candidate Profile

Qualifications

- Qualified finance professional (recognized accounting qualification suggested) with experience of operating in a global and complex organisation. CPA or equivalent degree (CA, MBA, ACMA, ACCA) strongly recommended (Chartered Accountant (CPA, ACMA, ACA, ACCA) required).
- Recommended a minimum of 10 years management experience in an INGO environment, of which 5 years at a management level within the finance and operations department of an international organization.
- Proven experience in anticipating and contributing to the development of required and appropriate policy formulation while ensuring timely review and approval arrangements.
- Experience in providing strategic advice to senior management regularly on all aspects of financial and management control for better decision making.
- Experience of managing direct reports, consultants and contractors for appropriate decisions and actions across the operations.
- Excellent understanding of business and financial planning including strategic modelling.
- Excellent analytical skills – the ability to analyse complex financial data and design and produce effective management information for organizational operations and plans beyond one jurisdiction.
- Sound understanding of compliance requirements of donors and charities and agencies including clarity of required compliance audits nationally and internationally.

- Experience in framing for approval policy and associated practice specifically to do with financial and management accounting procedures, authorities & approvals.
- An understanding of requirements and expectations of organizations like the Charities Commission, Companies House, the Information Commissioner and any other legal requirements.

Required Skills and Competencies

- Demonstrated credibility with colleagues and stakeholders at all levels of an organization (Board, Operations, Finance, Human Resources, Supply Chain etc)
- Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to lead a multi-disciplinary team.
- Leadership skills, including the ability to supervise and motivate qualified professional staff with diverse backgrounds and values.
- High degree of accountability and commitment to excellence.
- Ability to drive change and high performance, as well as identify and provide solutions which benefit the organisation.
- An independent worker but also a team player; able to thrive in an internationally dispersed team; respectful of diversities and can demonstrate commitment to ESSA's values.
- Proactive, creative, service oriented and collaborative problem-solver who is decisive and confident about taking own initiative and able to meet tight deadlines.
- Demonstrated abilities in MS Office, particularly Word, PowerPoint and Excel.





How to Apply

All correspondence, at this stage, should be via Oxford HR. To apply for this post, click on the “Apply” button on the job advert page, complete our online application form, and submit your CV and cover letter as two different documents, which should be prepared before applying as they will be considered in the application process. The cover letter should be no more than two pages long and explain why you are interested in this post and how your skills and experience make you a good fit.

The document should be saved in PDF in the following format: Your First Name-Your Last Name-Document Name-Date (mmyy) e.g., Pat-Jones-CV-022024-ESSA or Pat-Jones-CoverLetter-022024-ESSA.

Timeline

Closing Date:	29th March 2024
First stage interviews:	TBC
Final interviews:	TBC

Selection Process

All candidates will receive an update regarding their application after the closing date. We advise candidates to add the role email to their safe senders list and regularly check their spam folder.

Equality Statement

Equality and diversity are at the core of Education Sub-Saharan Africa’s values. Staff are expected to work collectively and individually to promote a constructive and sensitive approach to others from a variety of backgrounds, where the work of others is valued and respected.

Queries

If you have any queries on any aspect of the appointment process, need additional information, or would like to have an informal discussion, please email at fd-essa@oxfordhr.com in the first instance.

About Oxford HR

Exceptional leaders can inspire change and propel purpose-led organisations towards reaching their world-changing goals. Finding such leaders can be a challenge; and yet their transition into leadership is vital to an organisations mission and success.

Oxford HR is a global leadership consultancy dedicated to searching for and supporting remarkable leaders and teams in purpose-led organisations.

We understand the nuances of purpose-led leadership because we've worked in organisations across the breadth of the sector ourselves. We've also worked with such organisations since 1995; so we appreciate just what benefits impactful people can bring.





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