



Trustees

February 2026

About Lively Minds

The problem, our idea, and our mission

There's no debate: the early childhood years are critical for a child's lifelong success and well-being. Yet a staggering 250 million children globally miss out, the majority of whom live in rural communities in the Global South. Current solutions do not offer the quality, affordability, urgency, or scale required. It is time for a new, practical approach that gets early childhood development working effectively everywhere.

Lively Minds' core idea is simple and powerful: parents are the sleeping giants of early childhood development. When parents are activated with practical, context-appropriate ideas, they can dramatically improve children's learning, wellbeing, and readiness for school—at very low cost.

Our mission is to get quality early childhood development to millions by helping governments activate the power of parents.

Our journey so far

Founded in 2008, Lively Minds began with deep grassroots work in rural Ghana and Uganda, working directly with families, communities, and teachers to design practical, play-based approaches that fit the realities of rural life. In 2016, we made a deliberate strategic shift from direct delivery to supporting governments to integrate and scale parent-powered ECD through their own public systems.

In Ghana, our parenting programme is now embedded into the public pre-primary system, operating successfully in 3,500 communities, fully funded and delivered by government, with plans underway for national expansion. Randomised controlled trials show learning gains equivalent to an extra year of school, with the largest impacts among the poorest children—results that have been replicated when delivered at scale by government.



Alongside this, our radio programme for parents is broadcast by governments in Ghana and Uganda in 24 local languages, reaching over 2 million parents each week, demonstrating the potential of mass communication channels to deliver parent-powered ECD at population level.

Where we are going next

Our ambition is for parent-powered early childhood development to become the norm, not the exception, across the Global South. This moment is pivotal: governments are seeking affordable, scalable solutions; funding environments are shifting; and strong proof from Ghana shows parent-powered ECD can work at scale through public systems.

To reach the next level of impact, we are evolving our scale strategy. We are focusing on supporting new governments to embed proven, parent-powered solutions into their own systems, tailored to their context, capacity, and budgets. We have already secured partnerships with the Governments of The Gambia and Oromia (Ethiopia) to provide time-bound technical advisory support to pilot parenting approaches and develop costed scale plans.

Lively Minds now operates in increasingly complex political, institutional, and funding environments, requiring strong governance, strategic judgement, and the ability to balance learning, risk, and scale.

We are therefore seeking new trustees who can help us double our funding, expand our government partnerships, and significantly increase our visibility and influence within the global early childhood development sector.

The Role

Role: 3-6 New Trustees

Location: Open with a preference for Global South

Stipend: Volunteer Role with reasonable expenses reimbursed

Tenure of Trustees: 3 years renewable 3 times



About the Opportunity

Lively Minds offers Trustees the opportunity to contribute to the governance of a mission-driven organisation working at the intersection of early childhood development, government systems, and large-scale social impact in Africa. The organisation operates in complex environments and is testing new approaches to scaling impact through public systems and mass communication, creating a demanding and highly strategic governance context.

This role is intended for senior leaders with prior Board or equivalent governance experience, who bring the judgement, credibility, and confidence to operate at the highest level. Trustees at Lively Minds need to play an active role beyond formal Board meetings, contributing strategic insight, constructive challenge, and providing access to networks, relationships, and decision-makers that can help unlock scale, sustainability, and influence.

Above all, Lively Minds is seeking Trustees who are deeply committed to its vision and mission, and who bring genuine passion for improving early childhood outcomes at scale. This opportunity will appeal to individuals who are motivated by system-level impact, comfortable supporting a mission-led organisation with a dynamic Chief Executive, and eager to use their experience, judgement, and influence in service of long-term change.

What we are looking for

Across the Board as a whole, Lively Minds is seeking trustees who bring:

- Senior-level experience and judgement, with the confidence to operate at Board level
- Experience governing or leading organisations through growth, transition, and complexity specifically during scale-up.
- Experience selling to governments and public systems, or the ability to operate credibly in government-facing environments
- Strong external credibility and networks, with the capacity to open doors to funders, partners, and decision-makers
- Alignment with the organisation's mission and values, and a genuine commitment to improving early childhood outcomes at scale in the global south

Trustees are expected to contribute beyond formal Board meetings through strategic insight, perspective, and—where appropriate—networks and relationships. Candidates may come from public, non-profit, corporate, or entrepreneurial backgrounds, where they bring relevant experience of scaling organisations, selling to government, and navigating complex systems.



Lively Minds is particularly interested in Trustees who align strongly with one or more of the contribution areas outlined below. The skills mentioned below are not expected of a single trustee. Final role allocation will be shaped by the strengths of the candidates appointed and the overall balance of the Board.

1. Resource Mobilisation, Philanthropy and Fundraising

We are seeking Trustees who can help Lively Minds secure the mix of funding needed for sustainable scale, including:

- Experience with **big-bet philanthropy**, catalytic funding, and/or multi-year strategic partnerships
- Strong networks with philanthropies, foundations, corporate funders, and impact investors (where relevant)
- Track record supporting organisations to position and pitch for larger, longer-term commitments
- Understanding of **institutional and structural financing** for scale (e.g., engagement with AfDB, World Bank, and other development finance or results-based funding mechanisms)

2. Government Engagement and Scale-Ups

We are particularly interested in candidates who can help unlock and sustain scale through public systems, bringing:

- Deep experience engaging African **governments and public systems**, with the ability to open doors to decision-makers and budget holders
- Strong **business acumen and negotiation capability**, including navigating concessions, partnership terms, and complex multi-stakeholder environments
- Ability to **sell to government**, influencing adoption, budget commitment, and long-term uptake
- Understanding of how to influence policy and enable adoption at scale (advocacy, policy engagement, systems change) with integrity
- Experience in **social enterprise development** or commercial partnership models that support scale alongside mission outcomes
- Ability to help Lively Minds leverage institutional/structural funding and government financing pathways, including public budgets and long-term sustainability routes

3. Organisational Development and Effectiveness

As Lively Minds undergoes a strategic shift and scales, we seek Trustees who can strengthen internal and external-facing organisational capability, including:



- Governing organisations through strategy shifts, transformation, and scale
- Experience as a CEO, founder, or senior executive who has scaled organisations.
- Strong understanding of scaling “what it takes internally”: operating models, structures, decision rights, systems, and accountability
- Capability to improve organisational effectiveness across delivery, partnerships, finance, risk, people, and performance
- Strengthening partnership management, government relationships, and multi-country execution. Experience providing Board-level oversight of finance/audit/commercial sustainability, risk, legal/compliance, or People & Culture/HR in scaling contexts

4. Education Systems Strategic Leadership (ECD), Strategic Influence

We are also seeking a Trustee with strong ECD expertise who can bring **substantive sector credibility and policy insight** to Board discussions, strengthening the Board’s ability to govern a technically complex, government-facing organisation, with deep expertise in **ECD/ECE** and evidence-based approaches to early learning.

- **Senior-level experience in education policy, systems leadership, or governance**, with strong expertise in early childhood development/education (ECD/ECE) and evidence-informed approaches to early learning
- **Experience using media and strategic communications** to support policy adoption, public buy-in, and behaviour change, including mass media or population-level platforms
- **Comfort engaging education funders, multilaterals, and technical partners**, contributing to strategic positioning, credibility, and resource mobilisation for education system reform.

5. Board Chair

Lively Minds is seeking a Board Chair (or Chair-designate) to lead the Board through its next phase of growth and development.

The Chair will bring:

- Deep understanding of the essence of Lively Minds’ work ideally including early childhood development, system-level impact, and the realities of operating in low-resource and government-facing contexts with demonstrable credibility with senior external stakeholders, including governments, major funders, and partners
- Lived experience of founding, leading, or closely supporting an organisation, with insight into the pressures, ambiguity, and pace that founder-led organisations face
- Strong knowledge of charity governance and regulation, including sufficient familiarity with Charity Commission requirements to provide confident oversight and assurance
- Proven experience chairing Boards or providing senior governance leadership, particularly during periods of growth, transition, or strategic change with strong facilitation and



relationship skills, characterised by trust, constructive challenge, clarity of roles, and accountability

- Ability to act as a trusted partner to the CEO, offering sound judgement, challenge, and support, while maintaining appropriate governance boundaries
- Availability and commitment to provide additional time and support beyond standard Board duties

What it's like to be a Trustee at Lively Minds

Trustees are expected to:

- Attend and prepare for Board meetings (minimum 4 meetings a year) and relevant committees
- Act in the best interests of the organisation and its beneficiaries
- Provide constructive challenge and support to the executive
- Contribute strategic insight, judgement, and perspective at Board level
- Bring integrity, curiosity, and a commitment to learning in complex and evolving contexts

Trustee roles are voluntary and unremunerated. Reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

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 the 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 which function/Committee you are interested in 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)-Organisation e.g., Pat-Jones-CV-0226-LivelyMinds or Pat-Jones-CoverLetter-0226-LivelyMinds.

Please note that all our clients recruiting in the UK are legally obliged to confirm that the appointee is eligible to work in the UK. As of 1 January 2021, government's new regulations will apply. For further information visit the Home Office website at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas>.



Timeline

Closing Date: 13th March 2026

First stage interviews: March 2026

Final interviews: April 2026

Selection Process

All candidates will receive an update regarding their application after the closing date. We advise candidates to add the Oxford HR Consultant email address (see below) to their safe senders list and regularly check their spam folder.

Equality Statement

Equality and diversity are at the core of Lively Minds' 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 pirungu@oxfordhr.com in the first instance.

About Oxford HR

Oxford HR is a B Corp certified leadership consultancy. Having worked within a diverse range of institutions, from not-for-profits and charities to governments and corporate environments, we've seen the powerful impact that the perfect team can have. Finding innovative leaders can be a challenge; and yet their transition into leadership is vital to an organisation's mission and success.

We work across the globe to search for and support remarkable leaders and teams, improve their board effectiveness and support on a range of leadership functions.

Learn more at: oxfordhr.com