



Board Chair

May 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:	Board Chair
Location:	Open to UK/Europe (strong experience with Global South Required)
Stipend:	Volunteer role with reasonable expenses reimbursed
Tenure of Trustees:	3 years renewable



About the Opportunity

The Chair leads the Board of Trustees to provide effective governance, strategic oversight and support to Lively Minds. The Chair ensures the Board focuses on mission, performance and sustainability; provides appropriate challenge and assurance; protects good governance and regulatory compliance; and supports the CEO to lead the organisation through strategy shift and scale while maintaining clear boundaries between governance and management.

Board Chair – Core Responsibilities

Lively Minds is seeking a Board Chair to lead the Board through its next phase of growth and development.

Board Leadership and Governance Effectiveness

- Set the tone for a high-performing Board culture characterised by trust, constructive challenge, clarity of roles and accountability
- Chair Board meetings effectively, ensuring focus on the most material strategic issues and clear decision-making
- Ensure appropriate committee structures are in place and operating effectively
- Lead trustee recruitment, onboarding and succession planning to ensure the Board remains balanced and fit for the next phase
- Lead the development and embedding of clear governance structures, decision-making processes, and ways of working

Strategy Shift and Organisational Oversight

- Guide the Board's oversight of the organisation's strategy, ensuring clarity of direction, prioritisation and realistic sequencing
- Ensure the Board is engaged early in strategic discussions, not only at the point of approval
- Ensure robust oversight of organisational performance, including impact, quality, financial sustainability, risk and safeguarding
- Support the Board in overseeing organisational effectiveness during scale, including operating model, leadership capacity, and accountability

External Credibility, Partnership Stewardship and Resource Growth

- Represent Lively Minds externally at senior level, alongside the CEO, including with governments, major funders and strategic partners



- Increase appropriate visibility of the Board with external stakeholders to strengthen confidence, relationships and transparency
- Support a coherent pathway for income growth and influence, including government financing, institutional funding, philanthropy and partnerships
- Use networks and credibility to open doors and convene decision-makers, while respecting the CEO's executive leadership role

Charity Governance and Assurance

- Ensure the Board meets its legal and fiduciary duties and maintains strong governance standards
- Provide confident oversight of charity governance and regulatory requirements, including UK Charity Commission expectations
- Ensure appropriate risk management, audit, safeguarding and internal control frameworks are in place and actively used

CEO Partnership and Performance

- Act as a trusted partner to the CEO, providing sound judgement, support and constructive challenge
- Lead CEO performance management, including objective setting, review and support during periods of growth and transition
- Ensure healthy and effective Board-Executive relationships, including clarity and follow-through on Board decisions and advice

Candidate Profile

Essential Experience and Capabilities

- Proven experience chairing Boards or providing senior governance leadership, particularly during periods of growth, transition, or strategic change.
- Deep understanding of the essence of Lively Minds' work: early childhood development/education outcomes, system-level impact, and operating in low-resource contexts.
- Credibility with senior external stakeholders, including governments, major funders and partners; comfort operating in government-facing environments.
- Lived experience of founding, leading, or closely supporting a small or growing organisation, with insight into founder-led pace, ambiguity and pressure.
- Strong knowledge of charity governance and regulation, including sufficient familiarity with Charity Commission requirements to provide confident oversight and assurance.



- Ability to act as a trusted partner to the CEO, balancing support and challenge while maintaining appropriate governance boundaries.

Desirable Experience

- Track record helping organisations scale through government systems.
- Experience unlocking major partnerships and/or philanthropic or institutional funding to support growth.
- Understanding of organisational effectiveness at scale, including operating models, people and performance.
- Experience working across multiple countries/regions in the Global South and comfort with cross-cultural governance dynamics.

Personal Attributes

- Mission-aligned and committed to equity and impact.
- Strategic, thoughtful and calm under pressure.
- High integrity and discretion, with strong judgement.
- Collaborative but able to challenge constructively and hold the line on governance.
- Comfortable operating in dynamic ecosystem.

Time Commitment and Term

The Chair role requires a higher commitment than standard trustee duties, particularly during the strategy shift and Board transition period. As a guide, candidates should expect:

- i. preparation and attendance for Board meetings;
 - ii. regular CEO check-ins;
 - iii. committee oversight and inter-committee coordination; and
 - iv. additional time for urgent decisions, stakeholder engagement, and Board development.
- Availability for surge support beyond planned meetings is essential.

What Success Looks Like (12–18 Months)

- A high-performing Board with clear roles, good governance rhythm, and strong committee structure.
- Board and CEO aligned on strategy shift priorities, sequencing, and decision discipline.



- Clear oversight and assurance on quality, safeguarding, risk and financial sustainability during scale.
- Stronger external credibility and partner/funder engagement supported by the Board, contributing to a credible pathway to grow income.
- Improved organisational effectiveness for scale: clearer operating model, accountability, and leadership capacity.

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 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-Documents Name-Date (mmyy)-LivelyMinds e.g., Pat-Jones-CV-0526-LivelyMinds or Pat-Jones-CoverLetter-0526-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: 15th June 2026

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 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