

Director of Fundraising & Communications



August 2026



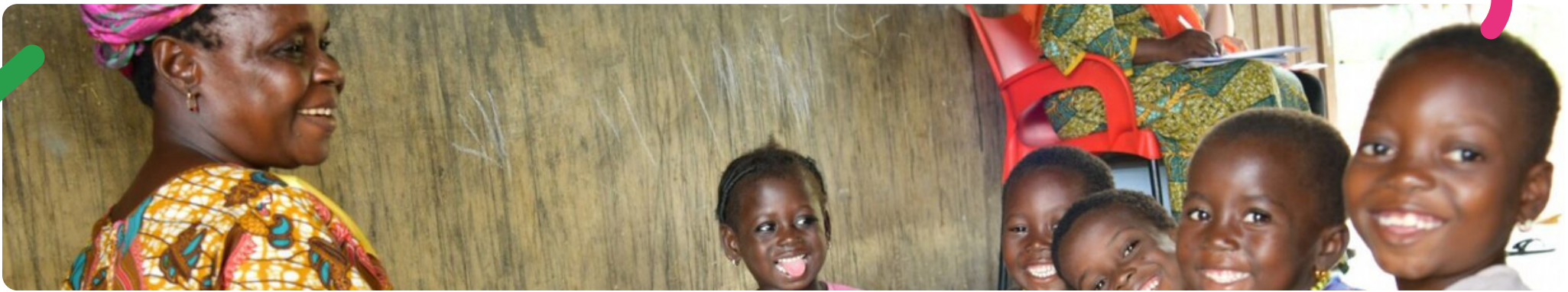
About Lively Minds

Lively Minds is an award-winning NGO with nearly 20 years of experience designing, testing and scaling early childhood development (ECD) solutions across the Global South. Our core idea is simple but radical: parents are the sleeping giants of ECD. Governments and donors have long overlooked parents, assuming that poverty and low literacy make them unable or unwilling to support their children's development. We have spent two decades proving otherwise. With RCT-backed evidence and a national-scale proof point in Ghana, we have demonstrated that parent-powered approaches, delivered through government systems, can achieve meaningful child development outcomes at scale.

Our 2026–2028 strategy marks a pivotal shift. Having demonstrated what is possible, we are now helping pioneer an innovative model of country-led sustainable scale. Rather than delivering programmes ourselves, we provide lean, time-limited technical advisory support to governments to help them integrate parent-powered ECD into their own systems, budgets and institutions. We are currently working with the governments of Ghana, Uganda, Oromia state (Ethiopia) and The Gambia in 2026, growing to six or more country engagements by 2028. Our ambition is to catalyse a sector-wide shift, positioning Lively Minds as the definitive partner for governments seeking to strengthen their ECD systems.

Our scale strategy rests on three interdependent pillars: fixed-term Technical Advisory partnerships with governments; the development of a modular radio model simple and affordable enough for governments to adopt and fund independently; and an advocacy and sector influence agenda designed to make parent-powered ECD the norm globally.





Purpose of the Role

Lively Minds is at a critical inflection point. We have the evidence, the model and the momentum. We now need the funding, profile and sector influence to match our ambition. The Director of Fundraising and Communications is a priority hire, created to provide the dedicated, experienced leadership that this moment demands.

The Director will own and drive Lively Minds' income generation, building new funder relationships, managing and deepening existing ones, and ensuring the organisation has the pipeline, discipline and quality of engagement to meet and exceed its fundraising targets. Working in close partnership with the Founding CEO, who retains ownership of a small number of long-standing strategic relationships, the Director will take primary responsibility for securing the funding that makes the 2026–2028 strategy deliverable, and that opens the door to greater scale beyond it. We need to raise approximately £3.4m over the next 3 years to deliver our strategy. But our ambition is to exceed that target so we can support additional governments.

Alongside fundraising, the Director will provide strategic leadership to Lively Minds' communications and advocacy work, ensuring that the organisation's external voice is compelling and that we are building credibility in the spaces where funding decisions are made. The Director will lead and provide strategic coherence to a small but outward-facing team, including Head of Partnerships and Advocacy Lead who are active on the international stage. Lively Minds is committed to thought-leadership and active external engagement, but equally committed to ensuring that communications resource is deployed with discipline and rigour. The Director will set a clear strategic filter for where the organisation shows up, what it publishes and who it engages: prioritising focus and quality over volume, and always asking whether external activity is building the relationships and reputation that ultimately drive income and/or systems change.

Lively Minds is a dispersed, remote organisation. The Director's team the Advocacy Lead, Development Manager and Communications Officer - are internationally distributed. The ability to lead, develop and maintain high standards across a dispersed team is essential. The role requires regular travel to international conferences and events.

Role Description

Role: Director of Fundraising & Communications

Location: Remote, with regular travel to international conferences and events. Must be within UK/African time zones

Reports To: Chief Executive Officer

Manages: Advocacy Lead, Development Manager and Communications Officer

Contract Type: Full time, permanent

Salary: £70,000 - £80,000



Key Responsibilities

1. Fundraising Strategy & Income Generation

- Own and deliver the multi-year fundraising strategy with clear priorities, targets, income streams and a disciplined pipeline to support the 2026–2028 strategy and future scale
- Steward existing funder relationships, turning strong partnerships into long-term supporters, advocates and connectors to new funding opportunities.
- Lead the shift towards Big Bet and catalytic funding, personally cultivating and negotiating high-value, multi-year partnerships and positioning Lively Minds for system-level scale
- Maintain a high standard of fundraising quality, pipeline management and forecasting, while coaching the team to produce compelling, sophisticated fundraising materials
- Build and continuously strengthen a diverse funding pipeline, identifying emerging opportunities, new funding markets and strategic partnerships that reduce concentration risk and support long-term financial sustainability

2. Communications, Brand & Advocacy

- Own and deliver Lively Minds' communications and marketing strategy, balancing visibility and sector influence with the need to strengthen fundraising and systems-change objectives
- Partner closely with the CEO to shape and steward a coherent external narrative, brand and messaging framework across all audiences and channels
- Oversee high-quality core communications and fundraising materials, including cases for support, pitch decks, website content, proposals and donor reports
- Provide strategic communications expertise to Advocacy, Partnerships and MEL, ensuring evidence and learning are translated into compelling narratives and consistent external messaging
- Lead efforts to strengthen Lively Minds' profile and thought leadership in the ECD sector, identifying opportunities for strategic media, events, publications and external platforms that reinforce its positioning and influence

3. Organisational Leadership & Team Development

- Contribute actively to SMT and organisational strategy, bringing funder intelligence, external perspective and communications expertise to strategic decision-making.
- Work closely with Finance and MEL to align fundraising targets, forecasting, budgets and evidence, ensuring proposals are credible, accurately costed and evidence-led
- Act as the organisation's communications subject matter expert, providing guidance and challenge to ensure high-quality, consistent external communications
- Lead and develop the Advocacy Lead, Development Manager and Communications Officer, fostering a team culture of quality, accountability, strategic clarity and continuous improvement
- Build strong cross-organisational collaboration, ensuring teams understand how fundraising, communications, advocacy and evidence work together to advance Lively Minds' strategic priorities

Person Specification

Essential Experience & Skills

- **10+ years of significant senior-level fundraising experience within international development, education, philanthropy or a comparable sector**
- **Proven track record of securing major grants from foundations, institutional donors and high-net-worth individuals, alongside demonstrated experience securing or meaningfully progressing large-scale, catalytic funding from Big Bet philanthropy programmes such as the Audacious Project, Skoll Foundation or comparable funders. A strong understanding of what these funders look for and how to position an organisation compellingly within their processes is essential**
- **Exceptional fundraising writing skills, with the ability to personally develop compelling cases for support, funding proposals, award applications and pitch decks tailored to sophisticated impact funders. This is a hands-on role requiring both strong writing capability and the ability to coach others to consistently produce high-quality fundraising content**
- **Experienced in developing and owning a marketing and communications strategy, with a strong understanding of how to balance organisational visibility, thought leadership and sector influence with coherence, strategic focus and income generation**

Essential Experience & Skills (con't)

- Demonstrated ability to work closely with a Founding CEO to shape and steward the organisation's external narrative and brand. Comfortable working in a founder-led environment, providing expertise and constructive challenge while ensuring the organisation maintains a clear, consistent and coherent external voice

Desirable Experience

- Experienced fundraising for a technical advisory, systems change or government-facing organisation
- Knowledge of the ECD, education or early childhood sector and its funding landscape
- Familiarity with the Big Bang Philanthropy network or equivalent impact-focused funder communities
- Experience working alongside advocacy and partnerships teams, providing communications expertise and strategic coherence to their external activity
- Familiarity with the funding landscape for organisations operating in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Experience working remotely across multiple countries and effectively collaborating with cross-cultural teams

Behaviours & Ways of Working

- A doer, equally comfortable in strategic conversations and writing a funding proposal
- Sets a high bar for quality and clarity in all external communications and holds it consistently
- Builds a strong, trust-based partnership with the Founding CEO, provides honest challenge and operates effectively within a founder-led dynamic without losing their own voice or judgement
- Collaborative and cross-organisational. Invests in strong relationships with programme, MEL and finance colleagues, understanding that the best fundraising is grounded in organisational reality
- Calm and focused under pressure - able to manage competing priorities and maintain quality when the stakes are high

What We Offer

- Competitive salary commensurate with experience
- 25 days annual leave
- Health insurance
- Pension contribution
- Generous learning and development budget
- Flexible, remote working



Application Instructions

Interested candidates are encouraged to read the Job Description carefully before applying to ensure they understand the role and meet the required criteria.

To apply, please complete the pre-screening questions and submit your updated CV using the link below:

[Apply here](#)

PLEASE NOTE - Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



Timeline

Closing Date: 3rd September 2026



Our Stance

Lively Minds operates a strict Safeguarding Policy and is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable people. As part of our recruitment process, the suitability of successful candidates will be verified through appropriate background checks including professional references and police checks.

Lively Minds is fully committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and to providing equal opportunities throughout our recruitment process. We want this commitment to be reflected in the diversity of the people who work for us, and we welcome applications from people of all backgrounds, identities, experiences and perspectives.

We are committed to ensuring that recruitment decisions are based on merit, skills, experience and suitability for the role, and that all candidates are treated fairly and with respect throughout the recruitment process.

