

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Salary	£62,415 - £64,058 (if UK based) (Competitive Birches rated salary for the local market if based outside of the UK)
Location	London, United Kingdom or the following Start Network countries of operation: DRC · Pakistan · India · Somalia · South Sudan · Philippines · Kenya · Bangladesh
Team	Communications
Line Manager	Director of Impact and Change
Line Reports	Manage the Communications team, including line management of, Communications Manager and Digital Communications Manager.
Hours	35 hours per week
Contract	Permanent
Grade	1B
Safeguarding	Basic

WHAT IS START NETWORK?

Our purpose is to be a catalyst for system-level change that improves the efficiency, effectiveness and ethics of humanitarian action. We do this by working as a network to develop, test & spread new ways of collaborating and resourcing locally-led crisis response and anticipation.

Our current membership is made up of over 130 local, national and international NGOs based all around the world. We also support 10 national and regional hubs made up of civil society organisations and NGOs as our vehicle for devolving power, resources and accountability.

OUR SOLUTIONS

DECENTRALISING & LOCALLY-LED ACTION: Shifting power and resources and decentralising decision-making to locally led networks and organisations.

EARLY & RAPID FINANCING: Building a global financing system that reduces risk, anticipates, and acts ahead of predictable crises.

COMMUNITY-LED INNOVATION: Incentivising innovative, locally led, and contextual solutions and learning from them together with people affected by crises.

For more information about Start Network and what we do, please visit our [website](#).

OUR VALUES

WE PUT PEOPLE FIRST: Communities come first in our decision-making and programming.

WE ARE BRAVE: We have great ambition and are willing to explore new things and take risks to achieve it

WE OPERATE COLLECTIVELY: We leverage the value of working as a network, sharing risk and resources, and learning together.

WE ARE INCLUSIVE: We see the value in diverse perspectives and work to remove the barriers that prevent voices from being heard.

WE ARE OPEN: We work transparently and with integrity, building mutual trust in all levels of our work, from governance to programming.

WE ARE ETHICAL: We behave and operate based on key principles of anti-racism, non-discrimination, and anti-colonialism. This is a work in progress.

JOB PURPOSE

The Head of Communications is a senior role responsible for shaping and delivering Start Network's communications strategy—externally and internally—to strengthen organisational influence, impact and coherence across all audiences. The role provides leadership to a global hybrid and remote working communications team, including direct line management responsibilities.

The role is responsible for ensuring an integrated, audience-led approach to communications that effectively engages key stakeholders and advances organisational priorities. The role will also oversee the delivery of key publications and act as our brand champion, ensuring that our outputs, messaging and communications are consistently on-brand, clear, compelling and aligned with our values and strategic objectives.

As part of the Impact and Change Directorate, the role will work with colleagues across Policy, Advocacy and External Affairs, Evidence and Learning, and Systems Innovation and Change in positioning Start Network as a leading agent of change, translating evidence and learning into compelling communications that influence policy, practice and funding across the humanitarian system.

The role plays a critical part in strengthening Start Network's profile, influence and thought leadership across the global humanitarian system.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategy

- Lead the ongoing development and delivery of an integrated communications and engagement strategy (including content, brand, digital and media/PR)
- Ensure all Start Network communications are aligned with the brand and organisational priorities
- Act as a strategic advisor to the Senior Leadership Team and Senior Management Group on communications, positioning, audience engagement and reputation
- Advise and collaborate with all teams to ensure communications are insight- and evidence-led and position Start Network as a change agent in the sector
- Work with the Head of Resource Mobilisation to position the Start Network brand with target donors and other audiences
- Work with the Head of Membership to ensure effective and streamlined member communications
- Work with the Head of Advocacy and External Affairs to ensure an integrated approach to communications and advocacy messaging across all channels
- Guide and support the Advocacy team in communicating key campaigns, aligned with desired systemic change
- Build communications capacity across the organisation, enabling teams and leaders to communicate effectively and consistently
- Manage the communications budget

Brand

- Act as the central brand champion across the whole of Start Network's decentralised global network, leading and overseeing the development and stewardship of a strong, consistent brand across the network
- Ensure effective tools, guidance and materials are in place for partners and hubs to support Start Network's brand and visibility, and to meet donor and partner visibility requirements.
- Support the CEO and Senior Leadership Team to build and position the Start Network brand
- Enable consistent but flexible application of the brand across diverse global contexts, balancing coherence with local relevance

Content, digital communications and campaigns

- Provide strategic oversight of content and channels to ensure communications and campaigns are audience-led, high quality and aligned with organisational priorities
- Oversee the strategic planning and quality of digital content (website material, blogs, video content, podcasts, and social media posts) ensuring consistency, impact and alignment with organisational priorities
- Ensure Start Network's digital platforms and channels are user-focused, accessible, up-to-date, and aligned with strategic goals
- Provide strategic oversight to SEO, analytics and performance tracking so they effectively support the communications strategy and ensure content reaches intended audiences.
- Collaborate with teams, including Advocacy, Membership and Resource Mobilisation, on the strategic use of events to build Start Network's thought leadership and engage stakeholders in our work.

Media and public relations

- Lead the ongoing development and delivery of a media strategy, positioning Start Network and its leadership as thought leaders through proactive media engagement and strategic storytelling
- Develop and maintain relationships with journalists, influencers, and media outlets
- Handle press releases, media interviews, and public statements
- Act as communications lead within the organisation's Crisis Management Team
- Provide support to the CEO and senior team on crisis communications planning – anticipating and responding to internal and external developments

Publications

- Provide strategic oversight to the organisation's publications function, maximising its value to influencing and thought leadership.
- Lead on improving publication quality assurance processes, including review and sign off protocols.
- Provide leadership and oversight to the approach, process and delivery of the organisation's governance materials and annual report.

Internal communications

- Shape, and co-lead the implementation of the organisation-wide internal communications strategy and approach in partnership with the People & Culture and Operations teams
- Agree resourcing requirements for internal communications
- Work with SLT and SMG to deliver an effective quarterly board report, supporting the information needs of Trustees.

Organisational contributions

- Contribute to the organisational strategy
- Champion Start Network's values, culture and ways of working
- Promote collaboration, agility and cross-organisational working
- Represent Start Network in meetings, events, on platforms or panels, to a range of stakeholders and audiences
- Carry out the responsibilities of the role in line with the Start Network Code of Conduct and with a commitment to safeguarding adults and children
- The Start Network team is an agile group of individuals who use their experience and skills across the network, so flexibility to work in and with different teams and functions is a part of our culture.

Line management

To carry out effective line management of a team, including recruiting and training direct reports and having an active role in building an inclusive team culture in line with our values

PERSON PROFILE

Essential Skills and Experience

- Proven experience in a similar senior-level communications role
- Strong track record of developing and delivering strategic communications across geographies and in complex organisations
- Strong track record of building, leading and developing high-performing, diverse and distributed teams
- Excellent networking and relationship skills, including gaining buy-in from key stakeholders at different levels
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with strong editorial judgement
- Strong expertise in brand and reputation management and strategic communications
- Demonstrated skills across a broad range of marketing and communications including PR, events, collateral production, email and digital marketing
- Experience in supporting advocacy, policy or behaviour change campaigns
- Sound leadership, strategic thinking, management and planning skills
- Experience overseeing/leading a publications function.
- Ability to research, analyse and to summarise complex issues to different audiences
- Experience using data and insight to inform communications strategy and measure impact
- Experience managing external providers to deliver to agreed objectives
- Demonstrated ability to manage budgets
- Excellent prioritisation and time-management skills and an ability to work under pressure and to deadlines

Desirable

- Educated to degree level or equivalent
- Professional qualification in marketing, PR or communications
- Good knowledge of the aid sector, humanitarian and development and mainstream journalists and media, networks, and organisations
- Experience operating in networked, federated or decentralised organisational models
- Experience working in partnership with HR/People teams on culture, engagement or change initiatives
- Experience in using CRM systems for managing stakeholder communications and data

Key competences

- Influence stakeholders to address difficult or complex issues by listening to diverse perspectives, finding common ground, and avoiding criticism or complaint
- Communicate confidence and compassion to others to represent their voices by enabling space, sharing encouraging words, motivating language, and offering help
- Promote different ways to engage different audiences, advising others on how to maximise impact through feedback and coaching
- Manage ambiguity by weighing up risks and uncertainties with opportunities in pursuit of our vision based on the evidence available
- Enable others to support and deliver cross-organisational initiatives by removing barriers, such as reallocating work, reprioritising, and coaching others to do the same
- Provide leadership by inspiring and unlocking motivation in others across the network to lead and hold them accountable for the results
- Create and promote a learning culture, authentically sharing own learning and supporting others to do the same at organisational, team and network level
- Identify cross-organisational changes needed to respond to changing context by scanning political, economic, sociological, technological, legal and environmental issues and bringing them to relevant colleagues
- Set strategic direction and provides clarity of vision, purpose and culture, enabling space for the team, members, hubs and other stakeholders to shape the journey

This role description is non-exhaustive and includes any other duties that may reasonably be required for the role.