Career Opportunity: Senior Programme Lead

Location: Johannesburg with Hybrid Options | Reporting to: Chief Executive Officer
Contract Type: 3-Year Fixed Term with Possibility of Renewal

Are you an education expert who believes learning is a lifelong journey? Are you passionate about improving access and success from early childhood to post-secondary education and training? Would you like to take up an exciting challenge with an African education support organisation founded on social justice and open learning principles? **Saide** is on a mission to **unlock the power of education and expand opportunity** for children, youth and adults across Africa. If our mission inspires you as much as it excites us, then we would love to hear from you.

ROLE PURPOSE

The **Senior Programme Lead (SPL)** is a member of Saide's Mission Leadership Team (MLT) with a critical role in advancing the organisation's mission. The incumbent will oversee the development and delivery of Saide's early learning, open education, teaching & learning resources, and student success initiatives, among others. The SPL also provides subject matter expertise as the overall post-secondary education and training (PSET) lead.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Team Leadership

- Lead, mentor, and support the Programme Innovation and Delivery team to drive mission-aligned programme delivery, monitoring, evaluation, research and learning.
- Foster a collaborative and high-performance team culture that values innovation, inclusion, and accountability.
- Contribute to organisational strategy and decision-making as a member of the Mission Leadership Team (MLT).
- Provide oversight and guidance to project teams, consultants, and implementing partners, ensuring delivery excellence and alignment with Saide's values and goals.

Programme Innovation and Delivery

- Develop and operationalise a comprehensive programme strategy that aligns with Saide's mission, strategic goals, and emerging opportunities in the education ecosystem.
- Strengthen systems and processes for effective programme design, delivery, and continuous improvement.
- Promote open learning principles, technology and data-informed approaches to enhance access and success.
- Cultivate strategic partnerships and networks to expand Saide's influence and the scalability of its initiatives across South Africa and the continent.
- Support fundraising by contributing to proposal development, pitch decks, and donor engagement processes.

Subject Matter Expertise and Thought Leadership

- Provide sectoral expertise in post-secondary education and training (PSET), including policy and advocacy, to guide programme content and strategy.
- Serve as a thought leader and spokesperson for Saide in external engagements including conferences, working groups, research forums, and media relations.
- Build and maintain strategic relationships with educational institutions, funders, researchers, and policy stakeholders to drive impact and systemic change.

Programme and Project Management

- Oversee the full project lifecycle of Saide's education initiatives (grant funded and commissioned projects), from project design and planning to implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning.
- Ensure compliance with funder expectations, contractual obligations, and internal quality standards.
- Manage project budgets, track expenditures, and ensure timely and accurate financial and narrative reporting.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research & Learning (MERL)

- Lead the development and implementation of robust MERL frameworks to track and assess programme effectiveness, learning outcomes, and impact.
- Guide the design and commissioning of evaluations, research studies, and reflective learning processes.
- Use evidence to inform programme improvement, learning loops, and organisational decision-making.
- Foster knowledge exchange internally and externally by synthesising and sharing lessons learned.

Policy Engagement and Advocacy

- Lead Saide's engagement with education policy-makers, regulatory bodies, and education sector coalitions to shape inclusive and equitable education policy.
- Develop policy briefs, position papers, and advocacy materials that promote open learning, student success, and systemic transformation.
- Monitor the policy landscape to identify opportunities and risks for Saide's work and contribute to relevant national and regional dialogues.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

Education and Qualifications

- Master's degree in Education, Development, Public Policy, or a related field (a PhD will be advantageous).

Professional Experience

- Minimum of 10 years of progressive experience in education programme design and delivery, preferably within the post-secondary education and training sector.
- At least 5 years in a senior leadership or management role with demonstrated success in leading teams, managing multi-stakeholder projects, and overseeing complex programme portfolios.
- Proven experience working with public institutions, donor agencies, NGOs, and/or multilateral organisations.
- Experience engaging in or influencing education policy, curriculum reform, and system-level change.

Technical Competencies

- Deep understanding of African/South African education systems, including issues of access, equity, and quality.
- Skilled in applying open learning, technology, and data-informed approaches to education programmes.
- Demonstrated ability to design and apply research, monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MERL) frameworks to drive continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making.
- Experience in fundraising, proposal development, partnership building and managing donor relations.

Leadership and Personal Attributes

- Strategic thinker with the ability to see the big picture while managing the detail of implementation.
- Inclusive, collaborative leadership style with a strong commitment to team empowerment.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including public speaking and writing.
- High level of integrity, adaptability, and emotional intelligence.
- Applicants must have the right to live and work in South Africa.

Saide is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applicants from diverse backgrounds.

ABOUT SAIDE

Established in 1992, *Saide* is an education support organisation founded on social justice and open learning principles. We believe that education is the foundation for lifelong success. As such, we are on a mission to *unlock the power of education and expand opportunity* for children, youth and adults across Africa. Innovating data-informed solutions and leveraging technology, Saide supports education providers across diverse modes of provision (in-person, remote and hybrid), partnering with governments, public and private institutions, as well as civil society organisations. We work across the education system from early learning through primary and secondary schooling, to higher education and training. Our current initiatives include the following:

- African Storybook (www.africanstorybook.org) – an innovative early learning initiative addressing the literacy crisis in Africa using the power of pleasure reading and openly licensed storybooks in the languages of Africa.

- Siyaphumelela (www.siyaphumelela.org.za) - a collaborative effort to enable access to higher education and holistic student access, currently working with 20 of the 26 public universities in South Africa.

- OER Africa (www.oerafrica.org) – a pioneering initiative that promotes the development and use of high quality open education resources (OER) to support teaching and learning across Africa.