

# Work with us towards a good start for all children

Knowledge for Policy Director

Senior Management Team | Knowledge for Policy Team

Bernard van Leer  FOUNDATION



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## The opportunity

We're looking for an experienced leader who has worked on urban initiatives at scale and led the development of knowledge resources to join our senior management team as our new Knowledge for Policy Director.

We're almost five years into our strategy to:

- support parents and caregivers through existing programmes and systems operating at scale (Parents+),
- work with cities to put a focus on babies, toddlers and the people who care for them into urban policy planning and design (Urban95),
- support leaders all over the world with expertise, connections, advocacy and funding, and
- develop and share inspiring and evidence-based policy and practices globally by establishing a Knowledge for Policy team to combine the communications, research and evaluation functions.

We're now moving into a new phase where we want to increase our support to partners in the implementation and scaling process, improve the use and impact of knowledge resources developed by our partners and team, and better assess the ideas being tested and scaled by our partners.

Our new Knowledge for Policy Director will lead the established Knowledge for Policy team and work closely with the senior management, Programme and Operations teams to take us into the next phase of our strategy as we seek to exponentially scale our impact on babies, toddlers and the people who care for them.

# Our mission and approach

At the Bernard van Leer Foundation, we believe that giving all children a good start in life is both the right thing to do and the best way to build healthy, creative and peaceful societies.

We are an independent foundation working worldwide to inspire and inform large scale action to improve the health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and the people who care for them. Our independence allows us to take risks on innovative ideas and bold leaders and make the kind of long-term, non-partisan commitment required to achieve and sustain large scale change.

We believe the major challenge is the transition to scale. Plenty of ideas to improve the youngest children's health, nutrition, protection and learning have proven their worth in small-scale projects – but how do we effectively reach hundreds of thousands or millions of children? To address this challenge, we work in the following ways:

- We are constantly scanning the world for innovations and good practices that can achieve large-scale change.
- We go beyond pilot projects and address the challenges of large-scale implementation.
- We identify bold leaders from diverse backgrounds and support them and their teams to take large scale action.
- We provide access to curated global knowledge and expertise, connections to an international network of peers, strategic funding and advocacy.

In the current strategic period, our work focuses on three solution areas:

## Parents+

Combining coaching for parents and other caregivers in early childhood development with services that meet families' basic needs.

## Urban95

Incorporating a focus on babies, toddlers and the people who care for them into urban policy, planning and design.

## Early Years

Promoting investment in the early years and sharing the science of early childhood development and best practices in transitioning successful early years initiatives to scale.





## Our history

The Bernard van Leer Foundation's mission is to improve opportunities for young children growing up in circumstances of social and economic disadvantage.

Our income derives from the sale of the packaging business built by our founder, Bernard van Leer, during the first half of the 20th century.

It was Oscar van Leer, Bernard's son, who focused our foundation's activities on children in 1964.

Today, we remain guided by his belief that giving all children a good start in life is not only the fair thing to do, but also an effective pathway to building more healthy, creative and peaceful societies.

Since Oscar chose to focus our mission on young children more than 50 years ago, we have invested over half a billion Euros, supporting pioneers and leaders from around the world to develop and spread knowledge about how to make effective investments in child development.

This work has:

- led to innovations widely adopted by governments and non-profit organisations;
- generated ideas that changed the way people think about the earliest years of a child's life; and
- informed public policies in more than 25 countries.

# Our organisational structure

**Our annual operating budget is approximately € 19 million.**

We are funded by and represent the majority of the charitable spending and staffing of the Van Leer Foundations, which also provides financial and technical support to two strategic partners based in Israel, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and the Jerusalem Film Centre. The Institute and the Film Centre are focused on strengthening democracy, equality and regional peace.

With close to 40 employees worldwide, our headquarters are in The Hague, The Netherlands.

Our Management, Operations, Knowledge for Policy, and Netherlands Programme teams are based at headquarters. We currently work in Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, the Netherlands, Peru and Turkey, including in more than a dozen cities in these countries as well as in Colombia (Bogota) and Albania (Tirana).

The Van Leer Foundations are governed by a Board of Trustees that meets four times per year. The Board is composed of accomplished leaders in business, civil society and government.



# About the Knowledge for Policy Team

Informing and inspiring large-scale action for babies, toddlers and the people who care for them – through a combination of flexible funding, sharing knowledge, connecting people and engaging in advocacy – is at the heart of the Bernard van Leer Foundation's approach.

## In support of this...

- Our Programme team leads geographically-focused advocacy, develops relationships and partnerships with organisations across a range of sectors and disciplines, and provides funding, technical assistance and other support to policymakers, technical staff, advocates and other leaders all over the world – with a current focus on city- and national-level work in Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Israel, India, Jordan, the Netherlands, Peru, Turkey, the Latin American region and the Syrian refugee response region.
- Established four years ago, our Knowledge for Policy team leads a range of activities to influence changes in policy and practice globally as well as to support Programme in its engagement with policymakers, technical staff, advocates and other leaders.

We have a particular focus on working with and in cities and on initiatives to support parents and other caregivers.

One way we think of the work of the Knowledge for Policy team is that it “extracts, curates and distributes” actionable, scalable ideas for leaders and organisations working to improve the health and well-being of babies, toddlers and the people who care for them.

Specifically, the team:

### 1. **EXTRACTS** actionable, scalable ideas

... from our own partnerships, through organisation-wide documentation, evaluation and storytelling partnerships and internal monitoring and learning.

... from great work going on elsewhere in the world, by engaging and developing partnerships with experts, organisations and networks that generate knowledge.

**2. CURATES** actionable, scalable ideas through BvLF-branded knowledge resources (e.g. our Early Years Starter Kit and our flagship annual journal Early Childhood Matters) and through partnerships to develop knowledge resources

### 3. **DISTRIBUTES** actionable, scalable ideas to:

... leaders and other strategic partners, directly and via technical assistance partnerships

... leaders and other strategic partners, via BvLF convenings, study tours and leadership and executive education programmes

... other selected audiences, via distribution partnerships, targeted social media and other forms of communication

# About the role

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## The Knowledge for Policy Director will:

- Join the Bernard van Leer Foundation's senior management team at a particularly exciting moment in our strategic evolution and our journey to greater impact through our partners for babies, toddlers and the people who care for them – as we seek to increase the quality, reach and uptake of the learnings and ideas that our partnerships are generating.
- As a member of the senior management team, lead the evolution of the Bernard van Leer Foundation's strategy to scale its impact and reach through knowledge
- Lead an innovative, high-performing team that seeks to influence changes in policy and practice globally, in close cooperation with our Programme team, by working across a wide range of knowledge initiatives. These include:
  - Developing partnerships and making grants
  - Creating and sharing knowledge resources widely
  - Delivering technical assistance both directly and through partners
  - Organising study tours, executive education and other capacity-building and inspirational initiatives
  - Commissioning research and communications projects
  - Leading on organisation-wide documentation, monitoring, evaluation & learning (MEL) frameworks and supporting the Programme team in commissioning evaluations
  - Leading on external and internal communications
- Serve as a senior subject matter expert for urban policy, planning or design



# Principal responsibilities and tasks

Reporting to the Executive Director of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, the Knowledge for Policy Director will be responsible for the following:

## Senior leadership, strategy and management

- In close collaboration with the Programme Director, the Executive Director of the Bernard van Leer Foundation and the CEO of the Van Leer Foundations, contribute to the development of organisation-wide strategy – with a focus on scaling our impact through knowledge
- Lead the development and execution of the Knowledge for Policy team strategy and annual plan, setting and communicating clear priorities to the Knowledge for Policy and broader team, and ensuring Knowledge for Policy activities evolve to meet the needs of the organisation, our partners and the leaders we seek to engage
- Line manage, coach and motivate –5 direct reports as well as consultants
- Organisational responsibility for corporate communications and internal support systems – with primary day-to-day responsibility for these activities taken by the Lead, Knowledge Uptake & Communications and the Communications & Knowledge Uptake Officer

## “Extracting, curating and distributing” knowledge

- Oversee and provide regular input and counsel to the Knowledge for Policy team’s work on:
  - developing and increasing the uptake and impact of knowledge resources, technical assistance, convenings, study tours, executive education and more

- the documentation and evaluation of our partnerships, internal monitoring and learning, and commissioned research
- Lead on selected major urban knowledge partnerships
- Lead on developing and evolving the Bernard van Leer Foundation’s knowledge development and research agenda
- Serve as a senior subject matter expert for urban policy, planning or design

## Developing new ideas and engaging new leaders

- Oversee the development of, and/or directly develop, new areas of work for the Foundation, for example: access to nature; childcare; the use of technology to support frontline workers; new executive programmes and courses
- Oversee the development of, and/or directly develop, new ways to learn from and bring our knowledge and ideas to regions outside our core countries
- Identify and develop new platforms through which to share our knowledge and ideas, such as urban conferences and networks
- Working closely with the Lead, Knowledge Uptake & Communications, generate opportunities to better position the organisation and senior staff as thought leaders

Some international travel is required.

# Who are we looking for?

We're looking for the new Knowledge for Policy Director to bring the following to our team:

## Skills and experience

- You have **technical expertise in urban policy, planning or design and a track record of implementing urban initiatives at scale** – to complement the early childhood technical expertise and implementation experience of our Programme Director
- You have **significant organisational leadership experience**, including working at the senior management level to set and execute strategy and leading a team or department with a diverse work portfolio
- You **understand how professionals across sectors, from government to civil society to business, use knowledge to inform their decisions** – and you'll relish the challenge of thinking strategically about using knowledge to influence changes in policy and practice globally and leading a team to do that
- You have **direct experience of leading the development of knowledge resources** to change policy and practice
- Ideally, you also have **experience with one or both of the other core functions led by the Knowledge for Policy team**: research, monitoring, evaluation & learning and/or communications strategy, knowledge dissemination, marketing or related functions
- You're an excellent communicator, both orally and written, in English. (Proficiency with other languages used in the Foundation's work also welcome: Dutch, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Hindi, Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish, French.) You have the gravitas to serve as a senior representative of the Foundation.
- You've developed the above working in different contexts around the world, ideally including low- and middle-income countries

## Personal qualities

- You're **highly motivated to work towards our mission** of a good start for all children and you're excited about joining a committed team that continually seeks to innovate and to increase its impact
- You **love ideas** and you're a creative, structured, analytical thinker – but you're also **very practical**, focused on how knowledge leads to action
- You're a **humble leader** and **great at getting things done with and through colleagues, partners and consultants**. You've got **brilliant stakeholder management skills** and will work well with our international, collegial and highly committed team working to serve babies, toddlers and people who care for them



## Details and how to apply

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### Role details

**Position:** Knowledge for Policy Director

**Team:** Senior Management Team

**Reports to:** Executive Director, Bernard van Leer Foundation

**Based in:** The Hague, The Netherlands (in-person collaboration with the rest of our team is important for this role, so we regret that we are not able to consider people who wish to be based remotely).  
Some international travel is required.

**Salary range:** €80k to €110k

Benefits include pension contributions, 26 days of annual leave, paid parental leave additional to Dutch statutory requirements, and support for professional development as well as for physical exercise.

For applicants hired from outside the Netherlands, we also offer a relocation package, visa support and – for eligible applicants – additional expat incentives.

**Contract:** 2 years full-time (37.5h / week) staff position.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation is an Equal Opportunities Employer and particularly welcomes applications from a diversity of backgrounds and experience.

# Applications

**Closing date:** Wednesday 17 February at 0830 CET

Please complete your application online through Applied, an online recruitment platform whose mission is to help organisations hire the best person for the job regardless of their background:

**<https://app.beapplied.com/apply/fcwydtfwz>**

You will be asked to submit answers of up to 250 words to a small number of questions related to this role, along with an up-to-date CV. We will review these blind (without seeing your name or CV) and make a shortlist for first interview.

## Interviews

We will conduct two rounds of interviews in late February/March 2020. Please check our website **[bernardvanleer.org/about-us/#Vacancies](https://bernardvanleer.org/about-us/#Vacancies)** for updates.

## More information

If you have any questions about the role or the application process, please contact Agnes Buis, Human Resources Officer at **[agnes.buis@bvleerf.nl](mailto:agnes.buis@bvleerf.nl)**.

**Thank you for your interest in working with us. We very much look forward to hearing from you.**



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