

# Work with us towards a good start for all children

Lead, Knowledge Uptake & Communications

Knowledge for Policy Team

Bernard van Leer  FOUNDATION



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## The opportunity

We're looking for a senior communications and content strategist and manager to join our team in a new role: the Lead, Knowledge Uptake and Communications.

Four years into our current strategic focus to support governments and other organisations working at scale to better support babies, toddlers and the people who care for them, we're proud of the quality of our network and of the knowledge-to-action resources that we, our partners and others have developed to date. But we also know there's more we can do to further connect and support our

network, and to expand the reach and impact of our knowledge resources.

This is a unique opportunity to join our team at a particularly exciting moment, to lead our work to increase the spread and uptake of the great ideas that our partners and team are coming up with, and to strengthen our own communications and thought leadership as an organisation.

# 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, peaceful and creative 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 role

Informing and inspiring large-scale action for babies, toddlers and the people who care for them is the heart of the Bernard van Leer Foundation's strategy.

## In support of...

- ☒ Our Programme team leads advocacy, develops relationships and partnerships with, and provides technical assistance and other support to policymakers, technical staff, advocates and other leaders all over the world.
- ☒ Our Knowledge for Policy team leads a range of activities to support these leaders, including the development of knowledge resources, convenings, executive education, study tours, technical assistance partnerships and direct technical assistance to the Programme team.

We're proud of the quality of our network and of the knowledge-to-action resources that we, our partners and others have developed to date. But we also know there's more we can do to further connect and support our network, and to expand the reach and impact of our knowledge resources.

To drive our work to expand the reach and impact of our knowledge resources and to lead on communications for the organisation as a whole, we're looking for a senior communications and content strategist and manager to join our team in a new role: the Lead, Knowledge Uptake and Communications.



## Who are we looking for?

- ☒ You have the skills and ideas to champion knowledge uptake and lead communications across the organisation
- ☒ You'll be politically savvy and you'll be interested in how professionals across sectors, from government to civil society to business, use knowledge to inform their decisions. You may have gained this through working in journalism, public affairs, or campaigns and advocacy
- ☒ You're comfortable across communications and content – you have a head and heart for communications that get people to think, feel and act differently, and you're happy navigating a wide range of global policy, research and practitioner topics from the early years to urban issues to public health to humanitarian assistance and emergencies and more
- ☒ You relish the prospect of distribution, dissemination, marketing and so on... whatever you call getting great policy and practice ideas into the hands of people who will use them
- ☒ You're creative and flexible working across a range of mediums and channels, from publications, digital and social media, events, presentations and meetings and more
- ☒ You're an excellent writer of English, experienced in writing for busy professional audiences as well as online. Other languages used in our work also welcome, such as Dutch, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Hindi, Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish or French



- ☒ You don't need to be the front-person when it comes to our advocacy – you're a humble leader who gets satisfaction from supporting the people who hold direct relationships with the key decision-makers we're seeking to engage
- ☒ You're an ideas person who's also great at getting things done with and through colleagues, partners and consultants. You've got brilliant project and 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
- ☒ And you've developed the above working in different contexts around the world, ideally including low- and middle-income countries

## Principal responsibilities and tasks

Reporting to the Knowledge for Policy Director, the Lead, Knowledge Uptake & Communications will:

### Lead the development of our strategy to increase the reach and use of the great ideas our partners and team are coming up with:

- ☒ In collaboration with the management team, lead the development of our knowledge uptake strategy overall – e.g. defining and refining our audiences and deciding which knowledge resources, channels and tactics to prioritise

### Design and execute communications and knowledge uptake strategies and lead selected strategic communications partnerships

- ☒ Lead the design and execution of strategies to increase quality, distribution and uptake by our key audiences across existing and new knowledge resources in digital and print form, e.g. our Starter Kits, Early Childhood Matters journal, policy briefs, case studies, human interest stories, etc.
- ☒ Oversee the commissioning and distribution of human interest stories / solutions journalism-style documentation of our major partnerships
- ☒ Manage selected global communications and distribution projects and partnerships
- ☒ Manage a freelance project manager to produce the Foundation's annual journal, Early Childhood Matters

### Support communications, advocacy, positioning and thought leadership across the organisation

- ☒ Analyse our network of leaders and engagement calendar and make recommendations on how we might better serve this community through our knowledge resources and how we can provide leaders opportunities to engage and connect
- ☒ Advise staff on specific engagement activities (e.g. convenings, knowledge resources, external communications)
- ☒ Support senior staff in their communications and advocacy work through writing executive briefings and advising on organisational positioning and individual thought leadership
- ☒ On occasion, support the Van Leer Foundations on communications, advocacy and engagement for the group

### Manage corporate communications and systems

- ☒ Oversee the Annual Report, website, social media, messaging guides and marketing collateral and internal contact and photo databases
- ☒ Oversee monitoring and evaluation of our engagement and communications activities
- ☒ Potentially line manage one direct report working on all of the above

## Experience, skills and competencies

### Key experiences and skills:

- ☒ Relevant work experience in journalism, public affairs, politics, knowledge uptake, communications, advocacy or related. Politically savvy
- ☒ Ability to understand, interpret and present complex and sensitive information from a variety of sources
- ☒ Deep appetite for spreading ideas and serving audiences
- ☒ Experience working across a range of mediums and channels, e.g. publications, digital and social media, events, presentations, meetings and more
- ☒ Experience managing projects, staff members and consultants
- ☒ Experience across a range of geographic contexts, ideally including low- and middle-income countries
- ☒ Knowledge of or interest in one or more of BvLF's target sectors and issues, such as the early years, public health, urban policy, planning and design
- ☒ Excellent written English, with particular emphasis on busy professional audiences
- ☒ Proficiency with other languages used in the Foundation's work also welcome (Dutch, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Hindi, Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish, French)

### Organisation-wide competencies used to assess performance in this role:

- ☒ Teamwork: Contributing actively to a joint result or solution to a problem, even when such teamwork concerns a matter which is not of immediate personal interest.
- ☒ Learning ability: Absorbing new information and ideas and applying them effectively.
- ☒ Results orientation: Actively focused on achieving results and objectives; ready to take action in case of disappointing results

### Job-specific competencies used to assess performance in this role:

- ☒ Creativity: Identify original solutions to function-related problems. Devise new work methods to replace existing ones.
- ☒ Client-orientedness: Investigate needs and wishes of the client and act accordingly. Anticipate on client's needs. Give high priority to service and client satisfaction.
- ☒ Planning & organising: Effectively determines targets, prioritises the time required, the actions required and the resources needed to achieve certain goals.
- ☒ Written communication: Makes ideas and opinions clear in a report or document that conforms to proper design & structure; writes grammatically correct sentences and uses terminology and words appropriately for the audience



## Details and how to apply

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### Role details

**Position:** Lead, Knowledge Uptake & Communications

**Team:** Knowledge for Policy

**Reports to:** Knowledge for Policy Director

**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)

**Salary range:** €57k to €78k

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:** 1 year full-time (37.5h / week) staff position, with intention to renew

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

## Applications

**Closing date:** Monday 27 January 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/czd85x05wu>

You will be asked to submit 250-word answers 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

**First interviews:** February TBC

**Final interviews:** February TBC

We will be posting provisional dates as soon as possible – please check our website [bernardvanleer.org/about-us/#Vacancies](http://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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