



Rift Valley Institute
Job Description
Research Training Manager

Job Title: Research Training Manager

Location: Kenya with frequent travel within Africa

Employment Type: Full-time, one year contract, renewable subject to funding

Reporting Structure: Reports to Executive Director



Key Working Relationships

- Works closely with Executive Director and senior management on strategy.
- Works closely with the Courses and RVI Forum Team.
- Works closely with the South Sudan Women Researcher Network project in South Sudan and
- with other RVI staff engaged in research, education and training to ensure coherence, high standards, synergies and learning.
- Works closely with RVI Fellows helping to maintain and develop relations.
- Collaborates with RVI Finance and Administration and Operations on programme management.

- Works with the Publications and Communications team on all products published by the programme.
- Cultivates good working relationships with research institutes in Africa, networks (including the Open Society University Network), individual researchers, trainers, and mentors in coordination with RVI country offices and programmes.

Scope of the role

- Responsible for refining the design and implementation of the Research Communities of Practice programme.
- Provides strategic leadership and acts as a lead resource person on applied research design, training and methods across RVI, in consultation with RVI leadership and managers.
- Leads on maintaining relations with RVI's Fellows and with relevant regional networks.
- Manages consultants under the programme

Responsibility for resources

The Research Training Manager is the budget holder for the Research Community of Practice programme funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

JOB CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

For many people and communities across Eastern and Central Africa where RVI operates, conflict, political violence, climate emergencies, rapid demographic change and social injustice are persistent risks, affecting livelihoods and shaping life chances. These challenges require collective solutions by African communities who are informed by well-founded, evidence-based research generated in the region. While there is a strong commitment by African scholars and scholarly institutions to understand and address the challenges, there is a structural deficit in applied social science research capacity. This perpetuates an imbalance in knowledge production and creates an environment in which externally conceived research dominates, resulting in limited local ownership of research processes, application and outcomes. Consequently, there are significant gaps in empirical understanding of local realities and what works, which can result in external diplomatic, security and assistance programmes that do more harm than good.

RVI works to link scholarly research to real-world impact, and to systematically respond to these challenges and redress power relations in knowledge production. The Research Communities of Practice programme, funded by the Africa peace-building fund of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, has three related components that build on RVI's experience in research capacity development. It will:

- Establish and convene research communities of practice in conflict affected countries in East and Central Africa.
- Support the professional development of early career researchers through bespoke training and mentoring to increase expertise and knowledge production;
- Make publicly available locally generated knowledge by amplifying the voices of African scholars and researchers who generate original, rigorous research through publications.

The Research Training Manager will lead RVI's strategy on training African researchers. The post-holder will design and manage a professional development programme for early career researchers in eastern and central Africa through bespoke training, coaching and mentoring and generate original research publications that amplify the voices of African scholars and researchers. The Research Training Manager will work with RVI country teams, managers, partners and RVI Fellows, supporting existing RVI training programmes in South Sudan, the Somali regions and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the development of new blended learning programmes, ensuring consistency in approach and methods.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership (15%)

- Lead RVI's strategy to invest in the professional development of early career researchers in Africa, including those who lack formal education opportunities, through training, coaching and mentorship programmes.
- Advise on and support the development and delivery of the Institute's other in-person and online educational and training programmes.
- Expand RVI's networks of local, regional and international research partners and help build sustainable relations between African researchers from Eastern and Central Africa and non-African research and academic institutions.
- Support initiatives in RVI that promote organizational learning.
- Ensure the programme is aligned with RVI's core principles and policies and supports the strategic development of the organisation.
- Actively participate in RVI's annual planning processes and be part of the RVI Management Team contributing to the organisation's development.

Programme Development & Delivery (65%)

- Continue to refine the design of the Research Communities of Practice programme in consultation and collaboration with RVI staff, RVI Fellows, and partners.
- Lead and manage the implementation of the programme, ensuring all those who collaborate with it have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and together effectively deliver on the programme's shared objectives.
- Design and develop professional blended, innovative learning programmes for early career researchers.
- Oversee the recruitment and management of trainers, coaches and mentors.
- Participate in the delivery of training and learning initiatives as required.
- Develop the methodology and criteria for the selection of participants of the research training programme and oversee their recruitment.
- Design bespoke learning plans for participants in the programme.
- Support the production and dissemination of research outputs.
- Oversee the design, organisation and facilitation of research community of practice events in collaboration with RVI staff and Fellows.
- Establish performance metrics and the means for monitoring, evaluating, learning and reporting on the impact of the Research Communities of Practice programme.

- Ensure robust financial management of the programme, in line with RVI's policies and procedures and donor regulations.
- Ensure risk management and mitigation methodologies are in place and comply with RVI's duty of care, research ethics and its safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensure programme documentation, contacts and calendars are kept up to date and appropriately filed in RVI's online storage system.

Donor relations (5%)

- Act as RVI's focal point for communication and engagement with the programme's donor, ensuring that they have confidence in its approach and management.
- Ensure accurate narrative and financial reports are delivered to the donor on time.
- Expand the programme funding to ensure sustainability and long-term impact, including funding for scholarships and publications.

Partnerships and Public Relations (10%)

- Cultivate and broker relationships with academic and learning institutes within and outside Africa building on established relationships.
- Engage RVI Fellows in programme activities.
- Represent the programme and RVI with national and international counterparts and funders.
- Publicise and disseminate the project's work, and maximise the influence of programme trainees through partnerships with regional and international organisations and participation in public events.

Staff management and capacity-building (5%)

- Manage consultants and Fellows involved in the programme.
- Support and mentor RVI staff in the delivery of applied research training as requested.

These are the normal duties which the RVI requires from you at the date of your appointment. It may be necessary to alter these duties in accordance with the needs of the job and the organisation. Any changes will be made in consultation with the employee.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Knowledge and Qualifications

- Masters of social science degree in relevant field (political science, development studies, anthropology) a minimum; a PhD is desirable.
- A qualification in training and educational approaches, and an ability to teach others.
- A broad knowledge of applied research methodologies.
- Demonstrable interest in local knowledge production, equity and social inclusion.
- Understanding of the research and policy environment in eastern or central Africa.
- An understanding of tertiary education in eastern or central Africa.
- Fluent in spoken and written English. Spoken and written knowledge of a second language spoken in the region (French, Arabic, Somali, Kiswahili) is desirable.

Experience

- Significant experience in tertiary level teaching methods, adult learning, and mentorship.
- Experienced in designing and implementing blended training courses in applied research methodology, including online.
- Experience of organising and facilitating learning events (such as conferences, seminars and workshops).
- A track record in designing and undertaking research in Africa and applying qualitative research methods (such as oral history, participant-led, community drama and other forms of action-research techniques).
- Experience of creating communities of practice an advantage.
- Experienced in programme leadership and management, including monitoring and evaluation, financial management, and risk management.
- Experience of developing effective project partnerships with institutions and individuals inside and outside Africa.
- Experience of working with governments, international funders, research institutions and development organizations.
- Experience of living and working in east or central Africa.
- Experience in successful fundraising.

Skills and Abilities

- Exceptional facilitation and training skills and the ability to teach and transfer knowledge
- Strategic and adaptative thinking.
- Excellent project management and planning skills and an ability to design and lead work plans.
- Excellent written and public communication skills.
- Strong analytical skills.
- Committed to working with people from diverse backgrounds.

Signature: _____ **(job holder)**

Signature: _____ **(line manager)**

Date: _____