Position Title: **Director of Innovation and Learning**  
Position Type: **2 Year Renewable Contract**  
Salary Range: **USD 60,000 - USD 80,000 gross per annum**  
Probation: **6 months**  
Application deadline: **31st March 2020 at midnight EAT**  
Location: **Nairobi, Kenya**  
Language: **English**

**About Africa's Voices**  
Africa's Voices exists to put the voices of citizens at the heart of the continent's transformation.

We achieve this by convening digital media spaces for plural, rich and inclusive discussions where citizens exchange with each other and are heard by decision-makers on priority concerns. We listen to citizens’ authentic voices in spaces they value and turn this engagement into rigorous social insights which accelerate impact in two ways: (i) as powerful evidence for more participatory, responsive and accountable governance and (ii) as citizen-led norm-challenging dialogues for progressive social change.

Our belief is that voices matter. This is why we draw on a unique combination of capabilities to enable authentic, unfiltered citizen voice to be heard all the way to decision-making. We deploy novel mixed methods for social analysis, harness Africa’s rich media landscape to engage citizens in large-scale discussions, and apply tailored technology for speed and scale to draw timely and actionable insights that guide our partners to put citizens at the core of their work to enhance their impact.

Africa’s Voices emerged out of four years of research at the University of Cambridge. Now a rapidly growing organisation, Africa’s Voices has established offices in Nairobi and Cambridge. In five years, we have amplified the voices of over 400,000 citizens in evidence-based programming in Somalia, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, and Cape Verde on priorities ranging from public health, education and agriculture to local governance, tax justice and humanitarian programming. We maintain close academic links with the University of Cambridge, and continue to collaborate with researchers to bring about innovative interdisciplinary approaches to social change grounded in citizen voice.

**About the Director of Innovation and Learning**  
Africa’s Voices is an innovative capabilities-driven organisation. The **Director of Innovation & Learning** leads the team that innovates, operationalises and safeguards our unique combination of capabilities in three core areas: Research, Design & Analysis; Engagement & Media; Data & Technology.

**Research, Design & Analysis:** Our projects all start with a tailored research design and a set of research questions, developed in collaboration with our partners to ensure it
addresses their needs by identifying evidence gaps to be filled by citizen voice. We design our projects for impact, keeping the ultimate objective in mind: for citizen’s voices to influence and shape policy and programmes towards their realities. We work closely with our partners throughout the research design, implementation, and insight generation, in order for them to contribute to and engage with the process, fully take on board our findings, and become advocates for our approach.

**Engagement & Media:** We spark dynamic and inclusive discussions in popular forums, including radio and social media which engage citizens on their own terms and language. Working with carefully selected and locally trusted media partners, we develop open-ended questions for audiences which they can respond to via free SMS, instant messaging, or social media. We consider how these questions will be processed and answered by audiences, then test and tailor for comprehension and cultural contexts. Follow-up SMS survey messages ask for socio-demographic information (e.g. gender, age, and location) or individual circumstances to allow for statistical comparisons between groups. Within these forums, opinions and beliefs are expressed spontaneously, resulting in authentic citizen-generated data.

**Data & Technology:** Our approach allows us to gain insights from conversations held in local languages, and on a scale previously unattainable for qualitative methods. We leverage technology as an enabler for civic empowerment, using it to engage with, not extract from, citizens. We mix human qualitative research techniques with responsible applications of data science and AI to analyse the rich local language voices flowing from digital discussions.

In order to do this we have built our own software tools, one of these, Coda2 was developed in collaboration with the University of Cambridge to allow interpretation and effective labelling of large volumes of textual data. Coda2 leverages AI to augment the interpretive capacities of researchers rather than to automate data analysis, enabling them to listen to and interpret a larger set of conversations in local languages than they would have been able to unassisted. Human interpretation is crucial as it allows us to draw insights from citizen voices, using natural curiosity, empathy, and compassion. A careful combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches allows us to increase both the scope and depth of our work and provide nuanced insights to our partners. Always leaning towards innovation and enhancing impact, we discuss and deliver insights to partners through workshops, interactive reports, and data visualisations.

The **Director of Innovation and Learning** provides leadership to develop our capabilities and their most effective combinations, including guiding tactical improvements based on evidence and learning. This also includes ways to more effectively and impactfully communicate social insights for partners, clients and wider stakeholders. For more strategic innovations, the Director leads the development of methodologies and research approaches supported by an international Technical Advisory Group.

The Innovation & Learning team works closely with Programmes at Africa’s Voices. The Programmes teams (currently, Governance & Accountability; Citizen Evidence for Social Change), draw upon Africa’s Voices’ capabilities to design and deliver social impact with partners and funders. The Innovation & Learning team’s role is to enable Programmes to tailor and deploy our capabilities, to produce timely outputs and to evaluate and learn
from project deployments. The Director of Innovation and her/his team ensure research quality and integrity in all projects, and are especially concerned to ensure that Africa's Voices communicates its methods, analysis and findings with maximum rigour, nuance and value.

The Director of Innovation & Learning is also external facing. She/he represents the innovative capabilities of the organisation alongside Programmes leadership and the Executive Director, to advance external relations, partnerships and business development. He/she will maintain and grow collaborations with researchers at the University of Cambridge (especially through the Technical Advisory Group), as well as establish new innovation and learning partnerships over time. Finally, he or she will represent AVF in external innovation forums, or through communications and publications that enable AVF to contribute to and benefit from the best thinking and practice in our field.

**Job Summary**

The **Director of Innovation and Learning** is expected to lead our rapidly growing team to undertake, design, and manage projects collaboratively with client organisations, with ultimate impact always in mind.

The role involves leadership of the technical teams (Research Design and Analysis, Engagement and Media, and Data and Technology) within Africa's Voices. This will be primarily to develop the capabilities that are used to deliver programmes and solutions with and for partners.

They will lead on designing the application of these capabilities to projects led by the programmes teams: designing the interventions, ensuring quality and integrity of our work and co-designing with the project team and the partners in other organisations to maximise the impact of what has been learnt. They will then use this learning to shape the future of the capabilities.

The role will include managing relationships with clients; managing a team of researchers in African countries and the UK; leading the development of innovative methodologies and research approaches in partnership with the Technical Advisory Group; communicating research insights to stakeholders; and producing research reports and academic publications.

**Selection Criteria**

**Essential**

**Leadership and innovation**

- A completed postgraduate degree (Masters or PhD) in a relevant Social Science discipline (such as social psychology, sociology, political science, development studies, public health, development economics, media and communications).
- At least 7 years of relevant experience in research applied to social issues.
- At least 3 years of leading an interdisciplinary team, or research group in applied social science.
- Ability to innovate through rigorous research design in challenging applied contexts.
Technical
- Excellent knowledge of, and experience working with mixed methods (including statistical concepts and data analysis).
- A sufficiently wide-range understanding and experience of qualitative methods.
- Experience in research on opinion research OR social norms OR public health OR social and behaviour change or similar.
- Willingness to work with and adapt new methodologies relevant to digital social research, including collaborating with data scientists on coding scripts for analysis.
- Experience in scientific research design, including survey methods.
- Ability to undertake research that has policy and social impact and to engage in knowledge exchange.

Management
- Ability to inspire and motivate an interdisciplinary team working on challenging ambiguous problems
- Experience in ensuring ethical and methodological integrity of research programmes, and leading the organisation's position on responsible data and research practices
- Ability to prioritise and manage multiple projects simultaneously, and follow through on issues in a timely manner.
- High levels of energy, initiative, and flexibility in quickly adjusting to changing work requirements.
- Aptitude for and willingness to work in client-facing contexts, focused on delivering research value-add.
- Clear and confident communicator of research methods and results to non-specialist and practitioner audiences.

Desirable
- Exposure to, interest in and some understanding of techniques such as statistical methods in human computer interaction, text understanding or NLP, or ethics in machine learning
- Experience in the design and application of data protection legislation in novel contexts
- Experience in engagement design, media analytics, or SMS based interviewing
- Strong client orientation and proven ability to work with development and governance actors, ability to identify problems, provide technical support, build collaboration and arrive at solutions.
- Track record of academic publications and interest to contribute to collaborative academic outputs with University-based collaborators.
- Knowledge and understanding of data visualisation techniques.
- Working knowledge of languages relevant to the African context besides English.

Travel Requirements
- The location of the post will be in Nairobi, Kenya. You will be required to travel to various programme work-related locations or for short term work assignments outside your work station as your work demands.

Remuneration
- The salary will be USD 60,000 - USD 80,000 gross per annum. The position
includes a corporate medical insurance in line with AVF’s health cover policy and learning opportunities.

To Apply
Please send your CV and a Cover Letter to careers@africasvoices.org explaining why you are interested in Africa's Voices and this position, and how you fulfil the selection criteria.

Application deadline is midnight (EAT) on 31st March 2020. Applications may be considered after this date only if a suitable candidate has not been found.

Questions about this recruitment be directed to the Director for Business Operations on careers@africasvoices.org by 1pm (EAT) on 20th March, 2020

Africa’s Voices Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and supports workforce diversity. All applications for vacant positions will be welcomed and will be considered on the relative merits of the applicant against the role profile for the position regardless of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, parental responsibilities, age, religion, or belief.