



Health Systems Strengthening Director – Based anywhere in SA

Background

Ilifa Labantwana is committed to quality early childhood development for all children that supports caregivers, creates sustainable livelihoods for women, and builds an equitable and prosperous South Africa for all. Ilifa Labantwana (Ilifa) works towards a South Africa where everyone recognises their contribution to children reaching their full potential. We use our deep understanding of Government and technical expertise; alongside evidence, collaboration and advocacy; to strengthen the early childhood development ecosystem.

If you tick ALL the boxes below, we would love to hear from you:

- You are a visionary leader with a passion for improving child health and development outcomes.
- You have a successful track record with a minimum of 5 years in a leadership position and 10 years working experience.
- You have experience in developing public policy and working with government.
- You are an experienced health systems strengthening professional with expertise in the following areas: public health, maternal health, child health and child nutrition.

Purpose

Early Childhood Development starts at conception, with the public health system playing a significant role in the early years. There are plenty of opportunities to leverage various components of the health system to ensure our youngest children thrive.

The Health Systems Strengthening Director will enhance Ilifa's strategy by advocating for, and designing, health systems that acknowledge and prioritise the importance of pregnant women and children under the age of 2. A focal area for the Director will be to build a robust national support system for young children, parents, caregivers, and the workforce with clear resourcing and implementation mechanisms. The Director will develop and foster strategic relationships with key government stakeholders, civil society, the private sector and donors. The Director will provide leadership to the Side-by-Side campaign in collaboration with the National Department of Health, to increase its reach and impact, through a combination of research, partnership building, content development, and innovative multi-channel behaviour change and communication strategies.

The Director reports to the CEO of Ilifa.

Responsibilities

- **Strategy & Thought Leadership** Craft a coherent health systems strategy enhancing Ilifa's role in advocating and prioritising the importance of pregnant women and children under the age of 2. Lead and coordinate the collaborative development and preparation of short and long-term plans aligned to strategic plans and objectives. Build a national system of support for young children, parents and caregivers through leveraging the health systems. Develop strategies to leverage the National Health Insurance towards maternal and child health. Work with Ilifa's

leadership team to identify and execute areas of alignment and integration between portfolios, using a health and nutrition lens.

- **Stakeholder relations** Build and develop strategic partnerships with various partner organisations, funders, policy makers and ECD implementing partners. Represent Ilifa in various platforms, participate in key sector forums and support the CEO in public engagements where the focus is on maternal and child health to amplify the 0-2 age group. Lead formalising the working relationship between Ilifa and the National Department of Health.
- **Systems Design, Development and Planning** Develop strategies and a core set of interventions to enhance Community Health Workers' role in delivering maternal and child health interventions in the home and clinical settings. Develop systems to scale, finance and deliver home visiting programmes. Identify cross-over programmatic interventions critical for young children e.g. early language development in the health setting, or improved nutrition in early learning programmes. Develop an early identification/warning/screening system for young children in need of extra care using innovative ideas. Develop mechanisms, processes and systems for full utilisation of the Road to Health Booklet and guides, leveraging the Side-by-Side campaign.
- **Data-driven decision-making** Lead strategic planning and development of new monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning (MERL) approaches to Ilifa's current and future projects in the health sector e.g. MERL for public health behaviour change and communications campaigns. Work with relevant government departments and partners to improve routine and other data on the role and effectiveness of Community Health Workers, and other data applicable to the nexus between the health and traditional ECD sectors.
- **Side-by-Side campaign** Conduct research on caregiver and parent preferences, knowledge and interests through Side-by-Side's social media and radio platforms to improve the campaigns reach. Drive innovative content development to strengthen the Side-by-Side campaign. Increase the Side-by-Side campaign's visibility through driving a public relations strategy e.g. journal publications, case studies and media interactions (tv, radio, social media and newspaper). Develop a clear strategy for Side-by-Side, focussing on components that need further development.
- **Advocacy** Advocate for increased investment by the Department of Health to the Side-by-Side campaign. Support advocacy efforts around income support for pregnant women, improving the value and working conditions of Community Health Workers, restoring the value of the Child Support Grant and reducing the cost of food.
- **People Management** Recruit, manage and support the development of the health systems team.

Qualifications & experience:

- A Master's or higher degree in Public Health, Public Policy, Social Sciences, Education, or a related field.
- Proven 10 years' working experience with a minimum of 5 years' in a leadership role in a health system strengthening, changing public sector systems and developing public policy.
- Extensive knowledge of public health systems, particularly maternal and child health, with primary and community health being desirable, specifically knowledge of the ward-based primary health outreach team (WBPHOT) system.
- For more info:
<https://www.hst.org.za/publications/South%20African%20Health%20Reviews/Chap%207%20WBOTS.pdf>
- Experience in developing strategies and managing behavioural change campaigns.
- Experience managing a team including budgeting, staffing, performance and operations.
- Demonstrated skills in policy analysis and advocacy, with experience influencing health-related policy changes.
- Experience with health information systems and an understanding of government health budgeting would be advantageous.

- Analytical person with problem-solving skills.

- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, for effective advocacy and stakeholder engagement proficient in public speaking and media interactions.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively manage multiple stakeholders, including government, service providers, implementing partners, civil society organisations, and other relevant stakeholders across various levels.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite and project management software.
- A valid driver's licence and a readiness to travel.

Competencies and personal qualities:

- A strategic thinker able to identify future trends, navigate complex health systems and challenges in child health and development, and capable of devising innovative solutions to address them.
- Resilience and flexibility to manage the dynamic nature of health programs and campaigns, with the ability to innovate and adapt strategies in response to changing circumstances and overcoming challenges.
- A collaborative mindset with excellent networks in government, civil society and in academia, with the ability to facilitate notable achievements through these connections.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently and as part of a team in a fast-paced environment, capable of managing projects successfully.
- Ability to multi-task and meet deadlines with minimal supervision and guidance.

What it means to work for Ilifa Labantwana:

- **Humility:** Ilifa recognizes that we cannot achieve our vision alone, and we do not have all the answers. We ask for help, and we value and learn from the contributions, thoughts, and experiences of others.
- **Agility:** Ilifa is solution-orientated and opportunistic. We are willing to try new approaches and adapt to changing contexts.
- **Integrity:** Ilifa acts with honesty and takes responsibility for our actions. We stand by our principles and hold ourselves, and our work, to a high standard.
- **Tenacity:** Our goal is difficult and long-term but is worthwhile. We work towards it with persistence, determination, and grit – even in the face of adversity.
- **Equity/Inclusivity:** We support the distribution of resources towards building an equal South Africa; emphasizing the needs of marginalized women and children so that they may also thrive. We appreciate that to help build an equal South Africa, we must be a diverse organization with diverse leadership and governance.

Ilifa Labantwana strives to be a diverse and equitable organisation. Preference will be given to South African black candidates as defined by the BBB-EE Act.

Closing date: 5 August 2024

Interested candidates must send a motivation letter highlighting your suitability to the role and an updated CV to **MaraisButton & Associates**.

Email: annelie@maraisbutton.co.za

Contact will only be made with shortlisted candidates.