

## Vacancy for a Chief Partnerships, Movement & Ecosystem Officer

### Who is SmartStart Early Learning?

SmartStart is a *successful national network* of NGOs and partners that is realising quality, affordable early learning for all children aged three to five. We are achieving this by *scaling a network of and building a platform for providers, achieving specific ecosystem transformations with governments and partners, and promoting early learning as a priority societal cause.*

### Purpose

The new role of **Chief Partnerships, Movement & Ecosystem Officer (CECO)** will lead SmartStart's efforts to build an **ecosystem** for early learning at population-scale — realising our vision of providing quality early learning to 1 million children by 2030. The role will focus on **society, social investors, and collective action on nutrition, venues, and the economic value of early learning.** The CECO will co-lead the SmartStart hub and network of partners in collaboration with four other chiefs; **and manage the partnerships, societal communications and fundraising** functions, responsible for realising the synergies between these. *We are looking for a **curious, creative, strategic, driven individual with extensive communications, partnership building and leadership experience; and a successful track record of managing teams in complexity.***

### Key Responsibilities

- **Establish early learning as a priority in policy, provisioning, and popular practices** by persuading more people exponentially that what they do matters in realising early learning for all — and making the benefits and progress of early learning widely visible
- **Catalyse and reinforce the SmartStart network's power to drive a *movement*** for early learning for all as a *societal cause* by using social influence to transform social norms
- **Guide mass communications** to the network of practitioners, parents, and frontline staff
- **Realise strategic operating government partnerships** with municipalities, provincial departments of education and state employment initiatives
- **Catalyse and connect partnerships and deepen collaboration between diverse actors** to yield exponential growth in key early learning enablers, incl. programme venues; nutrition for children; and key micro-(social-)enterprise support
- Oversee **organisational and internal communications**
- **Lead and develop a team** of three heads of department and an organisational comms manager
- Strategically explore opportunities and partnerships across a few (southern) African countries

### Requirements

#### Qualifications and Experience

- **Master's degree** (or equivalent) in a related discipline

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- At least **10 years relevant and diverse experience** in complex organisation-systemic contexts, ideally incl. early childhood development, education, or public health
- At least **five years in senior roles(s)** successfully leading organisations and managing teams
- Successful track record of building **large-scale, national partner networks** involving both government and non-state actors/NGOs
- Previous experience in leading **effective behaviour-change** campaigns
- **Fundraising** or oversight of fundraising advantageous

### Knowledge and Skills

- Strong understanding of **public policy and practice**, especially in local and provincial government
- Excellent communicator who can **“convert”** others to the SmartStart cause
- **Systems** doing-and-thinking orientation mindset & practice
- **Demonstrated curiosity** and appetite for feedback
- Ability to see the **big picture**
- **Demonstrated** commitment to **social justice**
- Ability to deal with **complex** problems
- Coaching managerial skills
- Excellent at building quality, trusting relationships
- Familiar with design thinking and iterative designing
- Fluency in one or more African languages advantageous

### Child Safeguarding Policy

Applicants must adhere to the SmartStart Child Safeguarding Policy, which has been developed in accordance with the International Standards for Child Safeguarding, which provides a benchmark for organisations working with children. Under this Policy, SmartStart will not employ anyone whose name is on the National Child Protection Register or who has been convicted of a criminal offence involving a child.

**To apply:** Interested candidates must send a motivation letter highlighting your suitability to the role and a CV with contact details of three work-related referees to **MaraisButton & Associates**.

**Email:** [annelie@maraisbutton.co.za](mailto:annelie@maraisbutton.co.za)

**Closing date:** 24 September 2024

**Location:** Hybrid

