

Knowledge & Learning Lead

Contract: Permanent

Hours: Full-time

Salary: £35K, plus benefits

Location: Vauxhall, London, with UK and some overnight travel

Reports to: Director of Programmes

Liases with: Campaigns, Policy & Communications Consultant

About the role

This is an exciting new role at SMK created in response to growing demand for our insight and support. SMK today is increasingly being recognised for its knowledge and thought leadership, as well as its capacity-building and policy work. Our Social Power report launched in the summer of 2018 is being widely used, and is driving a rapid increase in demand for our support. Our Change Network events are building on the evidence in this report, and there are new and exciting thought leadership projects in the pipeline.

We want to keep building on these activities to help SMK grow its reputation as the experts in social change, and to strengthen our own knowledge base so that we can provide the best possible support to help the sector be even more effective. This new role sits at the heart of this ambition.

Working closely with the wider team, this role will lead activity aimed at growing our knowledge and learning. This means being constantly curious about how social change is happening to bring new ideas and evidence into the organisation; leading projects aimed at deepening understanding in particular areas; and initiating new activity aimed at filling gaps or harnessing new opportunities.

Key to this role is the ability to convert knowledge and learning into high quality and fit for purpose content that can be used in our support programme, policy work and external comms. Excellent project design and management skills will be vital, as well as experience of facilitating workshops and discussions. Strong inter-personal skills and an ability to form strong relationships and partnerships will be important. This role may also be required to support the delivery of consultancy support at times, so some experience of consultancy is desirable. This role will also support income generating activity helping identify sources of funding support and writing bids and reports, as required.

About you

You are someone with a passion for social change and the intellectual curiosity and entrepreneurial zeal to help deepen shared understanding. You will be familiar with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, the way it tends to think about campaigning and social change, and bring your own strong existing networks.

You have experience and expertise in managing projects and other activity aimed at deepening our knowledge and learning, and an aptitude for converting that knowledge into useable content. You will thrive in a small, busy and ambitious team and have the flexibility to handle a broad and change-able workload. You'll be able to jump right in, working closely with the team to deliver at an exciting phase of our strategic development and organisational growth.

Job description:

As Knowledge & Learning Lead, in collaboration with colleagues, you will:

- Lead SMK's investigation and analysis of social change and civil society's role in it
- Encourage change-makers and civil society leaders to actively participate in our investigations
- Generate, interpret and communicate findings that arise from this work
- Effectively disseminate SMK's work (online, face to face and through media platforms) to drive a continuing conversation.
- Support consultancy and income-generating activity, as required.

Generate knowledge & insights

- Design and deliver projects that investigate and explore social change and civil society's role in it, building on SMK's existing body of work
- Generate findings and content that are accessible, unique and engaging
- Create a conversation by sharing findings online, at events and conferences, and through hosted discussions
- Scan the horizon by monitoring external sources of information including media, Parliament and Government, think tanks and other for issues and developments of relevance
- Undertake research (including both ad hoc tasks and longer-term projects) to support the work of SMK
- Establish and maintain excellent working relationships with key stakeholders
- Represent SMK at key events and meetings.

Support capacity-building

- Contribute to the content of SMK training and consultancy, ensuring SMK's thought leadership is built into and guides these services
- Help deliver consultancy support as required, and work with the Director of Programmes to identify new consultancy opportunities
- Maintain good relationships with clients, and help build networks that can offer new opportunities for SMK's programme of support.

Funding & budgeting

- Identify appropriate funding opportunities that align with SMK's priorities
- Secure funding for future projects
- Maintain clear and up to date budgets for each of your projects
- Track, evaluate and report on funded projects you manage.

Communications

- Assist in the delivery of SMK's communications through:
 - Social media, updating the website, writing blogs
 - Internal communication with SMK supporters, for example contributing to and sending newsletters
 - External communication with the public and stakeholders, mainly via telephone and email queries, and attending relevant meetings and events
- Communicate the organisation's work with key external stakeholders including civil society, funders, and policymakers
- Support, brief and, if required, deliver public speaking appearances
- Create and maintain contact lists for relevant projects.

Event assistance

SMK runs multiple workshops, roundtables and meetings throughout the year. You may run your own or be asked to contribute to other events by, for example, liaising with attendees, sourcing speakers, suggesting policy topics for discussion and facilitating discussions.

Other

Undertake any other duties commensurate with the purpose and remit of the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential

- Previous experience in a research, policy and/or communications role
- A good understanding of current issues and affecting civil society and change-making
- Experience of designing and delivering projects aimed at deepening learning, strengthening practice and growing commitment
- Excellent inter-personal skills and experience facilitating events and discussions
- Experience of producing copy that is compelling, influential and accurate, including the ability to write and edit well in both short form (e.g. blog) and long form (e.g. report)
- Excellent organisational skills - able to manage own workload effectively, take initiative and work under pressure
- Flexible, hardworking, happy to work with a small team, and committed to continuous personal development

Desirable

- Experience of public speaking and/or event chairing
- Experience of delivering consultancy support
- Experiencing managing or contributing to the delivery of successful events

How to apply

If this sounds like a role for you, you can apply by emailing your CV along with a cover letter of up to 750 words (excluding header and footer) to info@smk.org.uk. The title should be '*Knowledge & Learning Lead application*'.

You should address the key points in the person specification.

As a charity, we are committed to being an equal opportunities employer and actively encourage those under-represented in the sector to apply. If you are interested in the role and would like to have an informal chat, get in touch with Sue Tibballs at sue.tibballs@smk.org.uk or on 020 3752 5644.