



Africa Research Institute

understanding Africa today

Position: Communications Officer

Location: London, UK

Start date: As soon as possible

Salary: Up to £25,000 depending on experience

The job

Africa Research Institute (ARI) is looking to recruit an experienced and enthusiastic Communications Officer.

The institution

ARI encourages debate, questions orthodoxy and challenges “received wisdom” in and about Africa. We seek to promote an informed, nuanced and representative understanding of the continent.

ARI was founded in 2007. We are an independent and strictly non-partisan think-tank.

For examples of our work, please visit our website: www.africaresearchinstitute.org

The role

As part of a small, collaborative team, you will manage the Institute’s external communications strategy. You will also be required to manage a busy schedule of events, co-ordinate our demanding publications cycle and oversee the editing, production and distribution of our work. Applicants should be self-motivated, creative and possess outstanding and proven communication skills.

The successful applicant will need to demonstrate that s/he can improve the dissemination of ARI’s research through a range of channels, including social media and targeted engagement with policymakers and appropriate organisations. S/he will be expected to represent us with confidence at public events and conferences, as well as in targeted meetings with individuals and institutions.

This role requires considerable initiative and creative thinking. Applicants must be able to demonstrate the ability to devise innovative communications strategies for ARI publications.

Previous experience in communications and/or external relations is essential. A keen interest in contemporary sub-Saharan African affairs is desirable. A working knowledge of French would also be an asset.

Applicants must have the right to work in the UK.

How to apply

Applicants are requested to send a covering letter and CV to info@africaresearchinstitute.org with “Communications Officer” in the subject line by 9am on Monday 9th November 2015. Those selected for interview will be contacted on that day, if not before, and interviews will take place at our offices in the week beginning 16th November.

Communications Officer Job Description

Tasks and Responsibilities

Communications

- Develop communication strategies and plans for forthcoming (and past) publications
- Develop messages that reflect the main arguments of publications and ARI's core values
- Promote and strengthen ARI's brand in relevant policy circles
- Network and build relationships with relevant external organisations and individuals
- Critically evaluate the impact of communications efforts and integrate lessons learned into future work
- Arrange meetings and media appearances for visiting contributors
- Monitor developments in key areas of interest, relaying information to colleagues where appropriate

Event Management

- Research targeted guest lists for ARI events
- Manage invitations to ARI events
- Manage catering, technical and all other arrangements for ARI events
- Liaise with speakers and attendees
- Ensure smooth running of events
- Establish and maintain partnerships to run co-hosted events

Distribution of publications

- Agree distribution strategies, objectives, and timescales with colleagues
- Maintain and expand ARI's database (experience of using Microsoft Access software desirable)
- Distribute ARI publications at external events and conferences
- Identify new channels and strategies for distributing ARI publications to African governments, regional organisations, the media and other audiences
- Produce 'spin-off products', such as blogs and Twitter cards, to help promote ARI publications

Publishing

- Organise day-to-day management of publishing tasks and schedules
- Liaise with external designers and printers involved in the publication process
- Implement editorial changes to draft publications submitted by colleagues and contributors
- Contribute to editorial process and proof-read
- Arrange delivery schedules with printers

Website and social media

- Manage, co-ordinate and lead development of ARI's website
- Contribute to Search Engine Optimisation
- Main point of contact for website related matters
- Produce and commission content for ARI's blog

- Responsible for ARI's output via social media channels, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube
- Devise innovative social media strategies and campaigns to market ARI publications
- Design promotional images to draw attention to events and ARI publications (knowledge of Scribus or similar desirable)

Media

- Draft press releases
- Respond to media requests
- Identify and establish contact with relevant journalists in the UK, Africa and worldwide

General

- Keep up to date with African current affairs, and contribute to internal discussions
- Identify potential authors for ARI's *Policy Voices* and *Counterpoints* series
- Supervise and support the work of occasional interns
- Assist with research, as requested
- Undertake petty cash oversight, stationery ordering and other administrative tasks

Communications Officer Person Specification

Experience	
Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one year's experience working in a professional communications environment – e.g. non-profit sector, journalism, or private sector • Experience writing for a wide range of audiences and formats • Experience managing tight schedules and meeting strict deadlines • Knowledge and experience of using social media to increase organisational profile and impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in influencing policy • Experience in public relations • Publishing experience • Experience of living and/or working in an African country. • Experience undertaking research projects and conducting interviews
Skills and Abilities	
Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to develop strategies/campaigns for communicating the messages and recommendations of ARI publications to politicians, policymakers, the media and relevant institutions • Attention to detail and strong analytical skills • Ability to produce high quality work to strict deadlines • Ability to work collaboratively • Proven ability to multi-task • Excellent IT skills, particularly the Microsoft Office package 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to analyse, interpret and present statistical data • Experience with picture, film and audio editing software • Website skills, including a working knowledge of HTML
Communication	
Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency in written and spoken English • Excellent written and oral communications skills • Ability to communicate complex issues in clear – jargon-free – language • Ability to initiate relationships at public events and seminars • Ability to cultivate relationships with key institutions and individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working knowledge of French • Experience of making presentations and public speaking. • Experience of advocacy and campaigning • Experience of lobbying
Qualifications and Knowledge	
Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of contemporary African affairs and development • Desire to develop and broaden knowledge of contemporary African affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree in a relevant field • Ability to bring contacts in media, communications or Africa-related fields