



Deputy Executive Director

Description

About WITNESS

WITNESS is a global human rights organization made up of passionate human rights activists from all over the world. With a 50-person multi-disciplinary team and staff based across five continents, WITNESS' mission is to help people use video and technology to protect and defend human rights. They are registered as a 501(c)3 non-profit in the U.S. but with staff members around the world, including activists with diverse skills and backgrounds.

For 30 years, WITNESS has been a leading force in the movement to create a more just world. Their globally dispersed team supports grassroots activists, civic journalists, lawyers, and frontline witnesses to use accessible video technologies and effective tactics to amplify grassroots narratives, defend trust in critical voices, and fortify the truth.

Today, as video is both the dominant form of expression and increasingly under attack, they envision a world where frontline witnesses and their allies can safely and effectively harness the power of audiovisual tools to share their stories, protect their rights, and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

Working daily alongside grassroots activists, they engage in purposeful listening, deep collaboration for human rights impact and learning, and broad-based sharing of good practices. As part of a holistic model, they engage in technology systems-level interventions to ensure emerging audiovisual technologies such as deepfakes and generative AI reflect the key needs of the communities they center, serve, and support.

About the Role

The Deputy Executive Director assumes a critical role in driving WITNESS' success by overseeing organizational, operational, financial, and funding strategies. Their primary responsibility is to ensure the organization is fully equipped to fulfill its mission. This includes managing day-to-day operations, fostering a healthy work environment, and ensuring the team's structure and performance are optimal. Additionally, they are responsible for managing WITNESS' interactions with the Board of Directors and advisors.

As a key advocate for the organization's mission, the Deputy Executive Director plays a vital role in fundraising, building constituencies, and serving as a spokesperson. They collaborate closely with the Executive Director on the Programmatic Strategic Vision, offering guidance and forming a strong partnership. Furthermore, they oversee the implementation of strategies to foster a thriving culture and uphold the organization's values.

Duties and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team

- Co-responsible for and contributes to conceptualizing organizational, programmatic strategic vision and related programmatic strategies, strategic plans, and budgets to achieve WITNESS' mission and vision while helping define and achieve short- and long-term organizational goals;
- Contributes to and helps shape strategies and decisions related to organizational framing and positioning;
- Designs and supports the team structure, considering security and risk profile, DEI and culture, and financial sustainability and resourcing;
- Ensures the consistent practice and shaping of an inclusive and effective leadership culture throughout the organization holding the team accountable and responsible for an inclusive and cohesive management culture;
- With support from the Executive Coordinator, manage the day-to-day operations of the Senior Leadership Team.

Strategic Planning and Management

- Create and implement the organizational strategic plan that details over 3-5 years how WITNESS will operationalize and resource the programmatic strategic vision;
- Advise the Executive Director on the organizational multi-year programmatic strategic vision;
- Ensure cohesive management of departments to achieve a strategic plan, including coordination of organizational work plans and tracking of capacity

and overall prioritization across the organization;

- In conjunction with the Director of People and Systems, ensure organizational structures are fit for purpose, and capacity is aligned with work plans to enable staff to succeed in their respective jobs, and the organization is able to accomplish its shared goals and mission;
- Manage direct reports, collaborate to set team individual objectives, and provide ongoing coaching and feedback.

Fundraising

- Leads on securing and sustaining a key portfolio of funders; cultivate and meet with key prospective donors;
- Support the fundraising team in securing fundraising and annual financial contributions from the Board.

Board Relations

- Serves as the primary liaison and partner for the Board: engages, develops, activates, informs, partners with, and motivates the Board in organizational strategy, fundraising, institutional and financial governance, legal compliance, risk management, and other matters related to the WITNESS Board's function and responsibilities;
- Manages Board and Committee meetings, retreats, and board-staff partnerships;
- Supports, in conjunction with the Governance and Nominations Committee, efforts to create and implement a long-term plan and vision for the Board;
- Supports and initiates all efforts to recruit and retain new Board members; manage and coordinate Board onboarding activities;
- Ensures Board alignment with WITNESS' values and culture.

Constituency-Building and Communications

- Act as a public spokesperson, and promote the organization's programs and mission with key strategic organizational stakeholders, including media, donors, human rights communities, programmatic partners, and technology companies;
- Own and engage in high-level strategic partnerships for the organization (e.g., cross-departmental partnership initiatives);
- Oversee the cohesive and proactive internal communication and information flow for the organization across departments with a focus on the WITNESS mission, vision, and impact.

Culture and Values

- Oversees the Director of People & Systems in implementing a cohesive strategy and work plan to foster a thriving, participatory, and mission-driven culture;
- Integrates DEIJ practices and human rights-lead approaches, creating a healthy, inclusive work environment;
- Ensures that values of transparency, accountability, and DEIJ are translated into concrete work plans, structures, and policies across the organization.

Skills and Experience

Core

- Minimum of 10-15 years of progressively responsible and relevant professional experience, including experience working within an NGO or non-profit organization;
- Experience working within human rights organizations, movements, or with communities facing human rights violations;
- Lived or worked experience in one or more of WITNESS' global non-US programmatic regions, such as Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, or Africa;
- 5+ years of senior-level management experience demonstrated through leading diverse staff and teams;
- Experience cultivating a highly collaborative and inclusive team culture and aligning organization values across the full breadth of internal and external work;
- A leader who actively seeks out and respects new perspectives with empathy, listens to diverse voices, and can adjust quickly to changing conditions and requirements;
- A strong communicator, able to craft and deliver strategic communications both internally and externally;
- Experience acting as an organization spokesperson or as an active public voice;
- Experience creating and implementing strategic plans within organizations, movements, or large-scale campaigns;
- Strong project management skills, with responsibility for the overall delivery of concurrent major organizational projects;
- Team-minded and have a strong collaborative approach;
- Ability to apply a values-based approach to decision-making;
- A flexible mindset and ability to be adaptable and open to change;
- High proficiency in written and spoken English.

Desirable

- Experience working within a global or regional framework and with some multi-disciplinary, general management or operational responsibility;
- Experience serving on a community Board, non-profit or NGO Board, or leadership council;
- Experience with managing global, remote or distributed teams;
- Ability to support teams in translating organizational priorities into clear goals and objectives;
- Experience with responsibility for organizational compliance, including meeting legal, fiduciary and funder requirements for operational compliance and reporting, is desirable;
- Experience communicating with key external stakeholders, either through direct fundraising activity or through communities engaged in strategic partnerships with a funding body;
- Experience managing key relationships with institutional or individual donors or key organizational supporters;
- Additional languages (beyond English).

Job location

- WITNESS is a globally distributed remote workforce. However, this key role will involve working with the WITNESS Board, fellow senior leadership team, and key stakeholders such as donors and allies primarily located in the Americas and Europe;
- Due to these key relationships, they do have a preference for candidates located between the timezones UTC/GMT-6 and UTC/GMT+2, including candidates based in Eastern Americas, Europe, and Western and Southern Africa;
- At this time, WITNESS'S team members are working through remote and, in some cases, hybrid office arrangements, combining work-from-home with intermittent use of offices and/or co-working spaces;
- The successful candidate must have the legal right to work in the location in which they will be based.

Compensation

- WITNESS operates a salary localization policy using a combination of regularly reviewed foreign exchange rates and location adjustment multipliers;
- Based on current rates, gross salaries that would apply in some of their current locations are given as an example:
 - USA – USD 180,000
 - Brazil – BRL 631,800
 - UK – GBP 140,650
 - South Africa – ZAR 2,030,350
- Note: Direct currency conversions of these salaries would not apply in different locations;
- If your location is not listed and you are shortlisted, WITNESS will be happy to confirm the local salary, which will be applicable.

WITNESS is an equal-opportunity employer. People of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, religions, genders, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, and individuals protected by any other statuses under international federal, state or local laws, including but not limited to, disability, marital, domestic partnership, familial, caregiver, transgender, military or veteran statuses, are encouraged to apply.

WITNESS also encourages those from traditionally underrepresented communities — including but not limited to women, people of colour, LGBTQIA+, immigrants, those with disabilities, as well as all those at the intersections in between— along with individuals with a connection to the communities most impacted by human rights abuses, to apply.

Even if you don't think your current skill set checks every box above, but this role seems to align with your strengths, they would like to hear from you.

WITNESS believe a strong combination of the following skills and experience will be key to being successful in this role.

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