Country Director

Description

Search for Common Ground is looking for a Country Director to steer its program and operations in DRC, as well as lead on fundraising, strategic orientation, and donor relations. DRC is Search for Common Ground's largest country program in terms of revenue, portfolio, staffing and geographical reach. This is an exciting opportunity for a dynamic leader with experience managing conflict transformation, governance or human rights programming in fragile contexts.

About Search for Common Ground

Search for Common Ground's (SFCG) mission is to transform the way the world deals with conflict – refocusing it from adversarial approaches toward cooperative solutions instead. It brings together numerous conflicting groups to find ways to peacefully resolve issues using independent media programming, track II diplomacy, as well as traditional peacebuilding tactics. The organization operates in 36 countries and is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and Brussels, Belgium, with the majority of its 600 employees based in field offices around the world including Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States.

The DRC is Search for Common Ground's largest country program with an annual budget of approximately USD 4 million, the total portfolio of USD 21.7 million and approximately 120 staff working in 8 provinces. The program involves a diverse range of donors and partners. It focuses on community dialogue and uses media and research tools to address community violence reduction, security sector reform, conflict-sensitive value chains, intercommunal reconciliation, Ebola response, and stabilization.

About the Role

The Country Director will support and oversee the management team, develop and maintain excellent relationships with donors and partners, establish and pursue new opportunities for funding, ensure excellence in program implementation, and participate in defining the strategic direction of the DRC program over the next 10 years. The Country Director will also be expected to set a zero-tolerance culture of compliance, and to bring a rigorous, analytical and solutions-oriented approach to this key leadership position.

Purpose of the Role

The Country Director has overall responsibility for the program in DRC from a programmatic and operational perspective, as well as leading on fundraising, strategic orientation, and donor relations. The CD leads the Senior Management Team and ensures and models transparent and accountable leadership of the program. This position reports to the Regional Director for Central and Southern Africa and collaborates closely with various Washington and Brussels-based divisions of Search for Common Ground, including the Global Affairs and Partnerships, the Institutional Learning, Communications, and Finance teams.

Duties and Responsibilities

Program Quality and Implementation

- Define program priorities and long-term strategy, in close collaboration with the Regional Director and VP for Strategy.
- Ensure efficient start-up and timely delivery of projects, collaborating with SMT members to identify and address any obstacles to implementation by strengthening planning and implementation systems and processes.
- Ensure consistent collecting and sharing of results across DRC teams, and with other programs and external stakeholders.
- In collaboration with the Program Quality Director, ensure that programming is implemented to the highest standards, adhering to approved methodologies, adaptive to changing contexts and leading to demonstrable results and impact.
- Stay abreast of the international conflict transformation field to ensure that the program's work remains innovative and relevant.
- Be directly engaged in the continuing development of the organization, its mission, and its staff, through the sharing of experience and knowledge, particularly contributing to its institutional learning efforts.

Program Development

- Strengthen existing funding relationships and identify and pursue new potential donors in collaboration with headquarters in Washington, DC, and Brussels, Belgium.
- Lead country team contributions to proposal development, assign staff as appropriate and ensure deadlines are respected.
- Contribute substantially to project design, ensuring comprehensive articulation of context, the potential for innovation, identification of relevant partners and integration of approaches to include women, youth, etc.
- Together with the Regional Director, make decisions on opportunities based on the quality of revenue, alignment to strategy and mission, and operational capacity.

Compliance and grants management

- Ensure excellent collaboration between country and regional teams to prepare quality financial and narrative reports, ensuring clear reporting processes, respect of deadlines and capture of quality data.
- Working with the Head of Offices and regional program managers to ensure that project contractual deliverables are met within deadlines.
- Set a strong culture of compliance and integrity within the DRC team, with clear links between compliance and performance evaluations, consistent communication and rigorous oversight.

Financial Management

- Directly manage the country Finance Director, ensuring financial compliance with DRC's laws, donor requirements and organizational procedures.
- Maintain regular and proactive communication with regional and HQ finance focal points on finance issues and ensure that the organization is ongoingly audit-ready and preventing and mitigating financial losses.
- Identify potential shortfalls and strategize with the organization's senior management as necessary to ensure the program's financial sustainability.
- Ensure all project budgets are regularly monitored and analyzed and appropriate action taken to ensure burn rates are in line with projections and prevent overspending.
- Ensure an accurate and updated country-level operational budget is in place, and conduct a monthly analysis with SMT members to ensure proactive decision-making to maintain coherence between operational costs and the available budget.

Human Resources, Admin and Operations

- Manage a team of diverse senior staff members (expatriate, national and third-country nationals), modeling effective communication, coordination, collaboration, and accountability.
- Ensure the creation and execution of a staff development plan to ensure ongoing staff opportunities for capacity building, and personal growth and to increase job satisfaction.
- With the HR Manager, ensure staff performance is managed in a consistent, fair and coherent manner appraisals, staff feedback.
- Ensure all in-country policies and procedures (financial, operations, HR, etc) are up to date, in line with global policy and local law and exhaustive for the needs of the program.
- Address rapidly any non-compliance to the organization's policy with appropriate communication, incentives, and disciplinary measures.
- Ensure an updated security and contingency plan is in place for all offices.

Organizational Representation

- Serve as Search for Common Ground's country representative within DRC and in international settings.
- Promote Search for Common Ground's key program priorities, country analyses, and policy recommendations to relevant national, regional and international stakeholders.
- Develop and maintain proactive, positive and professional relationships with partner organizations, other INGOs, donors, clients, government, etc.
- Maintain responsible media coverage of program events and issues related to Search for Common Ground's mission and share with the regional team opportunities for visibility and external representation.
- Maintain regular written and oral reporting to Washington and Brussels on the key country, regional, program, security and staff issues.

Skills and Experience

- At least a Bachelor degree (Masters preferred) in a relevant field (eg. conflict transformation, security studies, media and communications, sociology, political science, international development or related fields).
- At least five years' experience living overseas, preferably in Sub-Saharan Africa; experience living in DRC preferred.
- At least ten years' experience in managing conflict transformation, governance, human rights or related programming.
- Experience in managing large programs with multiple grants and donors in a fragile context.
- Demonstrated experience successfully managing multimillion-dollar budgets, project development, fundraising, and grants management.

- Track record in successful fundraising.
- Experience in capturing results and overseeing reporting, monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Knowledge of the conflict dynamics of the Great Lakes region, and specifically in the DRC.
- Knowledge of major donor rules and regulations, and the ability to manage and prioritize multi-donor funding.
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills.
- A problem-solving approach to challenging situations.
- Ability to multi-tasking and work independently to manage competing priorities.
- Highly developed conflict management and problem-solving skills.
- Acute business acumen and understanding of NGO challenges in complex operating environments.
- Professional-level proficiency in French and English, written and spoken.

Meta Fields