

Job Description

Job Details

Job Title:	Policy Manager
Work Unit:	Varkey Foundation
City and Country:	London (with regular travel as required)
Contract:	Permanent
Reports to:	Policy and Research Director

Job Purpose

The Varkey Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation established to improve the standards of education for underprivileged children throughout the world. Our mission is that every child should have a good teacher.

Through the Global Teaching Prize and the Global Education and Skills Forum, the Foundation has helped to place teachers at the top of the global education agenda and we have already reached more than a million children through our teacher training and leadership programmes in Ghana, Uganda and Argentina.

We can only be effective as a Foundation if we have a deep understanding of the policy and implementation challenges faced by teachers, teacher educators and governments around the world – particularly in low and middle income countries. And we need to take this thinking and learning and use it to advocate with these same governments and policymakers to help change happen to improve teacher outcomes. These twin tasks are the underpinning principles of the Policy and Research team within the Foundation.

As Policy Manager, your role will be to lead for the Foundation on the development and understanding of the debates surrounding how we can boost the status and capacity of teachers around the world. You will help shape the position of the Foundation on critical debates in international education and establish the Foundation as a serious, credible and evidence based organisation who have much to contribute to the global policy debates on these issues. We're looking for someone who would happily self-describe as a wonk or a geek! But who also knows the importance of turning that knowledge and fascination with these issues into practical action to ultimately improve the outcomes for teachers and children.

As a relatively small organisation, and in a new role, this position offers an exceptional opportunity for someone who wishes to combine the agility, flexibility and ambition of a start-up culture with the security and credibility of a global foundation, and to address one of the biggest issues in international education.

Key Duties and Accountabilities

The Policy and Research team has responsibility for a number of ongoing commitments within the Foundation:

- **Global Education and Skills Forum** – the Policy and Research team plays a central role in the curation and delivery of this large scale annual conference in Dubai, which culminates in the awarding of the Global teacher Prize and the \$1m prize to the world's best teacher. The

conference itself brings together more than two thousand delegates from all over the world and more than a hundred speakers from government, policy, academia, NGOs, civil society and practitioners to debate and discuss current issues in global education

- **The Atlantis Group** – a group of 25 former Education Ministers and Heads of State from around the world who have agreed to come together to form an advocacy coalition for ongoing education reform. The Policy and Research team forms the secretariat for this group and is responsible for delivering their annual programme including written research and other outputs (eg op-eds and research reports), governmental visits, and other advocacy opportunities including an annual summit of the whole Group
- **Existing research programme** – every year the Foundation commits to working with a number of high quality and credible research and policy partners to conduct new research into issues concerning teachers
- **Events** – the Foundation holds a large number of events annually to promote the causes of teachers and education reform. The management of the events themselves is delivered elsewhere in the Foundation but the Policy and Research team have a central role in designing the events, curating guestlists, and advancing both our policy and advocacy agenda through these events and follow up conversations
- **Social media and communications** - the Foundation is always keen to advocate publicly for the causes which are important to us and the Policy and Research team are heavily involved in designing these messages, drawing from our existing research and position papers and shaping our views for mass audiences and across traditional and social media

Alongside this existing agenda, the Foundation is now looking to make a step change in the way in which we develop our policy views and positions on a number of issues within the area of teacher capacity and status. Our ambition is to be recognised internationally as a deeply credible and heavyweight organisation who can contribute meaningfully to debates with policymakers and governments around the world to help shape the ways in which teachers are attracted, trained, developed, motivated and deployed within schools, with improved outcomes for young people as a result.

It is likely that the Policy Manager will take forward this agenda in a number of ways. As a new role, there is considerable scope to shape this to the skills and preferences of the postholder. Some examples of the types of work which this include are set out below; it is unlikely that this one role will carry out all of them so this should be seen as an indicative list:

- **Conducting original research** – increasingly, the Foundation wishes to design and carry out its own research in areas of priorities. Depending on the skills and capabilities of the post holder, this could range from peer reviewed academic literature, to more applied ‘think tank’ style policy research and publications.
- **Commissioning new work** – the Foundation has long worked alongside academic institutions, civil society and policy organisations, and other foundations to partner on the delivery of new research. The Policy Manager is likely to lead on commissioning and partnership work on future research.
- **Becoming the research champion within the Foundation** – although everyone across the Foundation shares a deep passion and knowledge of education, the Policy Manager will be in many ways the central point of contact for the Foundation with the research and policy community. The postholder will need to be not just comfortable but enthusiastic with immersing themselves in academic and policy publications, engaging in discussions with experts, attending and speaking at conferences and seminars and often being the ‘front

face' of the Foundation both for showcasing our own policy and research and engaging with third parties to absorb other research and debates to help shape our own positions.

- **Hosting events and discussions and supporting 'communities of practice'** – the Foundation is well known for its convening power and our Chairman, Mr Sunny Varkey, recognises the power and importance of hosting discussions and groups of experts to advance an agenda. The Foundation has a number of informal 'communities of practice' who both advise the Foundation and also help amplify our messages and the Policy Manager will be part of developing this convening role further.
- **Discussions with governments and policymakers** – the Foundation believes that our maximum impact comes from showing what is possible, and therefore catalysing other actors – principally governments – to take reforms to scale. As such, one of the most impactful tasks of the Policy and Research team is to advocate for our agenda amongst policymakers. We are keen to develop the relationship with a number of governments and countries who wish to take a proactive approach in reforming teacher policy. The Policy Manager is likely to take the day to day lead, alongside our country offices where appropriate, in helping these governments thinking through how to implement practical reforms and apply the findings of our research to concrete action.

As part of a Foundation which still has a relatively small head office team in London, the post holder will also need to be prepared to get their hands involved in everything and anything else that the Foundation does! This will often involve the post holder taking end to end responsibility for projects or elements of projects, including administration and more mundane tasks where required

- The Foundation and the Varkey family also have a strong entrepreneurial culture. The programme of work which we undertake is therefore flexible and can change rapidly in response to opportunities, so it is highly likely that new projects and programmes will appear throughout the year which the post holder will need to become involved with. The post holder will need to be comfortable with this level of agility and flexibility.

Person Specification

Experience, skills and attributes

- Experience working on education or development policy – for example in an NGO, consultancy, think tank, charity, academic post or government. Direct experience in international education in any of these roles would be a significant advantage.
- Comfort and experience – and enthusiasm and interest – at working at a level of depth with academic literature on international education issues, as well as broader policy papers and other grey literature.
- Ability to communicate complex issues – including quantitative and qualitative research but also other policy debates – into effective messages that can be transmitted with impact to larger audiences. Comfortable in communicating orally and in writing with a number of different audiences.
- Clear understanding of the role that governments and other major international actors play in the global education agenda and how public policy works, including both within countries and between countries.
- Strong organisation and prioritisation skills; the postholder will often be working on their own in various areas so needs to be able to manage workload and be a self starter.

- Willingness to participate in all and any activity which a relatively young and agile Foundation may decide to become involved in, and to shape it for maximum policy and research and advocacy advantage.
- Willingness to travel internationally when required, with the potential, with the postholder's agreement, of future engagement with other governments in country over a period of time.
- Educated to Bachelors' level or equivalent. An academic specialism in development, education or economics would be an advantage. There may be an opportunity for the postholder to develop their own original research programme and progress their academic qualifications if desired.

Location

- This position is based in the Head Office of the Foundation in London.
- The role offers potential for flexible working including home based if desired for up to four days a week.
- International travel is likely to form a proportion of this role.

Remuneration & Benefits

- Competitive and dependant on candidate experience
- Life Assurance
- Pension contribution
- Discretionary annual salary reviews

Please send your CV and cover letter to careers@varkeyfoundation.org, no later than 25th of July 2018.

Please note we will be interviewing candidates during this time, so early application is recommended.

All candidates applying for this position with the Varkey Foundation must be eligible to work in the UK/European Economic Area. Candidates should confirm this when applying with their CV and covering letter.

The Varkey Foundation is an Equal Opportunities Employer.