# Global Schools Forum

# Innovation Manager – Education Finance

Job description

August 2025

# About Global Schools Forum

Global Schools Forum (GSF) is a **collaborative community of non-state organisations** working to improve education at scale for underserved children in low and middle-income countries.

Our **vision** is that all children can realise their potential through safe access to quality education.

The GSF community is the largest of its kind, including **174 organizations** spanning **71 countries,** collectively running or supporting close to **1.37M+ schools and school networks**, over 1.77mn teachers and providing education to well over **134M+ million children**. Since inception in 2017, GSF has:

Our community comprises **standalone schools**, such as [MAIA Impact](https://www.maiaimpact.org/) working with Mayan girls in Guatemala; **school networks** working within or across countries, including organisations like [Hippocampus](https://www.hippocampus.in/) working in India or [United World Schools](https://www.unitedworldschools.org/) working in Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal and Madagascar; and organisations providing core support services to non-state schools, such as [EdPartners Africa](https://edpartnersafrica.com/) that provides financial services to schools in Kenya or [Instill Education](https://instill.education/) that provides a variety of teacher development offers across Africa.

# GSF’s strategy currently covers three core areas:

# **Strengthening and growing a global, interconnected learning community.** We are continuously expanding our community of mission-aligned, non-state organisations across Asia, Africa, and South America. We provide opportunities for our community of leaders to collaborate and learn from each other as they confront shared operational and pedagogical challenges. Based on the needs and challenges of the community, we curate an annual programme of events and communities of practice.

**Testing promising solutions and diffusing evidence.** We fund and support education entrepreneurs to develop, test and scale promising education approaches. We generate and share evidence on ‘what works’ in education and what makes organisations more effective.

**Partnering strategically to shape policy and scale solutions.** We enable our community to engage in the strengthening of education systems by engaging in global policy processes, and with support in forging partnerships with other organisations, funders, and policymakers.

We are a small, fully-remote global team with colleagues based in the UK and across Africa, Asia and Latin America, reflecting the communities in which we work.

Our Values are central to everything we do as a team, as a global community and in our engagements with partners, funders and the global education community:

* **Collaboration**: We leverage each other's strengths and knowledge to drive and amplify purpose driven collective action.
* **Intentional Inclusivity**: We cultivate and celebrate diversity of backgrounds, culture, perspectives, and approaches promoting inclusivity and mutual respect.
* **Continuous Improvement**: We commit to continuously learning, improving, and innovating, while sharing best practices and failures.
* **Honesty and Transparency**: We conduct ourselves with integrity, openness, accountability and kindness.

# Role Purpose

# The learning crisis globally is widening. 244 million children and youth between the ages of 6 and 18 are out of school, with sub-Saharan Africa (98mn) and South Asia (85mn) having the largest out-of-school populations[[1]](#footnote-26391). 70% of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries are unable to read a simple text with understanding[[2]](#footnote-2).

# The non-state sector is a large and growing provider of basic education services globally and is driving innovation to end the learning crisis. However, the impact of the non-state sector is limited by significant challenges, including lack of access to long-term sustainable funding as well as know-how and evidence to scale their impact. In a recent member survey, 66% of GSF’s members identified funding as a challenge, in particular, difficulty in securing multi-year, unrestricted funding, and funding to scale. With the recent cuts in bi-lateral aid, funding for the non-state education sector to innovate and scale will be severely reduced.

To tackle this challenge, GSF has undertaken a systematic approach through several programmes and initiatives to develop new financing vehicles for members. These include sub-granting to education providers seeking to scale their impact, designing large-scale blended finance vehicles for financial institutions serving low-fee private schools, impact-linked loans.

We are looking to bring a passionate, detail-oriented, and action-driven Innovation Manager to join us as we expand our programmes under this stream of work. In particular, the Innovation Manager will work on driving our work on the **Incentives for Learning (IfL) programme in Kenya**. The IfL programme is a 2-year pilot that will establish the impact of financial incentives embedded into loans on learning outcomes in low fee private schools (LFPS). When learning outcomes are achieved at targeted levels, the LFPS owners will be awarded a reduced cost of capital on their loans. Through IfL, partners aim to show that financial incentives can successfully be tied to learning outcomes in a sustainable way. It is expected that the embedded incentives in loans to schools will enable a behaviour shift making improvements in learning outcomes a business priority for the school owner. This shift will trickle down from the proprietor to school leaders and teachers leading to a gradual adoption of improved practices - at the school and classroom level which will improve learning outcomes for all children enrolled in schools.

The IfL programme, launched in early 2025 in collaboration with the IDP Foundation, IDinsight, and two financial institutions in Kenya, has made significant progress in designing an incentive-linked loan product and assessment methodology through consultations with school owners, loan officers, and other stakeholders. We are now entering a phase of operationalization, which will hands-on work with partners on the ground to effectively promote and distribute the incentive-linked loans and rewards, capturing key insights, and enhancing partners' capabilities and outreach for future expansion.

The insights gained from this 2-year pilot program will be instrumental in shaping a larger initiative focused on blended finance for education and child development outcomes. This initiative will involve the establishment of a dedicated finance facility focussed on children. The facility will employ a child-centered investment approach, providing loans primarily to banks, microfinance institutions, and other SME lenders who will in turn support affordable community-based schools, an emerging SME sector. Additionally, a Technical Assistance Facility will be established to offer support to financial institutions receiving investments, enabling them to better serve low-fee private schools through impact-linked loans and resources aimed at enhancing learning outcomes.

# Responsibilities

We are seeking a dynamic and driven Innovation Manager with a deep understanding of education financing models to join our team. The ideal candidate will be passionate about improving learning outcomes and will have a proven track record of successfully working with finance providers and an understanding of K-12 education.

The key responsibilities of the Innovation Manager - Education Finance will be as below.

1. **Providing experience-driven insights and hands-on support to financial institutions to operationalise the incentive-linked loan product including:**

* Work with the existing programme team and financial institutions to test and finalise the terms of the incentive-linked loan and rewards model.
* Assess capacity building needs of loan officers and readiness of the financial institutions to market the incentive-linked loan product and disburse rewards. Work with internal team and experts to fulfil these needs.
* Liaise with the assessment agency (IDinsight) to determine reward amounts based on assessment data.
* Work with financial institutions to provide post-assessment feedback to school.
* Work with financial institutions to build robust systems and SoPs for reward administration.
* Build a relationship with stakeholders on the ground including loan officers, Private School Associations, and key government departments to proactively identify and circumvent challenges for programme implementation.
* Ensure ongoing loan marketing and uptake of the incentive linked loan product.

1. **Document learnings and build channels for sustainable scale-up:**

* Identify and document programme challenges, processes, risks, trade-offs and learnings on an ongoing basis especially for the incentive linked loan product and reward model and needs and readiness support required by financial institutions.
* Codify learnings in a ‘Sustainability Blueprint’ for the incentive-linked loan product for replication across contexts.
* Build relationships and create buy-in from the right stakeholders for wider adoption and sustenance of the programme beyond the pilot period.
* Create channels for cross-learning and sharing of best practices and behaviours among schools.
* Participate in sharing the findings of the programme and overall learnings with GSF members and the wider education ecosystem through webinars, conferences etc.

# Person Specification

If you are a results-driven manager with a passion for education and a proven ability to drive positive change, we want to hear from you. Join our team and help us make a lasting impact on education financing and learning outcomes.

**Knowledge, experience, and skills**

* Strong knowledge of education financing models and experience working with financial institutions and education financiers;
* An understanding of the education sector is required; an understanding of non-state education models in low-middle-income contexts is preferred;
* Excellent project management skills, with the ability to document learnings and institutionalize innovative financing models in a sustainable way;
* Strong communication and relationship-building skills, with the ability to manage senior stakeholders independently;
* Ability to roll up sleeves and work hands-on with schools and financial institutions to implement and refine the innovative loan model;
* Skilled at simplifying complex ideas into easily understandable formats tailored to the audience;
* Ability to analyze data and make data-driven decisions.

**Personal characteristics**

* Excellent organisational and communication skills
* Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to build and maintain strong relationships
* Ability to work with a diverse range of people across multiple time zones
* Excellent problem-solving skills and a hands-on attitude
* Ability to multitask and prioritize tasks effectively
* Adaptability and flexibility to the dynamic work environment
* Commitment to global education and shared belief in GSF’s vision

**Terms and Conditions**

**Salary:** Competitive within non-state education sector, adjusted based on location and experience.

**Contract**: 12 months fixed term with expectation of extension.

**Hours:** Full Time, typically 9-5 in your time zone, but with significant flexibility. Given that we work across different time zones, some non-traditional hours for early or late calls may be required.

**Location**: Based in Kenya. Local work authorisation is required. Some local and international travel may be required. 

**Anticipated Start Date:** Immediate

**Our benefits include:**

* 35 fully flexible holiday days (including flexible bank holidays)
* Flexible working - at a location that suits you and at the times that work best for you
* Co-working space allowance
* Personal learning and development budget
* Access to GSF events
* Access to Learning Platform iHasco
* Annual team retreat

**How to apply and application deadline:**

**Application deadline:** August 24th, 2025, at 8pm EAT

**Please submit your application through our** [**career portal**](https://apply.workable.com/j/FD0A26CC30)**.** You will need to upload your CV and a cover letter detailing:

* What excites you about GSF and this role in particular
* Your achievements and experience as they relate to this job description
* What you would do in this role to really make an impact

Please note, we will not consider any applications unless they include a CV, cover letter and response to the points above, and/or if they have not been submitted through our application portal.

**Recruitment Process:**

* Shortlisted candidates will be sent a written assessment to complete
* First-round interviews with Hiring Manager
* Final interviews with Senior Leadership

Since this is an immediate position, we will aim to conclude our recruitment process by **30th September 2025.**

If you apply, we will process your personal data for recruitment purposes only and in accordance with our [Data Privacy Policy](https://globalschoolsforum.org/privacy-user-consent-privacy-notice-global-schools-forum).

**GSF is committed to cultivating a fair and inclusive workplace, where everyone can be themselves and thrive. We welcome applications from everyone regardless of race, age, disability, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or faith.**

If this role isn't quite right for you but you like the idea of working at GSF, please submit your CV to  our talent pool and be the first to hear about new opportunities in future here: [Global Schools Forum - Current Openings (workable.com)](https://apply.workable.com/global-schools-forum/?lng=en)

1. Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO, 2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-26391)
2. UNICEF, 2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)