

Job Description: Research Associate | Laterite Rwanda

Position:	Research Associate
Start date:	Immediate
Duration of commitment:	2 years (minimum)
Location:	Rwanda
Education:	Master's degree in Economics, Education, Statistics, Public Policy, International Development, Engineering or a related field
Experience:	Minimum 3 years of relevant professional experience in international development, economic and social research or public policy. Experience in Education projects preferred.
Language Requirements:	English - excellent written and oral; Kinyarwanda, Swahili or French is a plus
Pre-requisites:	Strong technical and analytical skills, solid project and stakeholder management skills, highly proficient with STATA/R/Python and any ODK based platform

Job Summary

- **Do you want to make a difference** to the learning crisis in schools in Sub-Saharan Africa?
- **Are you passionate** about learning how to improve the effectiveness of education programs?
- **Do you work best when collaborating** with experts across disciplines (teachers, NGOs, academics, governments) and getting the best out of their expertise?

If yes, then this might be the role for you. Laterite's Research Associate role in Leaders in Teaching (LIT) learning partnership will provide you with the opportunity to hone your leadership and technical skills and make a difference to education outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa.

About Laterite

At Laterite, we transform the way development research is done. Our mission is to deploy the most innovative research methods and the latest academic thinking to design effective responses to development issues. We provide three types of services to clients: i) comprehensive data collection and data processing solutions; ii) research services, from the design of large scale research projects through to analysis; and iii) strategic and technical advice to public and private sector clients.

Laterite currently operates in Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Uganda, India and the Netherlands. Laterite brings together more than 40 full time staff. In the last few years, we have successfully completed over 100 research projects, working with internationally recognized universities, global think tanks, international NGOs, multilateral donor organizations and several Government ministries and agencies.

The Laterite Model

1. ***We believe that impact is a long-term endeavour that requires being embedded in the local context:*** In order to achieve policy impact through research it is important to establish a strong local presence. Delivering high quality research and advice requires building a local team and data collection systems, understanding the context, establishing close working relationships with key players and understanding their constraints and motivations. We only conduct research where we have offices.

- 2. We are rigorous and structured, but not rigid in our choice of analytic methods:** Our mission is to deploy the most innovative research methods to design effective responses to development issues. We do not define ourselves by a particular method or approach (e.g. RCTs), but by our ability to embrace and deploy new technologies and research methodologies in our project work. We work in an *anti-disciplinary* way, by borrowing methods not only from econometrics but other fields as well.
- 3. We innovate with every opportunity:** With every new challenge and opportunity we try to innovate, always with the objective of creating new and better ways of conducting research in low-resource country contexts. The Laterite Lab, our internal research development arm, catalyzes our research efforts and aims to equip our teams with new research methods and techniques. Our aim is not only to acquire and implement new methods, but to create new methods.

You can find out more about Laterite on our website at: www.laterite.com

Who we are

Laterite is led by a team of young entrepreneurial professionals who see the opportunity to transform the way research is done. The research team has degrees from some of the world's top universities, including Harvard University, Oxford University, Cambridge University, Columbia University, University of California - Berkeley, MIT, London School of Economics and Yale University with vast experience working in development research in several countries. Our entire data collection team is recruited and trained from the best local universities in the countries we operate. Laterite is proud to be a culturally diverse organization with permanent staff from Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya, India, Greece, US, UK, France, the Netherlands, Colombia and Cameroon.

Working at Laterite

Working at Laterite will provide you with the opportunity to build on your management and technical expertise to make a difference on priority development questions. At Laterite, you will have:

- The opportunity to shape the strategic direction of a dynamic and growing research firm;
- A chance to make a difference on relevant policy and development issues in a high-pace environment;
- The opportunity to manage and focus on the professional development of a high-performing team of researchers and data collection specialists; and,
- The challenge to constantly upgrade your own technical capabilities, to ensure that as a company we are always on the cutting-edge of research with impact.

Position Description & Key Responsibilities

This position will be based in Kigali, Rwanda, with travel to field locations. The Laterite Research Associate for the Mastercard Foundation Leaders in Teaching (LIT) Initiative will have two primary functions: first, to coordinate project activities and communication across the learning partnership; and second, to deliver high-quality research. The Research Associate will be the primary point of contact for Laterite's activities. About 50% of the Research Associate's time will be spent on managerial and coordination responsibilities and 50% on analytic tasks.

Laterite values the career progression of its staff and puts emphasis on their professional development by providing coaching and ensuring they are exposed to tasks that help them pursue their personal development goals. Working as a Research Associate for Laterite will position you well for competitive PhD programs internationally, jobs at other development or consulting organizations, and becoming senior staff within Laterite itself.

Key responsibilities

As the LIT Research Associate you will:

- *Lead the working level engagement on the LIT Learning Partnership.* You will build the trust of the implementing partner organizations and help them to learn how to improve their interventions. You will champion an open and inquisitive culture
- *Collaborate with world-leading academics to implement a major longitudinal research study on teacher performance.* You will build trust, encourage smooth collaboration and get the best out of their expertise to help organizations learn how to improve their interventions
- *Make this learning partnership happen.* You will be the go-to person for the Learning Partnership. You will be on top of all the project details: ensuring the right work is done on time and that all messages are clearly communicated between key stakeholders.
- *Deliver timely and high-quality research.* You will be involved in a wide variety of research to build understanding of what works and why from literature reviews, to longitudinal data analysis, to semi-structured classroom observations.

Specifically, the Research Associate's responsibilities will cover two primary areas:

Project Management & Coordination

- Develop and manage tasks and timelines and report to senior management on progress, issues, and potential causes of delay;
- Liaise with senior management to ensure adequate resources are available for planned activities.
- Convene internal team meetings with Laterite and relevant stakeholders to review and coordinate the implementation of learning activities;
- Meet one-on-one with implementing partners to supervise activities or gather insights from the implementation process and share findings with the consortium;
- Provide regular updates to MCF on the progress of learning activities through in-person meetings, calls, and/or written summaries;
- Develop financial projections for upcoming activities;
- Coordinate with accounting team to track project expenditures against the budget and report on discrepancies during periodic reconciliation; and,
- Provide administrative support, as needed, to the management team – including financial, budgetary, HR and related tasks

Technical

- Review and synthesize relevant literature and secondary data, including Rwanda's Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and Rwanda Education Board (REB) research and policies;
- Prepare, submit, and follow up on applications for ethical clearance;
- Support implementing partners to develop theories of change and to review and improve their internal M&E capabilities and systems;
- Provide flexible technical support to implementing partners and lead action reviews;

- Supervise data collection and oversee a variety of quality checks to ensure that the highest data quality standards are met;
- Draft reports and project deliverables to communicate findings; and,
- Synthesize information from secondary sources, external evidence, and implementing partner data in blogs, policy briefs, academic articles, and data repositories.

Profile

Ideal candidates have outstanding technical and analytical skills. You are passionate about education and tackling the learning crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa. You can quickly grasp research concepts, and structure your technical approach to a problem. You have solid project management skills and can manage a portfolio of activities/projects involving varying levels of stakeholders. You have excellent interpersonal skills, are self-motivated and can flourish in a fast-paced environment, where timelines can often be unpredictable. You also have excellent written and oral communication skills (in English), and can effectively communicate internally and externally.

Proficiency in STATA/R/Python and any ODK based platform is a must. You have a Master's in Economics, Statistics, Public Policy, Engineering or related field, and at least 3 years of relevant professional experience. Lastly, you are willing to develop your professional skills, lead the growth of an organization dedicated to social and economic development, and thrive in a growing organization setting.

Qualifications

Pre-requisites:

- Strong attention to detail, ability to manage multiple tasks efficiently, and a motivated self-starter who will thrive in a start-up environment by taking ownership and initiative
- Strong statistical skills and knowledge of related tools/software (STATA, R or Python)
- Experience working with at least one ODK-based platform (like SurveyCTO, ODK, CommCare, etc.)
- Hands-on experience with Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (ME&L) systems, delivering training and capacity building
- Ability to build high-trust relationships and effectively communicate with a variety of stakeholders in public and private sectors

Strongly Preferred:

- At least 3 years of experience working on development projects, impact evaluations or other research studies - especially ones related to education
- Master's degree in Economics, Education, Statistics, Public Policy, International Development, Engineering or a related field
- Strong oral and written communication skills in English; Kinyarwanda, Swahili or French is a plus
- Experience living and working in diverse cultural settings; time spent in sub-Sahara Africa or other developing countries strongly preferred
- Knowledge of program and impact evaluation methodologies, including experimental and quasi-experimental designs

Compensation

Competitive with similar roles in other social enterprises and research firms. Benefits include generous leave, health insurance, medical evacuation and individual/team bonuses.

Application Process

Please complete the following application <https://form.myjotform.com/82274975593573>, including a CV and cover letter within the link. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, so we encourage you to apply ASAP.