

Programme Advisor (Artificial Intelligence)

Full-time, permanent role

Salary £55,800 - £60,400

London, UK

About The Elders

The Elders was founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007 as an independent group of global leaders working for peace, justice, human rights and a sustainable planet. There are currently 11 active Elders from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. The group has been chaired since 2024 by Juan Manuel Santos, former President of Colombia and a Nobel Peace Laureate. Previous chairs were Desmond Tutu, Kofi Annan and Mary Robinson.

The Elders work on five programmes: the climate and nature crisis, nuclear weapons, pandemics, conflict, and artificial intelligence (AI). Cutting across these programmes are commitments on multilateralism, human rights, gender equality and women in leadership, and intergenerational dialogue.

The Elders operate through private diplomacy and public advocacy; they use their experience, influence and access to heads of state and government and ministers to engage politically, and their connections to civil society to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable people and communities.

Supporting the Elders' work is a Secretariat of around 25 staff, largely based in London but with some staff in other countries. The work calls for a combination of initiative and humility, the ability to accept and implement Elders' decisions to high standards, and significant flexibility and teamwork. We have specialists in all our programmes, alongside communications professionals and those who operationalise our work and the Foundation as a whole.

Role Overview

Elders have recently decided to add AI to the strategy, with a focus on the international governance of AI. Elders' approach is still evolving, and this is an exciting opportunity to help support their thinking in a rapidly moving area where they have less professional experience than in the other four programmes. The impact Elders seek is that AI becomes primarily a force for good, developed in the public interest and governed by governments. They aim to contribute to that by working on three long-term outcomes: i) governments assume responsibility to protect people from AI threats, ii) governments work together and with the private sector and other stakeholders to ensure safe and inclusive use of AI; iii) the military use of AI is governed by international law.

The post holder will be the Secretariat lead on AI, supporting Elders on the strategic development, implementation, impact monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Programme leads' primary

responsibility is to translate the long-term outcomes in the strategy into annual intermediate outcomes and activities Elders want to do that deliver impact.

They work closely with other Programme team members (as part of a team of 11) to ensure effective implementation of the Elders' strategy in its entirety, drive high quality analysis and research, identify and deliver joint initiatives across programmes, manage strategic relationships and partnerships, and integrate the cross-cutting commitments into the AI programme. They work with colleagues in the Operations team to support the organisation of visits for Elders, and with colleagues in the Communications team to produce public diplomacy outputs.

The post holder will report to the Director of Programmes.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic leadership and development of initiatives

- Represent The Elders with external stakeholders to help strengthen Elders access and engagement to deliver programme outcomes.
- Build on research and networking to develop proposals for the Elders' consideration for initiatives to support achievement of long-term and intermediate outcomes in the AI programme.
- Lead implementation of agreed initiatives through private diplomacy, for example, arranging meetings and supporting country visits, briefing Elders orally and in writing, preparing detailed reports of visits, drafting letters for the Elders, consulting and coordinating with partners.
- Collaborate with colleagues leading other programmes (climate/nature, conflict, nuclear, pandemics) to identify synergies between programmes (for example the risks of an accidental nuclear launch or a bio-engineered pandemic, the use of autonomous weapons in conflicts Elders are working on, issues around the high-intensity extractive demand AI places on energy, water, and mineral resources) and opportunities for joint initiatives.
- Work with cross-cutting leads to ensure these commitments (multilateralism, human rights, gender equality and women in leadership, and intergenerational dialogue) are effectively integrated into the AI programme and deliver on Elders' priorities.
- Work with communications colleagues to identify target audiences for programme objectives and use audience analytics to refine our tactics and measure impact.
- Work with communications colleagues to identify appropriate public diplomacy initiatives to achieve programme outcomes, assisting with preparation of communications materials, such as drafting statements, op-eds and tweets.

Policy analysis, reporting and impact monitoring

- Track and monitor progress towards long-term outcomes and programme impact within the AI programme, providing written contributions to the Secretariat's regular impact reporting cycle.
- Develop and regularly review a programme theory of change, and use political economy analysis to ensure the programme remains aligned to deliver on long-term outcomes.
- Work with communications colleagues to identify examples of programme impact for inclusion in the annual report.
- Prepare and present board papers with progress updates and recommendations, for The Elders bi-annual board meetings.

Relationship building and representation

- Build on existing network of contacts to lead the strategic expansion of The Elders' external relationships on AI with the global AI policy community, including governments, frontier AI labs and other private sector businesses, international organisations, academics, civil society organisations, policy experts and influencers, to maximise support and potential for Elders to have influence.
- Where relevant identify and manage strategic organisational partnerships to increase reach, impact and achievement of programme outcomes.

Other responsibilities

- Manage specialist consultants providing advice to The Elders.
- Prepare written briefings and speaking notes for Elders, and contribute to other reporting as required.
- Prepare internal briefings for colleagues, such as notes of meetings and updates on major developments.
- Undertake other duties as required by the organisation.

Person Specification

- Educated to degree level, with 7-12 years' experience relevant to The Elders' work and this role (e.g. AI governance/policy, diplomacy, think-tank analysis, civil society advocacy etc).
- An extensive network of senior policy, private sector and civil society contacts in the AI world.
- A track record of developing strategies, leading implementation of programme plans and activities, and achieving results in a fast-paced environment.
- Experience of serving high-profile individuals, and collaborating with a range of organisations, to develop and influence policy.
- Strong diplomatic skills and keen international political acumen, experience of analysing complex global political situations, and the ability to operate with diplomatic finesse and agility across different cultural environments and world views.
- Analytical, research and communication strengths, with the ability to understand, interpret and present complex and sensitive information from a variety of sources to high-level and public audiences.
- Excellent written and spoken English, with the ability to draft compelling, clear, precise and concise briefing for senior audiences.
- A strong personal commitment to the mission and values of The Elders.
- A flexible style and willingness to work in a small, collaborative team.
- This role may require frequent international travel, sometimes at short notice and, in exceptional circumstances, for up to two weeks. The post holder may also be required to attend staff or Elders events in the UK from time to time.

Working at The Elders

We operate a hybrid working policy, with a high degree of flexibility for staff. We ask staff to attend the office based on need, not a quota of days. We believe there are certain activities that are best conducted in person, and also hold monthly "in days" when the whole UK team comes together. Aside from these obligations, staff are free to choose the balance between working remotely and working in the office that suits them best. We are based close to Green Park and Hyde Park Corner tube stations in London, in a recently refurbished office.

The salary range is £55,800 - £60,400 depending on experience.

In addition to a competitive salary we offer the following benefits:

- Private pension scheme with 10% employer contributions
- Optional private medical and dental insurance
- Group life assurance equivalent to 5 x annual salary
- 28 days of paid annual leave (with 3 of these days on stipulated dates between the Christmas/New Year holidays) plus all UK bank holidays and public holidays
- Enhanced parental leave

The Application Process

The Elders is committed to creating an inclusive working environment that values diversity and equal opportunities. We welcome and encourage applicants of any ethnicity, religion, age, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. We will assess purely on your abilities and fit for a role. We are happy to discuss any adjustments you need to ensure a fair recruitment process and to enable you to be successful in your role if selected. You must have the right to work in the UK.

Please submit the following by email to jobs@theelders.org:

- Your curriculum vitae (CV)
- A tailored supporting statement confirming explicitly that you have the right to work in the UK and covering the points below:
 1. Your assessment of how your skills and experience match the job profile and any areas requiring further development
 2. Examples of your recent work on AI, your personal contribution and the impact you had.
 3. Examples of when you worked with others to achieve a common goal.

The closing date is **09.00 UK time on Monday 20th July 2026**. First stage interviews will take place on **29th July 2026** and second stage interviews will be held in person on week commencing **3rd August 2026**.

You may also wish to include why you would like to work for The Elders and address any additional points in the person specification to further demonstrate your suitability and experience. Your supporting statement should be no longer than two sides. Whilst we understand the benefits of AI, we would strongly encourage you to not use AI to answer these questions as part of your application.

We will be unable to consider any applications that do not meet the above requirements or are received after the deadline.