

Senior Social Entrepreneur & Project Development Lead

Position Details

- **Duty station:** Based in one of Suyana's countries of operation Rwanda, Uganda, Switzerland, Spain.
- **Contract type:** Full-time employment contract.
- **Travel:** Regular travel across Suyana's countries of operation Switzerland, Spain, Uganda and Rwanda.
- **Candidate eligibility:** Applicants should be eligible to work in those countries and hold the appropriate work permits

About Suyana Foundation

[The Suyana Foundation](#) is a Swiss non-profit organization dedicated to empowering individuals, families and communities to lead dignified and self-sustaining lives.

For more than 20 years, Suyana has worked through locally led and holistic development approaches focused on health, education, sustainable livelihoods and WASH, creating long-term impact through strong community engagement, local ownership and strategic partnerships.

Building on its extensive experience in South America, Suyana is currently developing and expanding its activities in Africa, including Rwanda and Uganda.

Position Summary

Suyana Foundation is looking for an experienced and entrepreneurial **Senior Social Entrepreneur & Project Development Lead** to identify, develop and test innovative social enterprise and income-generating pilot projects across its African programmes.

We are looking for a builder – someone pragmatic, entrepreneurial and hands-on who enjoys turning ideas into something that works in practice.

The successful candidate will identify economic and social opportunities within communities, assess their potential, develop viable business and operating models and work directly in the field to turn promising ideas into practical pilot initiatives.

This is not primarily a desk-based strategy or conventional programme-management role. The person will be expected to go into the field, understand local realities, talk to communities and potential customers, analyse markets, identify opportunities, test assumptions and develop solutions in practice.

The role requires someone who combines strong social-development understanding with an entrepreneurial and commercial mindset and who is comfortable moving from an initial idea to a functioning pilot.

The objective is to develop social-enterprise models that create measurable social and economic impact while building sustainable livelihood and income opportunities for local communities.

Key Responsibilities

1. Social Enterprise & Pilot Project Development

- Proactively identify opportunities for social enterprises, community businesses, income-generating initiatives and market-based solutions within Suyana's African programmes.
- Work directly with communities, entrepreneurs, cooperatives, businesses and local partners to identify real economic opportunities and unmet market needs.
- Transform promising ideas into concrete and testable pilot projects.
- Develop practical business and operating models, including products or services, target customers, pricing, costs, revenue streams, partnerships and implementation requirements.

- Assess whether proposed initiatives have the potential to create both meaningful social impact and economic value.
- Design small-scale pilots that allow Suyana to test concepts before committing significant resources.
- Take an active, hands-on role in getting pilots started and resolving practical challenges during their initial development.
- Continuously adapt pilot models based on market feedback, field experience and results.
- Assess successful pilots and develop recommendations for their continuation, replication or scale-up.

2. Field-Based Opportunity & Market Assessment

- Spend significant time on the ground, understanding communities, local economies and market realities first-hand.
- Identify existing skills, resources, products, services and economic activities that could be strengthened or developed into sustainable enterprises.
- Conduct practical market assessments to understand demand, competition, pricing, customers, supply chains and potential market access.
- Engage directly with potential customers, suppliers, local businesses and other market actors.
- Test assumptions in practice rather than relying solely on theoretical assessments.
- Identify why an initiative may or may not work and adapt the approach accordingly.

3. Business Model & Financial Viability

- Develop simple, realistic and robust business models for proposed social enterprises.
- Assess market demand, pricing, cost structures, margins, revenue potential, break-even points and financial sustainability.
- Prepare realistic financial projections and pilot budgets.
- Identify the resources and capabilities required to make an initiative viable.
- Balance social objectives with commercial realities and ensure that proposed enterprises have a credible pathway towards sustainability.
- Recognize when an idea is not viable and recommend when Suyana should adapt, stop or redirect a pilot.

4. Community Entrepreneurship & Local Ownership

- Identify local entrepreneurs, cooperatives, community organizations and other actors capable of taking an active role in social-enterprise initiatives.
- Develop models that build on existing local skills, knowledge, resources and market opportunities.
- Ensure that communities are active partners in developing solutions rather than only beneficiaries.
- Strengthen local ownership and entrepreneurial capacity through practical coaching, mentoring and problem-solving where required.
- Design initiatives with a clear perspective on who will ultimately own, manage and sustain the enterprise.

5. Partnerships & Market Linkages

- Build practical partnerships with businesses, buyers, suppliers, government institutions, NGOs, universities, technical experts and other relevant actors.
- Identify partners that can provide market access, technical expertise, technology, distribution channels or other resources required for a pilot to succeed.
- Develop connections between community-based enterprises and relevant local or regional markets.
- Explore innovative partnerships with the private sector and established social enterprises.

6. Sustainability & Scale

- Build sustainability into social-enterprise pilots from the outset.

- Define clear criteria for determining whether a pilot has been successful and should continue.
- Assess which successful models could be replicated or adapted to other communities or countries.
- Develop practical recommendations for moving successful pilots towards greater independence and local ownership.
- Ensure that scaling decisions are based on demonstrated results and real market potential.

7. Project Development & Internal Collaboration

- Develop concise and high-quality pilot concepts, feasibility assessments, business cases, budgets and recommendations for management decision-making.
- Work with Suyana's programme teams and technical specialists to ensure that social-enterprise initiatives complement Suyana's broader development programmes.
- Work with the MEAL team to define appropriate social and economic indicators for new pilots.
- Provide technical input to funding proposals when required, while remaining primarily focused on developing and testing strong social-enterprise models rather than fundraising.
- Document lessons learned from pilots so that successful approaches can be improved and replicated.

Required profile

We are looking for a hands-on social entrepreneur: someone who can walk into a community, identify an opportunity, understand the market, develop a practical solution, test it in the real world and turn a promising idea into a sustainable social enterprise.

- Minimum 7-10 years of relevant professional experience in social entrepreneurship, enterprise development, business development, private-sector development, livelihoods, innovation or related fields.
- At least Bachelor degree in Business Administration, Economics, Entrepreneurship, International Development, Agriculture, Engineering or another relevant discipline.
- Demonstrated entrepreneurial achievements and practical experience are more important than academic credentials alone.
- Passionate about improving people's lives through sustainable development and strong commitment to Suyana's mission and values.
- Significant professional experience working in Africa, including Uganda and Rwanda.
- Proven track record of personally developing, launching or growing businesses, social enterprises or income-generating initiatives.
- Strong preference for candidates who have built something themselves, rather than exclusively advised or managed projects developed by others.
- Demonstrated experience developing new initiatives from an early-stage idea into a functioning pilot, business or enterprise.
- Strong understanding of markets, business models, financial viability and entrepreneurship in African contexts.
- Ability to combine social-impact objectives with sound commercial judgement.
- Strong field orientation and willingness to spend substantial time working directly with communities, entrepreneurs and local businesses.
- Strong problem-solving skills and the ability to find practical solutions when things do not go according to plan.
- Ability to work independently, take initiative and move projects forward without requiring extensive structures or supervision.
- Strong stakeholder engagement and relationship-building skills.
- Willingness to travel all time needed in the fields
- Excellent written and spoken English, French and/or relevant local languages are an asset.
- The successful candidate must be legally eligible to work in the agreed country of employment or be able to obtain the required work authorization.

We are looking for someone who is:

- **Entrepreneurial** – naturally identifies opportunities and thinks about how to make them work.
- **Pragmatic** – focuses on workable solutions rather than overly theoretical approaches.
- **Hands-on** – willing to go into the field, talk to people, test ideas and personally help get pilots off the ground.
- **Commercially minded** – understands that a social enterprise must respond to real demand and make economic sense.
- **Creative** – able to develop new solutions with limited resources.
- **Curious** – asks questions, listens and seeks to understand why things work or do not work.
- **Independent** – takes ownership and moves ideas forward.
- **Critical** – prepared to challenge assumptions and stop initiatives that do not demonstrate sufficient potential.
- **Resilient and adaptable** – comfortable experimenting, learning from failure and changing direction.
- **Collaborative** – able to work closely with communities, colleagues and external partners.
- **Results-oriented** – motivated by seeing an idea become a functioning and sustainable initiative.

What we offer

- The opportunity to develop and test social-enterprise ideas from the ground up.
- Significant autonomy to identify opportunities and turn promising concepts into practical pilots.
- The opportunity to work directly with communities, entrepreneurs and businesses across Africa.
- An entrepreneurial environment where ideas can be tested, adapted and developed.
- The possibility to create models that combine social impact, economic opportunity and long-term sustainability.
- A platform to take successful pilot projects and develop them into approaches that can potentially be replicated across Suyana's programmes.

Application process

This recruitment process is being managed by [KaizenMind](#), an HR firm based in Rwanda, on behalf of [Suyana](#).

If you are interested in joining [Suyana](#), please submit your application through the following [form](https://forms.gle/NT9axHTjdFWpAsV18): <https://forms.gle/NT9axHTjdFWpAsV18>.

Note: We are interested not only in where you have worked, but in what you have actually built. Thus, as part of the application, you will be asked to submit a short description of one business, social enterprise or income-generating initiative that you personally helped develop or launch, explaining:

- What opportunity or problem you identified.
- What your personal role was.
- What business or social-enterprise model you developed.
- How you tested whether there was real demand.
- What worked – and what did not.
- What results were achieved.
- Whether the initiative became financially sustainable or was successfully scaled.

 **Application deadline:** 12th September 2026, 10PM (CAT).

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