
Trustee Role Description

About us and who we're looking for

ABOUT THE ECONOMIST EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

We are an independent charity that was established in 2012 by employees of *The Economist* who were passionate about helping young people engage with the news. We support children from under-served backgrounds to develop essential skills for the modern world. We do this by enabling them to join inspiring discussions about the news which teach them to think critically, communicate effectively and understand global issues.

Our activities: Our programme, Topical Talk, brings about these discussions in three ways:

- We create world-class teaching resources for classroom discussions about global news stories.
- We run *Topical Talk Festival*: the only news festival for young people. Children from countries all over the world join discussions with each other and global experts, and they work towards publishing their opinions in writing, audio journalism and film for the chance to win awards.
- We train and support teachers to bring high-quality news discussions into their classrooms, including through intensive, in-person community partnerships in the UK and America.

Our impact: Children who take part in Topical Talk can make five times more progress compared to their peers in skills that are linked with better outcomes at school, in employment and as citizens. They learn to creatively solve problems, listen with an open mind and speak with confidence. Our programme has received international recognition by HundrED as one of the top 100 educational initiatives of 2020 and 2021, and as first-prize winner of the UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Awards 2022.

Our ambitions: We are at an exciting point in our trajectory. We have demonstrated huge growth potential, going from a small UK pilot in 2013 to working with thousands of teachers globally today, including on-the-ground work in the UK and US. There is still huge unmet need, so we have bold plans to reach a million children by 2026, with 100,000 engaging on a weekly basis. We will achieve our growth goals by expanding the depth and scale of our outreach work, focusing on children who need us most.

Management and leadership: Our Chair, Daniel Franklin, is Executive Editor at *The Economist*. [Current Trustees](#) include senior columnists, operations and finance executives at *The Economist*, leaders from charity / philanthropy sectors, and the General Counsel of Guardian Media Group. Our staff team of 14 brings a diverse skillset spanning education, design, outreach and operations, and a third are qualified teachers who taught in disadvantaged communities. We bring together this expertise with *The Economist's* world-class journalists, who are extensively involved with our activities.

Funding and organisational sustainability: We are in a strong financial position having grown our income every year since 2017. We maintain a reserves fund to cover six months of staff salaries. We are on track to raise £800,000 this year and we aim to significantly grow our income over the coming three years to support our growing ambitions. Funding comes mainly from donations from companies, trusts and foundations, and we have plans to grow earned income from schools. We've built multi-year and award-winning partnerships with leading organisations including KPMG, the Bank of England, Clifford Chance, PA Consulting and Morgan Stanley, and we've secured multi-year government grants from the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

THE ROLE

We are looking to bring new skills and experience onto our board to support us with achieving our goals and transitioning into a new phase of growth. It's an exciting time to join our team and guide us towards reaching a radically-increased number of children, while establishing a basis for future activity reaching into the next decade.

We are looking for an experienced leader who can provide practical strategic guidance on one or more of these areas:

- **School relationships:** We're looking to build relationships with groups of schools serving disadvantaged children in the UK and America; particularly UK multi-academy trusts or US school districts in states that are friendly to topical discussions in the classroom.
- **Funding development:** We aim to significantly increase our income and build a funding model that can drive delivery at scale long into the future. We need to develop our fundraising strategy and build relationships with a growing community of corporate and foundation partners in the UK and US.
- **Strategy development:** This is an exciting period of transition and we're grappling with complex strategic challenges, including balancing scale with depth and meeting locally-contingent needs. As we grow we're changing our management and organisational design. We have clear strategic plans, but ongoing input and oversight from our board is more critical than ever.

No prior board or charity Trustee experience is necessary.

Trustees' legal duties

Charity Trustees have overall control of a charity and are responsible for making sure it's doing what it was set up to do. In addition to any special areas of expertise that you may be able to contribute, all Trustees have a set of legal duties. The six main duties are to:

- Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with your charity's governing document and the law
- Act in your charity's best interests
- Manage your charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure your charity is accountable

The duties of a charity Trustee, and the legal eligibility requirements, are described in detail [here](#).

Time commitment

We have quarterly board meetings online or in person, lasting roughly two hours. Trustees are asked to commit to attending all board meetings and will need to read board papers ahead of each one.

From time to time, our Chief Executive or Chairman also call on board members in between meetings to offer guidance on areas related to their particular expertise.

We're keen to find Trustees who are happy to go beyond the minimum requirements to play a more active role in helping us grow and deepen our impact. In return, we offer the opportunity to play an important role in the next stage of the Foundation's journey and make a real difference to disadvantaged children.

Location

You don't need to be based in the UK. You could join board meetings in person at our office in London (near Charing Cross) or virtually.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

You are...

- Inspired by our mission.
- Collaborative, supportive, self-reflective and open to different perspectives.
- Rigorous and thoughtful in judging risk and opportunities.
- Open to creative and bold ideas.
- An analytical problem-solver.
- Able to speak in a credible and compelling way about our work, as an ambassador for the charity.

You have...

- At least two years of experience in a strategic-level role.
- Integrity: you are willing to speak your mind and always act in the best interests of the Foundation and the teachers and young people it serves.
- Relevant experience, and / or the ability to make practical connections, to support us with the priority areas identified above.

This role involves working with young people, so you will be required to have a DBS check (which we will organise).

We want to make our board more representative of the diverse backgrounds of the children and teachers that we work with. We're particularly keen for you to apply if you are from a community under-represented in the charity sector or have faced extra barriers because of your background.

If you require any adjustments for your interview, just let us know.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

To apply, please send a CV and brief cover letter to our Programme Officer, Manni, at manthuramohamed@economist.com by **midday UK time on August 18th**.

Please include "Trustee Application" in the subject line.

Please also fill out our **Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form** and attach this with your application.

In your cover letter, please confirm that **you are eligible to become a Trustee** – read more [here](#) – and that **you are able to make the time commitment** outlined above.

Interviews with our Chief Executive, our Chairman and another of our Trustees will take place online in **the week of August 28th**.

The appointment will be made by **September 8th**.

If you have any questions about the role, please email our Chief Executive, Emily, at emilyevans@economist.com.

We look forward to hearing from you!