

Lead – Quantitative Research & Methods

Dated: October 2022

Contract: Full time, permanent

Salary: £40,000-£45,000 per annum (please note, salary bands are under review, due for decision in December 2022)

Start date: Immediate

Location: Home based with potential access to desk space in central London, if required; travel across the UK will be required from time to time as part of role, particularly during field research

Reporting to: Director of Research and Evaluation

Direct reports: None at this time

Annual leave: 25 days per year plus bank holidays

About YMCA George Williams College

In April 2022, YMCA George Williams College merged with the Centre for Youth Impact. The merger brings together the Centre's work to progress thinking and practice in impact measurement in youth work and provision for young people with the College's rich history of supporting high quality relational practice with young people and communities. The combined charity works across the UK, including locality working via dedicated regional networks across England. Although still developing the strategy for the newly combined charity, the two organisations have long shared a vision for all young people to have access to high quality provision and services that improve their life chances, and which enable them to achieve their potential in mind, body and spirit. We believe that embedding more meaningful approaches to evaluation, quality improvement and impact measurement at the heart of resilient, learning organisations is key to achieving this vision.

About the role

The Quantitative Research and Methods Lead is a new role for the organisation, and will play a key role in shaping and delivering our work on common measurement and building the data ecosystem for the youth sector. This role will create new and specialist capacity and expertise to complement existing skills and knowledge around qualitative research and evaluation methods.

The Quantitative Research and Methods Lead is responsible for advancing our thinking and strategic aims related to the design and implementation of quantitative research and evaluation methods, including data analysis, visualisation and manipulation. This will include, with support from a project director, accountability for all aspects of project management and delivery (including contract and budget management, communications, reporting, managing risk and resources) for a portfolio of projects designed to develop the youth sector's access to and use of shared data to understand and improve impact. Alongside owning a portfolio of projects, the Quantitative Research and Methods Lead will collaborate with other Leads, contributing their expertise and insights into their projects. In particular, the Quantitative Research and Methods Lead will work closely with our Digital Product Design Lead to maximise the potential of our new data portal and suite of measurement tools, in line with our emergent data strategy.

The Quantitative Research and Methods Lead – as with all other Lead roles in the organisation - is an ambassador for the Centre for Youth Impact and YMCA George Williams College, and helps to

build relationships, influence stakeholders and promote our insight in all of their interactions with the youth sector. Deep collaboration and committed partnership working will be a core feature of this role as we seek to achieve transformation at scale across informal and non-formal provision for young people. The Quantitative Research and Methods lead will develop a range of material for external publication and internal learning and reflection (including training content), and hold our collective learning from their programmes of work. They will also contribute to developing and regular reviews of our strategy, sharing reports with the Board of Trustees as required.

The Quantitative Research and Methods Lead will play a strong role in supporting income generation, and will work closely with colleagues across the organisation to embed insights from our data and measurement activity into our broader programmes of work, alongside communicating with and reaching out to our networks.

What are we looking for?

We are looking for an outstanding candidate with a deep understanding of quantitative research and evaluation methods, alongside creativity and imagination about the role of data in sector-wide transformation. You will need to be proactive and an excellent communicator, with strong interest and skills in building alliances and collaborations to advance shared projects and initiatives. You will need high-level skills in data analysis (advanced Excel as a minimum, alongside SPSS and PowerBI), and open-source data tools (Python or R, or similar), and have a solid understanding of the ‘real world’ context for gathering and utilising data in youth provision. You will also need to be comfortable bringing those skills into a fast-paced charity setting, and continuing to learn as you go. An interest in and solid understanding of evaluation would be a distinct plus, as would an awareness of youth-focused public policy and system dynamics. We need a candidate who understands the deeply human and relational nature of data.

You will have the ability to engage with humility and authenticity with a wide range of people and organisations working to support young people and their communities, whilst building their understanding and confidence in data use. You will be able to spot and make connections between relationships and areas of work and be alive to changes and patterns in the external policy and practice context and the opportunities they present for our charity.

Finally, you will also need to be a strong and confident project manager and a compelling and confident writer and presenter who can communicate the breadth of our work. You will be comfortable representing us externally, and acting as a ‘thought leader’: openly reflecting the evolution of your ideas and thinking, and generously sharing your learning with others.

Duties and responsibilities

Plan, manage and deliver projects

- Design and initiate new projects and strands of activity that advance our strategy in relation to quantitative research, evaluation methods and data
- Own the successful delivery of key quantitative research, evaluation and data projects, ensuring they are delivered to time, budget and achieve the charity’s strategic objectives for each project. This responsibility includes:
 - Managing and negotiating roles and responsibilities with partners

- Risk management
- Budget management
- Communications planning
- Contractual/grant management
- Resource management
- Management of supporting team members including Associates/consultants
- Gather learning to support future delivery
- Take responsibility for the delivery of key elements of project work to a high standard, including field research, training and facilitation, data collation, analysis and writing
- Provide specialist advice to other Leads as required to support the delivery of their projects
- Collaborate with project directors/SLT to ensure awareness of risks and to seek support and senior level insight where required
- Build and support internal (and occasionally external) project teams to deliver on these projects, including allocating tasks, monitoring delivery, budgets and emergent risks
- Work alongside the Operations Lead to maintain an up to date and accurate map of capacity demands, availability and forecasting across partnership projects
- Support and undertake accurate recording of projects and contacts in our Salesforce CRM
- Prepare reports to funders as necessary

Strategy development and execution

- Shape the overarching strategic objectives for a project or area of work, linking them to the charity's strategy
- Participate in organisational strategic reviews, making decisions on how to prioritise where limited resources are focused across the different activities and projects the charity is working on.
- Share reports with the Board on the progress and development of their strategic areas of focus

Innovation & Income Generations

- Contribute to the identification, design and development of winning tenders, proposals and grant applications that further delivery of quantitative research, evaluation and data projects
- Develop project ideas related to their "line of enquiry" that can support fundraising proposals
- Develop relationships and an understanding of the priorities of funders they are working with to support the identification of new projects and funding opportunities
- Develop relationships with partner organisations and infrastructure bodies to generate potential partnership and funding opportunities.
- Contribute to the development of funding proposals, shaping approaches and budgets as required

Communications & External Networks

- Establish themselves as the Centre's "go-to" person for external stakeholders for their area of expertise
- Act as an ambassador for the Centre through all external activities, including presenting on the Centre's work where required.
- Contribute to the organisation's communications activity, proactively identifying from their portfolio of work what can and should be shared. This will include the development of external communications such as blogs and thought pieces.

Person specification

Essential skills and experience

- Very strong quantitative research and analysis skills, ideally developed through project work
- Ability to coach and support others to develop their knowledge and understanding of data
- Strong understanding of research methods (research design, survey methods), analytics (linear correlation, thematic coding, designing and building statistical models, cluster analysis and regression) and software to guide routine decision making about appropriate analysis, and data presentation
- High-level knowledge of and skills in statistical analysis packages and open-source data tools (Python, R or similar; SQL)
- Skills in data visualization and/or creative approaches to presenting data and quantitative insight
- Outstanding verbal and written communication skills
- Excellent project management skills, including managing multiple projects simultaneously, monitoring budgets, reporting processes and time tracking
- Strong partnership and collaboration skills: the ability to understand others' contexts and motivations and build a committed team of diverse partners accordingly
- Interest in and commitment to equitable evaluation and anti-oppressive practice
- Some understanding of the evidence base and research context for youth work and provision for young people

Desirable

- Understanding of and strong interest in key themes in the evidence/impact agenda in youth work and provision for young people
- Knowledge of youth policy and the current youth sector context
- Experience in training and facilitation
- Experience of growing and supporting communities of practice
- Track record in significant and proactive income generation; including leading/contributing to development of grant applications and/or responses to competitive tenders in excess of circa £100,000.

Personal qualities we are looking for include:

- Identifying with and embodying the aims and ethos of our charity, including valuing collaborative approaches, challenging and supporting those we work with, and being curious and questioning
- Collaborator and team player
- Reflective and highly self-aware
- Able to have challenging and courageous conversations with compassion
- Understanding of and empathy with our sector
- Focused and thoughtful strategist, balancing project delivery with sector leadership