

Helen Keller Intl Job Announcement

Associate Director, People & Culture – East & Southern Africa and Asia

*Country-based in a Helen Keller Intl country office within the East & Southern Africa and Asia portfolio
(Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nepal, the Philippines, or Tanzania)*

Guided by the remarkable legacy of its co-founder, Helen Keller, Helen Keller Intl partners with communities that are striving to overcome longstanding cycles of poverty. By delivering the essential building blocks of good health, sound nutrition, and clear vision, we help millions of people create lasting change in their own lives. Working in 18 or more countries – across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States – and together with a global community of supporters, we ensure every person has the opportunity – as Helen did – to reach their true potential.

The Associate Director, People & Culture (HR Business Partner) is the senior HR presence for Helen Keller Intl's East & Southern Africa and Asia portfolio. This role pairs trusted advisory partnership with Country Directors and senior leadership with direct line management of country-embedded HR Managers, ensuring that staff across the region experience globally designed people strategies as consistent, professional, and locally grounded support.

This is a role that combines senior HR advisory partnership with people leadership. The Associate Director advises Country Directors and portfolio leadership on workforce planning, organizational design, talent, and employee relations; directly supervises and develops country-embedded HR Managers; and is accountable for HR service delivery standards, labor law compliance, and employee relations outcomes across the East & Southern Africa and Asia portfolio.

This role is ideal for a senior HR professional who combines strong technical HR expertise across employee relations, talent management, and labor law compliance with proven people leadership experience, and who is energized by building HR capability across diverse, multi-country contexts.

Functional Relationships

The Associate Director, People & Culture reports to the Senior Director, People Strategic Delivery and Partnership, and directly supervises country-embedded HR Managers across the East & Southern Africa and Asia portfolio. Key relationships include:

- Country Directors, Country Representatives, and Managing Directors (where applicable)
- Senior Director, Employee Experience, and the Global Safeguarding Advisor
- Senior P&C Officer, Lead, Strategic Initiatives, and the VP, People & Culture
- Labor counsel and employment law advisors, and donor compliance representatives (e.g., FCDO, UN agencies)

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic HR Partnership

- Serve as the primary HR advisor to Country Directors, Country Representatives, and portfolio leadership on workforce planning, organizational design, talent, performance, and employee relations.
- Translate global People & Culture strategies into locally relevant, contextually appropriate action within each country.
- Provide proactive, forward-looking HR advisory support, anticipating people risks and talent gaps before they affect program delivery.
- Champion the employee voice across the region, ensuring staff and manager feedback reaches the Senior Director, People Strategic Delivery and Partnership.

2. Leadership & Development of Country HR Teams

- Directly supervise country-embedded HR Managers across the region, setting clear performance expectations and providing regular coaching and feedback.
- Invest in the professional development of HR Managers, building their capacity to handle complex employee situations and grow as HR professionals.
- Build a cohesive, collaborative regional HR team with shared practices and peer learning across geographically dispersed HR staff.
- Provide surge support to country HR teams during periods of high demand, including major recruitments, complex employee relations matters, or leadership transitions.

3. HR Service Delivery & Operational Standards

- Own end-to-end HR service delivery across the region, from recruitment and onboarding through performance management and offboarding.
- Implement and uphold the global HR Service Charter, monitoring service quality and staff satisfaction across the portfolio.
- Ensure core HR processes, including performance conversations, talent reviews, and compensation analyses, are executed consistently with accurate documentation.
- Identify and escalate service delivery gaps or resource constraints requiring intervention at the Senior Director or pillar level.

4. Employee Relations & Safeguarding

- Serve as the senior HR resource for complex, sensitive, and high-risk employee relations matters across the region, including disciplinary processes, grievances, and performance exits.
- Guide and coach HR Managers and line managers in handling employee situations with confidence, empathy, and procedural correctness.
- Maintain close coordination with the Global Safeguarding Advisor, ensuring HR processes reinforce safeguarding principles across the region.

5. Labor Law Compliance & Risk Management

- Maintain working knowledge of labor laws, employment regulations, and donor compliance requirements in each country of the region.
- Oversee compensation analyses within each country, ensuring salary scales are competitive, equitable, and legally compliant.

- Ensure all HR documentation across the region, including contracts, staff handbooks, and policy instruments, is current and legally sound.
- Identify and escalate emerging compliance risks or labor market dynamics affecting the organization's ability to attract and retain staff.

6. Talent Management & Organizational Effectiveness

- Drive implementation of talent management frameworks across the region, including performance management, succession planning, and talent reviews.
- Advise Country Directors on team structure, staffing levels, and capability requirements as program portfolios evolve.
- Lead the HR delivery dimensions of organizational changes across the region, ensuring transitions are managed with care and transparency.

7. Feedback & Continuous Improvement

- Maintain a structured feedback loop with the Senior Director, People Strategic Delivery and Partnership, sharing portfolio-level insights on HR service quality and people risks.
- Contribute to the development of HR service standards, tools, and operating procedures at the pillar level.
- Track and report on portfolio-level HR metrics, including staffing levels, compliance status, and employee relations trends.

Qualifications

- Education & Experience: Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred; 8–10 years of progressive HR experience, including 3+ years supervising staff or managers, or leading a complex function or portfolio.
- Demonstrated expertise across core HR disciplines — employee relations, talent management, performance management, labor law compliance, and compensation — applied in field-based, resource-constrained environments.
- Genuine fluency in the legal, cultural, and operational context of countries in the East & Southern Africa and Asia portfolio — working knowledge grounded in direct experience.
- Strong advisory and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build trusted relationships with senior leaders and navigate difficult conversations across diverse cultural contexts.
- Excellent written and verbal communication in English, the working language across the portfolio.
- Desirable: Professional HR certification (SHRM-CP/SCP, CIPD, SPHR, or equivalent); experience in international development or global health; familiarity with donor compliance requirements (FCDO, UN); HRIS and people analytics proficiency; additional language proficiency relevant to a portfolio country (e.g., Portuguese, Swahili, French, Bengali, Nepali, Khmer, or Filipino).
- Ability and willingness to travel within East & Southern Africa and Asia for approximately 20–30% of working time, including regular in-country visits and occasional travel to Helen Keller Intl headquarters or regional convenings.

Key Competencies

- Owing Work & Building Trust: Delivers honest, well-grounded professional advice and follows through on commitments to senior leaders and peers.

- Adapting & Navigating Change: Clarifies priorities, addresses risks directly, and adapts plans in response to evolving operational and strategic conditions.
- Getting Work Done: Translates strategy into integrated execution, strengthening performance standards and accountability across teams.
- Working Together & Growing Others: Builds collaborative relationships across a diverse stakeholder ecosystem and creates structured opportunities for growth.

Fairness, Belonging and Zero Tolerance to Abuse

As a member of the Helen Keller Family, each employee is expected to:

- Help to develop and maintain an environment that welcomes and develops a multi-cultural workforce with varied lived experiences and identities.
- Foster a work environment where everyone feels valued and included.
- Support employees' evaluation and promotion processes based on skills and performance.
- Promote a safe, secure, and respectful environment for all members of Helen Keller family, stakeholders in general, and particularly for the communities we serve.
- Follow Helen Keller Code of Conduct helping to prevent any type of abuse including workplace harassment, sexual abuse and exploitation, and trafficking in persons.
- Adhere to the Organizational Core Values embodied by our namesake and co-founder: courage, integrity, rigor, and compassion.

Compensation

Helen Keller offers a comprehensive rewards package, including health and dental coverage, paid leave, and professional development. Specific offerings may vary by country in accordance with local laws.

The compensation for this position will be aligned with the local salary structure of the country in which the successful candidate is based, consistent with Helen Keller Intl's Grade 10 (Associate Advisory/Supervisory Contributor) framework.

To Apply

Qualified candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to HKI.Recruitment@hki.org.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

In the spirit of the extraordinary ability and vision of our founder, Helen Keller Intl fosters an environment of fairness and belonging for our workforce.

Helen Keller Intl is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We are committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment.