Finance Manager, Daara Consortium

Employer	Equinexus Partners Ltd, Lead Organisation of the Daara Consortium
Programme	Daara: strengthening African organisations to improve foundational learning
Location	Nairobi, Kenya (consortium secretariat) Role Operating Remotely
Contract type	Full-time, fixed-term, renewable subject to programme funding
Reporting line	Chief Finance Officer, Equinexus
Works closely with	Programme Director, Finance leads within consortium partners Gates Foundation, External auditors, Banks, procurement providers and regulatory authorities
Duration	3-years, aligned to the programme period (currently expected to run from October 2026 to July 2029)
Travel	Periodic regional travel across Anglophone and Francophone Africa for partner finance review and assurance
Remuneration	Competitive, commensurate with the seniority of the role

Background
Across sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of children complete their early years of schooling without acquiring the foundational literacy and numeracy on which all later learning depends. Few challenges in the region carry greater consequences, and the organisations best placed to lead the response are African.

Daara is a multi-country initiative funded by the Gates Foundation to strengthen African organisations driving improvements in foundational learning. Its premise is straightforward and demanding. Lasting change at scale rests not on isolated projects but on durable, well-led institutions that can work effectively with governments, generate and use evidence, and sustain results long after any single programme has ended. At its heart is a single conviction: the unit of change is the institution, not the individual. Durable improvement in foundational learning comes from strengthening the organisations and the leaders closest to the work, rather than from developing individuals in isolation. The first phase of Daara was co-created by organisations across sub-Saharan Africa, implemented by Better Purpose, and recorded successes in strengthening member organisations' development and improving foundational learning delivery.

This phase of Daara is delivered by a consortium led by Equinexus Partners. The consortium brings together four organisations, each leading a distinct technical component of the programme:

- **Equinexus Partners:** Lead Organisation, fiduciary host, and orchestrator of programme design and delivery.
- **QEDA:** foundational learning, technical excellence.
- **eBASE Africa:** monitoring, evaluation and learning.
- **LARTES-IFAN:** research, policy, and Francophone engagement.

Working across the consortium, the Finance Manager provides the operational leadership required to ensure that all financial information is accurate, timely and compliant. The role works closely with the finance teams of each consortium partner, coordinating financial reporting, reviewing expenditure, supporting compliance with agreed financial standards, and consolidating financial information for submission to the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Finance Officer, in turn, provides strategic oversight, chairs the programme's financial governance arrangements, and reports to the Consortium Finance Subcommittee and other governance bodies.

The role exists to ensure that a complex, multi-country, multi-partner grant is managed with the discipline, transparency and integrity that public trust demands. It requires someone who can combine technical financial expertise with sound judgement, collaborative working and an appreciation of the stewardship responsibilities that accompany significant donor investment. This is a senior appointment and one of the most consequential operational leadership roles within the delivery of Daara.

The Finance Manager is employed and line-managed by Equinexus Partners as the Lead Organisation and fiduciary host of the Daara consortium. While accountable to the Equinexus Chief Finance Officer, the role works closely with the finance teams of all consortium partners to ensure consistent financial management, timely reporting and compliance with the programme's fiduciary obligations. The effectiveness of the role depends as much on the trust and collaborative relationships it builds across the partnership as on the authority of the position itself.

The role calls for someone who can earn the confidence of partner finance teams, programme leadership, external auditors, the Gates Foundation and the Consortium Finance Subcommittee alike. It requires an appreciation that sound financial stewardship is not simply about compliance, but about enabling the programme to deliver its ambitions with integrity, transparency and accountability.

Purpose of the Role

The Finance Manager exists to ensure that every financial decision strengthens the credibility, integrity and long-term sustainability of the programme. This is the senior finance appointment for the consortium: the person who turns a large and complex grant into a well-governed instrument of delivery, and who ensures that the way Daara handles money itself demonstrates the institutional discipline the programme asks of others.

This is a stewardship role before it is an accounting one. The Finance Manager protects public trust by ensuring that resources are used wisely, fully accounted for, and directed to the purposes for which they were given. They enable delivery rather than constrain it, building systems and controls that give colleagues the confidence to act quickly and well, rather than treating finance as a brake on the programme.

The role is responsible for the financial integrity of the grant, the soundness of the controls that protect it, the accuracy of the consortium's reporting, and the confidence of everyone who depends on those things to be true. That confidence is owed to several audiences at once: the Gates Foundation, which must trust that its investment is in safe hands; the consortium partners, who must trust that funds are managed fairly and transparently; the auditors and regulators, who must find a programme that is ready for scrutiny at any time; and Equinexus leadership, which carries ultimate fiduciary responsibility as host.

The work demands technical mastery and sound judgement in equal measure: the ability to see how budgets, controls, compliance and reporting connect, and the discipline to hold the line on standards while keeping finance in service of the programme. Above all, it demands integrity, exercised consistently and visibly, because the credibility of the whole consortium rests in part on how its money is managed.

The measure of success is simple to state and difficult to achieve. Three years from now, the programme should have been managed without a single avoidable financial surprise, its audits should be unqualified, its partners should regard its financial management as fair and exact, and the Gates Foundation should regard Equinexus as a fiduciary host it would trust again without hesitation.

Core Responsibilities

1. Financial Stewardship

- Lead the day-to-day financial management of the Daara programme, supporting the Chief Finance Officer in ensuring the integrity of the grant and the sound stewardship of programme resources.
- Protect donor resources as funds held in trust, ensuring they are used solely for their intended purpose and managed with the highest standards of transparency, accountability and professionalism.
- Maintain accurate financial records that clearly distinguish Equinexus' own programme expenditure from funds administered on behalf of consortium partners, ensuring complete financial transparency at all times.
- Promote value for money across the programme, balancing economy, efficiency and effectiveness while safeguarding programme quality and compliance.

2. Budget Planning and Financial Management

- Coordinate the annual budgeting process across the consortium, translating programme plans into credible, well-structured and deliverable financial plans.
- Prepare multi-year financial forecasts and scenario analyses that support informed decision-making and adaptive programme management.
- Monitor cash flow across the programme, ensuring partners receive funding in accordance with approved schedules while maintaining appropriate financial liquidity throughout the grant period.
- Coordinate budget revisions and reallocations in accordance with the grant agreement, reviewing partner budgets for consistency, accuracy and compliance before submission to the Chief Finance Officer for approval.

3. Consortium Financial Management

- Coordinate financial reporting across all consortium partners, establishing clear reporting requirements, templates and timelines that support consistent financial management.
- Review partner financial submissions against approved budgets, workplans and grant conditions, identifying issues early and working collaboratively with partner finance teams to resolve them.
- Provide financial guidance and support to partner finance teams, promoting consistent application of consortium financial policies while respecting each partner's own governance and financial systems.
- Consolidate financial information from across the consortium into a single, accurate financial picture to support programme management, donor reporting, and governance oversight.

4. Grant Financial Compliance

- Ensure the programme's financial management complies with the Gates Foundation's requirements, the grant agreement, and all applicable donor conditions, recognising that compliance is an ongoing discipline rather than a periodic exercise.
- Support compliance with procurement requirements, contractual obligations and statutory regulations across all participating countries.
- Maintain a continuous state of audit readiness by ensuring financial records, supporting documentation, and internal controls remain complete, accurate and readily accessible.
- Monitor changes in donor requirements and financial regulations, promptly escalate significant compliance risks to the Chief Finance Officer, and support the timely implementation of corrective actions.

5. Financial Reporting and Decision Support

- Prepare timely and accurate monthly, quarterly and annual financial reports, ensuring all reporting is complete, reconciled and supported by appropriate documentation.
- Develop financial dashboards, forecasts and variance analyses that enable programme leadership to understand financial performance and make informed decisions.
- Provide financial analysis and decision support to the Programme Director and Chief Finance Officer, contributing to reporting presented to the Consortium Finance Subcommittee and other governance bodies.
- Ensure that every financial report produced by the programme meets the highest standards of accuracy, consistency and professional integrity.

6. Internal Controls and Financial Risk Management

- Implement, maintain and continuously strengthen internal financial controls appropriate to a complex, multi-country consortium programme.
- Uphold clear delegations of authority, segregation of duties and financial approval processes, ensuring they are consistently applied across programme operations.
- Maintain the programme's financial risk register, identifying emerging financial risks and supporting proactive mitigation measures.
- Promote a culture in which financial concerns are raised promptly, addressed constructively and resolved transparently.
- Safeguard programme assets, financial records and supporting documentation through effective record management and secure financial systems.

7. Procurement and Financial Assurance

- Provide financial oversight of procurement processes, ensuring expenditure represents value for money and complies with donor and organisational requirements.
- Review procurement documentation, supplier due diligence, and contractual financial provisions before making commitments.
- Operate payment approval processes with discipline, ensuring every expenditure is appropriately authorised, supported and within delegated authority.
- Support programme teams in applying procurement procedures consistently across all consortium activities.

8. Audit and External Assurance

- Coordinate the programme's operational preparation for internal and external audits, ensuring auditors receive complete, accurate and timely financial information.
- Support donor financial reviews, assurance exercises and other compliance assessments with professionalism, transparency and responsiveness.

- Coordinate internal financial reviews and periodic compliance checks, using findings to strengthen systems and improve financial management.
- Prepare responses to audit findings, monitor the implementation of agreed actions, and ensure that lessons learned strengthen future practice.

9. Financial Systems and Information Management

- Develop and maintain financial procedures, reporting tools and operational guidance appropriate to a multi-country consortium programme.
- Maintain standard financial templates and reporting mechanisms that support consistency across all consortium partners.
- Ensure financial records are organised, secure and readily retrievable, preserving the programme's institutional memory throughout the grant period.
- Continuously review financial systems and processes, identifying opportunities to improve efficiency, accuracy and user experience.

10. Financial Leadership and Capacity Strengthening

- Lead the programme's day-to-day finance operations, coordinating financial activities across the consortium and supporting any programme finance staff assigned to the initiative.
- Foster effective working relationships with partner finance teams, building trust and encouraging collaborative approaches to financial management.
- Strengthen financial capability across the consortium through guidance, coaching and shared learning, recognising that strong financial stewardship contributes directly to institutional strengthening.
- Model the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and accountability in every aspect of the programme's financial management.

11. Strategic Financial Advice

- Provide financial insight and strategic advice to the Programme Director and Chief Finance Officer, ensuring financial considerations inform major programme decisions.
- Support adaptive programme management by modelling the financial implications of alternative delivery scenarios and strategic choices.
- Contribute to long-term financial sustainability planning, helping the consortium consider how successful approaches can be sustained beyond the grant's life.
- Prepare a high-quality financial analysis to support the Chief Finance Officer in providing assurance to the Consortium Finance Subcommittee, Equinexus leadership, and the Gates Foundation.

Education and Qualifications

- A recognised professional accounting qualification, such as ACCA, CPA, CIMA or ICPAK, in good standing, or working towards.

- A relevant degree in finance, accounting, economics or a related discipline; a postgraduate qualification is an advantage, though demonstrated mastery matters more than certification.
- At least 8 years of finance manager experience, including no fewer than five years managing the finances of donor-funded programmes.
- A demonstrable record of managing grants in excess of US$2 million, ideally within multi-country or consortium arrangements.
- Direct experience of international development finance, and of meeting the standards that major institutional funders expect.
- Experience in managing or overseeing partner and sub-grant finances across more than one country and currency.
- A record of leading external audits and donor reviews to a clean and timely conclusion.
- Deep familiarity with sub-Saharan Africa, and the cultural and linguistic range to work effectively across Anglophone and Francophone contexts.
- Professional working proficiency in both English and French(preferred) is essential, given the consortium's Francophone partnership and the programme's commitment to equity between Anglophone and Francophone partners.

Knowledge

- A thorough command of international donor compliance and grant management, ideally including the Gates Foundation's requirements.
- A strong grasp of financial control frameworks, budgeting, forecasting and audit.
- Sound knowledge of procurement and of financial risk management in complex programmes.
- Familiarity with the regulatory and statutory environments of the African jurisdictions in which the programme operates.
- Confident use of financial systems and tools, including advanced Excel and ERP or accounting software; familiarity with Power BI or comparable reporting tools is an advantage.
- An unequivocal commitment to integrity, transparency and the highest standards of ethical and financial conduct.
- Excellent written and verbal communication, with the ability to make financial information clear to non-financial colleagues.

Leadership Competencies

The appointment will be judged as much on how the Finance Manager leads as on what they deliver. The following competencies are central to the role.

- **Stewardship:** Treats every resource as held in trust, and protects it accordingly.
- **Integrity:** Acts consistently with the programme's values and earns trust by being trustworthy, especially when no one is watching.
- **Strategic judgement:** Sees beyond the figures to their consequences, and keeps finance oriented toward the outcomes the programme exists to achieve.

- **Financial insight:** Turns data into understanding, and understanding into better decisions.
- **Rigour and attention to detail:** Holds an exacting standard of accuracy without losing sight of the larger picture.
- **Risk judgement:** Identifies financial, compliance and fraud risk early, and weighs it soundly.
- **Influencing:** Secures sound financial practice across organisations they do not manage, through credibility and reason rather than position.
- **Systems thinking:** Understands how budgets, controls, compliance and reporting connect, and anticipates the second-order effects of decisions.
- **Professional credibility:** Commands the confidence of auditors, funders and partners through evident competence and consistency.
- **Relationship building:** Builds durable, trust-based relationships with partners, funders, and advisers, and keeps finance as a partner to deliver.
- **Resilience:** Sustains composure, focus and good judgement under pressure and in moments of financial scrutiny.

Success Metrics

- **Financial compliance:** The programme has met the Gates Foundation's requirements and the terms of the grant in full, with no material findings of non-compliance.
- **Audit outcomes:** External audits are unqualified, and any recommendations are closed out promptly and in full.
- **Reporting quality:** Financial reports are accurate, reconciled and on time, and are accepted by the funder and governance without material revision.
- **Forecasting accuracy:** Forecasts prove reliable, with variances explained and held within agreed tolerances, so that the consortium is never surprised by its own finances.
- **Budget utilisation:** Funds are deployed at a healthy, well-managed rate, neither underspent in ways that risk delivery nor overspent beyond approved lines.
- **Controls and integrity:** Financial controls operate as designed, segregation of duties is maintained, and there are no incidents of fraud or misuse of funds.
- **Partner confidence:** Consortium partners experience the programme's financial management as fair, transparent and accurate, and ringfenced funds, such as the AI Innovation Fund, are fully accounted for against their purpose.
- **Procurement and value for money:** Procurement is competitive and compliant, and the programme can demonstrate value for money across its spending.
- **Donor confidence:** The Gates Foundation regards Equinexus as a disciplined and trustworthy fiduciary host, and the relationship deepens over the life of the grant.

Why Join Daara

This is a rare opportunity to shape the financial stewardship of one of the most significant African-led investments in foundational learning on the continent. Daara is built on a conviction that the future of learning in Africa will be shaped by African institutions, and that the most durable way to improve outcomes for children is to strengthen the organisations and leaders working closest to the problem. The Finance Manager sits at the centre of that work, ensuring that a complex, continent-spanning grant is managed in a way that earns and keeps the trust on which the whole endeavour depends.

The role offers a particular kind of consequence: the chance to build financial systems and a standard of stewardship that strengthen not only this programme but also the institutions it works with, and that endure beyond the grant's life. It will suit a finance leader who takes satisfaction in precision and in building things that last, who understands that the way money is managed is itself a form of leadership, and who wants their work to help ensure that every child across the region can read, write and count. For the right person, it is a chance to leave the consortium, its partners and a generation of African organisations stronger than they found them.

How to Apply

Applications should comprise a curriculum vitae (CV) and a cover letter of no more than two pages setting out the candidate's suitability against this specification. Applications should be submitted to hr@equinexuspartners.com by 11th September, 2026..

Equinexus Partners is committed to building a team that reflects the communities Daara serves. Applications are welcomed from candidates across Africa and the wider region, and the consortium is committed to fair and inclusive recruitment.