

Job Description

AI+Africa Lead

Natural Language Processing Community of Practice (NLP-CoP)

Overview

[The MERL Tech Initiative \(MTI\)](#) is looking for a part-time (60%) **AI+Africa Lead** for our [Natural Language Processing Community of Practice \(NLP-CoP\)](#).

The **NLP-CoP** is a global, transdisciplinary community of 1200+ members that is exploring, learning, and collaborating on the safe and responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) for monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL). Our work bridges the areas of evaluation, ethical production and use of data and evidence, participatory data governance, and responsible use of data and emerging technologies to improve social impact. A key goal is democratizing understanding of emerging AI and strengthening capacities among MERL professionals to responsibly and ethically use emerging AI tools to enhance their practice.

The **AI+Africa Working Group**, one of the NLP-CoP's 8 sub-working groups, is exploring NLP and emerging AI in African contexts. (Some 25% of the NLP-CoP's members hail from and/or work on the African continent.) The AI+Africa Working Group has expressed interest in building relationships and connections across the continent, with an eye toward sharing learning and improving cross-sector, cross-disciplinary collaboration on the use of AI for MERL and the application of MERL to AI and its impact on policy and society.

The AI+Africa Lead will focus on supporting the AI+Africa Working Group to create space, structure and momentum for its members to work, learn together and connect with each other and with other networks working on different aspects of AI development and governance in Africa. The work will also support the AI+Africa Working Group to strengthen its capacities to better use data and AI to improve MERL and evidence-based policy making. The AI+Africa Lead will also play a role in landscaping, understanding, networking and connecting at the intersection of MERL+AI in Africa more broadly.

You might be a good fit for this role if you are:

- Reliable and highly organized, with excellent communication and writing skills in English
- Based in an African country, with strong regional networks across African civil society, MERL, ICT4D, Digital Development, AI, data governance, and/or related professional communities
- Highly curious about the intersection of emerging AI, MERL, data governance, and the social sector in African countries and contexts
- Passionate about training, learning and supporting transdisciplinary communities to grow their knowledge, collaborate, and apply learning to their practical and strategic work
- Ready for an opportunity to build your professional network within a nimble, high-impact, motivated team of other consultants who are driving forward the field of ethical, responsible use of AI in international development, humanitarian and human rights-related work and the use of AI for MERL.

Description of the job

The main activities for this part-time role include:

Research, Landscaping, Planning, Trendspotting

- Conduct a participatory research and landscaping exercise to better understand current AI+MERL efforts, existing similar or related efforts, and existing communities of practice on the continent, and opportunities for collaboration
- Develop a plan for next steps and actions together with the AI+Africa Working Group based on the landscaping
- Regularly scan newsletters, social media, mainstream media, and other sources to stay abreast of developments related to AI+MERL in African contexts
- Stay on top of emerging trends, challenges, tools and topics related to AI+MERL in Africa

Ongoing support for the AI+Africa Working Group

- Work with AI+Africa Working Group members to implement plans for learning and collaborating
- Identify topics and speakers; plan and organize virtual and in-person events on MERL+AI based on Working Group interests
- Write and/or work with AI+Africa Working Group Members to write blog posts and thought pieces and Working Group meeting summaries
- Share relevant articles, links, events with the Working Group
- Establish metrics and process for monitoring and improving the AI+Africa Working Group together with the overall NLP-CoP
- Manage Working Group membership, membership list, and Slack channel
- Seek feedback from the Working Group for continual improvement

Training and capacity strengthening

- Identify and share relevant external events and opportunities on AI+MERL in Africa
- Organize and design internal training, capacity strengthening, and learning events and opportunities based on needs and interests as expressed by AI+Africa Working Group Members
- Identify suitable organizations and individuals to support learning and training on AI+MERL

Support wider NLP-CoP and MTI activities

- Engage with other networks and communities of practice to cross-pollinate learning around AI+MERL in Africa
- Develop concept notes to seek support for training and other Working Group activities
- Support strategic growth and development of the overall NLP-CoP, with an eye to ensuring representation, participation, and influence of the AI+Africa Working Group in wider CoP efforts
- Collaborate with other MTI team members and the overall NLP-CoP Community Manager

Hours, location, compensation, terms

- Part-time position (60% time - 3 days per week / 12 days per month)
- Salary range of \$45-50k USD depending on experience
- May require occasional after-5pm meetings to overlap with team members in US and Europe
- Remote role - candidates must have own laptop/computer and a steady Internet connection
- 1 month trial period as part of a 2025 contract, with potential to renew for up to 18 months total

What our ideal candidate brings

Skills and experience

- 5-7 years of experience in a similar role or doing similar work
- Excellent writing, communication, organization, engagement
- Excellent interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence
- Bachelor's degree or higher in international development, human rights, computer science, data science/data management, IT, evaluation, law, ethics, education, or related fields
- Comfortable and skilled with Office, online meeting platforms, day-to-day use of tech and social media (Office: Word, Power Point, Excel, Teams, Google Drive, Calendars/Scheduling, Slack, LinkedIn, Chatbots, and MERL Tech Tools)
- Experience in several of these areas: monitoring and evaluation, research, learning, emerging AI, community development, international development, humanitarian work, training and capacity strengthening; and interest in learning more about them

Traits

- Responsible, dependable, reliable, consistent, shows up on time, relationship builder
- Enthusiastic about engaging and learning and helping others connect and learn together
- Well organized, professional, detail oriented
- Finds joy in helping a lay audience understand complex topics
- Supportive team player; alert and responsive to the needs of others
- Proactive, self-motivated, goes the extra mile
- Able to self manage without extensive supervision, anticipates what needs to be done
- Excellent interpersonal skills; highly professional communicator
- Excited about working with a diverse and distributed team/network
- Positive, can-do attitude, interest in learning new things

What we offer

- Flexibility and excellent opportunity for professional growth in an emerging space
- Excellent visibility and opportunity to grow your professional network and shine in an exciting field
- Friendly, supportive, and accountable best-in-class team of experts as your colleagues
- A diverse and inclusive environment, where transparency and feedback are welcomed
- Opportunity to learn about emerging technologies and their responsible, practical application
- Exposure to cutting edge ideas and technologies to help you stay ahead of the wider field
- Potential to join research projects and support new areas to build your skills and knowledge
- Space to develop your own ideas and projects (if aligned with MTI's mission and goals)
- Contract from start date through December 2025, potential to extend to 18 months or more

What we do not offer

- Benefits
- Equipment
- Funding to secure equipment or Internet access
- Visa support

To Apply

- Send a cover letter to hello@merltech.org indicating your interest in the position and why you feel you would be our top choice.
- Attach or link to your CV, provide 2 relevant writing samples, 1-2 documents or links that show examples of relevant work products or projects you've been involved in
- **Deadline for applications: midnight ET, Sunday February 16, 2025**
- **Shortlisted candidates will be contacted by February 21, 2025** to schedule interviews