

We are looking for a trustee with recognised expertise in either technical and vocational training, youth employability, or gender inclusion in Africa.

Term	Minimum three years, renewable
Remuneration	Unremunerated. Reasonable expenses reimbursed.
Board lead	International development and programme quality
Committee	Programme and technical advisory work. Potentially chairing a Programme Committee.
Location	This role is open to candidates based in Zambia, elsewhere in Africa, the United Kingdom, or Europe.
Closing date	Applications considered as received.

About Build It International

Build It International equips young people in Zambia from disadvantaged communities, with construction skills, life skills, and real work experience so they can earn a sustainable living. Our rural cohorts help build the schools, clinics, and community facilities that their communities urgently need. Since 2007, we have trained more than 2,500 young people and built over 60 schools and clinics, benefiting more than 400,000 Zambians.

Our 2023 Impact Study found that 88 per cent of graduates were in paid construction work 6 months after training. Average monthly income increases up to five-times one year after graduation and up to nine times five years after graduation. Eight impact studies over more than fifteen years, using consistent measures and a comparison group, give us unusually strong evidence for an organisation of our size.

We work from our Centre for Excellence on the outskirts of Lusaka, through mobile training cohorts, and through community construction projects in rural Zambia. Our annual income is approximately £1 million. We are firmly rooted in Zambia and our 2025–2028 Strategy commits us to move from delivery alone towards supporting the wider development of Zambia’s construction and skills sector.

Governance and the board

Build It International is a registered charity in the UK (1115989) and a company limited by guarantee in Zambia (PACRA 120150137444). Although two legal bodies, since 2022 it has functioned as one organisation governed by a joint Board of Trustees. A memorandum of understanding guides the relationship between the two legal bodies.

Both boards are represented on the Finance and Audit, Fundraising, and Nominations and Remuneration Committees. A trustee also chairs the Safeguarding Committee.

Build It International fully understands the importance of effective governance for the well-being of the organisation and invests in its board to achieve this. Trustees must be enthusiastic advocates of the

role of NGOs in international development and comfortable working on strategic and policy matters. They are also expected to contribute to expanding our community of support.

We are recruiting three trustees to the board in 2026. Each appointee takes the board lead for one area of our work. This role description covers one of the three; the others are advertised separately.

Why this role, and why now

Zambia has one of the youngest populations in the world, with approximately 60% of the population under 25. More than three million young people are not in education, employment, or training. Youth unemployment sits at around 38.5 per cent, and young women are disproportionately affected. Construction is one of the few sectors that can absorb large numbers of young people without requiring formal academic qualifications, and Zambia's technical and vocational education system largely struggles to connect training to what employers actually need.

Our 2025–2028 Strategy commits us to working on both sides of that problem, and to moving beyond delivery towards influencing how the sector operates. We are already engaged with TEVETA (national skills regulator) and the National Council for Construction, and our Women in Construction programme, funded by the Government of Ireland, works at the systemic level with vocational training institutions, contractors, trade associations, and national regulators. Our Technical Learning Group brings training institutions together to develop gender policy standards.

We have completed eight impact studies, including five-year income tracking and comparison group data, and are currently completing our first Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis. This strong evidence base is unusual for an organisation of our size, and we are seeking a trustee who can support our ambitions around programme quality and impact.

What this trustee will bring

Essential

- Recognised expertise in technical and vocational education and training, youth employability, or skills and labour market systems in Africa.
- Understanding of gender inclusion as a structural and systemic issue rather than a participation target, particularly in male-dominated sectors.
- Experience of influencing policy or practice at national or sector level, whether through research, advocacy, advisory work, or programme design.
- The ability to interrogate evidence rigorously and constructively, and to tell us where our impact claims are strong and where they are not.
- Commitment to locally-led development, and support for our transition to Zambia-based senior leadership.
- An academic, research, NGO or consultancy background, including at firms such as Dalberg, McKinsey, or equivalent advisory practices.

Desirable

- Direct experience of Zambia or Southern Africa.
- Published or peer-reviewed work on youth employment, skills systems, or gender in the labour market.

- Knowledge of green and climate-resilient construction skills, and of how green skills curricula are developed and accredited.
- Networks among research institutions, think tanks, multilateral agencies, or ministries of education, labour, or youth.
- Experience of monitoring, evaluation, and learning frameworks in employment and skills programmes.

What you will do

- Take the board lead on programme design, quality and impact.
- Advise the executive on programme design, quality standards, and the evidence base, and contribute to our technical advisory work.
- Challenge and strengthen our approach to gender inclusion across training, employer engagement, and sector influencing.
- Help us articulate our systems change ambition credibly to funders, partners, and government, and connect us to relevant research and policy networks.
- Support our localisation commitments, and hold the board to them.

Summary of trustee responsibilities

- Ensure that the charity focuses on a clear vision, mission, strategic direction, and effective execution.
- Monitor the performance of the charity.
- Ensure good governance and compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Act as guardians of all the charity's assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment, and proper application.
- Take the board lead for one aspect of our work, developing a deeper understanding of the related issues and advising and supporting staff.

All trustees will bring

- Commitment to our vision, mission, values, and strategy.
- Good, independent judgement and a willingness to be flexible, tolerant, and diplomatic.
- The ability to demonstrate Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to work constructively as part of a board.
- The ability to make decisions impartially and objectively in the best interests of the organisation.
- Willingness to be an advocate for Build It International and to support fundraising.

In addition, trustees should

- Have a good understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities, and liabilities of trusteeship, in the UK or Zambia. Training can be provided.
- Commit to devoting the time and effort necessary to fulfil the responsibilities outlined.
- Have experience of, or a genuine willingness to understand, the context in which we work in Zambia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

- Sign up to our Code of Conduct.
- Declare relevant interests on appointment and keep that declaration current. We maintain a register of interests, and any matter in which a trustee has a personal, professional, or financial interest is handled through our conflicts of interest policy. Making introductions and advocating for Build It International is welcomed and expected; taking part in a decision where you hold an interest is not.

Terms of appointment

Time commitment

Trustees make a commitment of an average of around two hours per week, the equivalent of 10 to 12 days per year, plus attendance at four board meetings and one away day. It is a requirement that trustees are easily contacted by email.

Location

Board meetings are held in Central London and Lusaka on a mid-week afternoon, and also on Microsoft Teams. An annual away day is held online in September or October. Our offices are in Shrewsbury, United Kingdom, and at our Centre for Excellence at 10 Miles, Chibombo, Zambia.

Remuneration

Trustees are not remunerated but may reclaim expenses directly incurred in carrying out their role for the charity, on submission of the appropriate receipts.

Term

A minimum of three years, renewable.

How to apply

Please email a cover letter and CV to Alison McKittrick at alisonmckittrick@builditinternational.org.

In your cover letter, please tell us what draws you to Build It International and what you would want to contribute in your first year.

It is important that we get to understand each other before a decision is made. After an initial call, a face-to-face meeting will be arranged. This usually includes prospective board members sitting in on a board meeting.

There is no fixed closing date. Applications are considered as they are received, and we will close the search once we have made the appointment.

Thank you for your interest.