
Position: Senior Director, Head of Partnerships
Site: Hybrid: MaRS Discovery Tower (Toronto) + Work from Home
Organization: Grand Challenges Canada
Reports to: Chief Strategy and Partnerships Officer (CSPO)
Status: Permanent, Full-Time
Salary: \$158,341/year + benefits

[Grand Challenges Canada](#) (GCC) is dedicated to the vision of a world where innovation helps every person thrive. Our role in this vision is to support local, scalable, sustainable innovation that builds a healthier, more equitable future.

As an innovation platform and one of the leading impact-first investors in Canada, GCC has funded over 1,600 innovations in more than 100 countries. These innovations have already touched the lives of more than 100 million people, and we're on a journey to reach 700 million people with lifesaving and life-improving innovations by 2035.

Delivering on that strategy depends on more than grant-by-grant fundraising. It depends on partnership architecture: structures that use GCC's own capital as a lever to attract co-investment from other philanthropies and to bring institutional financiers such as MDBs and DFIs into our outcomes. GCC is seeking a Senior Director and Head of Partnerships to design and lead that work.

This role is built around relationship capital and structural imagination. The Head of Partnerships will bring trusted, peer-level relationships with the Government of Canada and other governments, philanthropies, and multilateral institutions that matter most to our strategy, and they will use those relationships to engineer the consortia, anchor mechanisms and blended-finance vehicles that put GCC in lanes other intermediaries cannot occupy. They will sustain a small, distributed team that they develop deliberately, and serve the organization as a whole.

Key Responsibilities

The Senior Director will lead the operational architecture of GCC's external partnership work in service of the 2025-2030 strategy and its near-term FY26/27 capital mobilization targets, including:

- **Mobilizing deployable relationship capital.** Bringing trusted, peer-level relationships with priority philanthropies into immediate service of GCC's pipeline. The role assumes the right candidate brings these relationships from day one, rather than a willingness to build them from scratch.



- **Engineering partnership and capital structures.** Designing partnership architectures that use GCC's own capital as a lever to attract co-investment from other philanthropies and larger commitments from MDBs, DFIs and multilateral financiers. This includes positioning GCC as anchor for pooled mechanisms and lead convener of multi-stakeholder funding consortia. This includes finding ways to invest with others in ecosystems to produce system-level outcomes, not just in innovations with innovation level outcomes.
- **Bridging philanthropic and institutional capital.** Holding genuine credibility with foundations and with MDBs/DFI and using that bridge to bring institutional capital toward GCC's outcomes.
- **Strategic instinct and disciplined judgement.** Seeing partnership possibilities that are not visible, and pairing imagination with the discipline to know when to push and when to walk away. You cannot only win in this position, but you also have to be prepared to take risks, learn hard lessons, and keep moving. The organization and senior leadership recognize this and will support you personally and professionally in taking risk.
- **Market positioning.** Identifying and occupying lanes where GCC is the only logical convener or lead, moving beyond competition with other intermediaries for the same grants into partnership models that are GCC-distinctive. Comfort with first-of-kind deals and ambiguity.
- **Senior relationship stewardship.** Maintaining peer-level relationships with senior leaders across philanthropies, governments and global institutions over time, with the judgement to orchestrate them: when to engage the CEO, when to hold the relationship personally, and when to surface them to the broader team.
- **Distributed team leadership.** Building and developing a partnerships team whose measure of success is what the team can execute independently. Distributing ownership meaningfully, investing in team capacity, and creating the conditions for delegated decision-making.
- Working as a core member of the Strategy team, including peer engagement with the Senior Director for Policy and Strategy and the Director, Strategic Communications.
- Close partnership with the CSPO on strategy, positioning and deal architecture; with the CEO on principal moments and CEO-level relationships; with the Chief Investment and Operations Officer on operational and fiduciary elements of deals; and with Grand Challenge portfolio leads on thesis-specific funder work.
- Close work with the Senior Director, Innovation Advisory and the Senior Director, Policy, as well as the broader Senior Director level across the organization, as senior leaders with wide accountability.
- Ensuring all work is aligned with GCC's core values, with the principle of servant leadership, and focused on impacting people's lives.

- **Team leadership and culture.** Provide leadership and mentorship to an evolving team — including, but extending beyond, two direct reports — fostering a culture of kindness, collaboration, accountability, and continuous learning.
 - Model work behaviours that support personal and team wellness and are aligned with GCC's values and passion for boldness.
 - Ensure that all direct reports have clear performance objectives with dedicated time to touch base on deliverables, challenges, potential supports and strategies.
 - Demonstrate the positive participation that you seek by playing an active and visible role in GCC team-building events and townhalls.

Over the first 18-24 months, the Head of Partnerships will help GCC:

- Close on the FY26/27 non-ISG fundraising goal of CAD \$50M, with particular focus on our Climate and Health and Mental Health portfolios.
- Support and enable the Director of Partnerships in designing and bringing to commitment at least one innovative partnership structure, in which GCC plays a credible anchor or lead-convenor role.
- Support and enable the Director, Government & Multilateral Partnerships in at least two MDB or multilateral pooled-outcome engagements, each with a defined pathway to investment in GCC outcomes.
- Develop the partnerships function such that the majority of pipeline progression and stewardship is owned and executed by the team rather than the Senior Director (SD) personally. This is a servant leadership role, and we take that perspective seriously.

Markers of success

- Measurable progress against the strategy's capital mobilization goals, both in dollars raised and in the structural quality of the mechanisms through which they are raised.
- At least one partnership structure designed, anchored and brought to commitment within the first 24 months.
- A partnerships team that carries the weight of stewardship and pipeline development independently of the SD.
- A discernible shift in GCC's external positioning, from credible grantor to credible convenor: evidenced by inbound partner approaches, invitations to anchor consortia, and visibility at high-value moments such as Skoll World Forum, CGI, AVPN, UNGA, WHA and WHS.

Qualifications

- Kindness. It all starts there.
- At least 15 years of professional experience, with substantial time in senior partnership, fundraising, capital mobilization, or blended-finance roles at impact-first organizations, philanthropies, DFIs/MDBs, governments, multilateral institutions, or comparable platforms.
- Demonstrable, deployable peer-level relationships with senior decision-makers at priority global philanthropies, governments and with multilateral and MDB/DFI counterparts. We will ask for specifics.
- Track record of designing and closing multi-stakeholder partnership structures: pooled funds, co-investment consortia, anchor-and-leverage architectures, blended-finance vehicles, or comparable instruments.
- A demonstrable history of bold bets that worked and things that didn't work out.
- A leadership philosophy that measures success by team capacity and team output rather than personal throughput. Direct experience building and sustaining partnerships teams that operate with distributed ownership.
- Strong written, verbal, and convening presence across cultures, institutional contexts and senior audiences. Lived experience in LMICs is a strong advantage.
- Strong cultural competence and a deep respect for diversity, equity, fairness, and social justice.
- A genuine alignment with GCC's mission and core values.

People from historically excluded communities with lived experiences in relevant thematic areas are encouraged to apply. People with lived experience and/or work experience in the communities or countries we are supporting are especially encouraged to apply.

Don't meet every requirement? Studies have shown that women, people of colour, people from LGBTQ2S+ and disability communities are less likely to apply to jobs when they do not meet every qualification. At Grand Challenges Canada, we are dedicated to building a diverse, inclusive, authentic, and accountable workplace, so if you are excited about this role but your experience does not align perfectly with every qualification in the job description, we encourage you to apply, as you may be the ideal candidate we are looking for.

Location and Work Requirements:

- We are currently working in a hybrid model with time in office and working from home. With rare, approved exceptions, GCC staff are to live in or near the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and available to travel to, and work from the Toronto main office, as business operational



needs require. Any expenses related to travel and or relocating to Toronto are the sole responsibility of the employee and will not be reimbursed by GCC.

- Domestic and international travel required.
- Applicants must be eligible to work in Canada.

Benefits

- Health and Dental provided by Sunlife Canada effective on start date.
- Enrollment in the Healthcare of Ontario (HOOPP) Defined-Benefit Pension Plan.
- Four (4) weeks of paid vacation.
- Four (4) day work week (with Friday as a flex/off day), excluding weeks with Statutory holiday (program reviewed annually).
- Access to Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and UHN added value benefits such as fitness, spas and wellbeing, hotels and travel services, and retail discounts.
- International SOS (ISOS) travel safety and supports around the world.
- Bring-your-own-device (BYOD) cell phone allowance.
- Growth and wellness fund.
- New Temporary Work Relocation - work remotely for up to 90 days, almost anywhere in the world.

Terms

- Start date: Immediate
- Status: Permanent full-time

Application process

- [Please submit your resume and cover letter here.](#)

AI Use in Application Processing

Please be advised that Grand Challenges Canada may use artificial intelligence tools to assist in the processing and evaluation of applications submitted for this position. These tools may be used to support activities such as résumé screening, candidate assessment, or scheduling, and are used as an aid to, and not a replacement for, human decision-making. All hiring decisions are made by qualified personnel who review AI-assisted outputs before any determination is made regarding a candidate's application. Grand Challenges Canada is committed to ensuring that its use of AI in recruitment is fair, transparent, and free from unlawful discrimination, in accordance with applicable federal and provincial human rights and privacy legislation. If you have questions about how AI is used in our hiring process, or if you require an accommodation at any stage of the recruitment process, please contact GCC's HR Team at hr@grandchallenges.ca.