

# 2026 Leadership Hiring Trends

in the Global Social Impact Sector

NGO Recruit Partners  
*Global Reach. Local Insight.*  
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# Why This Report

As organisations plan for 2026, leadership has become a strategic priority.

This report shares what we are seeing alongside foundations, NGOs, social enterprises, and other mission-driven organisations operating globally.

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# Our Perspective

At NGO Recruit **Partners**, we work as partners; advising boards and senior teams on leadership transitions, succession planning, and senior appointments.

These insights are drawn from real searches and advisory work, not forecasts.

# Trend 1: Leadership Stability

Leadership stability has become a strategic focus. Boards are prioritising:

- Long-term alignment
- Leadership longevity
- Strong values fit

Short-term fixes are giving way to deliberate, future-focused leadership choices.

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# Trend 2: External-Facing Leaders

Senior leaders are increasingly expected to act as public ambassadors for their organisations.

Demand is strongest for leaders who can:

- Build strategic partnerships
- Engage funders and stakeholders
- Represent organisations with credibility

# Trend 3: Competitive African Talent Markets

Africa remains a critical leadership base for global social impact work.

Kenya and South Africa continue to be the most competitive markets for senior leaders with global credibility and regional insight.



# **Trend 4: Fundraising Leadership Scarcity**

The challenge is not fundraising skills, it is fundraising leadership.

Organisations are competing for senior leaders who can operate strategically at executive and board level while building sustainable funding models.

# Trend 5: Senior Candidate Expectations

Senior candidates increasingly assess organisations through:

- Governance maturity
- Transparency and clarity
- Strength of the recruitment process

Recruitment itself has become a signal of organisational quality.

# **Trend 6: Leadership Diversity**

Leadership diversity is increasingly viewed as a governance and effectiveness issue, not just a values statement.

Boards are paying closer attention to who holds decision-making power and whose perspectives shape strategy.

# Trend 7: Employer Brand

Senior leaders are highly selective.

Organisational clarity, leadership culture, and external reputation now directly influence hiring outcomes at senior level.

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# Preparing for Leadership Hiring in 2026

Organisations planning senior hires in 2026 should:

- Plan earlier than before
- Be clear on mandate and authority
- Benchmark compensation realistically
- Treat recruitment as a strategic process

# Our Role

At NGO Recruit Partners, we support organisations advancing social and sustainable change by partnering on leadership hiring, thoughtfully, transparently, and globally.

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