

Project Manager/Development Practitioner: Informal Settlement Community Fire Safety

Kindling is an international non-profit organization whose aim is to reduce fire risk in informal and humanitarian settlements worldwide. We aim to promote holistic fire safety development by supporting institutions, partner organizations and communities through research, advocacy, learning, and practice. We are an interdisciplinary team of researchers and practitioners with extensive experience in engineering, planning, and social and physical sciences in diverse geographies and sectors, such as the architecture/engineering/construction industry, education (formal and informal), international development, the humanitarian sector, disaster risk reduction, and public safety. As our organization grows, we aim to become increasingly diverse in backgrounds, experiences, geographies, and disciplines.

Project Background and Purpose of the Role

Building on our work to date in Cape Town, we are developing a fire risk assessment and fire risk reduction model for informal settlements. This aims to take a participatory and inclusive approach to working with residents and relevant city level actors to identify the long-term and immediate causes of fire risk, and build short-, medium- and long-term strategic responses to reduce fire risk that integrate social and technical data and knowledge. This project will pilot and develop an approach with an identified informal settlement in Cape Town, with the aim that the knowledge produced and reflections on the model can be shared more widely in the future and adapted to different informal settlements, as well as city and country contexts.

We are seeking an experienced Project Manager/Development Practitioner to support Kindling in its work with several communities in Cape Town, including managing a team of community-based researchers and supporting Kindling's Cape Town Fire Safety Community of Practice, which brings together key stakeholders across the city. This role involves regular visits to informal settlements (2-3 times per week) as well as office-based work for preparation and follow-up activities. The successful candidate will manage a diverse range of activities, including project planning, event coordination, supervising team members, documentation and analysis of project activities and outcomes, monitoring and evaluation, health and safety, specific aspects of financial management, and logistical support for Kindling initiatives.

Key Activities and Responsibilities

This is a fixed-term employment position for a period of approximately 8 months (early-April to end-November 2025). The Project Manager will have the following responsibilities:

Supervision:

- Managing the daily activities, deadlines and deliverables of a team of community-based researchers, research assistants, facilitators and/or translators. (This includes quality control of deliverables.)
- Assigning tasks, delegating and providing onboarding, guidance and on-the-job training to team members as needed, as well as being open to learn from their expertise.
- Problem solving with the team when things don't go according to plan or when there is a crisis.
- Providing daily updates and communication to Kindling's senior management.

Scoping and research:

- Supporting the identification of a suitable communities for Kindling to engage with.
- Leading urban contextual analysis (research into key social, economic, political and technical data, actor mapping, fire incidence data) and community profile development.
- Leading development of community engagement strategy and research approach and methodology.
- Leading iterative and strategic project planning, including the development and delivery of project plans to Kindling’s senior management for input and review.
- Contributing to the research design of community toolkit for fire safety.

Implementation and research:

- Preparing for community engagements and stakeholder meetings by booking venues, organizing catering, printing materials, and purchasing necessary supplies.
- Recruiting, training and managing community-based researchers.
- Setting up and coordinating advisory committees.
- Planning and facilitating participatory risk assessment and risk reduction workshops.
- Facilitating participatory data collection and analysis.
- Managing ethics and informed consent.
- Managing data storage protocols.
- Capturing observations and taking minutes during all meetings, community activities, and other engagements. (Minutes will be due within 48 hours of the meeting or event.)
- Assisting with specific financial management tasks, such as tracking expenses and managing invoices for project activities.
- Translating documents or discussions as needed to ensure effective communication across the team and community.
- Following Kindling’s health and safety protocols and contributing to developing new protocols as needed.
- Collating key data and analysis.
- Documenting emerging methodology and workshop outputs.
- Internal reporting and participation in Kindling events and team meetings.
- Forecast project needs and proactively communicate with Executive Director and Head of Strategic Operations on a daily or weekly basis – pays close attention and identifies what needs to be done.
- Engage in continual learning and demonstrate openness to feedback and learning from others.

Output development:

- Contributing to the development of assessment and risk reduction strategy guidelines and toolkits.
- Suggesting and reviewing potential formats.
- Contributing to content development.
- Supporting local dissemination.

Qualifications, skills and experience:

- Postgraduate education in urban planning, social development, community-based disaster risk reduction or equivalent professional experience.
- Minimum 5-10 years’ experience of working with informal settlement communities/residents in Cape Town, and conducting research.

- Experience managing a team of colleagues of various levels and responsibilities.
- Experience of working with diverse actor groups.
- Workshop facilitation skills; experience and knowledge of facilitating participatory methods and analysis.
- Evidence of excellent written and communication skills in English and Xhosa.
- Experience with participatory mapping, and spatial mapping and analysis more generally.
- Knowledge of/participation in key Cape Town disaster risk networks (NGOs, local government, fire response).
- Experience/knowledge of multi actor land / housing / urban planning and disaster risk reduction practices.
- Experience working with local and international NGOs/nonprofit organizations/academic institutions.
- Experience of documenting and communicating project monitoring and evaluation.
- Prior experience in a project coordination role, preferably in community-based projects.
- Strong organisational and multitasking abilities – including managing self and managing others.
- Ability to capture detailed notes and observations from meetings and activities.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite and other administrative tools.

Desirable:

- Fire risk and fire safety knowledge.
- Disaster risk reduction knowledge.
- Spatial mapping experience.
- Event coordination experience.
- Experience in financial management or budgeting.
- Valid driver's license.

Contract Type and Location:

- Location: Cape Town (both on-site work in the community, office-based work and remote work).
- Start date: As soon as possible
- Hours: Full time (approximately 40-50 hours per week). Candidate must be available during regular working hours. Some evening and weekend work may be required.
- 8-month fixed-term employment contract, with possible extension.
- Compensation will be commensurate with qualification and experience.

Application submission and deadline

Please send a copy of your CV (maximum two pages) and a cover letter sharing your suitability for this role (maximum one page) to fire@kindlingsafety.org

Application deadline: **7 April 2025 at 17h00**

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. The position may be filled, and the advertisement removed, once a suitable candidate is found. For further information about Kindling, visit www.kindlingsafety.org. For any queries prior to application, please contact: fire@kindlingsafety.org