



Research Assistant: 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.

We are seeking a Research Assistant to support Kindling in its work in Cape Town. This role involves regular visits to informal settlements (2-3 times per week) as well as office-based work for research, report-writing, and community engagement activities.

The successful candidate will contribute to toolkit development, documentation, and piloting, including multiple participatory research methods and co-creation models. They must have strong qualitative research skills, and quantitative research skills are a plus. Ideally, they will have 3 or more years of experience in thematic analysis with qualitative research software that will add significant value to Kindling's team in terms of data management and qualitative analysis.

Depending on the nature of each project, the Research Assistant will report to the Executive Director, the Head of Strategic Operations or the Project Manager.

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 Research Assistant will have the following responsibilities:

- Capture observations and take minutes during meetings, community activities, and engagements.
- Translate documents or discussions between isiXhosa and English.
- Carry out desktop-based research and conduct literature reviews.
- Contribute to toolkit development, documentation and piloting, using multiple participatory

research methods.

- Analyse and report on qualitative and quantitative data, using thematic analysis and other forms of data analysis.
- Support the team in organizing and managing large sets of data.
- Write research reports, briefs and summaries.
- Facilitate group discussions and research activities (such as focus groups or interviews).
- Provide administrative support including scheduling, document management, and report preparation.
- Coordinate follow-up activities after community visits, ensuring smooth project continuity.
- Collaborate with Kindling team and community members on planning and facilitating participatory risk assessment activities, as well as participatory risk reduction strategy development activities.
- Produce fieldwork diaries and reflections.
- Record communications with key settlement actors.
- Write up settlement profile data on a weekly basis.

Required Qualifications and Skills:

- Minimum three years' experience conducting qualitative research.
- Minimum two years' experience working with informal settlement communities/residents.
- An understanding of research ethics.
- Prior experience as a Research Assistant (with supporting references and evidence of reports written).
- Strong organisational and multitasking abilities.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English and isiXhosa.
- Ability to capture detailed notes and observations from meetings and activities.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite and other administrative tools.
- Comfortable with community visits and both office-based and remote working.

Desirable:

- Professional experience in participatory urban planning, social development, or community-based disaster risk reduction preferred.
- Experience in an administrative or coordination role, preferably in community-based projects.
- Knowledge of other local languages in addition to isiXhosa.
- Fire risk and fire safety knowledge.

Location and contract type:

- 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