

**Job Title: US Planning Director**

**Location: Los Angeles, CA**

**Organisation: Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI)**

**Closing date: Open until filled**

KDI is looking for a unique individual to lead our Planning team in our US office. The ideal candidate will be an urban planner by training and have no less than five years of experience leading community-engaged planning and design processes. This is not a conventional planning position, and the ideal candidate must be willing to wear many hats.

The Planning Director will lead a team of 3 – 5 planning professionals and will collaborate closely with the Design and Community teams. They will be responsible for developing and implementing innovative, multi-faceted projects in very challenging political, social, and physical environments. Because KDI projects are multi-sectoral, the Planning Director will be expected to enthusiastically work on a variety of projects ranging from traditional master plans, transportation plans, and site plans, to economic development plans, policy initiatives, advocacy campaigns, to site-specific programs and built-projects both temporary and permanent in nature.

The role requires the ability to think spatially, communicate graphically, budget efficiently, fundraise efficaciously, negotiate strategically, speak bilingually, travel frequently, and engage with people of all types, warmly and effectively. Much of our work takes place in the greater Los Angeles area and the Eastern Coachella Valley, where we have been working with community partners since 2010, to create Productive Public Spaces that combine physical infrastructure with economic and social development programs.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The US Planning Director oversees strategy, design, and implementation of planning, engagement, policy, and programming efforts for all of our US projects. This includes managing and mentoring a team of 3 – 5 employees, 1 – 2 interns, and numerous volunteers.

**Project, Program, and Design Delivery:** Lead design, development, and delivery of KDI US's projects and programs. Work closely with Design and Community teams in the delivery of each project. Overall quarterly and annual work planning for KDI-US team in collaboration with Executive Leadership. Lead design and in some cases, production of planning drawings and documents. Sets planning strategy and standards for US planning team. Close coordination with Kenya office and Board of Directors as needed.

**Community Engagement:** Collaborate with Design Director to lead workshops and engage KDI's community partners for the co-delivery of projects.

**Strategic Planning:** In partnership with Executive Leadership and our Board of Directors, contribute to the development, execution, and monitoring of the organization's Strategic Plan and Annual Business Plans.

**Budgeting and Financial Management:** Assist in building an annual budget for the organization. Work with the finance team to develop and monitor budgets for each project. Prudently manage organization's and donor's resources within those budget guidelines according to current laws and donor regulations. Verify budgets and approvals for all KDI site works, payroll, and overhead.

**Fundraising and Reporting:** Work with the Communications and Development Coordinator to identify resources and project opportunities in line with KDI's mission. As needed, assist in researching funding sources, establishing strategies to approach funders, developing proposals, pitching to donors and investors, and administrating fundraising records, reports and other needed documentation.

**Public Relations:** Contribute to media and academic publications that communicate KDI's mission, programs, and projects in consistent, creative, strong, and constructive language. Participate in conferences and panels, and deliver lectures related to KDI's work, as needed.

## **DESIRED PROFILE**

### **Experience**

- Track record as a leader with team building skills
- Aptitude for leading a team
- Capable of working in challenging environments
- Proven ability to innovate and transform organizations or groups
- Grant writing skills, a plus
- Strong references

### **Talents and Skills**

- Masters in Urban Planning or Urban Design
- Written and spoken fluency in both English and Spanish, strongly preferred
- Progressive leadership experience in a Planning or Community Development role
- A passion for creating transformative places and working collaboratively with people from all walks of life
- Flexible, adaptable
- Strong oral presentation skills
- Strong writing and graphic communication skills
- Willingness to travel to the Coachella Valley one day per week, and nationally and internationally as needed
- Experience with budgeting and financial management
- Ability to work extensively in Excel
- Facility with Adobe Suite

**COMPENSATION:**

- Competitive salary
- Generous benefits package

**ABOUT KDI:**

Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) is a non-profit design and community development firm that partners with people living in extreme poverty to design and implement solutions that permanently transform their communities and improve their quality of life. We believe participatory design and long-term investment are key to sustainable development. Working collaboratively with communities from conception through implementation, KDI enhances their ideas with technical knowledge and creativity, and connects them to extant resources. Through this process KDI builds networks of Productive Public Spaces (PPS) - high impact, low-cost environments - that individually and collectively, mitigate environmental hazards, provide needed amenities, build social networks, and generate micro-enterprise, at the neighborhood and regional scale.

KDI is currently working on over 20 projects with communities in Kenya and the United States. We strategically select and design our small-scale projects to create both physical and human networks that, when taken together, can start to address larger, regional challenges, like water pollution, unemployment, and social exclusion.

KDI has been recognized for our innovative approach to poverty alleviation by notable institutions such as The Rockefeller Foundation, UN-Habitat, The California Endowment, Ashoka Changemakers, American Express, Annenberg Alchemy, Smithsonian Institute, IDEO, The Atlantic Renewal Project, and Echoing Green.

**APPLY:**

Send your cover letter, CV, portfolio, and writing sample to Chelina Odbert, Executive Director, via email to [mail@kounkuey.org](mailto:mail@kounkuey.org).

Writing sample should be no more than 1,000 words and portfolio should highlight a range of project typologies.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to their race, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, disability, marital status or medical condition.