
Job Opening	Associate Director - Programs & Design (Regional)
Start Date	Q3 2026
Salary	Compensation is based on the country of hire and within the range of the local nonprofit/NGO industry.
Location	Remote (Work from Home), Location: Asia, Africa, or Europe

The Global Designing Cities Initiative (GDCI) is seeking an **Associate Director** to join its mission to transform streets around the world. This role will be working alongside another Associate Director, based in the Americas and will help oversee both programmatic and design work, with a focus on delivery and impact. This position will support a matrix reporting system and play an instrumental role within the Executive team.

Who we are

The [Global Designing Cities Initiative](#) (GDCI) was launched by Janette Sadik-Khan in 2014, with a mission to transform streets around the world. We inspire leaders, inform practitioners, and invite communities to imagine what's possible when we design streets that put people first. We are a team of designers, planners, and urban strategists committed to reimagining streets as places for people, shaping cities that are safe, healthy, accessible, and equitable for everyone. The strategies and best practices in our [Global Street Design Guide](#) are the foundation of our work, and they have been applied in cities across the globe, helping to update policies, build local capacity, implement and evaluate projects, and scale up impact.

What you'll do

Reporting to the Director of Design and Programs and as a vital member of the GDCI executive leadership team, you will serve as a strategic bridge between high-level vision and on-the-ground execution of quality street transformations in over 30 cities around the globe. In this role, you will provide oversight of GDCI's diverse portfolio of funded programs, working in partnership with another Associate Director based in the Americas, ensuring every commitment from grant deliverables, schedules, and multi-million dollar budgets is delivered at the highest standards. By maintaining and improving systems to measure and promote our impact, you will ensure our global work directly advances GDCI's mission to reimagine streets as safe, healthy, and equitable spaces for all.

Beyond programmatic management, you will co-lead a talented, multi-disciplinary team and serve as a critical support role to the Directors and the Executive Director. You will support internal

leadership needs and advance critical decision-making. Whether managing complex funder relationships or acting as an external ambassador in high-level global forums, you will be instrumental in scaling GDCI's influence and operationalizing our core values.

Job Responsibilities

Programmatic Oversight and Stakeholder Management

- **Drive Programmatic Impact:** Oversee the performance of funded programs against established goals, metrics, and internal GDCI quality standards, and when needed, step in to provide direct program management.
- **Design Quality Oversight:** Ensure technical design accuracy, quality, and consistency across all funded programs, working with program and regional leads to uphold GDCI's street design standards. Support project design reviews and help facilitate decision-making on design recommendations and proposals.
- **Cultivate Funder Relationships:** Build and maintain strong relationships with funders and ensure timely delivery of all reporting.
- **Budgetary Stewardship:** Manage programmatic budgets to ensure accuracy and enable proactive planning and coordination in collaboration with the executive team.
- **Systems and Reporting:** Maintain and strengthen systems to capture, track, and report on program impacts relative to specific funder or internal performance metrics.
- **Contextual Understanding and Problem Solving:** Support programmatic teams in balancing empathetic, locally grounded approaches with ambitious, globally informed strategies and best practices. Help navigate complex implementation challenges by integrating local realities, stakeholder perspectives, and technical excellence into practical solutions.

Organizational Leadership and Operations

- **Strategic Decision-Making:** Contribute to the executive team by bringing unique perspectives to strategic direction and conducting external research to challenge and improve organizational norms.
- **Operational Excellence:** Co-lead internal leadership and all-staff meetings to build a cohesive leadership team and coordinate events that support operational objectives.
- **Design Excellence:** Co-lead design strategy with the Leadership team to ensure consistency across GDCI's programs, resources, and assets. Champion cross-programmatic design learning and the integration of GDCI's technical stance, graphic standards, and visual identity into all organizational outputs. Help ensure new tools, products, and publications are aligned with GDCI design standards.
- **Executive Presence:** Serve as an internal and external leader for the organization, maintaining operations and external presence in the absence of the Executive Director or Directors.

Team and People Management

- **Professional Development:** Manage hiring and staffing issues, ensuring that advancement pathways and professional development are considered for all employees.
- **Coaching and Feedback:** Guide the team's skill development through timely feedback to ensure long-term success.

Program Growth and Partnerships

- **Strategic Growth:** Work with the Associate Director of Strategy and Development to seek and evaluate new partnership opportunities and secure ongoing program funding.
- **Design Thought Leadership:** Represent GDCI's design philosophy and technical expertise at global forums and peer networks, contributing to the broader discourse on safe, equitable, and sustainable street design. Support the dissemination of GDCI's design resources, precedents, and best practices to external audiences.
- **Expanding GDCI's Mission:** Represent and present on behalf of GDCI in various global forums, maintaining relationships with peer organizations complementary to GDCI's mission.

Who you are

This role demands a rigorous yet collaborative leader who thrives at the intersection of technical street and urban design expertise and effective organizational management. You are comfortable challenging the status quo and working within a dynamic, passionate, multicultural team that isn't afraid to push for bold changes in cities. Because GDCI's work spans the globe, you are adept at building relationships across cultures and navigating partnerships with ease, including senior leaders, city officials, and global partners. As a strong communicator, you are equally effective in live discussions as in asynchronous digital environments, maintaining clarity and alignment across time zones. You are highly organized and possess the mental agility to switch contexts frequently without losing focus on the organization's broader mission and needs. While fluency in multiple languages is a plus, it is not required.

To be successful in this job, you will excel in the following areas:

- **Strategic Management of Multiple Projects:** You are an effective people and project manager, able to lead teams to successful outcomes aligned with GDCI's and program objectives. This means being empathetic while enforcing accountability to ensure deliverables meet high standards and strive for positive impact.
- **Effective Delegation and Team Development:** You know how to work through others to get things done. As an Associate Director, you operate as a multiplier, setting clear direction and priorities for Leads and Managers, then trusting them to execute while remaining available for guidance and escalation. You understand the difference between oversight and micromanagement, and you build the capacity of those below you rather than absorbing their work, and jump in and execute when needed.

- **Balancing big picture vision with day-to-day execution:** As a member of the executive team, you can nimbly traverse big-picture discussions around the future of GDCI or impacts of internal policy changes, while also bringing a pragmatic perspective to support execution of day-to-day operations and decision-making.
- **Design Sensibility and Oversight:** You bring sufficient fluency in urban street design to evaluate technical quality, facilitate meaningful design reviews, and advocate for GDCI's design standards with city partners and funders. You help bridge programmatic and design priorities, ensuring the 'D' in GDCI remains central to everything the organization delivers.
- **Natural translator amongst organizational functions:** You serve as an internal bridge and translator, seeking synergies and resolving issues across internal functional areas, including financial constraints, programmatic interests, operations/HR, and external pressures and constraints.
- **Excellent verbal and written communication skills:** You are comfortable communicating with a range of stakeholders, including city officials, funders, partners, contractors, staff, etc. You are proficient in English, both written and verbal. Knowledge of other international languages and contexts is a plus.
- **External Ambassador:** As a visible member of GDCI's executive team, you must be willing to serve as an internal and external ambassador of the organization, its mission, and cultural values. This means having a natural interest in forging new relationships while also actively seeking new opportunities to grow the organization and expand its mission

Baseline Experience

At GDCI, we do not have minimum education or professional experience requirements. We encourage all candidates with relevant and differing experiences and professional backgrounds to apply.

Generally, we expect that qualified candidates will have the following baseline experience for a Director position.

- 14 years of relevant professional experience; OR
- 12 years of relevant professional experience with an undergraduate degree; OR
- 10 years of relevant professional experience with a master's degree
- Working knowledge of AutoCAD, SketchUp, and Adobe Creative Suite may be needed for specific projects.

Working Conditions, Physical Requirements

- This role is performed remotely within the country of hire, at an average of 40 hours a week.
- To accommodate overlap in working hours with other members of the Executive team, there is an expectation of regular participation outside standard hours (i.e., outside 9:30 am-5:30 pm local time).
- This role travels frequently throughout the year (approximately 25-30%). Not to exceed more than two weeks at a time.

Supervision Responsibilities

- Will supervise leads, managers, associates, and coordinators (when available).
- Owns the responsibility of developing all staff, offering timely and helpful feedback, and providing performance evaluations.

How to Apply

- **Deadline for applications:** Applications accepted on a rolling basis—please don't delay! Final deadline is **July 15, 2026**.
- **Submit applications:** Through GDCI's [application portal](#). If you need support, please contact careers@gdci.global.
- **Attachments:** Include a cover letter and resume (CV), and ideally a portfolio of projects detailing relevant work experience. Additional attachments demonstrating concise and politically savvy communication skills are encouraged.
- **Benefits:** GDCI offers a competitive compensation and benefits package, including health coverage, retirement benefits, paid sick leave, vacation, and holidays. Benefits may vary depending on the country of hire. Salary is based on local markets within the nonprofit/NGO industry and commensurate with experience and skills.

GDCI is a fiscally sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA). We are committed to workplace diversity and inclusion. We are equal opportunity employers and do not discriminate in hiring or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. We offer competitive salaries, excellent benefits, and a passionate working environment. Salary is based on a nonprofit scale and commensurate with experience.