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Design Director, Design for Equity

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Nairobi, New York, or San Francisco

IDEO.org is a nonprofit design studio on a mission to design a more just and equitable world.

We partner with nonprofit organizations, foundations, governments, and communities to design programs, products, and services focused on improving health, economic mobility, and wellbeing.

Position Description

Over the past 10 years, our work has expanded beyond traditional service and product design in the social sector, and we are now regularly working hand-in-hand with communities and local organizations to design interventions in service of more equitable outcomes. Some examples include launching an incubator in Kenya for girl-led solutions to reproductive health, working with communities in Southern Dallas to improve access to quality health care, and working with refugee, immigrant, and migrant communities in the US to ensure everyone has access to reliable information about COVID-19. **We're currently looking for a Design Director to join our team who can help us continue to evolve our practice of design, with a focus on equity, participatory design, and social justice.** You will report directly to a member of our Executive Team, working closely with our CEO, senior leaders, and cohort of fellow Design Directors across our San Francisco, New York, and Nairobi studios.

This would be a good role for you if you have a background in participatory design, community organizing, social work, policy and advocacy, liberation psychology, or any other field where you've applied equity and justice frameworks in your work. You'll be joining a diverse, multidisciplinary team that is passionate about these topics, and about transforming our organization—and the field of design more broadly—to a more anti-racist and anti-colonialist practice. Your role will be essential in helping assess where our teams have been both successful and challenged in the practice of designing for equity, and in co-creating and formalizing structures and best practices to spread throughout our organization.

Design Directors at IDEO.org are involved in the work in a number of ways. Our ideal candidate has a breadth of experience, and can easily transition between a mode of guiding and mentorship to directly helping designing services and experiences alongside our teams and community partners.

About you:

- You're passionate about human-centered design and social justice, and are inspired by the opportunity to advance approaches that center the voices of people from oppressed and historically marginalized communities in the design process.
- You are familiar with social justice history, approaches, and frameworks.
- You're self-directed and an active problem-solver who is always seeking out resources and information to answer complex questions with rigor and creativity.
- You possess a capacity and passion for creative problem solving, which could draw from your experience in either design, innovation, program development, or consulting contexts. Direct human-centered design experience a bonus.

Core Responsibilities:

- Develop guidance, frameworks, and tools that shift the way our teams practice design, work with communities and partners, and prioritize their time—driving towards a more equitable design process and outcomes through our work.
- Work directly with teams in the U.S. and Kenya as a guide, offering thought leadership and advisory support across projects, and going deep as a dedicated team member on key projects.
- Build relationships with external advisors who we can partner within specific projects.
- Working with our partnerships team to develop scopes of work that center equity and anti-oppression values .
- Flex your collaboration skills—working with designers of all disciplines on projects, and promoting cross-pollination between teams.
- Support designers to infuse their passions into projects and learn new skills
- Contribute to IDEO.org's studio culture.

You have:

- 8+ years of professional experience in a relevant field
- Experience working collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams
- Examples of writing, points of view, and/or projects that demonstrate experience with race, justice, systems of inequality in the US and internationally.
- Demonstrable experience designing and delivering programs to address issues of inequity
- Experience building and managing relationships with external partners
- Adept at synthesizing data, distilling complexity, and storytelling.
- Fluency in the human-centered design process
- Willing and able to travel domestically and internationally up to ~30% of the time (once we've determined as a community that it's safe to travel again).
- Cultural sensitivity, creativity, and resourcefulness
- A passion for inclusive leadership and creative collaboration.

What You Can Expect from Us



- Direct support from and collaboration with IDEO.org's Executive Team.
- An incredible multidisciplinary team that is passionate about advancing inclusive design and design for equity in the social impact sector, including directly collaborating with IDEO.org's Equity Committee.
- Thought partnership with our Director of HR & DEI, focused on internal transformation to becoming an anti-racist and anti-colonial organization.
- Financial resources to bring in external training, on top of our individual education budget.
- Endless Summer Fridays—ending the workday at 1:30pm on Fridays, in recognition of the emotional labor of the work we do.
- A comprehensive benefits package including medical, dental, vision, 401k match, commuter benefits, unlimited vacation policy, phone plan coverage, and parental leave.
- Relocation reimbursement is available for this role as needed.

IDEO.org Commitment to Diversity

At IDEO.org, we are committed to the work of advancing diversity, equity and inclusion within our organization and in the world. Our mission to design a more just and inclusive world is directly connected to our ability to bring many different perspectives to the table. This applies to our candidates, the people we hire, and the partners and communities we work with.

As a human-centered organization, we are committed to working with and designing for people of every race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, physical ability or attribute, religion, national origin, or political belief. We recognize that this commitment requires ongoing work and sustained attention, as well as adaptation to new insights and best practices.

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