

Firelight Foundation Letter of Inquiry 2012

Deadline: February 15, 2012

FUNDING CRITERIA

The mission of Firelight Foundation is to improve the wellbeing of children made vulnerable by HIV, AIDS and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. We support grassroots organizations that help families and communities meet the needs of their children.

Every child, regardless of race, creed, or country, deserves the promise of a future. Firelight supports community-based initiatives that work directly and effectively to support the fundamental needs and rights of vulnerable and marginalized children. We believe that grassroots programs are often the most effective and sustainable when they arise in direct response to needs and strengths within local communities. Firelight supports this vital work with initial one-year grants of \$1,000 to \$9,000 with the potential of renewal grants based on our funding criteria. We aim to partner with small grassroots organizations for seven years, working with them to strengthen their capacity during the length of our partnership.

ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS IN MALAWI

Firelight receives around 1,000 requests for funding each year and is able to support only a small percentage of these. In order for us to focus our efforts in an effective and sustained manner, we will only accept letters of inquiry in 2012 from organizations that meet the following criteria. We will decline funding requests from organizations that do not fit the following criteria.

We are seeking to expand our portfolio in the Northern Region of Malawi. Therefore, **we will only accept letters of inquiry from organizations based in the Northern Region.** We encourage community-based organizations (CBOs) to apply.

In selecting organizations to support, Firelight Foundation looks for:

- Direct support and services that meet the needs and rights of vulnerable children.
- Holistic support for children's development that nurtures children's voice, leadership, and active participation in decisions that affect their lives.
- Approaches that tap into local support and resources, and that build family and community capacity.
- A history of effective community action that spans at least three years.
- Networking and collaboration with other organizations and relevant government agencies. Organizations should be known by, or registered with, the District AIDS Coordinating Committee or District Social Welfare Office.
- Effective programming with innovative responses to the challenges affecting children's well-being.
- Sound organizational governance and management systems, including distinct roles between the Board and Director.

Examples of areas of interest include the following programs:

Firelight supports programs that respond to the needs of vulnerable children, including, but not limited to children living on the street, children with disabilities, child-headed households, grandparent-headed households, adolescent girls, children that are living with HIV, and children affected by HIV. Priority is given to programs that enhance or create a supportive environment for children's holistic growth and development through various activities such as:

- Building skills and knowledge of caregivers and youth to develop sustainable livelihoods.
- Addressing barriers that keep children from enrolling and succeeding in school.
- Providing counseling, emotional support, and recreation for children.
- Mobilizing communities to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, and violence against children.
- Supporting families to start gardens that provide better nutrition and regular meals for children.
- Reintegration of children into family and community.
- Legal aid for vulnerable children.
- Local and national level advocacy on child rights.
- Enhance health of children and caregivers, including HIV/AIDS prevention and access to treatment.

Firelight does NOT fund: individuals; scholarships for individual use; government entities; organizations or programs designed to influence legislation or elect public officials; organizations or programs solely intended to generate income or provide charity to individuals; academic or medical research; fundraising drives; or endowments. Firelight believes strongly in non-discrimination and does not fund programs that limit participation based on race, tribe, religion, gender, or nationality. **We very rarely fund US-based organizations or branches of international non-governmental organizations.**

Firelight Foundation believes that children develop best when raised within families and communities; therefore, **we do not fund the institutionalization of children, i.e. orphanages.** We are often asked for food aid, medical care, and housing. We understand the urgency of these needs, but we are not a relief agency. If you request such assistance, **please explain how the planned activities will be undertaken in a sustainable and holistic way.** Similarly, we receive many requests for school fees. Firelight rarely funds requests for school fees alone. If your organization seeks such assistance, please describe how your group plans to address children's other needs, and what your plan is for sustaining school fees beyond Firelight support.

LETTER OF INQUIRY TEMPLATE

If your organization is a charitable organization working with orphans and vulnerable children based in the **Northern Region of Malawi**, we invite you to send a "letter of inquiry" and provide us with basic information about your organization. Please ensure we have complete contact information for your organization, including:

- Full name of your organization (and acronym if applicable)
- E-mail and postal mailing address (both PO Box and street address, if available) and location of proposed activities
- The names and contact information for three people at your organization (name, title, e-mail, phone)

In your letter, please explain how your work meets Firelight's criteria by briefly answering the following questions:

1. Tell us your organization's founding story. When did you begin? What inspired the founding of your organization and who was part of the process?
2. Briefly describe your organization's main programs.
3. Please share two or three things that you have achieved in the time that you have been operating.
4. Describe how your organization is operated (including its management structure, number of paid staff, and number of volunteers).
5. Describe your approach in implementing your programs.
6. What activities do you propose for Firelight funding?
7. How much funding are you requesting? Please provide a breakdown by activity. (Remember, **Firelight awards first-time grants of \$1,000 to \$9,000.** Greater requests will be declined.)
8. Please estimate the number of children, families and communities you expect to reach through these activities.
9. In the previous year:
 - a. What was your organization's budget?
 - b. What were your main sources of funding?

We accept any kind of written submission. We currently accept applications in English, Chichewa, French, Kinyarwanda, Sesotho, and Swahili. **Please limit your letter to three pages.**

THE DECISION PROCESS

The deadline for receiving letters of inquiry is **February 15, 2012.** We will notify you shortly after that if we are interested in receiving a full proposal from your organization. Because we are a small foundation with limited resources, we cannot support all of the qualified organizations that submit inquiries. If we decline your request, we will try our best to explain why. Funding awards will be made in July 2012.

Please forward all letters of inquiry via mail, fax, or e-mail to:

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