



January 17, 2013

Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoy this week's edition of the Newsflash! Firelight is now open for Letters of Inquiry in Tanzania. Please see the content below for details!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Call for Letters of Inquiry) Firelight Foundation - Organizations Improving Learning Outcomes for Children in Tanzania
(Resource) Some tips on Supervision

(Call for Letters of Inquiry) Firelight Foundation - Organizations Improving Learning Outcomes for Children in Tanzania

BACKGROUND

The mission of Firelight Foundation is to improve the well-being of vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa. We support grassroots organizations that help families and communities meet the needs of their children.

Under this request for proposals, Firelight seeks to fund organizations using innovative approaches to improve children's learning both inside and outside of ECD centers and primary schools, in Tanzania.

Since the 1990s governments, community-based organizations, and non-governmental organizations have put resources and energy into increasing the number of children who are enrolled in school. While school remains out of reach for millions of marginalized children in Africa, the progress around access is unprecedented. Now that so many children are in school, a key question for all is: *are children learning?*

Unfortunately, in Tanzania, evidence shows that many children are leaving school with low levels of reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. In order for education to fulfill the promise of a better future, greater effort must be placed on improving quality of learning.

With support from the Hewlett Foundation, Firelight seeks to partner with organizations using innovative strategies to improve reading, writing, and arithmetic for primary and pre-primary school age children in Tanzania. Under this funding, we seek to identify organizations that are focused on improving children's learning by creatively engaging family and community to help children to succeed in school, while also building a stronger relationship between what is happening in-school, outside of school, and what happens at home. Over a period of three years, we will work closely with organizations to demonstrate the effectiveness of their innovative approaches and assessing their effectiveness in helping to improve learning outcomes. Firelight will facilitate adoption of the most effective approaches among a network of community-based organizations.

FUNDING CRITERIA

Firelight receives around 1,000 requests for funding each year and is able to support only a small percentage of them. In order for us to focus our efforts in an effective and sustained manner, we will only accept letters of inquiry in 2013 from organizations that meet the criteria outlined below. Specifically we seek to fund organizations that demonstrate:

- Sound analysis and articulation of the barriers to children's learning.
- Effective and innovative program design specifying how programming and interventions lead to improvements in learning outcomes.
- Support for children's learning that bridges between what happens in school and out of school.
- Robust monitoring and evaluation to track progress and demonstrate learning outcomes.
- Commitment to using data to inform program review and adaptation.
- Track record in improving children's learning.
- Collaboration with a variety of stakeholders that influence and impact children's learning and well-being, including peers, local institutions and relevant government agencies.

In selecting organizations to support, Firelight Foundation looks for evidence of:

- 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 build family and community capacity.
- A history of effective action that spans at least three years.
- Networking and collaboration with other organizations and relevant government agencies.
- Consistency between mission, goals, and strategy.
- Learning and adaptation in response to emerging needs and insights derived from experience and data.
- Effective programming with innovative responses to the challenges affecting children's well-being.
- A track record of accomplishment and innovation in education, particularly in improving children's learning outcomes in primary school
- Sound organizational governance and management systems, including distinct roles between the Board and Director.

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.**

LETTER OF INQUIRY TEMPLATE

If your organization is a charitable organization working with to improve learning outcomes for primary school children in **TANZANIA**, we invite you to send a letter of inquiry and provide us with basic information about your organization. We will give particular priority to organizations working in the **Moshi/Arusha, Iringa, Mbeya, and Morogoro regions**. Please ensure we have completed contact information for your organization, including:

- Full name of your organization (and acronym, if applicable)
- E-mail and postal mailing address (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)

BACKGROUND

1. Tell us your organization's founding story. When and why your group was started? Who was involved in its founding?
2. Briefly describe the main activities of your organization.
3. Describe three major accomplishments of your organization since it began.

PROPOSAL FOCUS

4. What are the key obstacles to children learning well at school? Which of these problems can be addressed by civil society organizations?
5. Which problem(s) will your organization address, and what is your strategy for addressing the problem?
6. Explain what is innovative about your strategy
7. Describe the main activities that you will implement with Firelight funding.
8. In your activities, who are the critical actors in supporting improvements in children's learning?
9. Define the desired outcomes and how you will measure them. Specify how you will measure improvements in children's reading and math skills.
10. What schools are you working with and where are they located?
11. How many children will you reach?
12. What other collaborations will be part of your program implementation?

FINANCIALS

13. How much money are you requesting in US Dollars? (Remember, **Firelight only awards grants of \$1,000 to \$15,000**. Greater requests will be declined.) Please provide a summary of your proposed budget.
14. What was your organization's budget for the most recent financial year? What were the sources of funding?

We accept any kind of written submission. We currently accept applications in English and Swahili. **Please limit your letter to five pages.**

THE DECISION PROCESS

The deadline for receiving letters of inquiry is **February 18, 2013**. We will notify you by **March 11, 2013** 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 August 2013. **Please forward all letters of inquiry via mail, fax, or e-mail to:**

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(Resource) Some tips on Supervision

The supervisor's overall role is to communicate organizational needs, oversee

employees' performance, provide guidance, support, identify development needs, and manage the reciprocal relationship between staff and the organization so that each is successful.

1. Supervisors set expectations:

- Review and revise job descriptions
- Delegate responsibilities
- Review and revise performance work plans
- Create professional development plan
- Assign a project
- New staff orientation
- Setting annual goals

2. A supervisor hosts regular opportunities to communicate with employees:

- Identifies and resolves problems
- Gives timely appreciative and developmental feedback
- Discusses current projects/workload and upcoming deadlines

3. Supervisors partake in performance reviews

- Quarterly performance review meetings
- Annual performance reviews
- Setting annual goals

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Aligning individual performance expectations with organizational goals
- Developing performance goals collaboratively with their direct reports
- Ensuring that performance goals are clearly communicated and current
- Providing fair, constructive, and timely feedback towards performance expectations and goals
- Providing assistance, guidance, and coaching support as needed
- Ensuring that staff have professional development plans in place
- Conducting performance evaluations according to established systems and policies

Employees are responsible for:

- Communicating work load challenges
- Communicating progress towards performance goals
- Identifying and communicating professional development needs and opportunities
- Achieving performance and professional development goals as identified in individual work plans and individual development plans.

Communicating Expectations

In order for employees to understand what is expected of them, you should communicate expectations in terms of behaviors by explaining what it “looks like” when an employee is behaving “professionally,” treating co-workers with “respect,” or being “accountable” for his or her work.

Expectation

Professional: Arrive to work and all meetings on time; adhere to dress code guidelines; ensure all written communications are error free and use appropriate tone that considers the audience.

Respectful: Greet people in the hallways; treat colleagues as internal customers; clean up your area and do your part to keep the common area (e.g. kitchen) clean.

Accountable: Meet all deadlines; come prepared to meetings with minutes from the last meeting, questions about the agenda and ideas to contribute to the topic; respond to requests in a timely manner.

Supervision Meetings

Regular Supervision Meetings

Performance management is not an episodic event that happens at the beginning and end of a performance cycle. It is an ongoing process that requires constant attention and thoughtfulness. Supervisors are responsible for scheduling supervision meetings regularly with each of their direct reports. Supervision meetings have numerous purposes:

- Monitor performance to expectations and work plan progress
- Discuss work load
- Discuss timelines and deadlines
- Identify any training needs, challenges, barriers, or obstacles
- Provide performance coaching when needed
- Problem-solve when required
- Provide feedback
- Providing documentation for legal purposes

Establish your supervision agendas in the following three categories:

Performance: Specific to individual’s performance. This generally includes performance reviews and also addressing problems with performance or providing positive feedback on specific performance.

Work Updates and Progress Check-ins: Generally checking in on upcoming

tasks/deadlines or status of tasks.

Support/Coaching/Mentorship: Less about performance or tasks, but more about the individual's "well being" as a staff member or personal/professional development.

One supervision meeting can encompass more than one of these agenda types, but understanding what your focus is will make it easier for you to come up with clearer meeting objectives.

Guide for More Effective Supervision Meetings

Prerequisites for increased success:

- Mutual respect between supervisor and employee:
- See each other as competent
- Interested in each other's success
- Commit to the meeting (don't cancel unless it's for something extremely urgent)

Supervisor should:

- Encourage and support the employee
- Demonstrate confidence in the employee's ability to progress
- Ask for feedback

Employee should:

- Be receptive to suggestions for improving performance
- Take ownership of success
- Ask for feedback

Assumptions about the Supervisor-Employee Relationship:

- People are an organization's most important resource
- Everyone has talents and strengths to nurture, and challenge areas to further develop
- Performance reviews and training are central to a supervisor's success
- Managers have tremendous influence over an employee's ability to grow, or they can impede progress
- Skills in appraising people and in developing their capabilities can be learned
- A combination of giving employees the opportunity to actively participate in the decision making process of setting goals and providing feedback are major factors in employee motivation

For more go to: <http://www.compasspoint.org/>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website: <http://www.firelightfoundation.org/newsflash.php>. We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org.

For more information contact:

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