

17 April, 2012

Dear Friends,

This week we are sending you Part 1 of Firelights series of Agra-flash Newsflashes focusing on Sustainable Agriculture, we hope you enjoy!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Call for Proposals) UN Voluntary Fund 2013 Call for Applications
(Resource) How to raise funds from US Foundations Webinar
(Report) An Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture
(Attachment) 72 Ways to Make Agriculture Sustainable

(Call for Proposals) UN Voluntary Fund 2013 Call for Applications

The Fund provides grants of up to \$15,000 for projects aiming to provide humanitarian, legal and financial assistance to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery.

Contemporary forms of slavery include, inter alia, chattel slavery, serfdom, forced labour, debt bondage, the worst forms of child labour including children in armed conflict, forced and early marriage, sale of wives, widow inheritance, trafficking in persons, sexual slavery, sale of children.

Grants will be awarded to organizations providing direct assistance to victims of contemporary forms of slavery, including medical, psychological, legal, educational, social and economic assistance.

Applications from all regions will be accepted. All applications must be submitted in English, French or Spanish.

Deadline: May 31, 2012. For more information, visit this link: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Slavery/Pages/SlaveryFundMain.aspx>

(Resource) How to raise funds from US Foundations Webinar

The Webinar on “How to raise Funds from US Foundations” will be organized on 25 April 2012 at 13:00-14:30 GMT.

The Webinar will be able to better understand how different types US foundations operate; understand their priorities in the developing and external relations field; know what information is relevant and where to find it; have the knowledge to make informed decisions on whether those donors are relevant to your organization or not; and understand whether you can apply for funds and if so, how to do it.

This course is ideally suited to fundraisers who want to build their fundraising capacity, executive directors/NGO managers who are responsible for donor relations, and, individuals who want to develop their professional skills and effectiveness.

To sign-up for the webinar, visit this link: <http://webinars.fundsforngos.org/april-2012/webinar-raise-funds-foundations-april-25-2012/83/>

(Report) An Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture

What is sustainable agriculture?

"What is sustainable agriculture? It is in large part, a wedding of ecology and agriculture. It proposes that a farm must be not only economically but also ecologically healthy if it is to be viable over the long term. It also proposes that farmers and farm workers should be afforded a good quality of life and be treated fairly. A sustainable agriculture will yield healthy rural communities and towns, which are key to the overall health of our nation." - The Next Green Revolution: Essential Steps to a Healthy, Sustainable Agriculture, by James E. Horne, PhD, and Maura McDermott

Sustainable agriculture is defined as a way of raising food that is healthy for consumers and animals, does not harm the environment, is humane for workers, respects animals, provides a fair wage to the farmer, and supports and enhances rural communities. In essence, it means to describe farming systems that are "capable of maintaining their productivity and usefulness to society indefinitely."

The concept of sustainable agriculture embraces a wide range of techniques, including organic, free-range, low-input, holistic, and biodynamic.

The common thread among these methods is an embrace of farming practices that mimic natural ecological processes. Farmers minimize tilling and water use; encourage healthy soil by planting fields with different crops year after year and integrating croplands with livestock grazing; and avoid pesticide use by nurturing the presence of organisms that control crop-destroying pests.

Beyond growing food, the philosophy of sustainability also espouses broader principles that support the just treatment of farm workers and food pricing that provides the farmer with a livable income.

Critics of sustainable agriculture claim, among other things, that its methods result in lower crop yields and higher land use. They add that a wholesale commitment to its practices will mean inevitable food shortages for a world population expected to exceed 8 billion by the year 2030. There's recent evidence, though, suggesting that over time, sustainably farmed lands can be as productive as conventional industrial farms.

10 Steps to Sustainable Agriculture:

1. Conserve and Create Healthy Soil
2. Conserve Water and Protect Its Quality
3. Manage Organic Wastes and Farm Chemicals So They Don't Pollute
4. Manage Pests (weeds, insects, diseases) with Minimal Environmental Impact
5. Select Plants and Animals Adapted to the Environment
6. Encourage Biodiversity (of domesticated animals, crops, wildlife and native plants, microbic and aquatic life)
7. Conserve Energy Resources
8. Increase Profitability and Reduce Risk
9. Ensure equity for farmers and give farm families a good quality of life
10. Develop strong, vibrant, and resilient rural communities

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.