



October 18, 2012

Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoy this week's edition of the Newsflash!

Sincerely

The Firelight Team

(Call for Submission) £10,000 Award Opportunity at the World Habitat Awards 2013

(Call for Applications) Request for Applications for Displaced Children and Orphans Fund Program

(Call for Applications) Global Change Leaders program for emerging female leaders from the global south

(Resource) Guidelines on How to Use the Media

(Call for Submission) £10,000 Award Opportunity at the World Habitat Awards 2013

The World Habitat Awards are given to projects that provide practical and innovative solutions to current housing needs and problems. The awards offer £10,000 presented to each of the two winners at the annual United Nations global celebration of World Habitat Day. In addition to the awards, the winners also get international recognition.

Projects & approaches are sought that ...

- Demonstrate practical, innovative and sustainable solutions to current housing issues faced by countries all around the world.
- Can be transferred or adapted for use as appropriate.
- View the term habitat from a broad perspective and bring other benefits as well, such as energy or water saving, income generation, social inclusion, community and individual empowerment, capacity building or education.

The World Habitat Awards (WHA) competition has a two-stage entry process:

- Stage I submissions need only comprise a summary of the key aspects of the project. From these preliminary submissions, ten projects are selected by an

Assessment Committee to go forward to Stage II of the competition.

- Stage II submissions are evaluated by an independent advisory group before being put to a panel of international judges, which includes the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the

Rector of the United Nations University, Tokyo. Evaluation visits are carried out to some of the projects prior to the final judging.

Deadline for Submission: 1 November 2012

For more go to: <http://www.worldhabitatawards.org/enter/?lang=00>

(Call for Applications) Request for Applications for Displaced Children and Orphans Fund Program

On behalf of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), World Learning (WL) invites organizations to submit their written applications in response to the Request for Application (RFA) for projects to improve the safety, well-being, and development of highly vulnerable children in four priority countries: Cambodia, Columbia, Guatemala, or Rwanda. Under this RFA, WL is anticipating to award up to three sub-grants from the Special Programs to Address the Need of Survivors (SPANS) Grant Solicitation and Management (GSM); each sub-grant will be a maximum of \$1 million for a 27-month project. An organization may submit no more than one (1) Application that addresses one (1) or more of the following four (4) areas:

- Development of family-based systems of care, including reunification, kinship care, foster care, and adoption;
- Develop capacities and increase the effectiveness of the child welfare workforce in ways that directly result in moving children into family care;
- Develop a system to document individual children as part of a case management system to place children in family care;
- Initiate a system to enumerate children outside of family care in countries where the number of such children is unknown and where this lack of visibility is a barrier to moving children into family care.

For organizations interested in responding to this RFA, Program Description, Application Instructions, and Eligibility and Selection Criteria can be retrieved from the RFA PDF uploaded on the following website: <http://www.worldlearning.org/aidspansgsm.cfm>

Questions concerning this RFA should be submitted by email to Bill Saur at bill.saur@worldlearning.org with a copy to Luisa Angelsmith at luisa.angelsmith@worldlearning.org by October 2, 2012 at 1:00pm EDT

(Washington, DC time). A list of questions and answers will be posted on the website mentioned above on or about October 5, 2012. In the case you encounter problems downloading the RFA, please also contact the individuals listed above.

One (1) electronic copy of the Application should be sent and addressed to Bill Saur at bill.saur@worldlearning.org with a copy to Luisa Angelsmith at luisa.angelsmith@worldlearning.org.

Deadline for Submission: October 25, 2012 at 1:00pm EDT (Washington, DC time).

For more go

to: http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=ry9uqxgab&v=001KOjYle_zlG-2qBt9BS6ljK3XmfGjriC1lcjzdDW39hqM4w28D98fybfXCgX1rRmRRGJeyKWU3VTazyS5lmuL-NHTOfcinCA5FV1RylseZUVZUiTBYB3MXTARerHYOsI3

(Call for Applications) Global Change Leaders program for emerging female leaders from the global south

Do you know any amazing up-and-coming female leaders? The International Centre for Women's Leadership is offering an opportunity for emerging women leaders from the global south to participate in a 7-week Global Change Leaders program at St. Francis Xavier University in Canada.

The program will run for seven weeks from March 24 to May 10, 2013.

The program is open to women from the global south who have demonstrated leadership in a development sector for at least two years but would still be considered an emerging leader. Applicants should meet the following requirements:

- Female
- From the global south
- A practitioner in civil society organizations including community based organizations and not for profits, or active in public or private institutions, donor/philanthropic agencies, social movements or in a social enterprise / business
- *At least two years* of demonstrated leadership in a social or economic development endeavour in sectors such as livelihoods or inclusive economic development, food security, environment, access to education and health care, governance, and the rights of girls and women
- University degree or combination of post-secondary education and experience
- Competence in English

Through campus-based education, field visits, mentorships and linkages to a global network of other women leaders, the program enables the women to strengthen their leadership capacities to contribute to change in their organizations and communities. Program participants engage in learning themes grounded in real

world experiences. Topics covered include transformative leadership concepts, practical leadership skills, citizen-led and asset-based development, and oral and written communications. Through a shared learning environment with other emerging women leaders from around the world, participants are exposed to a range of experiences and the beginnings of a potentially lifelong network of support.

Deadline for Submission: December 3, 2012.

For more go to: <http://coady.stfx.ca/women/change-leaders/>

(Resource) Guidelines on How to Use the Media

1. TURNING YOUR PRESS RELEASE INTO NEWS

The first question to ask yourself is: what is the story? Journalists publish stories, not just information about your organisation. The better the story, the closer it will be to the front page. So make sure the information is newsworthy, and ask how you can make it of interest and relevance to readers. Can you issue the press release to coincide with a more recent news event?

Know what you want to say. This may seem obvious, but if you are not clear what it is you want, or want to say, the press release will reflect this.

Who are you writing for? This will affect how you write and what you say.

Once you are clear about the content of the press release, you can concentrate on how to write it, with our five-step guide.

1. Keep it simple. Good, clear writing could be crucial and an otherwise interesting press release may be snubbed if it is written badly. Keep asking yourself: what is it I am trying to say? Then write as if you are recounting a story to a friend or family member.

Eg, DON'T say: "The National Group for the Protection of Child Rights has decided to integrate its strategic plan into national protection mechanisms through a process of consultations beginning with an event this September." DO say: The National Group for the Protection of Child Rights is hosting a conference on 17 September 2007 on the subject of child protection in Swaziland. Avoid jargon and 'UN-speak'.

2. The What, Who, Where, When, Why, How rule. In other words, what is happening/happened? Who is/was involved? Where is it/did it happen? etc. This information should be in the first three paragraphs of any story.

E.g. “The Kenyan Commission for the Prevention of Discrimination Against Children is set to release a new report on children and disabilities. Called “Kenya’s Forgotten Children”, the report will be officially launched at 11am, at Nairobi Town Hall, Cole St, Nairobi, tomorrow, 23 May 2007. The report will address the growing problem of discrimination towards children with disabilities in schools.”

Or, “Five children under the age of ten have been discovered working at a shoe factory in New Delhi. The children, whose names cannot be revealed because of reporting restrictions, were found at 4pm yesterday (23 May 2007) by members of the Indian Coalition Against Child Labour who were carrying out a routine inspection. The children said they had been working eight hour days in exchange for basic food and bottled water.

For other examples, visit the BBC website www.bbc.co.uk

3. Keep it short. Use short sentences and short words. Is each word in the press release absolutely necessary? For example, ‘policymaking process’ can just be ‘policymaking.’ Weighty words lengthen sentences and bulk out content. Use leaner substitutes instead, e.g.

Advantageous.....Helpful Consequently.....So Endeavour.....try

The press release should never be longer than one page.

4. Make it accurate. Check for grammar and punctuation, and keep it factual. Avoid exaggeration.

5. Include ALL contact details: address, email, telephone, website, fax etc. If issuing a call for information, applications etc. Double check you have included the correct email address.

BBC Action Network: how to write a press release: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork/A4288944>

BBC Action Network – the A to Z of campaigning: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/actionnetwork/campaignguides>

The Economist

style guide: <http://www.economist.com/research/StyleGuide/> BBC news style guide: <http://www.bbctraining.com/pdfs/newsstyleguide.pdf>

2. WRITING EMAILS TO EXTERNAL AUDIENCES

The principal rule is: Be clear, concise and direct. As with press releases, think about what you want to say, and do not over-complicate. Remember that people may be receiving many different emails, and might not have time to read all of them properly.

The subject line:

DO give a short, clear indication of the email eg. 'Application for project grant'

DON'T make the title vague or too long e.g 'submission from the Nigerian Coalition Against Child Discrimination for assistance with...etc etc'.

Attachments

DO include an attachment if it contains important information in line with the purpose of the email

DON'T include the whole email as an attachment – opening it gives the reader something extra to do, and gives them more reason to reach for the delete button. Also, there can sometimes be problems receiving attachments.

DON'T add endless attachments, particularly organisation logos or graphics. These can carry viruses and may take too long for people to download, particularly those who work with 'dial-up' internet.

The person you are writing to

DO find out a contact person that you can address the email to.

DO make the email as polite and warm as possible

DON'T make the email look like you have sent it to a hundred people. Someone is more likely to read and consider an email if it is addressed to them, or at least the organisation they work for.

DON'T write the address, telephone number etc of the recipient at the top

of the email (like in a letter). It is not necessary and can look overly formal.

Font and style

DO use simple, standard font.

DON'T use large font, different colours, capital letters or pictures/photos unless necessary/relevant. It can look unprofessional, and can take time to download. Bright colours can render the email difficult to read for people with visual impairments.

Contact details

DO make sure you have included the correct details! You may be surprised how often the email address is misspelt or does not work, for example.

DO include: the full name of the organisation, a postal address, telephone and fax number (if applicable), web address (if applicable) and an email address.

If the email contains information for publication, make sure you are happy that these details are made public. If not, say so.

DO find out the language the organisation you are writing to works in. If it is not your first language, try and get someone who speaks the language well to check for mistakes. Note that you can send emails to CRIN in English, French or Spanish.

DON'T include inaccurate information, or details you want to keep private. If an email contains sensitive or confidential information, do make this clear.

The content

DO write in a simple way, explaining clearly what you want or are offering. DO keep the email as short as possible – certainly no longer than one page DO use short, simple words (see above: press releases)

DON'T fill the email with lots of irrelevant information which the reader may not have time to read.

BEWARE fraudulent emails. For examples, visit: <http://www.419baiter.com/>

3. HOW TO WRITE FOR THE WEB

Studies of how users read on the Web found that they do not actually read: instead, they scan the text looking for key words and sentences.

Make it short

Use at least 50 per cent fewer words than if you were writing on paper.

Use the 'inverted pyramid' style, by placing the most important information at the top (like newspaper articles).

Is it necessary? Do not put content on the website 'just because you can'. Ask yourself if the information is relevant and should be on the website at all.

Make it easy on the eye

Do not use large blocks of text. Instead, use bullet points, sub-headings and summary paragraphs where possible. E.g. <http://crin.org/themes/ViewTheme.asp?id=5>

Make one point per paragraph and then expand on it for the rest of the paragraph. If your first sentence doesn't grab a reader they are likely to skip the whole section

Keep the writing simple

Avoid exaggeration and jargon. Long words lengthen sentences and bloat content. (See section on press releases).

Use objective language and a neutral tone. Very biased language (e.g "CRIN has been doing outstanding work to improve...") puts people off.

Highlight and hyperlink

Hyperlinks split up information on your website so pages are shorter. They are often underlined and in a different colour, so stand out.

Search Engines use hyperlinks to categorise websites, so hyperlinked keywords help to rank your site too.

Use bold or different colours to highlight key words. Such words stand out and catch the eye on a page filled with text. Remember though that too many of these, or different fonts, might be confusing. They may also create problems for people with visual impairments.

And finally...

Check, check and check again. It is rare for a first draft to be mistake-free. First edit

the writing yourself, then ask someone else, and finally check it again yourself considering each of the points above.

4. SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA

Speaking to the media can be daunting, but these tips can ensure the report reflects what you really want to say.

DO prepare. Know your subject, and think about the questions you might be asked.

DO be assertive. Seize the opportunity to drive your message forward, as well as answering questions

DO say if you don't know the answer. Say you can get back to them.

DO take your time to think about your response.

DO focus on what you want to say. Speak briefly and to the point.

DO return to your messages. Repetition is OK.

DON'T use NGO speak (e.g. global impact monitoring, monitoring and evaluation). Use language understandable to the media.

DON'T repeat negative language. Try and turn negative language into positive.

DON'T let the reporter put words into your mouth. If you are unsure, go back and clarify.

BEWARE of "Off the Record." From the time you meet the reporter till the time she leaves, anything you say may be recorded.

[Information from Save the Children Sweden - MENA Office]

5. HOW TO GET LETTERS PUBLISHED IN THE MEDIA

Here are some guidelines for writing to the press based on talking to journalists and the editors of letters pages.

When writing to the press, try to make sure your letters are:

- Accurate - make sure that the information is correct. We demand it of journalists, and should therefore demand it

of ourselves. Where possible, support your argument with facts.

- Prompt - the speedier the response, the more chance it will get published.
- Brief –

the shorter the better. Many newspapers receive hundreds of letters a day, so you will

have more chance of getting published. Try and focus on one major point, and make your point as early on in the letter as possible.

- Clear – any letter must make sense. Be aware that readers may not know as much about a subject as you do.
- Personal - letters are often more likely to be published if they contain personal knowledge or experience.
- Constructive - remember to praise coverage that you appreciate as well as that which you dislike.
- Polite – newspapers will not publish letters that are offensive.

Remember:

There is massive competition for space, so your letter may well not get published. Do not get disheartened. However, letters are passed to reporters, so a well written letter can still make an impact. And if a number of letters address the same issue, at least one of them is more likely to get published.

Always include your contact details in the letter, and if it is handwritten, make sure that it is legible. For more information, contact CAABU at: caabu@caabu.org, or visit their website:

<http://www.caabu.org/index.asp>

For more go to: <http://www.crin.org/docs/media%20toolkit2.pdf>

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:

Firelight Foundation
740 Front Street, Suite 380
Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA
www.firelightfoundation.org
+1 831-429- 8750