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June 28, 2012

Dear Friends,

This week's edition of the Newsflash highlights the importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) and the ways in which community-based organizations (CBOs) can provide essential learning and development to children ages 0 through 5 through their programs in ECD, PMTCT, or HBC. We also profile some of Firelight's grantee-partners that have contributed to this work in Malawi and Zambia, through a Hilton Foundation funded ECD program.

We'd also like to learn more about other materials our partners are using for ECD. If you are involved in an ECD program and have materials to share, please email them to us at: [newsletter@firelightfoundation.org](mailto:newsletter@firelightfoundation.org). **If you utilize any of these Essential Package materials, let us know how they work for your organization.**

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

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Call for Proposals) UHAI East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative: Seventh Round of Call for Proposals  
(Call for Applications) Southern African Trust Drivers of Change Award 2012  
(Resource) Background on ECD  
(Resource) Hilton Foundation Essential Package

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(Call for proposals) UHAI East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative: Seventh Round of Call for Proposals

The East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative has announced a call for proposals to provide funding for NGOs and programs led by and focused on sexual minorities health and rights within East Africa, but also considers project grants for organizations which are working with sexual minorities but not necessarily led by them.

The fund considers proposals from organizations that are working in the following

areas:

Policy and legal advocacy  
Rights based service delivery  
Strengthening institutions  
Media and culture  
Income generating initiatives

Deadline to apply for funding is **6 July**. For more information please visit: <http://files.fundsforngos.org.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/Call-for-Proposals-English1.pdf>

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(Call for Applications) Southern African Trust Drivers of Change Award 2012

The Southern African Trust invites nominations for the 2012 Drivers of Change Awards. It supports processes to deepen and widen participation in policy dialogue with a regional impact on poverty.

The Drivers of Change award recognizes individuals or organizations from across the Southern Africa region that are making a real impact, especially in developing effective public policies and strategies, to overcome poverty. It is awarded in four categories: civil society, government, individual and business. The award has been established to hold up living examples of innovative practices, inclusive attitudes and effective processes that build social trust and create the best conditions to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of people living in poverty.

#### **Award Categories-**

- Government
- Individual
- Investing in the Future and Drivers of Change: Business Award
- Investing in the Future and Drivers of Change: Civil Society Award

Deadline: **31 August, 2012**. For more information please visit: [http://www.southernafricatrust.org/drivers\\_of\\_change/index.html](http://www.southernafricatrust.org/drivers_of_change/index.html)

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(Resource) Background on ECD

At Firelight we believe that early childhood development is critical for all children to reach their full potential. A caring adult, nutrition, basic health services, play, and cognitive stimulation, are particularly important for children growing up in poor and vulnerable families. Community-based organizations (CBOs) are able to facilitate collaboration among families, communities, and government in order to work together towards the goal of improved early childhood development for children affected by AIDS.

The responsibility for fulfilling the needs and rights of young children is jointly held

by parents and government. Parents have the greatest influence on child development, because they are the most intimate and constant level of support for children. However, in communities affected by HIV & AIDS, parental capacity is often limited by poverty, illness, lack of knowledge, and a lack of awareness that the early stages of child development have a lasting impact on children's outcomes. In the places where government can intervene to make a difference, government services often do not reach the children that need their services the most. Policies sometimes exist but are under-resourced and poorly implemented.

The lack of integration between these two extensive systems (families and government) results in missed opportunities to enhance outcomes of young children.

But the situation is far from hopeless. Recent research provides evidence about the importance of a child's development from the very earliest stages of life. The evidence includes insight on the long-term effects of risk factors as well as the protective factors that have a positive effect on children's development. In 2011 the Lancet Series on Early Childhood Development documented research-based evidence which showed that reversing the impact of risk factors on children's development was possible, if interventions are: (1) introduced early in life; (2) provide high quality support and services; and (3) target children in greatest need.

The challenge and the opportunity is to use that evidence base to build program models that offer an effective system of support to a high number of children at a level of quality that can change their life outcomes.

Communities across Africa offer that opportunity.

Building on the inherent strengths of Africa's long-standing tradition of community sharing and mutual aid, CBOs have been organizing communities to respond to the needs of children affected by HIV & AIDS and poverty. Indeed, research evidence shows that 90 percent of material support to children affected by HIV & AIDS comes from extended families and communities.

Rooted in the communities they serve, our partners are best positioned to assess the particular situation of children in their community. Their intimate knowledge of the problems guarantees a long-term and socially appropriate response. Their local leadership gives them legitimacy and authority in the community. Their social capital positions them to influence family and community knowledge and social norms.

Over the last two years, Firelight has been working with partners in Malawi and Zambia to address the challenges outlined above. Four of our partners have been

involved in the process of testing and validating the Essential Package. This resource, and their experience, is profiled below.

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(Resource) Hilton Foundation: Essential Package- Holistically Addressing the Needs of Young Vulnerable Children and Their Caregivers affected by HIV and AIDS

The Essential Package (EP) was created by Save the Children and CARE as a resource for organizations running ECD programs. The EP is a comprehensive set of tools and guides for policy makers, program managers, and service providers to, "address the unique needs and competencies of young children, particularly those affected or infected by HIV/AIDS, in an integrated and holistic way." This is meant to be used as a guide for organizations managing programs, as well as for community-based volunteers doing home visits to monitor children's living environments and emotional, cognitive, and physical development. The goal of the EP is, "to empower volunteers, home based care providers and other community-based workers to offer a comprehensive range of services that will enable young children to reach their developmental potential."

Firelight worked with four of our grantee-partners, two in Malawi and two in Zambia, on using the EP and validating the tools provided in the toolkit. The Malawi partners included Peace In God Organisation (PIGO) and Namwera AIDS Coordinating Committee -Chigwenya (NACC). In Zambia Firelight worked with Mphatso Development Foundation and Mulumbo Early Childhood Care and Development Foundation - Chililalila. These partners used the training materials, visual guide, and comprehensive checklist to conduct baseline and endline surveys of households in their communities.

The EP is divided into the following sections:

1) **In-depth literature review** - provides the rationale for mainstreaming ECD into programming for children affected by HIV and AIDS

2) **Frameworks** - highlights the critical needs of young children and their caregivers in the context of HIV and AIDS

3) **Tool kit** - the various components included in the toolkit can assist organizations in developing or strengthening their ECD programs. We will detail each tool of the tool kit below.

**-Situational Analysis** - a guide to map local resources and services available in the community as well as to identify gaps and possible solutions

Mphatso found that, *"the caregivers engage with the communities and local government in pursuing children's needs as a result of social mapping because the caregivers are able to identify and appreciate the local initiatives."*

**-Community Mobilization Guide** - step by step process to work with key

stakeholders on addressing children's needs by introducing new activities within the context of HIV and AIDS

PIGO used this opportunity to, *"reach out and help those we could not be able to reach and also helped us in cementing our relationship with the community."*

**-Training Manual for Volunteers on ECD** - A guide for a 5-day training on the importance of ECD

After the training, Mulumbo reported: *"By the end of the 4 days, caregiver's knowledge on how to care for young children was enhanced; they were able to use the tools and gained knowledge on how to meet their own needs. The general comments from the use of the essential package were that the layout and content of the manual is easy to follow and understand. It addresses some of the practical issues that happen within their community."*

**-Visual Guide** - A pictorial guide to be used by home-based care volunteers to provide key messages to caregivers on the needs of young children and suggested actions for addressing these needs

NACC found that: *"[The EP] has enlightened volunteers and the community members at large to understand how serious the problems are in their communities. And has motivated them to do something to alleviate the problem."*

The toolkit also includes:

**-Program Manager Implementation Guide** - outlines roles and responsibilities of program managers and volunteers

**-Monitoring and Evaluation Framework** - highlights inputs, outputs, indicators, and outcomes

**-Comprehensive Checklist** - used to collect data at a household level and track changes over time

**-Policy Brief** - provides information on why addressing ECD matters

**-Online articles** - a library of online articles related to ECD

**For more information and to download the tools of the EP, you can visit:** [http://www.ecdgroup.com/HIV\\_AIDS.asp](http://www.ecdgroup.com/HIV_AIDS.asp).

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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](mailto:newsletter@firelightfoundation.org).

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