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May 23, 2012

Dear Friends,

This week we are sending you Part 2 of Firelights series of Agra-flash Newsflashes focusing on Sustainable Agriculture, we hope you enjoy!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Funding Opportunity) ABILIS Foundation Grants for Empowerment of People with Disabilities

(Call for Proposals) UNESCO International Fund for Cultural Diversity

(Call for Proposals) EJAF Robert Key Memorial Fund

(Resource) Building Soil Fertility

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(Funding Opportunity) ABILIS Foundation Grants for Empowerment of People with Disabilities

The ABILIS Foundation provides grants ranging from €500 to €10,000 for projects initiated by organizations that are run by persons who have a disability. Organizations that are run by parents of children with disabilities can also apply.

The ABILIS Foundation in Finland supports activities that contribute toward equal opportunities for people with disabilities in society through human rights, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. Special priority is given to projects advocating for human rights of people with disabilities and to activities developed and implemented by women with disabilities.

In order to be eligible for support, organizations must have a certificate of registration and be based in a country defined as qualifying for Official Development Assistance.

Applicants based in India, Bangladesh, Uganda, Kazakhstan, Tanzania, and Ethiopia should contact ABILIS partner organizations for an application form.

Applicants located in other eligible countries must contact the Foundation to request the application form.

More information available at  
this link: [http://www.abilis.fi/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=20&Itemid=4&lang=en](http://www.abilis.fi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20&Itemid=4&lang=en)

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### (Call for Proposals) UNESCO International Fund for Cultural Diversity

UNESCO's International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) supports projects that aim to foster the emergence of a dynamic cultural sector, primarily by facilitating the introduction of new cultural policies and cultural industries, or strengthening existing ones.

The purpose of the IFCD is to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction in developing and least-developed countries that are Parties to the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Who can apply:

- all developing countries that are Parties to the Convention.
- all State Parties to the Convention that have determined the existence of special situations on their territory in conformity with Articles 8 and 17 of the Convention and related operational guidelines,
  - non-governmental organizations coming from developing countries that are Parties to the Convention, which meet the definition of civil society and criteria regulating admission of its representatives at meetings of organs of the Convention as mentioned in the operational guidelines relating to the role and participation of civil society<sup>1</sup>,
  - international non-governmental organizations, which meet the definition of civil society and criteria regulating admission of its representatives at meetings of organs of the Convention as mentioned in the operational guidelines relating to the role and participation of civil society, and which present projects with impact at the subregional, regional or inter-regional level,
  - representatives of vulnerable groups and other social groups identified in Article 7 of the 2005 Convention (i.e. women and other social groups, including persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples) from developing countries that are Parties to the Convention.

**Deadline: 30 June 2012**

For more information, visit this link:  
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/diversity-of-cultural-expressions/how-to-apply/>

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(Call for Proposals) Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF) Robert Key Memorial Fund

The Elton John AIDS Foundation in the United Kingdom offers grant support centered on five broad themes: Women & Children, Positive Lives, Livelihoods, Vulnerable Groups and Innovation. Funding is offered only for organizations based in in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

The Robert Key Memorial Fund is a part of EJAF and is actively seeking applications for work to advance the rights or meet the needs of People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) from vulnerable or marginalized communities.

Frontline organisations undertaking this work with the active participation of PLWHA and marginalised communities are encouraged apply. Each application should be grounded in an analysis of local needs and be able to predict clear and measurable benefits from the proposed work for a defined group of individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

Applications will be considered for awards up to £10,000 per year and may be for single or multi-year programmes.

In order to be eligible to apply for the funding, the proposed projects need to be implemented in the following countries:

Cambodia, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Russia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom, Ukraine and Zambia.

For more information, visit  
this link: <http://www.ejaf.com/Applyingforgrants/IntlFundingPriorities>

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(Resource) Building Soil Fertility

Declining soil fertility is one of the greatest problem affecting farmers' ability to produce enough food for their families. Soil regeneration is key to sustainable development, where the loss of soil organic matter contributes to a rapid decline of soil fertility, degradation of soil structure and increased risk of erosion. In developing countries, food production could be doubled or tripled through the use of organic methods by intensifying biological activity through increasing diversification.

### **Why Chemicals Don't Work**

Using harsh chemicals not only causes nutrient imbalances, but also negatively affects the physical and biological properties of the soils. Many chemical fertilizers provide a quick burst of nutrients, but may leave little for the plants to draw on over the course of the growing season. And because petroleum products are needed to

produce the fertilizers, they use up valuable non-renewable resources. Finally, chemical fertilizers don't build or maintain healthy soil; much like taking a vitamin rather than eating your fruits and vegetables, they provide the chemicals but none of the added benefits that other soil inputs offer.

### **Use Organic Matter Instead**

Think of a natural system, such as a forest or meadow: it thrives year after year by recycling available nutrients. Leaves fall and break down; grasses and flowers grow, bloom, and fade; animals die and decompose—all life adds organic matter to the soil. This is the cycle you're trying to recreate in your garden.

Each time you harvest crops or pull weeds, you make a "withdrawal" from the soil's pool of nutrients and organic matter; if these aren't replaced, the soil is eventually robbed of the resources plants need to flourish. Organic matter, made up of decomposed plant and animal material, can help replenish nutrients and at the same time improve soil structure, making it easier to work and a more hospitable place for plants to thrive.

Here are some readily available sources:

- o Compost – made using recycled weeds, kitchen scraps, leaves, manure, and other materials
- o Manure – from cows, horses, poultry, and other livestock
- o Cover crops – also known as "green manures" involves growing certain crops, such as fava beans or vetch, which adds organic matter to the soil, limits erosion, and suppresses weeds
- o Various mulches – including sawdust, tree bark, straw, and leaf mold which can be used as a surface mulch making effective weed barriers and help hold moisture in the soil, but they also temporarily tie up nitrogen as they decompose (to prevent this, you can compost them before returning them to the soil so they won't compete with plants for nutrients)

For the full report on Soil Fertility and additional resources related to sustainable agriculture visit this link: <http://casfs.ucsc.edu/publications/for-the-gardener>

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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).

**For more information contact:**

Firelight Foundation  
740 Front Street, Suite 380  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA  
[www.firelightfoundation.org](http://www.firelightfoundation.org)  
+1 831-429- 8750