



March 19, 2013

Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoy this week's edition of the Newsflash! This week we are focusing on the Rwanda cooperative movement. We wanted to share with you the cooperative model, so that you can get a glimpse of how they work!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Call for Proposals) Submissions open for 2013 WISE Awards

(Call for Proposals) Children's Prize: \$1 Million Prize for Saving Lives of Children under 5

(Call for Nominations) World of Children Award: Cash Grants for Individuals working for Children

(Resource) What is a Rwandan Cooperative?

(Call for Proposals) Submissions open for 2013 WISE Awards

The World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) is accepting submissions for the 2013 WISE Awards identify, showcase and promote each year six innovative educational projects that are having a transformative impact on societies and education. Each winning project receives international recognition and a prize of \$20,000 (US). In addition to this, the WISE Awards winning projects and Finalists are given support and visibility through WISE media and communication channels such as film productions; participation in the annual WISE Summit and collaborative events where the projects are presented on a global stage; and the WISE Books.

WISE brings to light these educational models for their positive contribution within a community or society and their potential for scalability. Year by year, WISE is building a community of educational innovators which offers a fertile environment for groundbreaking collaborations.

Innovations can be of many different kinds depending on the context. WISE therefore seeks to highlight today's most innovative solutions and approaches to

educational challenges confronting the world at large.

Project holders from any region, educational sector or level may submit applications which demonstrate the quality and impact of their activities in accordance with the criteria. Whether you are involved in a project that provides access to quality education, creates new opportunities for lifelong learning or develops innovative educational technologies and approaches, WISE invites you to apply for the 2013 Awards.

Deadline for Submission: 31 March 2013

For more go to: <http://www.wise-qatar.org/awards>

(Call for Proposals) Children's Prize: \$1 Million Prize for Saving Lives of Children under 5

The Caplow Children's Prize is providing a grant of \$1 million for saving children's prize. The Children's Prize is a project created by Ted Caplow. Dr. Caplow is an engineer and serial entrepreneur with a background in renewable energy, sustainable food production, and water contaminant dynamics. The Children's Prize is supported by the Whole New World Foundation

The Children's Prize is a novel humanitarian contest to save children's lives. A \$1 million prize will be awarded to the best plan for preserving the lives of children who would otherwise die before the age of five. All prize finalists will be showcased on the website.

This is an Internet-based contest open to people or organizations from any corner of the globe. The entire application process can be completed online. Applicants to the prize must propose plans to save the lives of children who would otherwise die before the age of five. The rules are extremely simple: the winner will present a proposal that balances credibility with the greatest number of lives saved, and will be awarded one million dollars to execute their vision. The lives to be saved must be in immediate danger, and the names of the beneficiaries must be provided to the donor over the course of the winning project. The timeline and budget details are up to the applicant.

The project is structured as an open web-based contest, with eligibility extending to everyone, both individuals and organizations, across the world. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the number of potential lives saved, the probability of success, and the ease of verification. The winner will receive funding to directly execute the life-saving interventions outlined in their submitted proposal.

Deadline for Submission: 1 May, 2013

For more go to: <http://childrensprize.org/>

(Call for Nominations) World of Children Award: Cash Grants for Individuals working for Children

The World of Children Award provides funding and recognition to support life-changing work for children. By discovering and elevating only the most effective changemakers for children worldwide, we set the gold standard in child advocacy. It is currently accepting nominations for the 2013 World of Children Awards.

These awards recognize real-life heroes working to dramatically improve the lives of children. In addition to this, Honorees also receive grant funds and media attention, both of which help their gold standard programs grow so that they will ultimately impact the lives of even more children. Honorees who are selected to receive a 2013 World of Children Award must be able to attend the Awards Ceremony events in New York City.

The awards program was created to recognize and elevate those selfless individuals who make a difference in the lives of children here in the USA and across the globe, regardless of political, religious or geographical boundaries. These courageous leaders recognize that our children are the world's most important asset. Their stories are heroic. The World of Children Award honors these leaders and grants them funds to support the proven, high-impact programs they have created for children. These Awards ensure that more children's lives will be touched, improved and changed forever.

There are three categories of the award:

- The Humanitarian Award (Minimum grant of \$50,000)
- The Health Award (Minimum grant of \$50,000)
- The Youth Award (Minimum grant of \$25,000)

Deadline for Submission: April 1, 2013

For more go to: <http://worldofchildren.org/nominate/nomination-form/>

(Resource) What is a Rwandan Cooperative?

What is a Cooperative?

Like in most African countries, cooperatives were first introduced in Rwanda by the Belgians in the colonial period as instruments for driving the agenda of the government's socio-economic goals. The International Cooperative Alliance defines a **cooperative** as:

an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

According to the law on cooperatives (GOR, 2007b), the legal requirements for registration include the following:

- Four copies of the by-law document related to the new law of 2007, signed or finger printed by all the founder members;
- Four copies of the minutes of the constituent general assembly meeting of the cooperative bearing the signatures or finger prints of all founder members;
- Four copies of the list of the members of the board of directors and of the supervisory committee indicating their names, addresses, functions and the signature of each person;
- A specimen of the signature or fingerprints of persons authorized to represent the cooperative before the law.

The role of government in cooperative promotion

Different organizations have declared their position on the role of government in promoting cooperatives.

The ILO, ICA, and the United Nations unanimously agree that the government should assist cooperatives by establishing a supportive environment for their growth (COPAC, 1997). However, when government exercises

undue controlling influence over the cooperative movement, cooperative democracy and autonomy are negatively affected, particularly membership participation and the democratic administration of cooperatives.

What does a cooperative look like?

Cooperatives have specific values, including self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others (ICA, 1995). In pursuit of these values, the cooperative movement has developed principles that guide the transaction of their activities:

a) Voluntary and open membership: Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

b) Democratic member control: Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

c) Member economic participation: Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes:

i. Developing their cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible;

ii. Benefiting members in proportion to their transaction with the cooperative;

iii. Supporting other activities approved by the membership

d) Autonomy and independence: Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

e) Education, training and information: Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

f) Cooperation among cooperatives: Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

g) Concern for community: Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

A key element that runs through these principles is **cooperation**. The concern for cooperation, which requires cooperatives **not to compete among themselves**, has to a large extent determined the structural organization of the cooperative movement globally. According to the ILO (2001), **cooperation allows cooperatives to combine their strength as locally rooted organizations with the advantages of large scale enterprises**. In that context, primary cooperatives

create unions; unions create federations; and federations create confederations as the apex cooperative organizations within countries.

The roles of cooperatives in development

According to the ILO (2001), the role of cooperatives in development is threefold: economic, social and political.

1. Economic: Cooperatives alleviate poverty

The economic role involves provision of opportunities for improved incomes to members. Besides playing an important role in the economies of countries, as evidenced by their market share of the GDP, cooperatives are used as a tool to help alleviate poverty. They play an important role in facilitating access to credit, procurement and storage, distribution of input and marketing of products. It is in this regard that cooperatives supplement the functions of state credit institutions and marketing corporations. In the process of playing these roles, cooperatives create employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas, and allow disadvantaged groups to be organized for social and economic benefit (ILO, 2001). It is also important to mention that cooperatives are concerned with the creation of decent work in most developing countries. In general, the main economic activities in which cooperatives have ventures are agriculture, fishing, financial services, production and labor, mutual guarantee or insurance, retailing and wholesaling, housing and public services (ILO, 2001).

2. Social: Cooperatives organize vulnerable groups of people together and reduce social exclusion

The social role involves protection of members from risks. According to ILO (2001), cooperatives play an important role in mitigating risks and solving pressing social problems by:

- * Improving living and working conditions of farmers and factory workers;
- * Providing members with financial services to help them respond to unexpected problems;
- * Making production and consumption credit available to small-scale producers and agriculturists;
- * Offering production, health, funeral and life insurance and protecting consumers from adulteration of commodities;
- * Taking other social actions such as care for the aged, children and handicapped, and the creation of employment for socially disadvantaged population.

In addition to job creation, cooperatives have helped to improve the living conditions of their members. Success stories on how members have used their cooperatives to buy cars, build houses, pay school fees for their children, produce food for the family, and improve their clothing are indicators of such changes. Women weavers that we visited in Bugesera reported how their husbands were proud of their contribution to meeting family needs.

In addition, cooperatives have been used to organize vulnerable and excluded groups of people to start income generating activities.

Such groups include demobilized soldiers; people living with HIV/AIDS; genocide survivors, especially widows and orphans; ex-prisoners; street children; women; and prostitutes, among others. Cooperatives are, therefore, a tool for reducing social exclusion.

Cooperatives play a role in the social protection of their members and their families, especially in getting health insurance. Although health insurance is mandatory for all Rwandans, cooperatives have made it easier for their members to pay premiums for health insurance schemes that are popularly referred to as *mutuelle de santé*. For example, cooperatives in the tea sector pay insurance premiums for their members on credit. Beside health insurance, cooperatives facilitate closer interaction among members that makes it possible for them to develop mutual assistance schemes. For instance, there are cases where some cooperative members help each other when bereaved or when they have social functions such as wedding ceremonies that require higher capital outlays that could be beyond the reach of an individual member.

Finally, cooperatives serve as a channel for HIV/AIDS awareness and protection campaigns. The national commission in charge of HIV programme provides funds to institutions to keep cooperative members sensitized and trained about HIV/AIDS. Moreover, some associations of people living with HIV/AIDS have formed cooperatives as instruments for improving their welfare.

3. Political: Cooperatives work in solidarity and engage in advocacy with the government

With regard to their political role, cooperatives play an important role in public life and civil society. In democratic countries, cooperatives express their views on different issues concerning their communities' welfare such as environmental conservation and the provision of services such as health care, education,

creation

of employment and taxation, amongst others. Moreover, by defending the interests of their members, cooperatives defend the interest of the public in general. For example, consumer cooperatives set standards for consumer protection. The contribution of cooperatives to civic life is embedded in the fact that they are schools of democracy. The principles of voluntary and open membership as well as democratic member control ensure the cooperative a school of values is comprised of honesty, transparency, and equity.

For more go

to: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/ent/coop/africa/download/wpno12cooperativesinrwanda.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.

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