



May 3, 2012

Dear friends,

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

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Call for Proposals) LAUNCH – Innovative Waste Technologies and Deployment Models for Sustainable Development

(Call for Applications) The Urban Studies Foundation announces Fellowship for early or mid-career urban scholars

(Call for Applications) USAID Leadership Initiative for Good Governance in Africa: Call for Applications

(Call for Applications) Peace, Security and Development Fellowship for African Scholars

(Article) Guest Blogger Kim Klein: Building Resilience into the Nonprofit Sector

(Article) Annals of Ideas Group Think: The Brainstorming Myth

(Call for Proposals) LAUNCH – Innovative Waste Technologies and Deployment Models for Sustainable Development

The goal of the LAUNCH: Beyond Waste Challenge is to identify ten “game changing” innovations that have the potential to transform the current waste management systems and practices to ones focused on minimizing waste and/or transforming waste into new products.

LAUNCH invites proposals for innovative design for zero waste solutions, waste elimination, waste transformation, and waste mitigation technologies, as well as waste reduction-focused education, business, and financial strategies that have the potential to reduce and/or eliminate waste at a household, community, office building, campus, or industrial level.

The Waste Hierarchy establishes a ranking of management options in context of increasing environmental impact, and is based on the simple premise that it is better to avoid generating waste than to treat or dispose of waste. The ultimate goal

of LAUNCH is a sustainable future for planet Earth and its inhabitants.

ELIGIBILITY-

Responses from companies (small to large), consultants, entrepreneurs, inventors, nonprofit organizations with strong program implementation capacity, research institutions, social enterprises, and venture capitalists are welcome. Applicants poised to “go to market” and/or scale up their innovations will receive the most benefit from the LAUNCH experience. A principal from your organization must be available to attend the LAUNCH: Beyond Waste Forum at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California from July 18 to July 22, 2012.

Deadline for Submission: May 15, 2012

For more go to: <http://www.launch.org/forum/11/beyond-waste>

(Call for Applications) The Urban Studies Foundation announces Fellowship for early or mid-career urban scholars

The Urban Studies Foundation has announced an innovative fellowship programme for early as well as mid-career urban scholars. This will help the scholars to write up research findings in the form of publishable articles or a book in a university or other academically-accredited institution in the global north.

The main objective of the fellowship is to expand theoretical and empirical understanding of the major social, economic, political and other problems associated with the rapid processes of urban growth in the global south.

The programme is especially designed to give scope to the exchange of ideas between urban scholars working in the global north and south. To this end, particular importance is attached to the identification and willingness of an established urban scholar working within a northern institution to act as a mentor of the fellow.

Deadline for Submission: May 25, 2012

For more go to: [http://www.ukcds.org.uk/funding-Fellowship for early mid career urban scholars-1412.html](http://www.ukcds.org.uk/funding-Fellowship%20for%20early%20mid%20career%20urban%20scholars-1412.html)

(Call for Applications) USAID Leadership Initiative for Good Governance in Africa:
Call for Applications

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under its Annual Program Statement (APS) has issued a call for applications for its Leadership Initiative for Good Governance in Africa (LIGGA).

The purpose of LIGGA is to promote a culture of good governance and leaders of integrity who eschew corruption in Africa. Strengthening good governance, developing leadership capacity, modeling integrity, and promoting accountability is the focus of LIGGA, with emphasis on transparency, oversight mechanisms, representativeness and responsiveness, respect for human rights, and principles of inclusion, participation, and public service.

This APS seeks applications targeted at leaders in any level of government as well as leaders in civil society, media, and policy-making. Women and minority leaders should be highlighted for inclusion as participants. All applications should demonstrate gender sensitivity and cultural awareness for the proposed location of activity. Multi-sector, gender, positional, and regional representation are encouraged

NGOs, for-profit organizations, colleges and universities are eligible to apply for this funding. Initially, a concept note has to be submitted.

Deadline for Submission: April 24, 2013.

For more information, visit grants.gov and search by funding opportunity number for: APS-OAA-12-000023

(Call for Applications) Peace, Security and Development Fellowship for African Scholars

Countries/Region- Africa

The programme seeks to nurture junior African Scholars interested in pursuing a career in Peace, Security & Development, and to equip them with the skills necessary to achieve this. Through taught courses as well as rigorous mentoring activities, the programme will accomplish the following objectives:

- Increase the pool of African experts on peace, security and development and working to generate African-led ideas to address the security and development

challenges on the continent.

- Foster studies on peace and security issues within the African institutions of African institutions of higher learning, and ensure that academic institutions have better access to knowledge and expertise on these issues
- inject skills within regional and national centers of excellence so that they can strengthen their research capacity on peace, security and development topics with independent and critical approaches.
- Contribute to expertise on peace, security that grounded in the pursuit of excellence and integrity.

Deadline for Submission: May 18, 2012

For more go to: <http://www.codesria.org/spip.php?article1584&lang=en>

(Article) Guest Blogger Kim Klein: Building Resilience into the Nonprofit Sector

In the opinion piece "Building Resilience," guest blogger Kim Klein takes us on a journey through an urban food desert to make the case for collective, systemic action as a means to combat the "money deserts" that threaten nonprofits and their long-term sustainability. Kim says, "Just as no individual can really be healthy outside of the context of culture, geography, and economic ability, neither can a nonprofit." Read her thoughtful blog post here:

"Systemic change." I heard this phrase for years, and probably even used it, without really feeling what it meant. Of course **I knew that it referred to structures that had to be dismantled or re-thought or, in some cases, built in order to address various oppressions, but there is a difference between knowing something intellectually and really knowing it in your whole entire being.** Then one time I was staying with a member of the board of a grassroots organization doing work in a very poor neighborhood of a large city. She was out and I was hungry so I set off to find something to eat .

My host had told me there were no restaurants, even fast food chains, in walking distance, so I just thought I would find a grocery store and get something. After several inquiries and many blocks of walking, I finally came across a small bodega. The choices were many kinds of liquor and many kinds of chips, ice cream, spam, Wonder Bread, and the like. There was nothing fresh, no frozen vegetables, and not even that much in the canned food section. This turned out to be the only store in about 25 square blocks of a neighborhood where most people don't own cars and the bus runs infrequently. **Just a ten minute drive away is a large supermarket, but it might as well be in another state for how accessible it is. I learned that these kinds of neighborhoods are called "food deserts."** Suddenly "systemic change" felt very personal— I could see why the food justice movement says the whole way food is grown and distributed has to be re-thought. I eat junk food

because it tastes good sometimes, and it is easy to get, but I have never thought, “I eat it because it is really hard to get any other kind of food.”

In the nonprofit sector we are experiencing “money deserts.” I help individual organizations diversify their funding streams, build their donor base, make themselves more attractive to funders, and strengthen their capacity to raise money. But strengthening the capacity to raise money assumes that there is money to be raised, and sometimes that is a false assumption. Those organizations which have relied on government funding to do work that governments should fund--meeting basic human needs, providing public education, protecting our open spaces, insuring that people who can't afford lawyers still have access to the law, the list goes on--are currently in a “money desert” and only the concerted joint effort of all kinds of nonprofits will solve this problem.

Resilience—the ability to be flexible and nimble, to thrive in a variety of circumstances, depends on all of us thinking about the nature of funding and how organizations should be funded. What kinds of organizations should be funded mostly by foundations? What kinds of organizations should focus on a variety of individual donor strategies, and what kinds of organizations really shouldn't? The conversation has to go beyond what you are able to do and move into what makes the most sense for your mission. For example, just because you are good at getting grants doesn't mean that is the best way to do your work. Many organizations that used to get government funding have been successful raising money from foundations and individuals, but does that mean their work should be privately funded?

Organizations need to focus on being resilient, just like individuals need to focus on being healthy. But just as no individual can really be healthy outside of the context of culture, geography, and economic ability, neither can a nonprofit. Many communities are fixing their food deserts with mobile grocery stores (such as the People's Grocery here in Oakland); urban agriculture and gardening programs; farmers' markets; zoning laws to prevent more liquor stores or fast food outlets; and loans and incentives to encourage community owned businesses. What are the lessons the nonprofit sector can learn from the food justice movement? Why not take part of your staff or board meeting to reflect on this question? Our overall health, and by extension, the health and well being of our communities, depends on our collective answers.

For more on how to have these kinds of conversations at your nonprofit or in your networks, visit www.nonprofitstalkingtaxes.org.

For the full article go here: <http://www.compasspoint.org/blog/guest-blogger-kim-klein-building-resilience-nonprofit-sector>

(Article) Annals of Ideas Group Think: The Brainstorming Myth

The New Yorker article "Groupthink" reveals, among other fascinating facts about group dynamics and creativity processes, that traditional group brainstorming may not be the effective idea generator that meeting facilitators have led us to believe. Instead, "[d]ecades of research have consistently shown that brainstorming groups think of far fewer ideas than the same number of people who work alone and later pool their ideas."

"How to Organize a Squad to Create Ideas." When a group works together, Alex Osborn wrote, the members should engage in a **"brainstorm,"** which means **"using the brain to storm a creative problem—and doing so in commando fashion, with each stormer attacking the same objective."** For Osborn, brainstorming was central to his advertising agency's success. Osborn described, for instance, how the technique inspired a group of ten admen to come up with eighty-seven ideas for a new drugstore in ninety minutes, or nearly an idea per minute. The brainstorm had turned his employees into imagination machines.

Osborn's book outlined the essential rules of a successful brainstorming session. The most important of these, Osborn said—**the thing that distinguishes brainstorming from other types of group activity—was the absence of criticism and negative feedback.** If people were worried that their ideas might be ridiculed by the group, the process would fail. "Creativity is so delicate a flower that praise tends to make it bloom while discouragement often nips it in the bud," he wrote. "Forget quality; aim now to get a quantity of answers. When you're through, your sheet of paper may be so full of ridiculous nonsense that you'll be disgusted. Never mind. You're loosening up your unfettered imagination—making your mind deliver." Brainstorming enshrined a no-judgments approach to holding a meeting.

Brainstorming was an immediate hit and Osborn became an influential business guru, writing such best-sellers as "Wake Up Your Mind" and "The Gold Mine Between Your Ears." Brainstorming provided companies with an easy way to structure their group interactions, and it became the most widely used creativity technique in the world. It is still popular in advertising offices and design firms, classrooms and boardrooms. "Your Creative Power" has even inspired academic institutes, such as the International Center for Studies in Creativity, at Buffalo State College, near where Osborn lived. And it has given rise to detailed pedagogical doctrines, such as the Osborn-Parnes Creative Problem Solving Process, which is frequently employed by business consultants. When people want to extract the best ideas from a group, they still obey Osborn's cardinal rule, censoring criticism and encouraging the most "freewheeling" associations. At the design firm IDEO, famous for developing the first Apple mouse, brainstorming is "practically a religion," according to the company's general manager. Employees are instructed to "defer judgment" and "go for quantity."

The underlying assumption of brainstorming is that if people are scared of saying the wrong thing, they'll end up saying nothing at all. The appeal of this idea is obvious: it's always nice to be saturated in positive feedback. Typically, participants leave a brainstorming session proud of their contribution. The whiteboard has been filled with free associations. Brainstorming seems like an ideal technique, a feel-good way to boost productivity. But there is a problem with brainstorming. It doesn't work.

The first empirical test of Osborn's brainstorming technique was performed at Yale University, in 1958. Forty-eight male undergraduates were divided into twelve groups and given a series of creative puzzles. The groups were instructed to follow Osborn's guidelines. As a control sample, the scientists gave the same puzzles to forty-eight students working by themselves. The results were a sobering refutation of Osborn. The solo students came up with roughly twice as many solutions as the brainstorming groups, and a panel of judges deemed their solutions more "feasible" and "effective." Brainstorming didn't unleash the potential of the group, but rather made each individual less creative. Although the findings did nothing to hurt brainstorming's popularity, numerous follow-up studies have come to the same conclusion. Keith Sawyer, a psychologist at Washington University, has summarized the science: "Decades of research have consistently shown that brainstorming groups think of far fewer ideas than the same number of people who work alone and later pool their ideas."

And yet Osborn was right about one thing: **like it or not, human creativity has increasingly become a group process.** "Many of us can work much better creatively when teamed up," he wrote, noting that the trend was particularly apparent in science labs. "In the new B. F. Goodrich Research Center"—Goodrich was an important B.B.D.O. client—"250 workers . . . are hard on the hunt for ideas every hour, every day," he noted. "They are divided into 12 specialized groups—one for each major phase of chemistry, one for each major phase of physics, and so on." Osborn was quick to see that science had ceased to be solitary.

For more go
here: http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/01/30/120130fa_fact_lehrer#ixzz1tZK9Ap00

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
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