Dear Friends,

This week's Newsflash! is about sustainable agriculture and community gardening.

The current global food crisis is strongly linked to international agricultural and food policies. This means that a handful of multi-national corporations control the profit, and the producers themselves receive very little.

The crisis is made worse by global climate change, decreasing amounts of water and rainfall, and land degradation. Experts believe that these trends will only worsen, and Sub-Saharan Africa is and will remain one of the most affected areas of the world.

There is hope, however, in developing reliable food security measures that are less affected by food policy and weather conditions. Grassroots solutions-what you all are best at- might be the most effective and the only way to ensure food security.

We hope that this week's newsflash will provide you with useful information and resources.

Sincerely,

Firelight Team

Information from
: http://desertification.wordpress.com/2008/10/14/gardening-helping-to-overcome-malnutrition-and-hunger-in-sub-saharan-africa-google-kendlina/

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(Call for Applications) JAMS Foundation

(Call for Proposals) Internews Innovation Grant Opportunity in Sub-Saharan Africa

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(Call for Applications) JAMS Foundation

The JAMS Foundation seeks applications for The Weinstein International Fellowship program aimed at providing opportunities for individuals from outside the United States to visit the U.S. to learn more about dispute resolution processes and practices and to pursue a project of their own design that serves to advance the resolution of disputes in their home countries.

The JAMS Foundation Board of Directors will approve Fellowships of up to $25,000 in support of projects outlined by Fellowship applicants. This program is intended to be flexible and open to innovation, and applicants are encouraged to develop proposals that will increase the availability of dispute resolution education, training and services in their home countries

and beyond.

During their time in the U.S., Fellows may be based in a JAMS Resolution Center or may participate in a university program or be connected to another organization or institution, depending on the nature of their proposal. Fellowships may be from one month to one year in duration.

It is anticipated that Fellows will come from countries that do not have an established culture of using mediation for cases in litigation. Part of the Fellows' time in the United States will be spent observing how JAMS administers and resolves such cases.

For more information, please click on the link below:

http://www.jamsadr.com/weinstein-fellowship

(Call for Proposals) Internews Innovation Grant Opportunity in Sub Saharan Africa

Internews Africa Region is proposing to fund the pilot projects proposed by local NGOs, software companies and/or mobile phone operators, local media outlets and individuals from various regions. Creative, innovative ideas that involve the sharing and exchange of information will be considered for funding. The incorporation of new media into project activities focused on the use of text messaging, social media, mobile phones, webcasting, podcasting, IVR systems, mBanking, mapping, crowdsourcing or other such methodologies is highly encouraged. A special effort will be made to ensure that the grant awarded is complementary to the overall Internews Africa Region.

The pilot projects should be no more than 4 months in duration, with the possibility of extending for an additional month to carry out a research on the innovation piloted. Examples of topics for the pilot project may include proposing technical solutions to issues around (but not limited to): health, Diaspora remittances, agriculture, mining and extractive industry, refugees and IDPs, and community media sustainability.

Eligibility

The fund is available for local NGOs, software companies and/or mobile phone operators, local media outlets and individuals from various regions. The pilot must be carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa. Organizations/Individuals may submit more than one proposal for various projects, but each organization is only eligible for one grant. These small innovation grants will range from $5,000 to $30,000. Internews reserves the right to fund parts or all of the activities of a particular proposal, to fund one or more than one proposal, or to fund no proposals under this call.

Last date for submitting the proposal is June 30, 2011

For more information, please see the attachment in this email.

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(Call for Funding) USAID Biodiversity Understanding in Infrastructure Landscape Development Program

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) representing the US Government (USG) in partnership with the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT) seeks applications for

the Biodiversity Understanding in Infrastructure and Landscape Development (BUILD) program.

The program is aimed at maximizing the human and ecological outcomes by reducing the threat of infrastructure development to high-biodiversity ecosystems through effective policy, regulatory and planning approaches focused on engagement with government decision-makers, local stakeholders and civil society.

Subject to the availability of funds USAID seeks to competitively award one cooperative agreement under this RFA in the amount of $1.2 million over 3-years. A cost share minimum amount of 10% of the total cost of the cooperative agreement is required under this RFA.

With this RFA, USAID's objective is to support the development and testing of innovative and catalytic approaches in the policy, regulatory and planning realm to reduce the threat of infrastructure development to high-biodiversity ecosystems. BUILD will capture and disseminate best practices in order to scale-up what works. This investment will further USAID efforts to support integrated approaches to development by focusing on the nexus of conservation and infrastructure sectors.

Target Geographies:

This investment will be working at the global level generating, capturing and disseminating best practice approaches and tools informed by key policy, planning and capacity-building activities in a limited number of high-priority landscape(s) and/or seascape(s).

Goal

The goal of BUILD is to improve policy, regulatory and planning approaches to avoid or reduce negative impacts of infrastructure development on bio-diverse ecosystems through innovation and learning. BUILD will focus on engagement with government decision-makers, local stakeholders and civil society.

Deadline for submitting the application is June 23, 2011

For more information, please click the link below:

http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=XXtwN2CdWp1znJpD KplCS5XQ92jwTTshLf5crvP4d4gXx322S97h!420756808?oppId=95173&m ode=VIEW

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Resource: What is sustainable agriculture, and why is it important?

Nearly 80% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa lives in rural areas; 70% of this population is directly dependent on agricultural for its livelihood.

In regions with limited rainfall or other barriers to food production, rural farmers have to adopt farming practices that conserve fragile soils and improve their fertility.

The goals of sustainable agriculture are:

a) *Increased Ecological Resilience* to reduce the risk in weather-changing environmental conditions;

b) *Improved Health and Nutrition* (more diverse, nutritious and fresh diets; reduce the invidence of pesticide poisoning among wokers, communities and consumers);

c) *Conservation of Natural Resources* (biodiversity, soil organic matter, water quality and quantity, ecosystem services);

d) *Economic Stability* (more diverse sources of income; spread of labor requirements and production benefits over time; reduced vulnerability to single commodity price swings etc);

e) *Climate Change Mitigation* through incrased energy-efficiency, reduced reliance on fossil fuel-based agricultural inputs, increased carbon sequstration and water capture in soil; and

f) *Increased Social Resilience and Institutional Capacity* (increased ecological understanding and access to social support networks)

Information from The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)

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(Resource) Community Gardening

Community gardens contribute to food security and are one of the most basic strategies for survival. Farming as a community enables healthy food production and the sharing of resources and methods.

Community gardening is about more than growing food, flowers and herbs. It's also about interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, planning and organizing, group decision-making and the associated rewards and challenges that come with working with people. In short, community gardening is as much about "community" as it is "gardening."

Community Gardening Toolkit, University of Missouri Extension

Urban Community Gardening

To learn about low-cost and simple urban community gardening principles and methods, please click on the link below:

http://www.echonet.org/content/urbanGardening/697

Rural Community Gardening

Five core beliefs

To read the core beliefs of community gardening, click on the link below and scroll down to "Starting a Community Garden".
http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=MP906

Steps to Starting a Community Garden

1) *Talk with friends, neighbors and local organization about your idea*. If people voice opposition or concern, take note and be sure to address these concerns in future meetings. As a general rule, aim to find at least 10

interested individuals or families who want to be a part of the garden before moving to the next step.

2) Hold a meeting with anyone interested in the garden. The purpose of this meeting is to determine the feasibility of starting a garden, to brainstorm ideas and to address some basic questions. This meeting can be informal or formal, but at the very least, one person should be responsible for taking notes and sending them to the group after the meeting. Publicize the meeting to individuals, groups and relevant organizations.

***Your first meeting may be an appropriate time to define your group's purpose, values and vision. This can help your group develop a common understanding of why you are embarking on a community garden project (purpose), the beliefs and principles you share that underlie your purpose (values) and the long-term goal or outcome you hope to achieve (vision).

At subsequent meetings, you may wish to draft an action plan to identify steps to take throughout the rest of your garden startup process. This can help your group get organized, stay focused and add a measure of accountability to your process.

3) *Find and evaluate potential garden sites.* Tour the neighborhood with friends and family and talk to your neighbors. Be sure to consider churches, nonprofit agencies and businesses as potential partners. These groups may own land and have an interest in being a part of your garden.

4) *Identify local resources needed for starting a garden.* Gardens can require a fair amount of tools, equipment, supplies, infrastructure,

knowledge and other forms of support. Gardeners themselves can provide some resources. For other resources, it makes sense for the group to seek out and acquire materials in bulk or solicit donations and support from other groups.

5) *Hold a second meeting.* The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the notes from the previous meeting and hear reports from the people who volunteered to find and evaluate possible locations for a garden (Step 3) and identify local resources for starting a garden (Step 4). If you completed the Purpose, Values, Vision exercise, you may wish to revisit this document to see if people are still in agreement and to gain input from new group members.

If your group feels like the primary issues have been adequately addressed and enough people are committed to the project, you may be ready to evaluate and select one or more sites to pursue for your garden.

6) *Develop a site plan.*

The plan for your garden can be as simple or elaborate as you choose. Consider including the following elements in your plan:

The boundary of the lot

The location and size of garden beds

Any trees, shrubs or existing vegetation that will be kept

Driveways, pathways and open spaces

Compost bins

A shed

The location of the water source

Garden sign

Garden name

7) *Establish gardener guidelines and draft the gardener application.*

Just as there are many types of community gardens, there are many types of gardener guidelines and gardener applications. Having clear guidelines for gardeners to follow and an application to collect their contact information will aid in your efforts to keep order among and stay in touch with gardeners.

8) *Prepare and develop the site.*

Once you've held the meetings, gained commitments from a number of people, selected a location, identified and assembled the resources, drafted and signed the lease, established the garden rules and made the plans, it's time do the physical work of preparing and developing your community garden.

There are many ways to go about this, and much will depend on the condition of your site. Generally, groups will schedule regular workdays to take care of the initial tilling, trimming and building projects. It is helpful if one or more people can lead various projects and coordinate equipment, supplies and volunteers.

9) *Celebrate your success!*

Don't forget to take a step back and recognize your accomplishments. Hold a garden party and invite neighbors, local businesses and organizations. Show off the work you've done, and talk to people about your plans for the future. This is a great way to gain community support for your garden.

Community Gardening Toolkit, University of Missouri Extension

For more information, please visit The Community Gardening toolkit:

http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=MP906

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(Resource) Best Practices Database in Improving the Living Environment

This searchable database contains over 3,800 proven solutions from more than 140 countries to the common social, economic and environmental problems of an urbanizing world. It demonstrates the practical ways in which public, private and civil society sectors are working together to improve governance, eradicate poverty, provide access to shelter, land and basic services, protect the environment and support economic development.
To learn more, please visit the Learning Centre link below:

http://www.bestpractices.org/blpnet/BLP/learning/learning.htm

Best Practices and Local Leadership Program

The Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme (BLP) is a global network of institutions dedicated to the identification and exchange of successful solutions for sustainable development.

The BLP partners' network identifies initiatives in such areas as housing, urban development and governance, the environment, economic development, social inclusion, crime prevention, poverty reduction, women, youth, infrastructure and social services.

Every two years, up to 10 outstanding initiatives receive the Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment.

For more information, please visit the link below:

http://www.bestpractices.org/blpnet/BLP/#

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(Resource) The Equator Initiative

The Equator Initiative is a partnership that brings together the United Nations, governments, civil society, businesses, and grassroots organizations to build the capacity and raise the profile of local efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The Initiative is dedicated to celebrating successful local initiatives, to creating opportunities for sharing community experiences and good practice, to informing policy and fostering an enabling environment for local action, and to building the capacity of grassroots organizations to deliver results and scale-up impact.

To learn more, please click the link below:

http://www.equatorinitiative.org

The Equator Prize

The Equator Prize is awarded biennially to recognize outstanding community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

For more information, please click on the following link:

http://www.equatorinitiative.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=145%3Aeq-prize-wwd&catid=81%3Aeq-prize-what-we-do&Itemid=462&lang=en

Equator Knowledge

Equator Knowledge is a research, data collection, and peer-to-peer learning programme. The aim of Equator Knowledge is to compile relevant data from and about Equator Prize nominees that can serve an indispensable role in informing policy and advancing research.

To learn more, please click the link below:

http://www.equatorinitiative.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=146%3Aeq-knowledge-wwd&catid=82%3Aeq-knowledge-what-we-do&Itemid=464&lang=en

Equator Dialogue

Equator Dialogues is an ongoing series of community-driven meetings and exchanges, held in conjunction with related international forums. Designed as a response to the lack of representation of local and indigenous groups in policy forums, Equator Dialogues creates space for grassroots leaders to influence policy and share their experiences with relevant stakeholders in the United Nations, government, academia, business, and civil society.

To learn more, please click the link below:

http://www.equatorinitiative.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147%3Aeq-dialogues-wwd&catid=83%3Aeq-dialogues-what-we-do&Itemid=466&lang=en

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(Resource) International Fund for Agricultural Development

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), an agency of the UN, was created to finance agricultural development projects that enhance the food security of people in developing countries. Through low-interests loans and grants, IFAD works with governments to enable poor people to overcome poverty themselves.

To learn more about this agency and the work that it does, please click the link below:

http://www.ifad.org

To read about projects by country, please click on the link below:

http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/country.htm

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(Resource) "From Relief to Recovery: Rural Farming in Zimbabwe"

This article explores the benefits of conservation farming in Zimbabwe through projects funded by the IFAD. It highlights particular farmers techniques and strategies to overcome the challenges of food insecurity.

To read the article, please clink the link below:

http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/voice/tags/zimbabwe/zimbabwe_recovery

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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 newletter@firelightfoundation.org.