



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## THE AMBASSADOR'S SPECIAL SELF-HELP FUND United States Embassy Nairobi



Members of WEMA accessing water from Ambassador's SSH Spring Protection Project

### ABOUT THE AMBASSADOR'S SPECIAL SELF HELP-FUND

The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund (SSHF) provides small grants to registered self-help groups, youth groups, community based organizations, and specific types of educational institutions and medical facilities. Our objective is to assist groups in the development of projects that improve living conditions in their communities. This Fund will not support the start of a project or activity, but may fund the expansion of an existing project. Projects supported by this fund are expected to be completed and serving the community within one year. Only projects that have strong community involvement and significant community benefit, and produce

ongoing, self-sustaining activities are eligible for funding. The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund entertains proposals in the range of \$1,000 to \$10,000, however the average grant awarded is \$3,000 to \$7,000. Requests within this range generally receive priority.

### Applying for the Ambassador's SSHF

The Ambassador's SSHF Office, located at US Embassy Nairobi, accepts applications on a rolling-basis. A completed application must be received in our office by the end of the calendar year (December 31), in order to be considered. Grants are usually awarded between September and December of the following year. Only proposals submitted on the official application form will be considered. Please send an e-mail to [selfhelp@state.gov](mailto:selfhelp@state.gov) to receive application materials.

Please see "The Ambassador's Special Self-Fund Criteria & Guidelines" below. If after reviewing this information you find that you still have questions about what the Ambassador's Self-Fund does or does not fund, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund  
United States Embassy  
P.O. Box 606 – Village Market  
00621 NAIROBI  
Telephone: (20) 363-6284 or e-mail: [selfhelp@state.gov](mailto:selfhelp@state.gov)



Ambassador's Self-Help Fund  
Project in Lamu



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00621 NAIROBI

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## CRITERIA & GUIDELINES

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### ABOUT THE SELF-HELP FUND

The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund provides small grants to registered self-help groups, youth groups, community based organizations, and specific types of educational institutions and medical facilities. Our objective is to assist groups in the development of projects that improve living conditions in their communities. This Fund will not support the start of a project or activity, but may fund the expansion of an existing project. Projects supported by this fund are expected to be completed and serving the community within one year. Only projects that have strong community involvement, significant community benefit, and produce ongoing, self-sustaining activities are eligible for funding.

Eligible applicants are Self-Help Groups that are registered through the District Gender and Social Development Office and should have been registered and working together successfully for at least two years before making application to the Ambassador's Self-Help Fund. NGOs are not eligible for grants.

The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund does not support requests from individuals or for individual profit. This Fund will not support the start of a project or activity, but may fund the expansion of an existing project.

The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund receives many more applications each year than can be funded. Carefully prepared application form, as well as the inclusion of all required attachments, is necessary for your project proposal to be considered complete.

### COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

The group and benefiting community must contribute 25% or more toward the total cost of the project (not just 25% of the amount requested from the Ambassador's Self-Help Fund). Community contributions can consist of materials, labor, cash or any combination thereof. Among the contributions, Applicants should always plan to contribute unskilled labor and transportation costs.

### DEADLINES AND AWARDS

A completed application must be received in our office by the end of the calendar year (December 31), in order to be considered. Grants are usually awarded between July and September of the following year.

The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund entertains proposals in the range of \$1,000 to \$10,000; however, the average grant awarded is \$3,000 to \$7,000. Requests within this range generally receive priority.

### APPLICATION AND AWARD PROCESS

The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund Coordinator reviews complete applications. Applicants are then informed in writing of the status of their application. Those not accepted are given a brief explanation as to why we cannot consider funding the project. Usually it is because the project does not fit within the funding categories and criteria.

If the application is accepted, a site visit may be scheduled by the Coordinator to meet the group and to discuss the project more thoroughly. Following a site visit, projects recommended by the Coordinator are referred to an Advisory Committee made up of the U.S. Ambassador and U.S. Mission personnel, which makes the final decision on which projects are to be funded.

The grantee will sign a legally binding agreement with the United States Government. Funds are not paid directly to the group, but to the suppliers of approved equipment, materials, and services. Suppliers must

agree to be paid after goods are delivered and upon receipt by our office of a signed delivery note and final invoice. The grantee is expected to provide ongoing project reports and a final, written, project evaluation. The Coordinator may visit the project to assess progress, and upon project completion a follow-up visit and dedication will be scheduled.

## **WHAT GRANT FUNDS CAN PURCHASE**

Grants from the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund are used for the purchase of durable goods and equipment.

## **TYPES OF PROJECTS FUNDED**

**KENYANS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.** The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund is supporting projects that assist special populations which may be vulnerable or at-risk. We consider projects that improve the lives and living conditions of groups such as Kenyans with disabilities, orphans, and vulnerable children. The fund also awards grants to schools for equipment, solar energy projects, and limited construction materials.

**PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT.** We seek to support projects that *actively protect, preserve, or restore the environment*. The *primary* goal of an environmental project is not income generation, but to address a specific environmental concern. For example, support could be considered for a tree nursery where the seedlings are used to reforest a riverbank or a tree nursery where the chief activity is to sell seedlings to the public and also donate seedlings to the community.

**WATER.** The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund can support community water projects that *bring clean, safe drinking water to a significant number of people*. It does not fund the purchase or construction of individual household water tanks but supports school-only systems, pumps or pipes for irrigation projects. The submission of a professionally prepared design report with bill of quantity, and blueprint(s) is an application requirement.

**INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES.** The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund may consider support for an *innovative or unique income-generating activity within a community*. *The activity should provide a benefit for the community-at-large, beyond that of income received by individual group members*. The group must show that it has already obtained appropriate training or the knowledge to implement its activity, must demonstrate a clear understanding of the market for its product or service, and already be actively engaged in the enterprise. The Ambassador's Self-Help Fund also entertains applications for income-generating activities that are primarily horticultural or agricultural. It also supports solar energy projects.

**MEDICAL EQUIPMENT.** We consider requests for *appropriate medical equipment from community-initiated clinics or dispensaries* that are already in operation with a professional facility and staff.

## FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

### The Following Are *Not* Currently Considered for Funding:

- Purchase or rental of land or buildings
- Administrative, recurrent, or operational costs
- Revolving loans or “start-up” capital
- Fees or salaries, including those for training, seminars, travel costs, or per diem
- Religious, cultural, or recreational activities
- Meetings, training, information campaigns, one-off activities
- Electrification and motor vehicles
- Office furniture, equipment, or supplies
- Electronics, including phones, computers, printers, photocopiers, or fax machines
- Textbooks, uniforms, school fees, and sports equipment
- Food, clothing, medicine, drugs, or any type of consumable goods or commodities
- Any chemicals, including fertilizer, pesticides, fungicides, or herbicides
- Small implements that are easily broken, stolen, or privatized
- Support to businesses, private or individual enterprises

## HOW TO APPLY

Qualified self-help groups may request an application form from the Office of the Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Fund (*Contact information below.*) Applicants that meet the criteria for funding consideration must supply specific information to the Office of the Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Fund:

- A complete application form
- Thorough project description
- Additional information necessary to explain the proposal, such as a site plan, design report, blueprints, building plans, specifications of equipment, photos, drawings, etc.
- Project budget, including self-help contributions and items for which financial support is requested
- Proposals for water projects must include a copy of a professionally prepared design report, blueprint(s), and a bill of quantity certified by the District’s Water Officer.
- Proposals for income-generating activities must provide a projection of all expenses and income for one year following implementation of the project, and indicate how profits will be utilized.
- Pro-Forma invoices for whatever the grant funds would purchase, including professional services
- Map to the project site
- Certificate of Registration from the Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs, Department of Gender and Social Services
- Signatures of endorsement of the District Gender and Social Development Officer and the relevant technical officer.

## QUESTIONS?

For further information, please feel free to contact us at:

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