



Embassy of the United States of America
Port Louis, Mauritius
PRESS RELEASE

The “U.S. Ambassador’s Special Self Help Program” gives small community development projects the boost they need

Port Louis, September 25, 2013: Do you have a project for your community, one which will improve basic socioeconomic conditions at grassroots level, but you are a bit short on funds? Why not submit a proposal for the “*U.S. Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Program*”? The next call for proposals for this program designed to assist small-scale development projects is expected around October 15, 2013 for projects to be carried out in 2014.

The U.S. Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Program is a grassroots assistance program offered by the United States Embassy that responds to requests for financial assistance from small community-based groups. The program promotes self-reliance through community action and strives to support projects that impact entire communities, through direct or indirect benefits. The primary objective is to help people help themselves. Groups that demonstrate a commitment to their communities and involve the community are the most successful. Each year about ten beneficiaries are selected. The U.S. Embassy to Mauritius has been providing continuous funding to groups in Mauritius and Rodrigues through the Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Program for the last ten years.

In the past two weeks two projects funded through the U.S. Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Program have celebrated their completion: the inauguration of a mini-library in Les Mariannes and the establishment of a Rabbit Multiplier Unit in Nouvelle France. The U.S. Embassy supplied the Mahaluxmi Samelan Society with the funds to buy books, bookshelves, and a computer set for a mini-library in the Community Center of Les Mariannes. No such facilities existed in this area until now. In Nouvelle France, the U.S. Embassy provided funds to the Mauritius Girls Guides Association to purchase twelve rabbit hutches and forty rabbits for a Rabbit Multiplier Unit. With the rabbit’s high rate of reproduction, the community will be able to provide other Girl Guides’ Companies around the island with offspring to start rabbit-raising projects. This is a rural family-based project for local income generation.

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In 2013, forty project proposals for the U.S. Ambassador's Special Self-Help Program were received from Mauritius and Rodrigues and eleven were chosen for funding , for a total of USD \$37,259 (approximately Rs 1,164,000) in aid. The 2013 beneficiaries were: SOS Femmes, Lupus Alert, Association Solidarité Maman, Muslim Youth Federation, Centre d'Accueil de Terre Rouge, Open Mind, SACIM, Association Vent d'un Rêve, Mauritius Girl Guides Association, Roman Catholic Education Authority, Mahaluxmi Samelan Society and T1 Diams. The U.S. Embassy Mauritius looks forward to receiving even more Self-Help Fund proposals this year.

Who can apply? Applications from non-government organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations or parent-teachers associations (PTA) of primary schools, secondary schools and other charitable institutions based in Mauritius, Rodrigues or Seychelles are welcome. For more details, please check the embassy's website (http://mauritius.usembassy.gov/self_help_program.html) over the coming days.

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