



**EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**P.O. Box 199 Mbabane, Swaziland**

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**A. AMBASSADOR'S SPECIAL SELF-HELP PROGRAM**

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

1. **History.** Self-help program (SHP) begun in 1964 in Togo and is still limited to African countries. Practically all Am Embassies in Africa have SHP.
2. **Purpose.**
  - 2.1. The purpose of the SHP projects is to generate widely the public awareness of US assistance efforts. To show that the United States Government (USG) cares for the welfare of the people in host country and is interested in the self-help endeavors of local communities.
  - 2.2. SHP target special development projects that fall outside the bilateral development projects undertaken by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). They are small (the average grant is \$3,000-\$7,000) and flexible compared to USAID's projects. As such, they allow Ambassadors to respond quickly to local community development requests in extending assistance directly to people rather than on government-to government basis.
  - 2.3. SHP also seeks to build the capacity of local communities to help them become self-reliant in beginning and continuing similar activities without the US assistance.
3. **SHP Projects**
  - 3.1. **Acceptable**
    - 3.1.1. Water projects: wells, latrines, pumps, boreholes, shower stalls and washbasins, fishponds, etc.
    - 3.1.3 Schools/clinics equipment and supplies desks, chairs, laboratory equipment, and library items, miscellaneous durable goods such as stove or refrigerator, or washing machine for health facilities, etc.
    - 3.1.4 Income generating equipment: weaving looms, tools for furniture making, rice-milling machine, etc. But avoid equipment that cannot be maintained by the local community—an issue of the capacity to sustain the project.
  - 3.2. **Gray Area**
    - 3.2.1. Construction: renovating a facility damaged by a disaster; repairing a house to create a day-care facility, etc.
    - 3.2.2. Office equipment: duplicating machines, typewriters (strongly discouraged)
    - 3.2.3 Vehicles: no restrictions exist for a legitimate need such as a vehicle for a small farm-to-market activity for income generation. However, generally their purchase is strongly discouraged—because it may be beyond a community's ability to maintain a vehicle.
    - 3.2.4. Miscellaneous: printing informational material, sports equipment for a local community school, etc.
  - 3.3. **Unacceptable**
    - 3.3.1. Remodeling or renovating an existing facility that is in disrepair due to neglect or lack of money—e.g., purchasing paint to repair a school.
    - 3.3.2. Activities with unmitigated and negative environmental consequences such as dams, roads through relatively undegraded forest lands; or activities that contribute to commercial deforestation; conversion of land-use from forest to livestock; actions that are likely to jeopardize, threaten, or endanger species and/or their habitat, and actions that are likely to degrade protected areas significantly, such as introduction of exotic plants or animals.

- 3.3.3. Religious activities
- 3.3.4. Sports equipment or uniforms for a national sports team.
- 3.3.5. Musical instruments or uniforms for a national orchestra or dance company.
- 3.3.5. Ongoing needs for education/training—such as bursaries or scholarships.
- 3.3.6. Computers
- 3.3.7. Office supplies such as pencils, paper forms, folders, etc.

### **3.4. Selection Criteria**

- 3.4.1. SHP activities should have a potential for generating public and political awareness towards the USG. Those activities that can be potentially controversial within the cooperating country should be avoided.
- 3.4.2. SHP activities should have community participation and contribution—volunteer time and labor, donated land, equipment and materials—and US contribution should be on a one-time basis only.
- 3.4.3. SHP activities should be of a high-impact nature, benefiting the greatest number of people possible with any one single activity. Projects that directly benefit only a very limited number of people are discouraged.
- 3.4.4. SHP activities should help improve basic economic or social conditions at the local community or village level; one should avoid activities that have only short-lived value.
- 3.4.5. SHP activities should demonstrate a community's self-help/self-reliant ability within its general means to implement those activities. Avoid activities that are too sophisticated for a community or beyond its ability to sustain a given project.
- 3.4.6. SHP activities should be viable and sustainable in terms of finance, necessary personnel support—e.g., teachers, nurses, or technicians to repair equipments—and necessary expertise and services. Communities that incur costs and other obligations they cannot meet, or embark on projects that are too ambitious for them to manage efficiently, may do damage to their reputation and create negative feelings toward the USG for abandoning their projects.
- 3.4.7. SHP activities should respect environmental norms for small projects to be sure that they don't adversely affect protected or other sensitive environmental areas nor jeopardize threatened and endangered species and their habitat.

## **4. The SHP Grant Process**

- 4.1. **No applications are accepted from individuals or private businesses.**
- 4.3. **Only projects that have strong community involvement and lead to ongoing self-sustaining activities are eligible for funding.**
- 4.4. **Community contribution of cash, materials or labor must amount to at least 25% of the total value of the project; and the beneficiaries of the project must participate directly in its activities.**
- 4.5. **SHP application process is very competitive. We receive more applications than can be funded.**
- 4.6. Applications are received between January and November to be considered for funding in the following year.
- 4.7. The selection process takes place between December and April.
- 4.8. The SHP advises applicants on the status of their applications on request due to high volume of applications
- 4.9. Site visits are a must for those applications deemed fundable.
- 4.10. Grants are awarded between May and July and all must be signed by July 31.
  - 4.10. All grantees sign a legally binding contract with the United States Government.
  - 4.11. Funds are generally not paid directly to the grantees but to the vendors who must send, to the SHP Coordinator, final invoices together with delivery notes signed by the grantees.
  - 4.12. The SHP Coordinator visits the projects to assess progress; and upon project completion follow-up visits as necessary.

**QUESTIONS?**

Call the SHP Coordinator: 2404-6441/-5

**SEND THE FORM AND DOCUMENTS TO:**

**Self- Help Coordinator  
U. S. Embassy  
P. O. Box 199  
Mbabane, Swaziland**