

Education funding guidelines

Criteria for Assessing Projects OSISA support can happen at any level of basic education within the areas of emphasis stipulated. OSISA also recognizes that needs and priorities in basic education may differ among the nine countries and therefore will take into consideration country priorities in basic education. OSISA places a particularly high priority on activist initiatives that:

- Increase democratic participation in educational improvement and promote constructive dialogue and debate between people and their governments;
- Ensure access to pre-school education;
- Increase learning opportunities and improve the quality of education for girls;
- Strengthen formal and non-formal education that helps prepare young people for life;
- Increases learning opportunities for children in difficult circumstances, such as children orphaned by AIDS or conflict, or those who might otherwise be marginalized from a quality education; and
- Try out or spread successful, holistic approaches to increasing access, equity, and quality in education that is needed in an open society.

In addition, OSISA will support programmes that satisfy the following criteria:

- Community participation throughout the project cycle
- The meaningful participation of women in the entire project cycle and the production of gender disaggregated data (not just numbers, but quality participation and representation)

- The participation of young people in decision making throughout the entire project cycle according to their evolving capacities.
- The implementing organization has to fully subscribe to open society ideals not just for its beneficiaries, but also within its own organizational ranks such as gender equity and employee rights.
- Innovative programmes that maximize resources.
- Approaches that are sustainable.

Key Areas of Support

OSISA will support education in four critical areas:

- Early Childhood Development
- Basic Primary Schooling for Children
- Education Opportunities for young people in and out of school, with emphasis on life skills.
- Education opportunities for illiterate adults

Early Childhood Development (ECD) OSISA wishes to emphasize ECD as a very important aspect of basic education as it supports the normal and holistic development of young children. Apart from the socialization process that early childhood centers and programmes allow to begin, there is evidence that children who receive early childhood education are more favourably disposed towards school and less likely to drop out pre-maturely than those who do not. Early schooling can contribute to equality of opportunity by helping overcome the initial handicaps of poverty or a disadvantaged social or cultural environment. In addition, the availability of facilities for children of pre-school age makes it easier for women to participate in social and economic life. Regrettably, ECD is still very poorly developed in most countries in the region. Since most of the parents/communities that OSISA is concentrating on are under stress, a

mechanism for achieving good and sustainable early childhood education may be for OSISA to support innovative pre-school programmes, where a child development component may be integrated into a multi-purpose community service at very low cost. ECD may also be integrated into community education programmes for parents. OSISA will therefore support initiatives that:

- Mobilise community resources for collective childcare
- Increase the learning opportunities for pre-school children
- Provide relief and stimulation for pre-school children affected by AIDS (e.g. HIV-positive children, orphans and children with terminally ill parents)
- Build the capacity of communities to be able to care for and stimulate their children
- Focus on the convergence of a range of community child care practices

Basic Education for Children

OSISA will support programmes that work for better quality basic school opportunities for disadvantaged children usually in contexts where resources are scarce, where many children are out of school and where schools are of such poor quality that even children that are attending get little that is useful to them. The overall objective is to contribute towards measurable changes in the learning environment, the content and processes of basic education and in the ability of children and young people to deal effectively with challenges in their lives. OSISA will work with partners to advocate with government to make maximum impact in education but also support innovative community-based approaches. OSISA will therefore:

- Support community based initiatives aimed at transforming schools into quality and functional learning institutions, which are centers of community life, which includes strong commitment to developing competent school management and governance.
- Support innovative approaches to teacher development.
- Support the development of strategies and policies of mitigating the negative impact of HIV/AIDS on children
- Support the development of a special programme on language issues in education. This is major issue across the region and it is one of the major reasons of exclusion and low achievement in the education system.
- Support activities aimed at increasing the inclusion of all children into basic education.
- Support the effective and efficient mobilization of resources
- Support dynamic advocacy activities to influence education providers to prioritize inclusion, quality and relevance.

Educational Experiences for Out-of School Youth

This includes a range of programmes with young people that focus on equipping them for real life challenges and for them to be active citizens that participate in issues that affect them. Emphasis will be given to methodologies that give young people the experience of thinking critically about their life experience, problem solving, tolerance, negotiation, contributing to one's community and representing their views (e.g. theatre, children's councils, boy/girl scouts and other ways of representation on issues that affect them) OSISA will support programmes that:

- Use peer support approaches
- Increase participation of youth in community development

- Enhance the participation of adolescent girls to meet their participation and development rights.

Education for Illiterate Adults

Since basic education is important for people to realize their full potential and become active citizens in an open society, OSISA will support adult basic education and literacy programmes that are linked to OSISA's other programme areas such as democracy building and media. This is in order to break the backlog of illiteracy in the region while promoting open society ideals. OSISA will also support adult education that encourages community participation and responsibility.

What OSISA will Not Fund

- Stand-alone workshops;
- Individual scholarship programmes;
- Private profit-making schools and education initiatives;
- Welfare needs of children and their communities.
- Purely academic research in education

Method of Applying for Support from OSISA

Any organization or individual wanting to get funds or establish partnership with OSISA, should send an initial letter of inquiry that shows how its own initiative relates to the mission, strategies and guidelines of OSISA. This letter should present the executive summary of the proposal and should include the project's goals and objectives, the activities of the project, the rationale and methodology, expected outputs, and a budget summarizing resources needed for the whole project and what is being requested from OSISA. The inquiry letter should not be more than two pages long. OSISA programme staff will review the initial inquiry and engage in further

discussions with the applicant should the proposal show some promise. The applicant will then be asked to submit a full proposal. *Full proposals should contain:*

- An explanation of the initiative, including what the problem or need is, and the environment in which it will be implemented;
- The intended impact;
- A description of the activities that will be undertaken;
- How the programme will be implemented and the relationship to stakeholders, government, and/or other funders or implementers;
- Project costs and financing sources;
- A timeframe for the project and measures taken to ensure sustainability; and
- Issues and risks in the project and how these will be addressed.
- An indication of the capacity of the organization to implement the project.

The following information must accompany the full proposal:

- A copy of the organization's constitution or governing rules;
- Description of organization's goals and objectives;
- List of organization's board members, executives, essential programme staff and membership;
- Most recent annual activities and financial report;
- Most recent evaluation, if relevant;
- A detailed explanation of how the organization is addressing sustainability issues as well as a list of current sources of funding;
- Other donors who have been approached to the fund project submitted to OSISA. Provide name of relevant individual at donor agency and their contact information.

Guidelines for proposal writing are available on request. Application documents should be forwarded to OSISA's office in Johannesburg. Applications are reviewed on an-ongoing basis with continuous interaction between OSISA and the applicant. Although preliminary assessment and interaction regarding a proposal is the responsibility of the Programme Officer, the overall decision lies with the OSISA board. For further information on OSISA's Education Programme contact: The Education Programme Officer Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa PO Box 678, Wits 2050 Johannesburg, South Africa. Telephone: + 27 (11) 403 3414/5/6 Fax: +27 (11) 403 2708 e-mail: education@osisa.org