

Veterans Support Foundation
Grant Application
Submitted: March 31st, 2014
Ask: \$5,000

For: Veteran Sponsorship
To: West African Medical Missions Inc
By: WAMMinc Global Committee

Who – Veterans interested in working in global health and/or international development
What – Volunteer with West African Medical Missions as a Global Health Officer
Where – Sierra Leone, West Africa
When – Between June – September 2014
How – Through a sponsorship funded by the Veterans Support Foundation
Why – Translating Skills of Service For Global Health

Volunteering with West African Medical Missions (WAMM) provides Veterans the opportunity to channel their strong communication, quick adaptation and team-driven skill set into humanitarian efforts and involvement in the global community. A Veterans Support Foundation (VSF) grant guarantees the opportunity for a Veteran to continue to develop these skills and removes any financial barrier that may inhibit participation in this life-changing opportunity.

Our Veterans are highly trained to be mission-driven, teamed-centered, and quick to adapt in dynamic situations. Furthermore, they have built a career on sacrificing to serve others. These abilities are extremely valuable to any organization, especially one with a mission to serve. However, our Veterans continue to face untold challenges following their service to our nation. A return to civilian life can be difficult and some Veterans struggle to transition their valuable military experiences into daily use and personal meaning. Veterans have an invaluable skill-set that can continue to benefit society and WAMM offers a platform for these skills to be translated and actualized in the global community following their call to service.

WAMM is a collection of health-minded individuals focused on strengthening the existing health capacities of West Africa through education, community empowerment, and civic engagement. For those interested in health and international development, WAMM facilitates volunteer opportunities to engage in strengthening health systems in Sierra Leone. Our mission is to nourish and cultivate the next generation of leaders to improve the health, education, and welfare of communities in West Africa. A VSF grant would be used to sponsor the entire cost for a Veteran to volunteer as a Global Health Officer (GHO) with WAMM in Sierra Leone for 10 weeks. GHO's are responsible for leading volunteer teams which provides an invaluable opportunity for a Veteran to use their unique training and ability to work collaboratively within local communities while abroad. WAMM's programs are diverse, working to fit the needs of both the volunteers and the communities in which they work. We currently

have projects in education, infectious diseases, mental health, poverty alleviation, and maternal & child health.

Since the program's inception in 2010, WAMM has provided international volunteer opportunities for three Veterans from the Armed Forces. Their feedback has highlighted the ways in which volunteering with WAMM opened up a constructive context to transition their skills from service to a broader civilian context. When asked if they thought this experience was beneficial for Veterans, they unanimously agreed and expressed strong support to create more opportunities for other Veterans to participate in our international programming. Furthermore, WAMM provides ongoing opportunities for volunteers to stay involved with the organization domestically before and after they return from volunteering abroad. Past Veteran volunteers have used their experience for academic credit and to further their professional careers.

There are a number of operational constraints facing WAMM that Veterans are uniquely positioned to address, the most pressing of which is information management. Communicating and utilizing complex demographic survey data poses many challenges for WAMM. Veterans are uniquely equipped to help address these issues from their experience with information management in a leadership centered organization. Understanding how to communicate effectively while fostering an environment that encourages the exchange of communal knowledge is a vital ability for successful collaboration. Every Veteran that WAMM has had the opportunity to work with has exponentially increased the value of our information management policies and systems. This is just one example of the unique operational knowledge that Veterans can contribute to support the strengthening of our ongoing global health efforts.

The VSF grant is an important opportunity for WAMM because it will staff WAMM with outstanding men and women that have served our country. WAMM will also be a transformative experience for the Veterans that participate. Not only will the VSF grant be an important opportunity for WAMM to have highly skilled men and women who have served our country as volunteers, but WAMM has the potential to be a life changing experience for Veterans as they transition to civilian life. This transition can often be difficult and many Veterans struggle to come to terms with the sacrifices they made through their service. WAMM provides Veterans with the opportunity to use their skills and talents for a humanitarian cause and witness the direct impact their work is making within local West African communities. WAMM will support their continued personal growth through humanitarian service and help translate their military skills into a new context.

Administrative responsibility will be handled by West African Medical Missions.

How will project be Managed?

- Overall responsibility will be handled by West African Medical Missions and Veteran is responsible for:
 - Serve as project lead for individual WAMM initiatives in area of focus, such as research studies, institutional strengthening programming, and community outreach initiatives

- Act as a team leader for WAMM within sector(s) the individual is assigned to manage in their community (GHOs receive a title reflecting their area of focus in our programming)
- Monitor qualitative and quantitative outputs of the projects within assigned sector(s), working with senior staff to prepare any data collected during projects for digital processing and reporting
- Work with administrative and senior staff to coordinate and plan team building activities and excursions on off-duty days
- Serve as a mentor and role model for Young Scholars program (YSp) students (YSp brings local health professionals, university and secondary school students together with international volunteers to address gaps in community health literacy), in particular senior scholars and local leaders who are assisting in directing the formulation and implementation of WAMM initiatives in area of focus

Financial responsibility will be handled by West African Medical Missions through the facilitation of requested grant provided by the Veterans Support Foundation.

- For a veteran to participate in our programing as a GHO we are asking for a grant to allow us to sponsor all the cost associated with this experience which include: program fees, flight, and small stipend. All excess money will be provided to veteran to add to stipend.
 - Program Fees \$2,000 (see breakdown below)
 - Average Round-trip Plane Ticket from US to Sierra Leone \$2,000
 - Stipend of Veteran \$1,000
- The business model WAMM uses to maintain sustainability relies on international volunteers paying program fees to cover the cost of housing and meals while abroad, with a portion going towards an investment into organizational infrastructure; creating revenue to support the following years activities.
 - GHO Program Cost: \$2,000
 - The first category involves all Sierra Leone amenities provided by West African Medical Missions for the entirety of the Global Health Volunteer 10 week commitment. With the exception of personal spending allowances, in-country amenities provided include:
 - Housing
 - 2 Meals per day from Contracted Cooking Staff or allowance equal to price for 2 Meals per day
 - In-Country WAMM Staff Salaries
 - In-Country long distance transportation for WAMM sponsored events
 - Round-trip transportation to and from airport in Sierra Leone

Program Cost Breakdown For GHO

- Local Staff Salaries 33%
- Food for Volunteers 24%
- Housing 27%

- Local student scholarships 8%
- General Operations 8%

Is this an existing project, explain.

In 2009, Frank Amadau and Gabriel Warren first met in a Sierra Leonean village called Mabulveh, where they worked to repair roads, clear fields, and plant crops for the Voluntary Work-Camps of Sierra Leone. Frank was an English and Literature teacher at the Prince of Wales, Freetown, Sierra Leone. Gabriel was a Neuroscience student at the University of Minnesota in the United States. As they worked together through the rainy season, they exchanged ideas about how to create a valuable impact in the health of Sierra Leone. After the camp concluded, Gabriel went on to shadow the Emergency Department Head, Dr. A.T. Mauna, at the main government hospital, Connaught, in Freetown. After a few months of volunteering at the hospital and working with Frank at Prince of Wales, Dr. Mauna, Frank and Gabriel came together to lay down the groundwork for what would be WAMM's first mission in Sierra Leone set to take place in the summer of 2010. Two years later, WAMM emerged as a registered Voluntary Community-Based Organization in Sierra Leone under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, while also becoming approved as a tax-exempt 501(c)3 international non-profit organization in the United States.

Now through our partnerships we open opportunities for our participants to engage a diversified range of forces structuring health in local communities. Furthermore, through a process of action and collaboration, we are beginning to focus on strengthening government capacity to address the root causes of health inequalities and disparities. We perform the majority of operations in Sierra Leone with committed, independent local staff dedicated to community health. As we expand we will begin creating and strengthening platforms for intercontinental exchanges of students, ideas, and actions aimed at addressing the roots of health disparities.

The entirety of our programming operates within the scope of the Global Health Strengthening Model (GHSM). The model enables us to operate in a variety of sectors whose intersections transcend health. The GHSM focuses on establishing local human resource networks to cure health disparities and inequalities in our areas of operation. We cultivate local leaders through education, increase their access to opportunities, and enable them to begin shifting health dynamics through our partner organizations by bridging their understanding of endemic problems with existing resources.

Three Pillars of the GHSM

- Young Scholars program
- Research Associate program
- Institutional Strengthening program

These programs focus on education, research, and institutional operations as they relate to health issues. Our efforts become re-approved every year by the local government. We meet with officials at the central ministry, city councils, and paramount chiefdoms quarterly to discuss our activities in each district we're present in. All of our projects and programs are collaboratively built to the specifications

of the governing bodies and partner organizations.

How has the project been funded in prior years – how will it be funded in future years?

- Through the employment of a self-sufficient business model utilizing international volunteers program fees to finance the following years activities, we've been able to operate on an overseas budget of under \$15,000 a year. Program fees cover the costs of housing, food, transportation, and local staff salaries. Housing is converted to function as a hostel when volunteers aren't present to provide additional review to our international operations. Every year we bring volunteers abroad we guarantee financing of our operations for the following year.

Other projects managed by our organization:

2010 (\$10,000)

The first Young Scholars (High School) program is held at Prince of Wales Senior Secondary School in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The class would be attended by over 80 students and provide an opportunity for 13 students to obtain tuition scholarships and earn the designation of Young Scholars. Research Associate program works with physicians at Military Hospital to understand the research needs of young physicians coming out of medical school. Institutional Strengthening program works with the National HIV/AIDS Control Program to strengthen the delivery and quality of care provided.

2011 (\$12,000)

Young Scholars (High School) program grows to reach over 350 students in Freetown and Kenema while also expanding its programming to include Gender Clubs and Community Outreach Initiatives. In Kenema Young Scholars (High School) program students work with the World Health Organizations Polio Eradication Initiative to create innovative community-based projects to address issues of noncompliance during vaccination campaigns in surrounding communities. RAP investigates the dynamics of health care in the provincial settings of Kenema and Kabala. Institutional Strengthening program partners with the Network for HIV Positives (NETHIPS) to begin providing human resource support leading to the identification of efficiency gaps in data management techniques.

2012 (\$26,000)

Young Scholars (High School) program community outreach projects in Freetown partner with local NGO's to establish a free one-day maternal health clinic in a community previously identified by students to be marginalized. Taught high-risk communities how to prepare oral rehydration salts, during the nation's cholera outbreak. Collaboratively created a mental health handbook with local chiefs, imams, pastors and traditional healers to begin raising the awareness of mental health issues. Research Associate program partnered with Wellbody Alliance to provide human support to population based study that determined the baseline maternal mortality index for the Kono District of Sierra Leone, with a population of over 350,000. ISp implemented a custom-built data management software package created by a team of volunteers in the US to increase NETHIPS capacity to efficiently and effectively manage the 12,000+ client files used to track and report donor provisions from UNAIDS, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and the Global Fund.

2013 (\$10,000)

Was a year of new partnerships, advocates and ideas. It was also a year that brought us one step closer to our aim of becoming a locally operational and sustainable organization: WAMM students and scholars successfully ran all operations in Sierra Leone, without any support from external international volunteers. In 2013, with the help of our new partners and the WAMM family, we laid the groundwork for several projects that will be going live in 2014