

***Note:** This project was written for the Core Seminar class that I took while attending Bard College's Globalization and International Affairs Program in New York (BGIA) in Spring 2010. The purpose of the assignment was to write a plan of action for a new project within the area of international affairs. Since I was working for Human Rights First, I decided to write a project that could be implemented within the organization. Consider this as a preliminary write-up upon which the organization could build on, if interested to implement the project. Please note that I haven't actually tried to implement the project, and that the entire project setup is theoretical.*

PLAN OF ACTION

A. Executive Summary

Human Rights First's mission is to build respect for human rights and the rule of law in order to help ensure the dignity to which everyone is entitled and to stem intolerance, tyranny, and violence.

This project will extend the organization's mode of action from the general *"build respect for human rights and the rule of law"* to concrete actions aimed at supporting rights that are not sufficiently upheld by other organizations that act in the field, such as the right to social security, the right to work and the right to a level of living adequate for the health and well-being of individuals as well as their families, as stipulated by articles 22, 23 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The project will be conducted by an independent team and will receive full support from Human Rights First (HRF).

By analyzing the actions of similar organizations directly involved in supporting human rights, we realized that there is little to no action in the fields covered by said articles of the UDHR. As a result of this analysis, HRF's board of directors has decided to offer support for an independent team's actions in this niche, through an innovative project. A pilot action plan which would enable access to those rights has been developed, and has 2 components:

1. Setting-up and developing a business incubator which would sustain the development of entrepreneurial skills. This action will lead to creating new jobs and wealth and to fostering a community's entrepreneurial climate. Entrepreneurs who wish to enter the business incubation program must apply for admission; upon admission they will be helped to obtain micro-credits from banks or foundations in order to start their business activity. Firms created as such will remain in the incubator for 2 years.
2. Awarding micro-grants for members of the low-income population that have ideas for creating commercial products, thereby helping them ensure the financial well-being of their family.

The country to implement the action plan will be chosen by HRF based on a per-country analysis. Depending on the result of the pilot, the program will be replicated in other countries that face the same problem – poverty – integrally or component-wise.

The action plan's keys to success include:

- A group of enthusiastic professionals who are profoundly dedicated to the idea of supporting human rights, both in HRF and in the team they are supporting.
- A group of professionals with a broad range of specialty areas that complement each other.
- A high level of experience in the human rights area.

- Many contacts in the countries where the organization acts.

B. Action Plan

1. Identifying the location for the pilot project

A study was conducted to identify the country where the pilot project should be implemented. The study targeted African countries in which our organization has previously undertaken work in the field of human rights. Following the conducted SWOT analysis, we have reached the conclusion that the pilot would have great chances of success in Ghana. The main elements of this analysis, which determined this choice, are described in the following SWOT analysis:

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relationship with representatives of the Government of Ghana • Good rate of adult literacy (65% in 2007) and 83% of children in school, which determine the existence of a pool of possible applicants for our program • The media of Ghana is one of the most free in Africa, which would help make our program known • English is the country's official language and the standard language used for educational instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of an adequate education in economic fields • The lack of entrepreneurship abilities • The fear of trying something new • The lack of trust of the population • 28% of the population live below the international poverty line of \$1.25 a day
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of natural wealth and of long-lived traditions in some fields (such as the textile field), which could become points of departure for deploying small businesses • Little economic sectors with high value added, but with high growing opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little opportunity to advertize the program • The lack of trust of financing institutions for awarding micro-credits • The likely lack of interest of officials in this program

2. Timeframe: The program will run between August 2011 and December 2014.

3. Budget: \$1 million. Financing sources:

- Organization's own sources from sponsorships¹ (75%)
- Co-financing from Ghana's budget (10%)
- Other sources (15%).

¹ Once the plan is approved a broad campaign to promote the project through its website and in media will begin. An advertising campaign will be prepared between June and August 2011.

4. Actions to be taken and duration:

Preparatory and informatory activities	
• Negotiations with the government representatives of Ghana about providing a suitable location for the business incubator	August to October 2011
• Preparation and implementation of the campaign to popularize the program in Ghana	August 2011 to December 2014
• Conducting a study to identify business ideas that can be realized with micro-grants up to \$ 2,000 (crafts, local food, specific agricultural products, etc.) and designing a flyer presenting them	October to December 2011
• Preparing the organizational structure of the incubator (shared administrative services and consulting services to start-up companies)	September 2011 to December 2014
• Negotiations for financing small entrepreneurs (a bank or a foundation; for example the Read Foundation)	October to December 2011

Component 1: Setting up an operating a business incubator	
• Refurbishment of the business incubator's building	December 2011 to June 2012
• Launching a call for applications for those wishing to enter the business incubator	May to June 2012
• Organizing courses that provide basic information for starting a small business (professional development in planning, goal-setting, financial sustainability)	May 2012 to December 2014
• Conducting the activity of the incubator	August 2012 to December 2014

Component 2: Awarding micro-grants for low-income population with entrepreneurship skills	
• Negotiations with local authorities to provide support for the development of the project and for organizing consulting centers for grants	November 2011- May 2012
• Organizing groups of volunteers and professionals who would make visits to regions and provide potential small business ideas that can be achieved with micro-grants of up to \$ 2,000	May-November 2014
• Monitoring the implementation of the businesses in the incubator	August 2012- December 2014

5. Expected Results:

- At least 1000 families that access and use microfinance products to help meet their basic needs and/or establish financial safety (grants of maximum \$2,000)
- At least 50 microenterprises incubated, out of which at least 50% lasted more than a year

- At least 150 new jobs created in these microenterprises
- At least 100 people trained
- At least 2 financial institutions that offered credits for this project remained on Ghana's market

6. Management Team:

HRF will oversee the development of the program, but the actions will be carried out by an “*in-the-field team*”, formed by a project director and two assistant directors, which lead 2 teams (one for each component), each team having 5 people. This “*in-the-field team*” will be based in Ghana.

The activity of the team will be directed from the NY office of HRF. The financial and communications departments will also offer all their support for the implementation of this project.