



Annual Report
2009





Balbir Mathur

President and Founder

Three years ago, my life was transformed. I became a grandpa. To those who aren't grandparents, there is no way I can describe it. Words simply cannot convey how my heart melts when I see that little girl—even on a webcam!

Trees for Life is also about people's lives being transformed. Every day we feel deeply touched by what is taking place, and we struggle with how to convey it. The usual content of annual reports—accomplishments, goals, statistics and financial figures—are only a dry husk.

Our mission is to demonstrate how people's lives can be transformed. For that purpose, we develop tools of empowerment. Some of these tools are tangible. Some of them are intangible, like responsibility, service, sacredness and self-sacrifice. These tools don't show up on a balance sheet. And yet, they spark the deepest transformation in people's hearts.

We also take a very long-term perspective. We ask how we would like to see the world 1,000 years from now, and what we can do today to move in that direction. A one-year report shows only a tiny sliver of 1,000 years.

Just like being a grandpa, Trees for Life is an experience hard to put into words. The following report is our attempt to do that.

Who We Are

Trees for Life empowers people by demonstrating that in helping each other, we can unleash extraordinary power that impacts our lives.

This movement started by enabling people around the world to help plant fruit trees in developing countries. Now it has matured to where Trees for Life provides a platform for people of various disciplines to work on long-term fundamental solutions to problems in the areas of education, health and environment.



It's about Life



Burkina Faso

Dar Es Salaam

El Salvador

South Africa

Guatemala

Haiti

India

Liberia

Nicaragua

Nigeria

South Africa

USA

Trees for Life started in the early 1980s with planting fruit trees in India. We emphasized creating awareness, training people to plant and care for trees, and providing the resources needed. Each recipient pledged to help at least two others.

The program grew rapidly in India and spread to Guatemala, Cambodia, Nepal, Costa Rica, Haiti, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and El Salvador. As a result, people planted tens of millions of fruit trees.

Inspiring people to help themselves

But for us, it's not about the number of trees planted. Much more important is the fact that tree planting inspires people to do more to help themselves. Trees for Life isn't about trees—it's about Life. It's about awakening the spirit in people and empowering them to address the needs of their own community.



Local ownership

Local people contribute a large portion of funding and resources, often making great sacrifices. People from various segments of society provide land, labor and in-kind contributions. Our international network provides key elements that are lacking locally.

Creating models

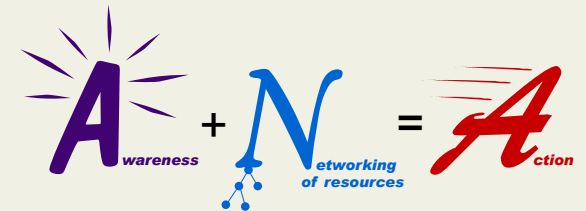
Our task is not to solve the problems of the world. We aim to create a few models that, if successful, may inspire others to solve their own problems. We are not a factory manufacturing the antidote to a disease for sale. Rather, we are like a laboratory developing new antidotes.

Long-term focus

Many groups focus on serving immediate needs, which is very good and necessary. We, however, focus on the long term. We work mostly in the background, focusing on how people can make a major paradigm change. While results are not always immediate, the long-term impact can be very deep and widespread.

Tools of empowerment

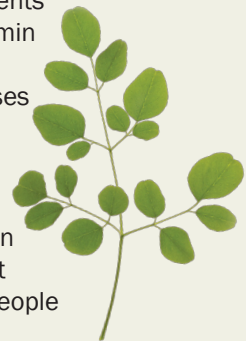
We focus on developing and providing the tools of empowerment to local leaders who can create hope in their communities. Empowerment in our case means:



A "miracle tree"

The Moringa tree (*Moringa oleifera*) literally saves lives. Its edible leaves help prevent deadly diseases by providing large amounts of essential nutrients like vitamin A, protein, calcium, vitamin C and potassium. People use every part of the tree for beneficial purposes ranging from traditional medicine to purifying water.

Moringa also happens to grow in parts of the world where malnutrition is the worst—exactly where it is most needed. The problem is that most people are simply not aware of its value.



Trees for Life spent more than 15 years developing and

testing educational tools about Moringa. We now distribute materials to help people in many countries spread awareness of Moringa's potential benefits.

One of these tools is a book intended for political, scientific and medical leaders around the world. The book aims to raise awareness and interest, and calls for clinical testing of Moringa leaves. When researchers demonstrate the value of Moringa to themselves and their people, doors can open for new Moringa programs.

As a result, Trees for Life has inspired people and governments worldwide to plant Moringa—including more than 20 million in Africa alone. Several scientific studies of Moringa are now in process.



Books for Life

Education is a key to empowerment, and a major key to education is literacy and reading. Books for Life, an educational branch of Trees for Life, introduces people to the joy of reading and learning. This year we worked in two main areas:



Libraries

Books for Life helped several communities in Nicaragua establish or improve libraries. These libraries provide books for all ages, computers and other educational tools.



- The local community provides: space to house the books, personnel and management, and \$2,000 for books and educational materials.
- Books for Life provides: \$6,000 for books, computers and educational materials; and three years of training and support.

By the end of 2009, we had 50 libraries in Nicaragua. Our goal is 200 libraries throughout the country.

Donated books

Books for Life also provided donated books to several developing countries. They included storybooks and textbooks for reading, math and science.

In 2009, people across Kansas held a major book drive for Liberia, Africa. Liberian officials had requested donated books for their country, where there is only one book for every 27 children. Thousands of individuals and schools responded, donating more than 95,500 books.



In addition, we sent donated books to libraries and schools in Burkina Faso, Dar Es Salaam, El Salvador, South Africa, India, Nigeria and South Africa.

Cookstoves save lives and trees

Villagers in Guatemala build their own fuel-efficient cooking stoves. These stoves use less than half the wood of open fires, protect children from burns, and preserve health by taking smoke out of the house through a stovepipe.



Life-giving trees

Trees for Life provided training and materials for people to plant and care for fruit trees and other types of beneficial trees in several communities in Haiti.

The Trees for Life Adventure®

More than 2.9 million students in the USA have participated in this educational activity, growing their own trees from seed. Students witness the miracle of life and learn how all life is interconnected. This program has spread to Canada, The Czech Republic, Austria, China and Chile.



Miraculous Women

The Miraculous Women (Las Mujeres Milagrosas), a group in Tisma, Nicaragua, decided to do something to help street children. On their own initiative, they founded a school that serves 80 children and started a carpentry shop to make the school self-sufficient.



Our Commitment

To service, not growth. In order to serve others we wish to remain small, responsible and responsive to the needs of the people we wish to serve.

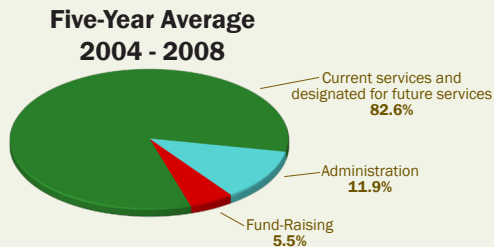
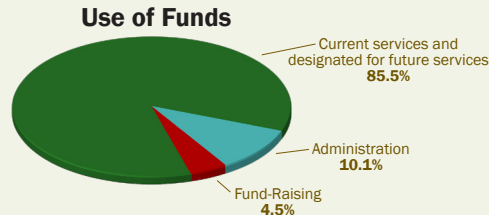
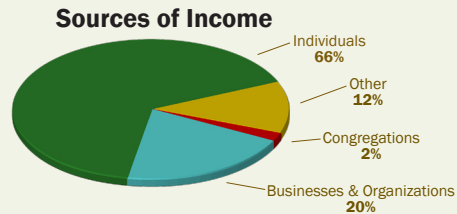
To remain non-institutionalized—so that we may be able to feel the heartbeat of the people we are committed to serve. To remain committed to serve from the context of sacrifice, not power.

Trees for Life is qualified as a charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to Trees for Life are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.



Highest rating from America's top independent evaluator.

Use of Funds 2009



Statement of Activities for the year ended December 31, 2009

REVENUE SOURCES

Contributions	795,183
In-kind Services	76,625
Interest income	16,063
Investment return	108,114
Total Revenue	\$995,985

EXPENSES

Program services	
USA	175,168
World	640,287
Subtotal	815,455
Fundraising	43,109
Management	96,313
Total expenses	\$954,877

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted net assets	466,982
Temporarily restricted net	517,122
Permanently restricted net	5,000
Total Net Assets	\$989,104

Where does my gift go?

To help the greatest number of families move toward self-reliance, Trees for Life does not use its limited resources to track individual gifts from donation to distribution to specific families. Instead, your gift supports the entire mission of Trees for Life. We use your gift where it can do the most good by combining it with the gifts of others to help transform entire communities. Your gift is tax deductible, and will be used to help people move from poverty to a sustainable life of hope.

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