

# Trees for Life



## 2012 Annual Report





Balbir Mathur  
President and Founder

2012 was a significant year in the life of Trees for Life. Our work in all areas did well. However, two areas need special mention:

1. Trees for Life's Moringa Movement
2. Books for Life's Teacher-to-Teacher Training program

These two branches emerged from the same soil, in response to the needs of the same people in the same framework of time. They share the same roots. Just like eyes and legs growing from the same body, they serve the same body but are totally different in their make-up. They have each mobilized different sets of people in society and are now on the verge of growing and flourishing on their own.

### **Trees for Life: Moringa Movement**

It is as if a call was made and millions of people showed up.

Two decades ago, a very small number of people were aware of the nutritional and medicinal values of the Moringa tree. A handful of organizations, including Trees for Life, went out on a limb promoting it among people in developing countries.

Today, things have changed. Moringa is now a globally known tree being planted in

practically all tropical countries. It is reported that more than 200 million trees have been planted in Africa alone. Scientists are researching how Moringa might help fight global malnutrition and provide natural remedies for diseases such as diabetes and even cancer.

This year, it became evident that a time has come to channel the force of this movement so that it can continue to grow in a sustainable way. We have decided to now focus our energies on developing a platform to allow for better collaboration between various groups and individuals working on Moringa. Work has started in this direction and shall continue in the near future.

### **Books for Life: Teacher-to-Teacher Training program**

Several years ago, we made a commitment to create a "bridge" to allow trained teachers around the world to share their knowledge and skills with teachers who serve the poor and are in need of training. Our team has been experimenting with how such a bridge might be established. We have been like a laboratory, where numerous formulas were tested. This year was very meaningful because we believe we found the formula and the necessary tools that are likely to work. We are now ready to launch them for field testing and improvements. This is a major development.

The coming year will focus on building teams to carry these two areas forward. This will not be an easy task, but we have been preparing ourselves and are ready for the challenge and opportunity being presented to us.

## 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*.



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# It's about Life



- Belize
- Botswana
- Cameroon
- Cape Verde
- Dominican Republic
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Guatemala
- India
- Kenya
- Nicaragua
- Nigeria
- Panama
- Philippines
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- United States
- Zimbabwe

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.



### 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:



### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

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. We also share information worldwide through our website.



Over the years, we have been instrumental in raising awareness of Moringa among political, scientific and medical leaders around the world. This awareness has led to a large number of research studies being conducted around the globe, which has opened doors for widespread use of Moringa by people in parts of the world where malnutrition is an issue.

As a result, Trees for Life has inspired people and governments worldwide to plant Moringa. We have heard that more than 200 million have been planted in Africa alone.



**Books for Life**  
an educational branch  
of Trees for Life

### 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: donated books and teacher training.



### Donated books

Books for Life provided donated books to libraries and schools in needy communities around the world. Books were provided

to communities in Belize, Botswana, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, USA and Zimbabwe.

### Teacher training

One of the major barriers to education in developing countries is the lack of well-trained teachers. We are working to create a "bridge" to transfer the knowledge of education experts to teachers who need training. To accomplish this, we envision a worldwide movement of people working together to create teacher training lessons.

In 2012, our team worked to develop models of these teacher training lessons. They are in the form of simple animated and live videos that share the basic principles and strategies of teaching. We believe we have found an effective formula for these lessons. We are now ready to start creating a platform for people around the world to participate.



### School support

We also provided support to a preschool in the town of Tisma, Nicaragua. This preschool provides education to approximately 30 or 40 children each year who otherwise would not be able to get an education.

### Cookstoves save lives and trees

Villagers in Guatemala continued an ongoing project of building 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. Over the



years, several design improvements have increased the stove's efficiency, and the use of clay or ceramic tiles has improved its beauty and value. By the end of 2012, more than 2,300 stoves had been built in Guatemala.

### Water for school children

In a region of north India known as Mewat, water comes only a few months of the year during the monsoons. There is practically no water the rest of the year. Sometimes the only water available is polluted. Drinking this water causes many children to suffer water-borne illnesses such as diarrhea, jaundice, and skin disease, which also interrupts their school attendance.

We are helping rural schools install water systems to filter and store rainwater. Each system can process, purify, and store more than 25,000 gallons of drinking water – enough for 400 students during the dry season. A system lasts for decades, benefiting thousands of children.



During 2012, we helped two schools install these water systems, benefitting some 800 children.



## 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 serve.

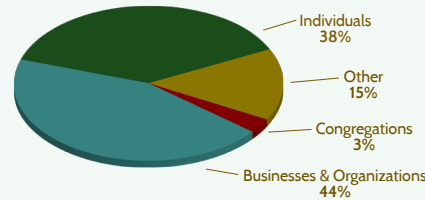
To remain non-institutionalized—so that we may be able to feel the heartbeat of the people we are committed to serve. To remain committed to serve from the context of sacrifice, not power.

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.

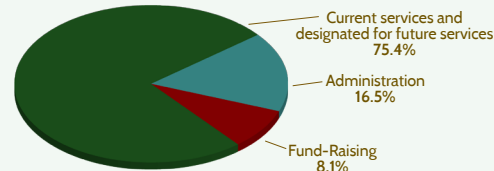


# Use of Funds 2012

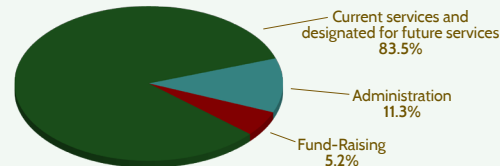
## Sources of Income



## Use of Funds



## Five-Year Average 2007 - 2011



## Statement of Activities for the year ended December 31, 2012

### REVENUE SOURCES

Contributions	441,341
In-kind Services	4,175
Interest income	107,435
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$552,951</b>

### EXPENSES

Program services	
USA	119,451
World	192,392
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>311,843</b>
<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>33,320</b>
<b>Management</b>	<b>68,905</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$414,068</b>

### NET ASSETS

Unrestricted net assets	759,917
Temporarily restricted net	239,822
Permanently restricted net	5,000
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$1,089,758</b>

## 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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