



**Working together to  
end rural poverty**

**Our review of 2011**

# Dear Supporter

We are pleased to bring you Find Your Feet's review of the past year. It is only a snapshot but we hope it will highlight the positive way in which rural families' lives have changed as a result of our work and your support.

We are a small charity, with a team of only six in the UK. But with your support and the hard work of our colleagues and local partners in India and Malawi we have made a significant difference to rural people's lives. By the end of 2011 we were working with 60,000 vulnerable rural people.

Unfortunately we can't tell you all of their stories here so instead we have chosen to tell you about the inspiring journeys of three families we met in 2011. Devki, a tribal woman whose community has been isolated and marginalised for decades but who is now making her voice heard in the state of Uttarakhand, northern India. We will also share with you the story of Edward, a farmer in Malawi, who despite chronic hunger has learnt new agricultural techniques and leadership skills which have enabled his family and his community to grow more food. And we would like to tell you about Keshi, who struggled to make a living as a brick kiln worker in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, but has now managed to start a small business to build a secure future for herself and her family.

We have also included a brief look ahead to our plans for 2012 and recent expansion to Nepal and Zimbabwe where we hope to reach even more families.

Finally we want to take this opportunity to recognise our fundraising champions of 2011 and thank each of you for your invaluable support, without which our work would not be possible.

From the UK Team *Seag. Olivia Laura Jessica Georgina Dan*



# Working to end rural poverty

**The largest proportion of the world's poor is the 800 million people who live in rural areas, they face a myriad of challenges every day.**

Find Your Feet works with rural families to help them address and resolve the challenges they face. One thing that unites the communities we work with is their desire to build a better future free from hunger, poverty and discrimination. In 2011 we focused our efforts on supporting rural families in India and Malawi and this is why.

## Why India?

The growing prosperity of India masks the obstacles that rural people face. The disparity between the urban and rural populations makes it hard to believe they are citizens of the same country. Currently 42% of the population survives on less than 80p a day with a disproportionate number living in rural areas where hunger is always present. In the four states where we work, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, there is limited infrastructure and few basic services. Communities are isolated and lack electricity, sanitation and clean water, and struggle to grow enough food for the whole family.



## Why Malawi?

Malawi continues to be one of the poorest countries in the world with 74% of the population subsisting on less than 80p a day. Furthermore, 80% of the population live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for survival. Farmers face many challenges, such as lack of access to irrigation, an over reliance on expensive fertilisers and erratic weather conditions. As a result, millions of families continue to suffer from chronic hunger and, in the northern and central districts where we work, over half of the families do not have food all year round.



**We work with the poorest and most marginalised communities in remote, rural areas where other support is scarce. Our vision is a world in which everyone has the right to build a future free from hunger and poverty.**

## We are speaking out

**In the state of Uttarakhand in northern India we have been working with tribal groups to help communities access government services such as education and health care, and to realise their rights to the land and forests.**

Devki and her family live in a small village in the district of Pithoragarh near to the border with Nepal. This mountainous region is remote, the terrain is challenging and government services often do not reach the families we work with. Communities are isolated with no understanding of their rights or the confidence to speak out. The tribal groups we have been working with face marginalisation and live in fear of eviction due to difficulties in gaining legal rights to their land which they are reliant on for food and a means of earning an income.

In the past year, we have supported poor rural communities like Devki and her fellow villagers to learn about their rights, enabling them to question the discrimination they have suffered. As a result, for the first time they have come together with other villages in the area to form a network and confront the government. Feeling empowered they have now begun the process to officially secure their right to the land they have lived and farmed on for decades.

So far, the community has also been successful in gaining access to other government services and schemes such as building a primary school in their village and acquiring a water irrigation system so they can grow crops all year round.

**“Times are better now as we have learnt to interact, we used to run away but now we learn from others. We have to continue the struggle or how will the fire grow bigger.” Devki Rajbar**

To date this project in Uttarakhand has reached 2,580 community members across 90 villages, so like Devki they can now speak out and claim their rights.

**£100 could provide training and support to 10 women in a village group so they can learn how to access their rights to basic services.**



**Devki and her family**

## We are growing more food

**In the Rumphi district of northern Malawi we have been working with farmers and their families to help them grow more food.**

Edward and his family live in an isolated area of Malawi where communities are reliant on their farms for their livelihood. But farmers in this area face a number of challenges because irrigation is difficult, they depend on only a few crops, the soil is often degraded, they lack access to credit to buy tools and seeds and they have limited knowledge of how to add value to their products and market them.

In the past year, to support poor rural families like Edwards, we have promoted our pioneering Lead Farmer model. As part of the project Edward was nominated by his community to become a Lead Farmer. This meant that we provided him with a comprehensive training programme, enabling him to experiment with new farming techniques, improve irrigation on his farm, diversify his crops and add value to his produce. The training also equipped Edward with skills in communication and leadership enabling him to use his farm as a demonstration site and share his knowledge with other farmers in his community.

So far, Edward and his wife have created their own natural pesticides, conserved seeds, made their own organic fertiliser, diversified their crops and developed a drip irrigation system.

**“A farmer must be active, constantly seeking ways to improve his practices because it is the only way that he can have a better life.” Edward Mughogho**

To date we have trained 250 Lead Farmers like Edward, who have in turn trained on average 40 follower farmers each, resulting in improved food security for 8,000 families in Malawi. In the coming year, if funding allows, we plan to expand the project to help more families in the neighbouring districts of Mzimba and Nkhata Bay.

**£165 could provide a Lead Farmer with the training they need to grow more food for their family and share their knowledge with 40 other farmers.**



**Edward and his family**

## We are building a secure future

**In the state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India we are working with families to help them break free from the cycle of poverty and move on to the path of self reliance.**

Keshi and her family live in Fatehpur, a rural district of Uttar Pradesh where the majority of communities are reliant on working in brick kilns. As a marginalised group they work long hours for poor wages in difficult conditions with no understanding of their rights. They struggle to find alternative employment opportunities and in times of crisis are forced to borrow from money lenders who exploit the families and charge impossibly high interest rates.

In the past year, to support poor rural families, we have encouraged communities like Keshi's to form Self Help Groups, bringing villagers together to discuss and resolve their problems, and to set up an affordable savings and loans scheme. Keshi and her group are saving 25 Rupees each a month (31p) and have started to build a more secure future by purchasing buffaloes, goats, seeds and farming equipment from their savings so they can earn an income and grow more food.

So far, Keshi has personally been able to set up a small shoe selling business from the support of the Self Help Group. Her husband previously had to migrate to get work as a labourer and lived away from the family for much of the last nine years earning very little. Now he is back home and goes to the local market every day to sell the shoes.

**“Now we earn enough to send all our children to school, and one of my sons is graduating from school! I am very happy to have my family back together.” Keshi Devi**

Over the next four years we will work with 9,483 families from the brick kiln communities to achieve long-term changes to their lives and build a secure future for their children.

**£125 could enable 10 people from the brick kiln communities to participate in training to learn about setting up and managing a successful small business.**



**Keshi and her family**

## Looking ahead

**We know that there are many more families who need our support. This is why we have set ourselves a goal of reaching 20,000 additional families in the next three years.**

After careful planning and research we have taken the first step towards this goal by expanding our work into Zimbabwe and Nepal.

### Zimbabwe

Once one of the breadbaskets of Africa, Zimbabwe has been ravaged by HIV and AIDS, failed governance and violence which has destroyed the social fabric of rural society. After a decade of crisis in Zimbabwe, the situation remains difficult but has stabilised and we are now optimistic for the future.

We believe therefore that the time is right to return to Zimbabwe and offer our support and expertise to the poor rural communities who are currently struggling to survive. Our approach will combine what we have learnt from our work in Malawi with the knowledge of the local Zimbabwe farmers. We will support farmers like Chinode and his family by enabling them to experiment with new farming techniques so they can grow more food, share their knowledge with others and help lead their community on the path to recovery and reconciliation.



We aim to support 1,500 Zimbabwean farmers like Chinode in 2012.

**We will continue to ensure that our projects bring long-term benefits to all the members of the rural families we work with. In doing so, we will work to address the marginalisation and disproportionate poverty felt by women and children in rural areas.**

### Nepal

In Southern Nepal the Tharu tribe, particularly women, have experienced decades of marginalisation. Historically they have been bonded labourers and now find themselves with a lack of fertile land, insufficient knowledge of appropriate farming techniques and a lack of other economic opportunities, trapped in a cycle of hunger and poverty. Furthermore, they are unable to make their voices heard in local decision making processes and are unaware of their rights.

We will use our experience from working with Tharu women across the border in India to help women like Mina and her family who face similar challenges in Nepal. The Nepalese government have made a number of promises to ex-bonded labourers from the Tharu tribe but many families are still living in hunger without enough land to farm.

We will enable poor rural women, like Mina, to come together to form Self Help Groups, so they can develop village savings and loans schemes which in turn will enable them to invest in small business enterprises and purchase food, medicine and clothes. We will also support Tharu farmers, men and women, to enable them to grow more food and manage the natural resources available to them more effectively. Furthermore, we will empower the Tharu tribe to make their voices heard and secure the rights to their land.



We aim to support 920 marginalised women like Mina in 2012.

**We will continue to work with local partners to understand community needs and learn from their local knowledge. Supporting families to build the skills and confidence they need to tackle the hunger and poverty they face is the most effective way to bring about lasting change.**

## Our fundraising champions

**We would like to thank you all for your commitment, determination and enthusiasm in supporting us this year.**

2011 was a busy year for our running teams, who together have raised over £25,000, helping us run poverty into the ground!

A huge thank you to everyone who ran the British 10K London Run, the Virgin London Marathon and the Brighton Marathon; a particular thanks to our Trustee, Kiran Patel, who ran both. Thanks also to our supporters who took part in the Reading Half Marathon, Stevenage Half Marathon and the Three Peaks Challenge, including our Fundraising Manager Laura Perkins who completed the Royal Parks Half Marathon, so well done all!

It has been an eventful year celebrating weddings and other occasions in aid of Find Your Feet. A special thank you to Holy Trinity Church Doynton and Pinner Parish Church who fundraised at their Harvest Festivals, and to Kathryn Ballisat who, inspired by our work in Malawi, created a delicious recipe book selling copies to friends in support of the communities we work with.

Many of you also joined us to showcase the best of ethical and sustainable fashion at 'We Are What We Wear', and celebrated with us at 'Light up Your Diwali!' where our India Programme Director Savitri Sharma shared stories from the families whose lives you have helped to transform. The chefs among you also hosted your own events for 'Curry for Change' and had fun with food and friends to bring about lasting change.



**As a small organisation we really value your support in helping us to raise funds and spread the word about our work.**

## A special tribute

We would like to take this opportunity to remember David Williams, son of our Programme Manager Betty, who was tragically killed in a cycling accident this year. David was a bright and talented young man who was training to be a doctor, and as an active supporter for many charities he had also chosen to raise money for Find Your Feet.

The Williams family have decided that money raised in his memory will go towards Find Your Feet's new project in Nepal as they felt David would want to support work that was practical and would bring lasting benefits to people, particularly women and children, who need it most.

We have all been overwhelmed with the incredible support received in memory of all he achieved and loved. Many of his friends and family have taken part in fundraising events to pay tribute to his life, so far raising an incredible £17,000.



David

The family along with all of us at Find Your Feet, would like to remember David, not only for who he was, but through the benefits that this work will bring to disadvantaged families in Nepal.

## Working in collaboration

**As a small organisation it is key that we collaborate with other organisations enabling us to share information, experience and learning, and lobby the UK Government on policy issues.**

Here are some of the networks in which we are involved:

- **African Smallholder Farmers Group (ASFG)**

Find Your Feet is currently the Coordinator of the group, a network of international organisations committed to creating an enabling environment for small-scale farmers in Africa. In October 2011, the group co-hosted an event in Parliament, entitled *'Sustainable agriculture: Addressing hunger, raising incomes and building resilience in a climate-constrained world'*, at which parliamentarians, academics and practitioners discussed the benefits of sustainable agriculture. For more information please visit [www.asfg.org.uk](http://www.asfg.org.uk).

- **UK Food Group (UKFG)**

Find Your Feet is on the Management Committee for this principal UK network for non-governmental organisations working on global food and agriculture issues. This year, the UK Food Group hosted a range of events on food sovereignty - the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods - including a conference in May 2011, entitled *'Building the UK Movement for Food Sovereignty'*.

- **All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Agriculture and Food for Development**

Find Your Feet is on the Steering Group of this network, which brings together Parliamentarians concerned with the science of agriculture, its impact on sustainable development and the overarching aim of the alleviation of poverty. Find Your Feet participates in events and meets with key decision makers to influence issues around agriculture and food security.

**Through these networks we can work towards long-term change for rural communities in India, Malawi, Nepal and Zimbabwe.**

## Thank you

**Our work would not be possible without the loyalty and generosity of our supporters.**

Thank you to all the trusts, foundations, companies, individuals and donors who have helped rural families build a future free from poverty in the past year.

**Special thanks to:**



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We would also like to say a huge thank you to Catriona Fox whose hard work and commitment to Find Your Feet during the many years she worked with us was outstanding and whose ongoing support continues to be invaluable.



# Our people

## Our Ambassador:

Atul Kochhar

## Our Patrons:

Tim Cross  
Stephen Ogle

## Our Chair:

Koy Thomson

## Our Director:

Dr Dan Taylor

## Our Board of Trustees:

Dr Helen Banos-Smith  
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Kiran Patel  
Linda Perry  
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Sue Stoessl



**Want to know more or get involved?**

**We would love to hear from you.**

**Help us to support rural families build a future free from poverty and hunger, email Jessica at [jessica@fyf.org.uk](mailto:jessica@fyf.org.uk)**

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