

Welcome

In 2010 I am delighted to say we made considerable progress and stayed true to our core values, funding self-help, sustainable development projects in India.

We made significant progress on a number of key initiatives;

- Built our fifth bore well thus changing the lives of some 4,800 villagers
- Secured core funding for an impoverished widows' home
- Secured sponsors for 30 children, preventing them from entering the labour market
- Secured a strategic partnership with the London Prajapati Foundation
- Established our first project in Gujarat, an Eye Camp funding operations for 40 widows

In parallel to the above, we are constantly striving to raise the profile of our work. To this effect, last year we introduced new merchandise - jute bags, which prominently displayed the logo of the Foundation. By choosing to buy one of these bags, supporters helped to reduce plastic bag consumption and contributed to our dedicated programs of work in rural India. All our bags were produced under ethical guidelines and we managed to raise the fantastic sum of £1,340.

Looking forward, the Foundation's impact in India has been further recognised and we have been asked to play a joint lead role (along with our partner, the FORD Trust) in working with a leading University in South India, looking to bring academic rigour to the front line work we have developed with women's groups.

A 'spin off' from the rural water supply project has been the request for 'legacy wells'. From as far afield as Singapore we have had special requests to install a bore well in memory of a loved one. Building a well is an everlasting memorial tribute to the departed person and is a positive way for family/friends to remember their loved ones and in turn crucially support the work of the Foundation.

Reflecting on the progress made over the last 4 years our success is attributable to the clarity of our corporate strap line - 'changing minds, changing lives', as this succinctly captures what we are trying to achieve. As a result, the Foundation has gone from strength to strength working as a conductor for all the charitable goodwill that runs through those involved with our work and a catalyst for increased efforts to support those in most need.

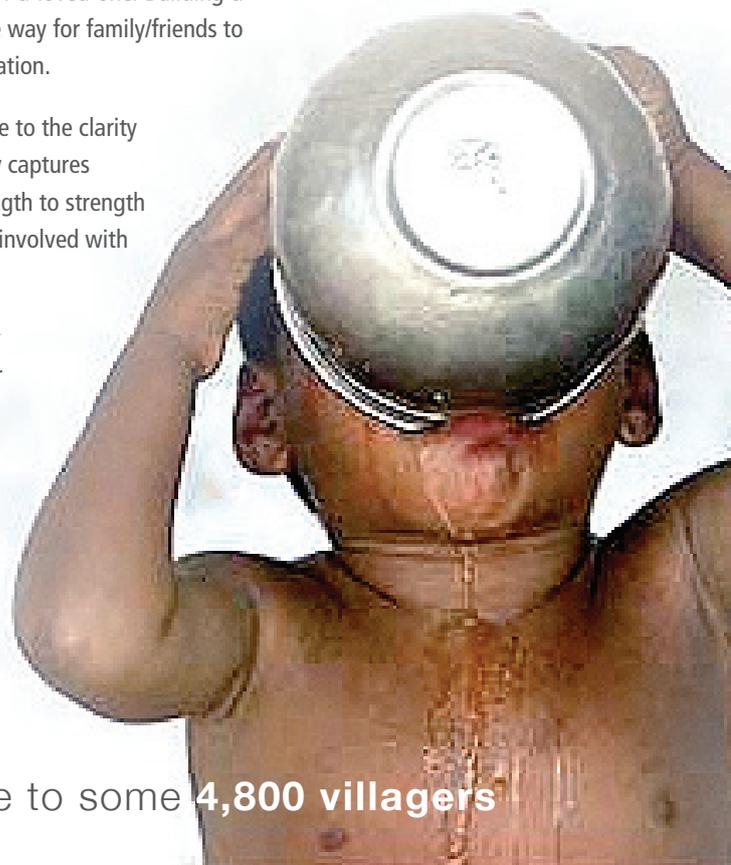
Finally, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the Board of Trustees, our partners in India - the FORD Trust, our amazing group of volunteers and all our generous donors and supporters, all of which combine to make the Foundation the force that it is today. We hope that individuals and organisations will continue to feel moved to support our mission and that in future years we will be able to acknowledge an ever greater positive influence on the lives of those most in need.

Bhupendra

Bhupendra Mistry

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our bore wells have brought renewed life to some **4,800 villagers**

Supporting widows ARUL MALAR OLD AGED HOME FOR WIDOWS – TAMIL NADU

The plight of Widows

India is the country with the largest widow population in the world. It is estimated there are 40 million widows in India today - 10 per cent of the country's female population. It has become home to the "husbandless". On news of their husband's death, the wives break their bangles as they can no longer wear jewellery or use sindhoor - the red powder women wear in their parting and on their foreheads to denote their married status. Many widows are thrown out of family homes by their children or abandoned by their in-laws as evil women who caused the death of their husbands.

Unfortunately, without a man by her side a woman has no respect in many parts of rural India. **It is part of a patriarchal culture where a woman is respected only if she is a mother, daughter and wife.**

The Care Home

The Development for Rural Oppressed People's Service Society - (DROPSS) is a Charity registered Care Home and is supported by a group of passionate and committed Community Workers. It began life in 1999 and provides food, accommodation, health and related care services for widows who would otherwise be destitute. The staff struggle to provide basic services on a 'shoe string' budget with minimal support from Government agencies. The majority of their time is taken up seeking 'in kind' donations for the up keep and general running of the Home.



The Partnership

In response to this desperate need, the Foundation feels compelled to raise funds to continue the work of this forward thinking Centre. To this end our latest collaboration is with The Prajapati London Foundation (PLF), the charity arm of the Shree Prajapati Association - London. Their aim is to help alleviate poverty and improve the lives of people throughout the world by undertaking small projects which make a lasting difference. The funding they provide will enable the home to secure a stronger future.



"Changing Minds – Changing Lives" is at the root of the philosophy of Kamla Foundation and we firmly believe that providing a stimulating environment for these women will enrich their lives, helping them to stand independently and enabling their voices to be heard in order to uplift the status of widows in society. The widows are the unacceptable face of India, a range of agencies including central and local government have failed them, politicians with rare exceptions have ignored them and the rest of society will continue to exploit them.

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Rural water supply REDUCING POVERTY AND IMPROVING HEALTH

The need

Providing clean drinking water is seen as essential for survival in rural areas of India where the Foundation operates. Hand operated pumps are preferred where the electricity supply is not reliable. The Foundation to date has installed five bore wells which in turn has benefitted some 4,800 villagers from the Dalit or 'backward class' communities. The first five wells have been kindly sponsored by Valpak Limited, (a Stratford-upon-Avon based environmental and recycling firm) This project aligns well with our goals of assisting to reduce rural poverty and improving the health of the rural population.

How it works

The Foundation is working in partnership with the Ford Trust and local Panchayats (Village Councils) to identify areas that lack adequate year-round access to safe clean drinking water. We then work to a strict schedule to determine the priority areas. Once a location for the bore well has been agreed and sourced, a Contractor and his survey team determines the likely soil depth at which water will be struck, the soil profile, and the likely water output. This team will survey common land around a designated area to select the best location for the bore well and to ensure maximum access for all intended beneficiaries.

Sustainable Development

The rural water supply represents an effective model of sustainable development, between the Foundation and its partners, identifying groups of villagers who need improved water supplies. These groups then take ownership of and maintain the completed hand pumps. The partners will provide key technical expertise to locate the best sites, supervise construction, certify the water as satisfactory for drinking purposes, and provide on-going related support.

Capacity building

In parallel to the above, the Foundation also allocates a training budget to educate community members on how to maintain their new water source, and will organise public health campaigns for hand pump beneficiaries emphasising the need for basic hygiene and sanitation. Health care workers from the district will come to these meetings and provide information on the safe use of water, the need to avoid water stagnation around the pump, and the importance of hygiene in its vicinity. Sustainability is key and we strongly believe in these community training programs, as they drastically improve the long-term effectiveness of the well.

Legacy wells

Over the last year a 'spin off' from the rural water supply project has seen the demand rise for 'legacy wells'. From as far afield as Singapore we have had special requests to install a bore well in memory of a loved one. Building a well is an everlasting memorial tribute to the departed person and is a positive way for family and friends to remember their loved ones and in turn support the work of the Foundation.

The benefits

- So far some 4,800 villagers have benefitted from the installation of the bore wells
- 90 per cent of whom are from scheduled castes and tribes.
- The project is helping beneficiaries to get safe, dependable water close to their doorsteps
- Has reduced the drudgery of hauling water from open wells and rivers
- Village women report that it takes them half the time formerly needed to fetch daily water supplies for their households
- This allows for greater time for more productive activities such as day labour or childcare.
- Beneficiaries also tell of dramatic reduction in water-related diseases once the pumps go into operation.
- Simple technology means that the pumps can be easily operated and maintained by the local villagers.



clean water is absolutely crucial for basic hygiene and sanitation

Sponsorship programme A REAL IMPACT ON THE THE LIVES OF THE POOREST

Thank you for the difference you've made

The Foundation has secured sponsorship to support 30 children from rural areas of Tamil Nadu who are living in extreme poverty, (some orphaned, many with a widowed or abandoned parent) but all in desperate need of assistance, in order to be able to continue their education and improve their life chances.

If parents are unable to provide the resources and meet the exam fees required, it is common practice for children to finish school after completion of Year 7 or Year 8. The children that are supported were all in danger of entering the labour market prematurely and their opportunities for the future were looking extremely bleak.

Supporting a family in India offers a unique opportunity for the sponsor to make a real difference to the lives of some of the poorest. This programme not only offers the opportunity to support a child through schooling, but the option of developing a relationship with the child/family which allows the sponsor to see directly the difference they are making. This connection is something that not only encourages the confidence of the person being supported, but can often be a rewarding and enlightening experience for the sponsor too.

Resource Packs

The Foundation would like to take this opportunity once again to thank the Sponsors for supporting the children by funding the resource pack each year. The Packs includes uniform, shoes, books, a school bag and stationery. The sponsored amount also covers exam fees. The Resource Packs were distributed in June 2011, just before the start of the new academic year. By providing this crucial support, the Sponsors are ensuring that these children can continue their education to a reasonable standard and not be forced to drop out due to the lack of finances. The longer these children remain in education, the better their opportunities will be for the future.



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Eye camp THE FIRST MAJOR PROJECT IN GUJARAT

The Foundation successfully delivered its first project in the state of Gujarat. This was a significant milestone in the life of the Foundation as this region is the birthplace of Kamlaben Mistry. To this end, we partnered up with the Rotary Eye Hospital in Navsari - Gujarat, to conduct an eye screening camp for some of the most marginalised rural communities. We focussed on widows in the main, as they are often unaware of available treatments, or simply unable to reach a hospital because of poverty and lack of transportation. With scattered populations spread across great distances, surgical eye camps are the most efficient way to reach the rural poor. Over 200 people participated in the programme and the cost of their treatment was met by the Foundation.

Significant numbers were treated with spectacles and were afforded related eye care. About 40 widows were referred for more specific consultation and cataract surgery. The eye screening camp played a crucial role in generating awareness about the importance of eye care and also highlighted the fact that ignorance can lead to severe eye disease and blindness.



Ophthalmic conducting initial eye assessment on a widow



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Volunteer experience A MOST POSITIVE LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE

Amy's story

I work in London as a commercial lawyer and as I sit at my desk working hard to get through the constant flow of emails and piles of documentation, I regularly find myself asking: is this it? This led me to travel to India last year where I volunteered for Kamla Foundation in rural Tamil Nadu.

From the outset, I wanted to focus my work on the area of Woman's Empowerment. I was eager to apply my skills to an issue that has particular importance in rural parts of India, where, despite the advancements of the country as a whole, a woman's role is still very much constrained by culture, tradition and the wider society.

I began by attending local women's self-help group (SHG) meetings with Karpagam, a strong, beautiful and incredibly petite Tamil woman of a similar age to me who works for the FORD Trust. I cannot over state my awe and admiration for Karpagam. She sets up and organises all of the women's SHG's which operate through the FORD Trust. At present there are around 18 but I saw first-hand that there is the demand for many more.

SHG's provide the women with an opportunity to make regular savings which they then pool together so that loans can be taken in times of need. Mostly these needs revolve around children and other family members - costs of keeping a child in education or a grandparent's medical costs. Most of the women do not have the skills to open up a bank account of their own. From a relatively early age, they are often kept from school to help with domestic chores and to earn money by working in the rice paddies.

At the first SHG meeting I attended we all sat together on the road which runs through the village. In reality this is no more than a muddy gravel track, and there were certainly no cars, only the occasional goat. Nevertheless, the women were all immaculately dressed in their brightly coloured saris.

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Together with Karpagam and other workers of the FORD Trust, we held sessions with the women's groups aimed at raising awareness of the basic rights to which men and women are equally entitled. It was clear that many of the women had a good understanding of equality and what this should mean in practice. These are strong, hard-working women with an abundance of commonsense. Yet poverty and the demands of their society substantially limit the extent to which they are able to enjoy that to which they are legally entitled. These are basic rights which most of us here in the UK take for granted; the right for women to receive education for instance, or to have a voice both in the home and in the community.

In my late teens and early twenties I took my youth and independence for granted. In contrast, the women I meet have all been married and had children before reaching what we in the western world often consider to be adulthood. Now the only real focus for them is survival and finding a way to provide for their family, often by working long hours in the intense heat in agriculture, or on construction sites, for no more than 100 rupees (around £1.50) per day.

There are many laws and government schemes in India aimed at helping the women I met but the reality is they simply don't reach most of the people in need. This is why the work carried out by the Kamla Foundation is of such vital importance.

As I went about my daily life during my stay in Tamil Nadu, I saw the evidence all around me of the positive impact which the Foundation has on the people in this area - from the woman who, with support and funding from the Foundation is now selling pineapples from her cart, to the young boy I see walking home from school with a satchel full of books who will benefit from the sponsorship programme. I feel deeply proud to be associated with Kamla Foundation. At the same time, it is clear that there is much, much more to be done.



Amy with members of women's Self Help Group



Anisha's story

I read about Maria's experience with the Foundation in last year's Newsletter. From seeing that her experience was so enriching and fulfilling for the people she was working with, I knew I wanted to experience something similar; I wanted to see it for myself and understand how I can help these incredibly disadvantaged people.

I spent my first week with Bhupendra visiting all the live projects that are being funded by the Foundation. It was a huge eye opener for me; it allowed me to gain a better understanding of the work the Foundation funds in Tamil Nadu. It's one thing reading about the projects in the newsletter and on the website but actually seeing it for myself and witnessing the impact they have on these unfortunate people's lives was just incredible.

I saw at first hand a newly installed water pump that was providing water for over 1000 people, seeing the joy on the villagers' faces and their sincere gratitude for providing them with one of life's essentials will be forever imprinted in my memory. I also met Rita, a young mother, who was given a fruit cart by the Foundation, by selling fresh fruit she no longer has to endure manual construction work.

The impact this project has had on her life was unbelievable; she is now able to provide a regular healthy income for her family allowing her children to complete their education. Every project undertaken by the Foundation are the necessary stepping stones needed to break the 'cycle of poverty' that so many people are living in.

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My work for the Foundation was focused on education and working with children from extremely disadvantaged situations. I worked in three different schools as well as a government run home for boys. I learnt how important education is for children in these difficult situations. Many families struggling with poverty cannot afford to send their child to school as they could potentially be earning an income to provide food for the family. It is for this reason the Child Sponsorship programme was conceived. I met and taught some of the children chosen for this support, they really are on the brink of desperation and I cannot think of a better way to encourage these families to keep sending their children to school.

I'm so grateful to Kamla Foundation for giving me this opportunity and to the FORD Trust for their hospitality. I am amazed at how tirelessly they work to implement the work of the Foundation. It has been one of the biggest challenges of my life to date, but I wouldn't change a thing!



Mural designed by Anisha and the children



Fund raising features A huge **thank you** for everyone's support.



Hersha Mistry entered the Blenheim Triathlon on Sat 4th June 2011 to raise the profile and funds for Kamla Foundation. She raised the grand sum of £1,318

On turning forty, I felt an urge to set myself a challenge and at the same time help a very worthwhile cause. A triathlon appealed since it covered three sports I have some experience in. The event comprised of a 750m lake swim followed by a 20km cycle, followed by a 5km run. Though I can manage each discipline separately, attempting them back to back and swimming in open water was going to be a challenge!

My first open water swim at Salford Quays was an experience. It was a cold 14 deg, visibility was zero and the wetsuit was unbelievably tight and restrictive! On the plus side it kept you warm and contained in-built buoyancy so you are less likely to sink to the bottom! Cycling and running, thankfully, were more familiar territory!

Sat 4th June approached all too quickly and I felt pretty nervous but well organized. Blenheim Palace was a spectacular venue for an incredible event - 4000 people took part in various "waves" over the weekend.

In the lake I started at the back as novices were advised to do and managed to swim the distance in 23 minutes. It was nice to see the family cheering me on as I approached transition.

The bike course was three laps which I found quite grueling as there were many hills requiring the use of all 24 gears. Other cyclists were racing past me all the time at frightening speeds. I even saw a few collisions, however I managed to stay on my bike and complete the course in 59 minutes.

When it came to the run, it really helped to remember all the encouraging messages from friends and family. The route was two laps around a lake with stunning scenery! Well placed water and loo stations also helped! I managed to finish in 32 minutes. This gave me a total time (including transitions) of 2:07 hours.

Finally, I would like say a **HUGE THANK YOU** to everyone that sponsored me and encouraged me along the way. YOU helped make the whole experience worthwhile and very rewarding.

Mini Olympic Games

Offerton Hall Nursery held their very own mini Olympic Games event on Wednesday 6th July in order to fundraise for Kamla Foundation. They kindly supported the Foundation back in 2009, and were delighted to partner up with them again. Last time they raised well in excess of £800 and this money helped to improve the lives of many widows and their children. All the children received sponsor forms and were well supported by close family and friends.

On the day itself the children endured horrendous weather; biting winds, pelting rain and hailstone for good measure! However they were incredibly resilient and braved the conditions to complete the course in head to toe waterproofs. On this occasion they raised the fantastic sum of £1,000! - Once again, a **big THANK YOU** to Offerton Hall Nursery staff, parents and all the children for their great support.



Proud Dylan with his medal

Become a supporter

By pledging to make a regular donation - however big or small, however frequent you will become a supporter and help us to help others most in need in India. Regular donations allow us to plan for the future and give us the security we need to develop new projects and resources to enable us to make our services as far-reaching and as effective as they possibly can be. If you are interested in becoming a Supporter, you can do so in the following ways:

Online | By cheque | Standing Order

If you would like to make regular monthly donations, please make contact using the details below and we will be glad to give you the relevant bank details.

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