The world still suffers large deficits in productive and decent employment, rural areas maintain a disproportionately low rate of access to safe water, and nearly 2.5 billion people lack access to improved sanitation facilities. In addition, insufficient progress has been achieved in the areas of hunger, gender equality, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, and decreasing maternal mortality.

Similar trends can be observed in Latin America and the Caribbean: while important advances have been achieved, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) notes that high levels of inequality persist, with progress varying greatly across countries. According to the UNDP’s 2010 report, the region as a whole is “on track to reach the targets related to extreme poverty, underweight, child mortality, and access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation services.” In contrast, progress concerning undernourishment, completion of primary education, gender equality, and maternal mortality is insufficient to reach the MDGs.

The MDGs have provided a road map to improve the quality of life for the world’s poor. Nonetheless, challenges have been raised about the omission of critical issues such as mental health (or non-communicable diseases in general) and disabilities, and some critics call for greater involvement of women in the goals.

As the timeline established for the MDGs comes to a close, the contributions of all actors will be fundamental to sustain and build upon the progress achieved as of now. The Resource Foundation (TRF) and its network of donors and local partners are working to ensure the success of locally driven initiatives that are in line with the MDGs while also helping to fill the gaps in this blueprint. This newsletter features a sampling of projects focusing on the environment, HIV/AIDS, mental health, education, and other aspects that are essential to improving the quality of life of thousands of low-income people throughout the region.

TRF IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE

Loren Finnell’s memoir – Still a Country Boy, After Embracing the World – was recently published by Mayhaven Publishing. The book describes Loren’s 48-year career in international development, including the creation of TRF. The Forward was written by Sen. Harris Wofford, co-founder of the Peace Corps, special assistant to President Kennedy and advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr. Those interested may order the book on Amazon or contact TRF at 212-675-6170.
DEAR FRIENDS:

Many exciting things are taking place at The Resource Foundation. As we enter our 25th anniversary year, we invite you to join us in ensuring the long-term sustainability of TRF and the amazing projects that you, our donors, support.

Over these many years, we have stayed true to the vision we held when our doors opened 25 years ago. From the basement of a New York suburb to a New York City office, TRF has been able to expand not only its staff but its donor base, service offerings, global reach and impact. With over 200 organizations in 28 countries in the Americas and Caribbean benefiting from the work that TRF and its donors do each year, we are well-positioned to exceed our expectations during our anniversary year.

With new donors, expanded services, innovative projects and increased support on the horizon, TRF’s efforts are making a lasting difference in the communities it touches. Earning another Charity Navigator 4-Star rating in 2012, making it five in as many years, TRF’s recognition and influence continues to grow. This means increased opportunities across the board. During our 25th anniversary year we will leverage our continued success to achieve our mission of empowering the disadvantaged so they can gain the skills, knowledge and opportunities to improve their lives. We look forward to you joining us in this journey.

We very much appreciate the role that each one of you plays in our development and success. You can help even more by sharing this newsletter with a friend once you have read it and urging them to become part of The Resource Foundation family.

Warm regards,

Loren Finnell
Founder & President

Marcela Lopez-Macedonio
Executive Director

WHILE SIGNIFICANT advances have been achieved on the global HIV/AIDS front—with fewer new infections and deaths from the disease, as well as breakthroughs in terms of prevention and treatment—UNAIDS emphasizes that much is yet to be accomplished. Similarly, despite progress in Latin America and the Caribbean, there are still approximately 1.7 million persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in the region. In this context, TRF has partnered with Johnson & Johnson to support a number of projects focused on this issue.

One such initiative is spearheaded by PROINFANCIA, in the Dominican Republic. The organization works to strengthen awareness and health education in relation to STDs, HIV/AIDS, and early pregnancy among low-income children, adolescents, parents, and educators.

In addition, TRF affiliate Huésped, in Argentina, seeks to enhance and expand mental health services for PLWHA. Huésped develops support groups and workshops in collaboration with health professionals, incorporating a special focus on family planning.

And in Colombia, Casa Gami’s perinatal support program for women with HIV/AIDS aims to reduce the occurrence of mother-to-child transmission through accompaniment during pregnancy, post-birth monitoring, and follow-up with a pediatrician, among other services.

These are just a few of the projects TRF and J&J support in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and health care in general. Future progress in combatting this disease and the interrelated social and economic impacts will depend on the joint effort of all actors. To learn more about these projects or others with a similar focus, visit our website or contact us directly.

THE RESOURCE FOUNDATION WELCOMES OUR NEW INSTITUTIONAL DONORS:

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GROSSMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION
JACKSON FAMILY FOUNDATION
KOENIG FOUNDATION

“THE ACT OF PHILANTHROPY is a spiritual act, an expression of caring for one’s fellow human beings. It is a belief in the future that the future can be good.” – ARTHUR C. FRANTZREB
RIO+20: A push to go green

In June, delegates from around the world gathered in Rio de Janeiro for the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), marking the 20th anniversary of the original UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). In the past year, with environmental concerns so high on the international development agenda, TRF and its partners have played a critical role in combating such challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In Tlaxcala, Mexico, ProNatura is working to preserve the Río Atenco watershed through a combination of community education and reforestation. ProNatura is supported by the Dow Chemical Foundation, with local Dow employees helping to plant 10,100 new trees during the past year. Another innovative project in Mexico is Efecto Verde’s environmental conservation program in Mexico City. With support from Kellogg, Efecto Verde initiated a program to improve recycling and promote green spaces, using recycled plastic waste to create hydroponic growing systems that formed the basis of rooftop gardens.

With the support of Pfizer Animal Health, TRF affiliate FVSA analyzed the productivity and sustainability of cattle production programs in the Argentine Pampas, benefitting local producers. Finally, in Brazil, Rã-Bugio educated children on the importance of rainforest conservation and the link between environmental welfare and overall quality of life through lectures at schools and guided trail tours in the Atlantic Rainforest. Rã-Bugio is supported by Johnson & Johnson, whose local employees were actively involved in the project.

The legacy of Rio+20 will continue to be felt in the coming year, making environmental initiatives a central focus of international development efforts. TRF remains committed to empowering its partners to make positive environmental changes through locally driven solutions. To find out more about how TRF can help you make a difference in these issues, please visit our website or contact us.

Filling THE MENTAL HEALTH GAP

Until recently, mental health has taken a back seat to other international development priorities, with no mention of the issue in any of the Millennium Development Goals. Yet mental health is linked to a number of other development outcomes, including education, physical health, and job opportunities. Today, in recognition of this reality, donors, organizations, and governments are increasingly committed to supporting mental health initiatives. TRF has recently supported several such projects in Brazil and Mexico.

The hospital humanization initiative, launched by Canto Cidadão in Brazil, seeks to improve the standard of patient care in hospitals by convening meetings of health care workers to share experiences and exchange ideas, equipping them to take charge both of their own mental well-being and that of their patients. Also in Brazil, TRF affiliate AVAPE provides skills training and job placement assistance to young women with disabilities, helping them to achieve greater independence.

In Mexico, Antenas por los Niños has created a digital puppet to provide interactive psychological support to young hospital patients. The puppet software, profiled in The New York Times, has allowed the children to learn about and cope with their conditions and treatments. And Fraternidad sin Fronteras, in Mexico City, continues to provide crucial shelter, education, and personalized health care to the mentally disabled and abandoned, taking a holistic approach to mental health.

In 2010—2011 alone, TRF and its local partners directly benefitted more than 1.6 MILLION men and women of all ages, thanks to the generous support of its donors.
LATIN AMERICA means a great deal to me and my family for a host of reasons; not the least of which is my daughter and wife were born there, and important elements of my career and professional success have been shaped there. Serving as a board member at TRF is one of the most important privileges I have as it affords me a regular opportunity to give back to the people and the region I love.

As the youngest son of a hardworking Mom raising three kids alone in the 60s, I developed an appreciation for the importance of independence with a modicum of support when times got really tough. As Mom used to say, “[w]e aren’t poor, we’re just broke and we’ll make it through.” In those years, I learned an important lesson of the value of “a hand up, not a handout” – the neighbors who provide babysitting in a pinch, friends who help bail out a flooded family room, grandparents who accommodate a grandson’s wish to complete high school in his home town – all examples of vital support that got us through the rough patches.

Latin America is a remarkably dynamic, optimistically energetic, culturally vibrant, economically diverse land of opportunity. It is a land rich with history and stories for the ages, while it is also one of the most youthful regions in the world, with much of its population under the age of 21. The region’s economic potential, combined with its young demographics, makes Latin America a promising engine of economic growth for decades to come. Furthermore, I firmly believe the economic potential of Latin America will only be realized through support at all socio demographic levels. The good work TRF performs on a daily basis to provide an economic “hand up” to literally thousands of deserving, creative, innovative, and hardworking individuals is key to Latin America realizing its potential and an affirmation of my commitment to support this organization in every way possible.

Look through this newsletter for further confirmation of TRF’s commitment to helping the people of Latin America realize their potential, which will be a “hand up” to us all.

Sincerely,

Michael Archer