

# Annual Report 2011

Ooty, India - Pune, India - U.S.A. - U.K.



*Rescue, Restoration, and Justice  
for Victims of Sex Trafficking*

# Annual Report 2011

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*"To be true to one's own  
freedom is, in essence,  
to honor and respect the  
freedom of all others."*  
- Dwight D. Eisenhower

*\* Names of girls in this report are changed to protect their identity*

# FREEDOM FIRM



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# Letter from the Director



In 2011, through the efforts of the team in Pune, 57 girls were rescued from prostitution in 14 successful interventions. In December, the total number of girls rescued by Freedom Firm since 2006 reached 200! Ten criminal cases were filed against the perpetrators in 2011. Numerous home visits were made to follow-up on previously rescued girls, several of whom came to Pune to testify in court (one from as far away as Bangladesh). In Ooty, 4 girls have

graduated from the restoration programme. At the end of the year 3 girls; Asha, Mangala and Kavitha are with us. We've seen miracles take place in their lives and tremendous growth. The Ruhamah Designs jewellery project has steadily expanded while the Avalanche Camp was again a wonderful time for girls to enjoy the beauty of nature and hear about the love of God; some for the first time.

Of course the accomplishments are only part of the picture. There's another story behind the scenes in Freedom Firm this past year. One of financial difficulty ... then provision. Another of staff moving on ... and new people joining. I'll tell the story from the words of some of the people who experienced it, as I look back on the way God led and provided.

"We also must share with you that we are in the tightest financial time Freedom Firm has ever seen." Greg Malstead - Feb, 2011

"I met with our team to discuss cost cutting." Evan Henck - Mar 10, 2011

"Yesterday alone, more than \$10,000 was received! We are amazed and thankful for this tremendous provision." Greg Malstead - March 15, 2011

"Sunemiya Nanda, MSW, from Orissa visited our Pune office this week and spent time with our team. This confirmed that she is the right person to join with FF in Pune." Evan Henck - Mar 17, 2011

"I just got an email from a donor today saying he will be giving \$10K and it should get to us in a couple weeks. Great news!" Gretchen Merritt - Apr 6, 2011

"Today begins my final official week at Freedom Firm. I do want to share with you what an absolute pleasure and honor it has been to work alongside each of you." Jayson Palm - Apr 25, 2011

"I was waiting to give the update until I knew the exact numbers, but the event was GREAT! We raised over \$10,000 and about 100 people were in attendance." Gretchen Merritt - May 16, 2011.

"We are having a goodbye dinner to celebrate and honor Anne." Mala Malstead - May 18, 2011

"We are privileged to have Rodney and his wife Diana join us in Ooty." Greg Malstead - May 18, 2011 .

"During the Lenten season Memorial Park Church hands out what we call Hope Offering boxes. Freedom Firm's portion is \$4,057.93." Don Creasy - May 25, 2011.

"Michael Yangad, Associate Director for Interventions, has given 30 days notice. He is needing to devote time to his final year of law studies and to his family."

Evan Henck - Jun 2, 2011

"First Fruit approved a grant for \$41,000 for expansion work into Nagpur!" Gretchen Merritt - Jun 22, 2011

"I personally thank all of you for your co-operation, support and care during my service for the past five years in Freedom Firm." Anandhi Daniel - July 14, 2011

"Marc Lawler joined Freedom Firm this Monday, August 1st in Ooty." Greg Malstead - Aug 5, 2011

"... we got a check for \$7,700 from Rotaract." Gretchen Merritt - Aug 8, 2011

"The rest of the \$6,000 came in from the Bergren Foundation that we had requested for the Legal Grant. We also got a \$3,000 unexpected gift in the mail today." Gretchen Merritt - Sep 23, 2011

"Nice work Rod. The Isabel Allende Grant for \$3,000 has arrived!" Gretchen Merritt - Oct 7, 2011

"I am praising God to inform you that we have received FCRA Prior Permission from Ministry of Home Affairs, Delhi for Freedom Firm trust." Jenitha Jayaveeran - Oct 17, 2011

"We have a problem. Too many good candidates! Talk tmw?" Evan Henck - Nov 24, 2011

"GREAT NEWS! We received a grant from the Mary Lynn Richardson Fund for \$3,000." Gretchen Merritt - Dec 22, 2011

"I am pleased to share the results from the tally of our special offerings at the thanksgiving and Christmas worship services. The "unofficial" results are that we should be sending ~\$17,000 to Freedom Firm in the very near future. Praise God!" Roger Rumer - Jan 3, 2012

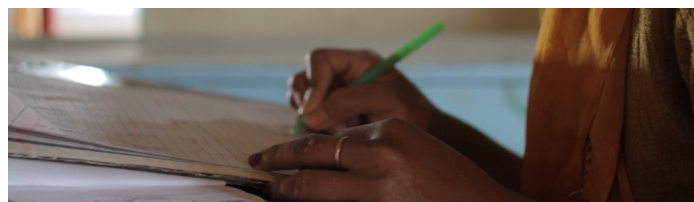
In December alone 3 new staff members joined Freedom Firm. Elfreeda and Sharon in Pune and Elizabeth in Ooty. Another person, Ganesh will join the Pune team in early January and possibly an investigator.

What an amazing year, and what an amazing team! If I could scroll through all the emails and text messages there would be so much more to say, and so much more to be thankful for. I've only touched on a few.

Thanks be to God for His favour in 2011, and for your prayers and support.

Warmly,

Greg Malstead, Ooty, India





# Mission and Strategy

## The Mission

Rescue, Restoration, and Justice. Freedom Firm seeks to eliminate child prostitution in India by rescuing minor girls, providing effective rehabilitation, and prosecuting the perpetrators of sex trafficking.

## The Strategy

**Rescue:** Freedom Firm undercover operatives locate minor girls enslaved in brothels, document the crime, and report it to the police. With assistance from our operatives the police raid the brothels, rescue the girls, and arrest the brothel keepers and traffickers. The rescued girls are then placed in aftercare, and the police file criminal complaints (or charges) against their oppressors.

**Restoration:** Freedom Firm's residential aftercare home provides rescued girls over 18 years old with job training, education, counselling, and health care in a safe, family-style setting. The creative program includes summer camp, animal therapeutic activities with partner organization Leg Up, and employment making jewellery with micro-enterprise Ruhamah Designs to help the girls grow in confidence and become independent. Freedom Firm's regional aftercare program also partners with other rehabilitation homes throughout India to provide for the well-being of all the girls we rescue.

**Justice:** In aggressive pursuit of conviction of those responsible for oppressing minor girls, Freedom Firm lawyers assist public prosecutors at each stage of the criminal trial. Rescued girls are empowered to testify against their abusers and help bring them to justice. Every trial and every conviction creates a deterrent and raises the cost of sex trafficking in India.



*"We express our sincere gratitude...to Freedom Firm for your outstanding effort in arranging testimony for the victim of trafficking for the sake of ensuring justice."*

*- S.M. Tofazzel Hossain, Programme Manager  
Rights Jessore*



# The Story of Freedom Firm

It was 2000 when Freedom Firm Founders Greg and Mala Malstead moved their family to Mumbai, India, and Greg became Director of International Justice Mission, Mumbai. As an attorney, Greg established IJM's first India office and built a team of investigators, lawyers, and social workers who partnered with local authorities to bring rescue and justice to victims of sex trafficking. In his five years with IJM, Greg led and participated in interventions that resulted in the rescue of over 450 victims, prosecution of more than 180 perpetrators, and conviction in 6 groundbreaking cases.

Despite this success in rescue and justice, the Malsteads wanted to do more for victims of the sex trade. Combining Greg's legal experience with Mala's creative passion and teaching background, they envisioned an organization that not only rescues girls and brings their perpetrators to justice but also restores these girls to lives of physical, emotional, and spiritual wholeness and equips them for a future of self-reliance. They also wanted to target their rescue and justice efforts in areas of Maharashtra and Karnataka that as yet had no major anti-trafficking NGO (non-government organization) presence.

So in 2006, the Malsteads, with the support of friends, founded Freedom Firm in Ooty, Tamil Nadu.

Freedom Firm's investigation team was soon on the ground in Maharashtra rescuing minor girls along with great legal and regional aftercare follow up, while the residential aftercare program began to take shape in Ooty. The holistic program includes a family-style aftercare home as well as counselling, health care, education, and job training. The girls are employed by a self-sustaining micro-enterprise jewellery business now called Ruhamah Designs. Also as part of aftercare, Freedom Firm has developed a horse activity program, called Leg Up, which incorporates the use of horses in building trust and self-confidence.

Since 2006, Freedom Firm has rescued over 200 underage girls from commercial sexual exploitation and is actively involved in restoring these girls to lives of wholeness and self-sufficiency. As supporters, you are a vital part of our history and our future. Thank you for sharing our vision.



*"The secret of freedom is courage."*

*- Thucydides*

# 2011 Highlights

## *Rescue: New Territories*

In 2011, more girls were rescued by Freedom Firm's intervention team than in any other year. 57 girls were rescued. Yet, considering the raids and the efforts taken to rescue girls, it was one of the most difficult years.

As the rescue work in Pune entered its 5th year, the team quickly realized that minor girls were more difficult to find. Consistent raids, and 8 convictions of brothel keepers guilty of exploiting minor girls, have had a high impact on the region. In one sense, this was encouraging evidence that there were less minor girls in prostitution, and Freedom Firm has been effective in its mission. The amount of young minor girls (between ages 11-14) has definitely decreased. At the same time, however, there was a realization that brothel keepers were also being more careful and trafficking minors who look older (ages 15-17) or young majors.

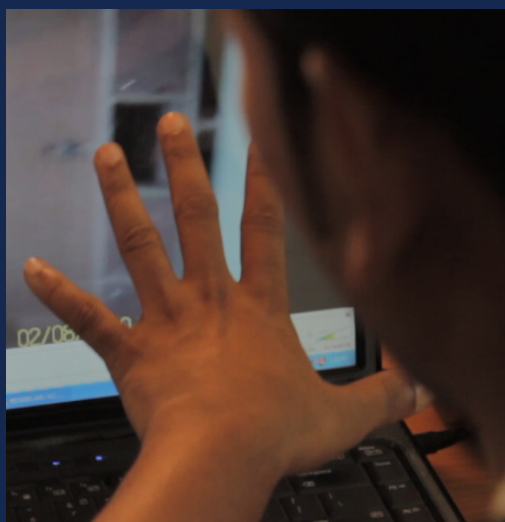
In March, the Interventions team went to rescue a minor girl from the Pune red-light area, but found two major victims Fatima and Namita who were forced into prostitution, and the police were able to rescue them. As they shared their stories in the police station, it became evident just how much has changed in Pune. These victims were tricked and trafficked like many girls, but their initiation into the business revealed a nasty change. Upon being brought to Pune from West Bengal, they were transported out to a remote jungle where they were abused and threatened. Completely frightened, they were returned to Pune where they entered into prostitution.

Aware of this new angle, the Investigations team works very strategically to search the back rooms of brothels and locate any minors in prostitution. The police have also stepped up their efforts by beginning to close brothels where minors have been found. The battle for freedom and justice continues to intensify, and Freedom Firm continues to enter new territories and new challenges.





## Glimmers of Hope in Nagpur



### Reviewing Undercover Film Footage

In Nagpur, rescue efforts united with the need for strong legal follow up. As we learned, the majority of the girls prostituted in Nagpur come from the Madhya Pradesh Bedia community, which historically has been involved in prostitution. That level of ingrained culture and tradition made rescues especially challenging.

In May and August, Freedom Firm rescued 4 girls who had been rescued in previous years also. (Madhura for the 3rd time, Sarasa and Kaveri for the 2nd time.) Baijantibai, the accused, who continued to pose as the girls' mother to take custody of them from the child welfare committee, was arrested on the spot and spent 2 months in jail before she got bail. This was a small but important victory.

The brothel keepers and pimps had developed a system over the years which allowed for raids, but was quickly followed by the release of the girls back into the hands of their "parents"; who would then return them to the red light area. Re-rescuing the same girls multiple times became necessary to expose the system which was failing to protect them. The legal team brought this to the attention of the courts and the Child Welfare Committee and it is beginning to make an impact.

## How Do Girls Get Trafficked? - The court testimony of a rescued girl in 2011

*I am from Bangladesh. My father got me married but my husband was not a good person. My husband's brother said he can get me a good job. He brought me to the border and then to Pune. He took me to a house and kept me there. Pramila Didi told me I have to do dirty work. I told her, 'No, I'll do good job here. That is why Sagar has brought me here.' She said, 'No one does good job here. You'll have to do dirty job here.' I said I would not do this dirty work, but after 10 days I started doing the work, forcefully. Pramila Didi forced me to do it.*

# 2011 Highlights

## Restoration: A Journey

### Ooty Residential Aftercare Moves Forward

In 2011, the Aftercare home in Ooty was characterized by transition. Four long term volunteers returned home in the span of a couple of months leaving spaces to be filled. Also, four young women in the program graduated, and two new girls arrived in their place.

Construction started in 2011 to expand the home "Roja" to care for up to 12 girls, but there were unexpected delays. (The project is expected to finish in 2012.)

In October, the Ruhamah Designs workshop and Education Centre moved to a new location; the space directly above the International Office! Aftercare and operations now coexist in community on a daily basis giving a strong sense of shared purpose and unity.



**Mangala enjoys providing horse activities for local disabled children**

Despite the changes of new staff, structure, and residents, the aftercare program in Ooty has reached a new level of maturity. The girls now spend six hours a day employed to make and design jewelry by Ruhamah Designs (a partner micro-business) to help train them in vocational and life skills. The remaining two hours focus on education in English and Hindi, computers, and functional math. The staff and volunteers provide a healthy level of counseling, friendship, horse therapeutic activities, fun, and care.

When Mangala first arrived, she was very quiet. She was trafficked from Bangalore and rescued two years before. She began her process of restoration in government homes, but she still struggled to trust others. In an environment of care, education, and support for eight months, it has been incredible to watch her change. Her smile beams across the room, and she does not hesitate to play loving jokes on staff and volunteers. She has begun to learn to write in Hindi and English. If there is a small child around, within minutes Mangala has the child comfortable in her arms. Mangala still has a long journey ahead of her to gain the confidence to live independently, but it is encouraging to see her moving forward.

*"God brought me to Freedom Firm. For the first time in my life, I feel love and happiness."  
- Kareshma, a new resident in Ooty Aftercare*



## Courage Shines in Nagpur

In Regional Aftercare, working with girls like Pragati convinces us that God is at work. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Nagpur has been the most difficult place to work, with resistance and hostility on every corner. What made it harder was that the girls themselves viewed us as their worst enemy. But we persisted; we reached out, never forgetting the fact that these little girls are victims of a perverted subculture, a subculture that has taught them to devalue themselves as nothing more than a sex object and money making machine for their “parents”.

Pragati’s courage to stand for truth and freedom was a breakthrough. As a 16 year old girl from the Bedia community, she was forced into prostitution as a child and is expected to remain a prostitute all her life. One of our social workers reported this conversation, “Pragati cried and started to tell me that everyday you visit us and tell us we are precious, but girls don’t understand this. She said she does not want to do this dirty thing and does not want to go back to her “parents” in the red light area. She does not know if they are her parents because they trouble and beat her always and force her to do prostitution. She also said that if she couldn’t earn money they would make her stay without food, she didn’t get any money, and she had to bring it all to them.” When Pragati officially made the statement against her parents in front of Child Welfare Committee, her life was threatened. The girls at the home ostracized her and the goons outside tried to break in and threaten to kill her. Freedom Firm requested the CWC to transfer her to a safer place. As of now, Pragati is staying in another shelter home. We are hoping and praying that people responsible for her plight will be brought to justice and Pragati will get an opportunity to live a life free from fear and exploitation.



**Freedom Firm Social Workers on Home Inquiry**



# 2011 Highlights

## Ruhamah Designs

Ruhamah Designs is a micro-business that partners with Freedom Firm to provide employment and vocational training to rescued victims of sex trafficking.

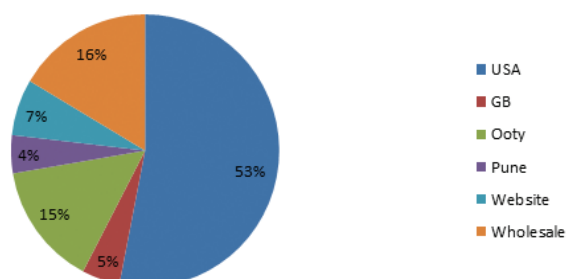
2011 marked the official launch of Ruhamah Designs as a financially independent and self-sustaining business that employs the girls from the Ooty residential aftercare program. In that time, 4 girls moved on and 3 girls joined as new employees. The workshop moved to a great location just above the International Freedom Firm office, and a new workshop in Pune will hopefully launch in 2012.

A new concept for home jewelry parties was born in 2011 called "What's in a Name?". This contains new structure and materials to create a unique educational and cultural experience concerning our product, employees, and work. It will be implemented in the USA and UK in 2012.

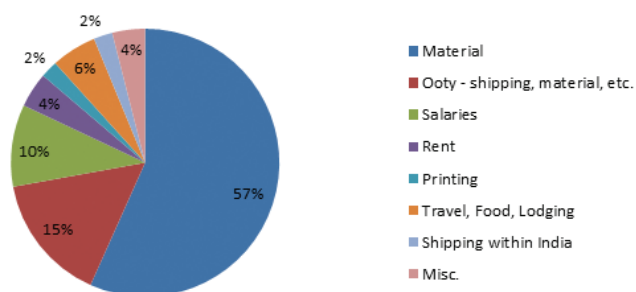


Ruhamah Designs creates beautiful hand made jewelry

**Total Sales 2011, Rs. 780,529**  
(\$15,600; £10,000)



**Total Expenditure 2011, Rs. 526,029**  
(\$10,600; £6,750)





# Leg Up: New Beginnings



In 2011, Leg Up has developed to meet the needs of the girls in the Ooty Aftercare program in a different way. After years of using the horses as an avenue for counselling, we shifted our focus onto local disabled children from impoverished backgrounds.

So instead of being the center of our efforts and our attention, the girls have learned to serve the children as “side walkers” and “leaders” with each disabled child riding a horse. Helping the disabled children to develop balance, strength, flexibility and communication has revitalized our Leg Up program.

The rescued girls are part of a much larger volunteer group of students and friends from the community in this initiative. As they have reached out with others to help children more needy than themselves, great transformation has happened. Their outreach has put their own misery and trauma in proportion, it has engendered thankfulness, and it has created moments of laughter and joy. The girls are busy giving therapeutic attention to others, and that in turn helps assuage their own pain.





# 2011 Highlights

## *Justice: Strong Testimonies*

The ultimate goal of the legal team is to secure a conviction for those guilty of exploiting minor girls. It is the aim of justice to see perpetrators held to account, which sends a message to the region that sex trafficking will not be tolerated. In addition, it can be a healthy (but difficult) process for the victims of sex trafficking to stand up against oppression and the people who hurt them.

In the past three years, the Freedom Firm legal team initiated cases that resulted in 8 convictions. One of the most important ways that Freedom Firm assists the justice system is to find, bring to court, and prepare rescued girls to testify. This is resource intensive and often involves several trips to remote villages, but when a girl testifies boldly about her experiences as a victim, it usually ensures a conviction under the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act. Recently, it was encouraging to learn that in sex trafficking cases at Faraskanna police station in Pune, 11% of accused abscond (run away), but in Freedom Firm I.T.P.A cases at the same police station 44% of accused have absconded. This indicates that the accused are aware that the rescued girl may actually come to testify against them when Freedom Firm is involved in the case. At the same time, this poses a significant challenge in bringing the accused to justice when they run away before trial.



**The Freedom Firm Legal Team Prepares a Petition to the Bombay High Court**

## SAJALA

Sajala came to Pune in February to testify against the accused Reshma. Sajala was accompanied to Pune by her brother Shorab, who happens to be the only earning member in the family. Though Sajala came to Pune on the 7 of Feb, she finally got to testify on the 21 of Feb. The reason behind this long delay was due to numerous tactics employed by the defense to prevent Sajala from getting to the stand. This period was very trying for Sajala as well as her brother, but despite all the odds she did well on the stand. Sajala's small but significant victory was a step towards preventing Reshma from exploiting other girls.

## LEENA

Leena was trafficked from Nepal and was rescued on the 1st of Oct 2009 in Pune. Since her rescue she has been a resident at a government home for rescued girls in Pune. Leena is the mother to an infant child back home in Nepal and was separated from her child when she was trafficked. Ever since her rescue it has been her desire to go back home and be with her child. Numerous attempts were made by Freedom Firm to expedite her trial so she could return home. Despite all the hardships, Leena testified in October 2011 and was finally able to return home.



A Case Meeting in Pune

## ROSHNI

Roshni is the first girl to come to Pune from Bangladesh to testify in the case against her brothel keeper and trafficker. The process to get Roshni to come to Pune took more than a year of effort by Freedom Firm and Rights Jessore, a partner organization in Bangladesh. In order to travel to India, Roshni needed a passport and visa, which involved a lot of paperwork. Roshni testified brilliantly in court in September 2011 and she returned to Bangladesh more confident and healed.



# 2011 Highlights

## *Horse and Rider: A Journey Towards Freedom*

In the year of 2011, Freedom Firm partnered with Award-Winning Director Ben Stamper and musician Pete Hicks of Aradhna to create a unique narrative documentary "Horse and Rider". Shot on location in India, it captures the incredible work of Freedom Firm, and highlights two powerful stories of young women on a journey towards freedom.

"Known is a drop. Unknown is an ocean."

This ancient tamil proverb serves as the foundation of this film, and separates it from other films about trafficking. "Horse and Rider" looks beyond trafficking as an overwhelming or unknown "issue", to tell a story about real human beings that are overcoming the tragedy of trafficking and rebuilding their lives.



The filming process was sensitively and strategically planned to be healthy for all involved. Two young women in the Ooty Residential Aftercare program volunteered to share their stories in the film to help other women who have been through similar abuses.

The result is something of sheer beauty. In "Horse and Rider" Ben Stamper captures the complex work of Freedom Firm, the diversity of India, and the unrelenting hope and strength found in the survivors of trafficking. This film is something that truly must be experienced.

[www.horseandriderfilm.com](http://www.horseandriderfilm.com)

To order the film or organize a screening:

[www.freedom.firm.in](http://www.freedom.firm.in)  
[contact@freedom.firm.in](mailto:contact@freedom.firm.in)



# Finances 2011

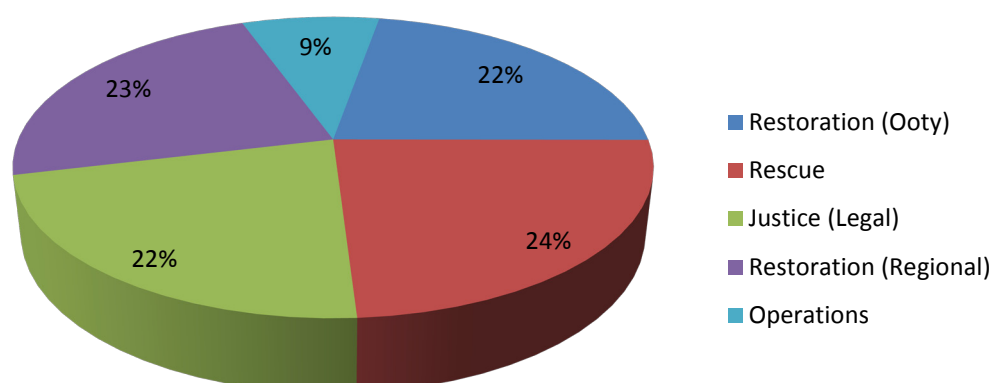
One of our core principles is Achieving Results. We allocate our resources with an uncompromising drive to achieve results balanced by a responsibility to steward our resources. We are diligent about stewarding finances given by donors, not just because accountability matters, but also for the sake of relentlessly pursuing and achieving our mission - rescue, restoration, and justice for victims of sex trafficking.

Without your generous and sacrificial gifts, Freedom Firm would never be able to do the work we do. We rely entirely on the financial contributions of generous people like you to meet our operating budget, and we are so grateful that you believe in this work and contribute to its success!



## Expenses

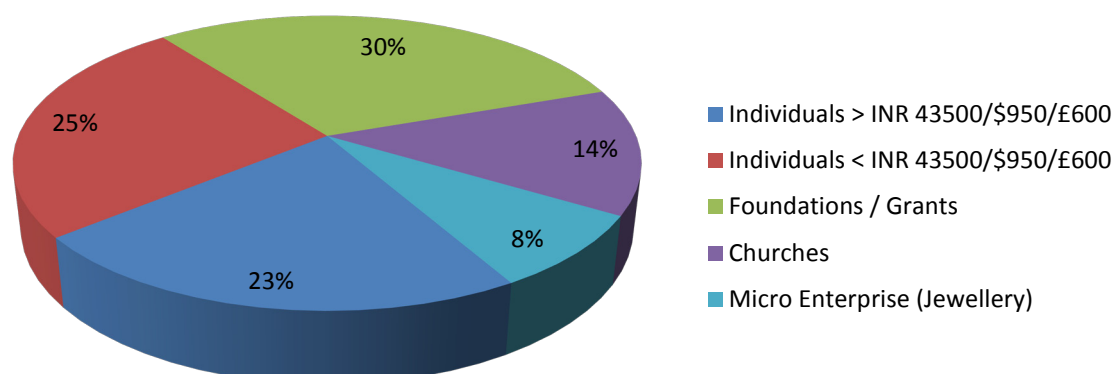
January-December 2011



## Income Sources

January-December 2011

Total income: INR 16,943,099 / \$345,355 / £217,855



# Freedom Firm Boards

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## Freedom Firm Board

### **Mr. Mervyn D'Mello – Chairperson**

Director, Community Relations,  
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Mumbai, India

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Regional Programme Manager, The Global Fund  
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Coordinator, Smyrna Fellowship Trust  
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### **Ms. Padma Raman – Treasurer**

Teacher, Hebron School  
Ooty, India

### **Mr. Jason Abel**

Senior Associate, Clutch Group  
Bangalore, India

### **Ms. Valsa George**

Staff, Hebron School  
Ooty, India

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Madurai, India

### **Mr. Heber Jeyaraj**

Business  
Ooty, India

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Marketing Leader, Bayer  
Memorial Park Presbyterian Church  
Allison Park, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

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Buyer, Target Corporation  
Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A.

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Newman, Georgia, U.S.A.

### **Ms. Sara Miller**

Assistant District Attorney  
Fort Myers, Florida, U.S.A.

### **Ms. Holly Andrews**

ESL Program Coordinator, World Relief Seattle  
Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.

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Project Manager, Anawim  
Birmingham, England

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Hildenborough, England

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Director, Impel Communications  
Tonbridge, England

### **Mr. Richard Phillips**

CEO, ACET (AIDS Care Education & Training) Ireland  
Dublin, Ireland

### **Mr. Maxim Sinclair**

CEO, Treasures in Heaven Trust  
President and Founder, Christian Vision for Men  
Kent, England

### **Mr. Simon Elliott**

Lead Elder and Pastor  
New Life Church and Jubilee Community Centre  
East Grinstead, England

### **Mr. David Greenslade**

Chartered Accountant (Rtd.)  
Sevenoaks, England