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The John Templeton Foundation awards \$1.3 million to RDI to Secure Land Rights for Poorest of the Poor in India and Indonesia

SEATTLE, WA--The Rural Development Institute (RDI), an international nonprofit organization working to secure land rights for the world's poorest people, recently received a grant of \$1.325 million from the John Templeton Foundation to help combat poverty in two of the world's most populous and impoverished countries—India and Indonesia. RDI's three-year Global Homestead Program will help rural families gain access to a small plot of land on which to build basic shelter, cultivate a home garden to supplement the family diet and income, and provide space for a workshop and/or small livestock.

“Global poverty is largely a rural phenomenon,” said Tim Hanstad, President and CEO of RDI. “Of the 3.4 billion rural people living on less than two dollars a day, the majority live in rural areas.” They depend on the land for their nourishment and livelihood, yet approximately 100 million families have no stake in the land they work.

Some are tenant farmers who pay high rents with little security from season to season, while others are itinerant laborers who depend upon employers for shelter. Many households are headed by women, who in general have significantly less access to and control over productive assets and decision-making at home and in their community. RDI's Global Homesteads Program offers these “poorest of the poor” a hand up, not a handout.

Homestead plots will provide these landless poor with a sustainable, practical source of freedom, opportunity, and entrepreneurial initiative.

Through the groundbreaking program, RDI plans to show that land for the poor can be acquired in a non-confiscatory manner and distributed through a fair, transparent process. RDI also plans to demonstrate that homestead plots are a practical, financially feasible solution for much of the world's deepest poverty as land can be purchased by governments and NGOs on the open market for less than is spent on other development programs. Funding from the John Templeton Foundation will support extensive research, program design and implementation, and strategic communications for the program.

In India alone, 25,000 people die from chronic hunger every day. Based on 38-years of experience, RDI believes ownership of small homestead plots will help reverse this trend. Like the simple idea that catalyzed the global micro-lending movement, “micro-ownership” of homestead plots offers a fundamental shift in thinking about how to get land—the most important source of opportunity—into the hands of the poorest of the poor.

ABOUT RDI

RDI is an international, independent, non-profit organization dedicated to ending mass poverty and hunger among the world's rural poor. RDI works with

governments and NGOs to develop and implement policies, programs and legislation which advance and secure property rights for the poorest of the poor in less-developed countries.

RDI has built a reputation as a leading international authority on land law, policy, and reform issues since its inception in 1981. It is known for generating awareness of rural land issues, diagnosing the systemic causes of rural poverty and conflict, promoting innovative and practical solutions to sensitive land ownership questions, designing market-friendly land reform legislation, and assisting governments as they implement reforms.

Headquartered in Seattle with satellite offices in India, China, Indonesia, and Rwanda, RDI has been working for nearly 40 years, in over 40 countries to help secure land rights for more than 400,000,000 people.

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