



Asia Initiatives

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



help a woman rise



OUR MISSION

The mission of Asia Initiatives (AI) is to leverage the power of social capital to promote healthcare, education and sustainable development, striving to bring positive change in the quality of life of people in underserved communities.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Asia Initiatives is 15, and growing! What has grown, above all, is our conviction in our values:

- All our work is pro-poor, pro-women and pro-environment, a mantra articulated by our mentor Dr. M.S. Swaminathan.
- Abject poverty is unjust, and we have the responsibility to ameliorate it.
- Education, health and skill empowerment, especially for women, are the paths out of poverty.
- We respect the people whose lives we touch through our projects, expanding their choices and opportunities – on their terms.
- We believe in teamwork – with our local partners and the communities we serve.

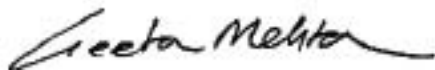
While our values have endured, our actions and methodologies have evolved over time. We started by sending over 3,500 computers to village knowledge centers run by M.S. Swaminathan Foundation (MSSRF) that continue to provide critical information about farm prices and technologies to farm families, as well as to schools in India and the Philippines to help bridge the digital divide. Asia Initiatives' microcredit program funded over 200 microcredit banks in partnership with the MSSRF and other NGOs. Fifteen years of groundwork has now lead to our innovative methodology of SoCCs or Social Capital Credits, a community currency for social good. This program is unique in being fully adaptable to local needs, scalable, and user driven. It provides a framework for women and their families to choose how they can improve their neighborhoods, while getting better healthcare, education and skill empowerment.

We are also progressing towards making our organization more sustainable. While individual support and our fundraising gala continued to fund a large part of our budget, the grant from PepsiCo Foundation helped greatly by supporting our SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) project this year, and we are actively looking for more corporate support. We are also now a SoCCs consultant to our long term partner WomenStrong International, for their project sites in Ghana, Kenya, and Washington DC. We are excited about the possibility of providing this service to other international donor organizations that want to multiply the impact of their development dollars.

Our plans for 2016 include growing the impact of our SoCCs using our online platform SoCCmarket.org. We are also looking to expand our SoCCpreneur program to fund many small businesses that will set aside 5% of their profits to fund the SoCCs program in their communities.

A special AI moment this year was when Kerry Kennedy, our honoree at the 2015 Gala, challenged us to expand our work to remove as much poverty and deprivation as we can in our deeply connected planet. I invite you to join us in doing our very best to do just that.

With much appreciation to all our supporters,



Geeta Mehta





“It is just amazing to learn of your innovative work in Kumasi on SoCCs. This sounds absolutely wonderful, a real breakthrough.”

Jeffrey Sachs
American Economist and Director, Earth
Institute, Columbia University



“A tribute to a good idea is how no one has thought about it before. SoCCs is the best idea I have heard since Muhammad Yunus’ Grameen Bank umpteen years ago. You got yourself a tool. I urge you to pursue it.”

Pedro Sanchez
World Food Prize laureate,
MacArthur Fellow



“The Social Capital Credits program is a proven, powerful tool for advancing toward social justice by acknowledging the honest work of individuals and returning the fruits of that work both to these individuals and their communities.”

Dr. Susan Blaustein
Founder and Executive Director of
WomenStrong International (WSI)



“A system such as SoCCs is a catalyst to the formal economy. It is the precursor to eradicating poverty....it is building hope, self-reliance, self-confidence, spurring entrepreneurship and ultimately creating good citizens.”

Marva Allen
Technology Entrepreneur
Founder, Hue-Man Bookstore and The Power of One

THE LIVES WE TOUCHED

Here are some 2015 SoCC Stars!



Anjalatchi enrolled in the AI's SoCCs Sowbhagya program with M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), earned SoCCs to help in desilting wells and attended training sessions which taught her how to grow better fodder for her cattle. She redeemed her SoCCs to buy a cow which gives her additional income she didn't think was possible.

Aruna Keskar is the mother of two children and a wife of a small farmer in Bori Sinh, India. AI's SoCC program with Save Indian Farmers gave her a part-grant to buy a buffalo. She has nearly doubled her income by selling buffalo milk and dung, and is now confident of being able to feed her children even if the crops fail.

Ghana's Pediatric Society introduced a SoCCs-based small loans program in partnership with WomenStrong International and Women's Health to Wealth for mothers of preterm babies in lower income segments in Kumasi, Ghana. SoCCs allows them to get small loans for their wellbeing based on credits they earn for weekly checkups.

THE LIVES WE TOUCHED

Here are some more 2015 SoCC Stars!



Gitanjali Bhawda, learnt from the AI's SoCCs program in Ahmedabad with Center for Development about the Right to Education Act, which allowed her to enroll in school again. SoCCs encouraged her to actively volunteer in her community, and secure admissions for similar school dropouts. At the AI-sponsored Kadam Resource Center, she is a hardworking student who loves learning.



Margaret Mariga Boyani is part of a SoCC project with Alice Visionary Foundation Project in Kisumu, Kenya, to clean community areas and plant kitchen gardens in the restored space. She redeems SoCCs for school fees and supplies. The 'moringa' plants from the kitchen garden help supplement nutritional needs of her family.



AI Tokyo Board Members Jagmohan Chandrani, Afifah Yamasaki, Pradipta Mullick and Ramachandra Tantry visited many projects AI is supporting in Kolkatta, Delhi and Banglore this December. They also selected some new projects during their visit. All our projects are visited by a member of AI team at least once a year.

ASIA INITIATIVES IMPACT 2015



240

Cattle Loans



50 girls learning
KARATE for self
defense

298

Women got regular
health checkups



Women helped in
community gardens



250

Children given
digital education

Women artisans
incentivized
to produce **350**
embroidery work

350 Adolescent girls
educated on sexual &
reproductive health



Wells desilted

1280 women
practising waste
management



Check dams protect
200 hectares of land

512 women

21 self-help groups

55 safe child births



1500 people partic-
ipated in a pageant
to help restore a river

Social Capital Credits

SoCCs



SoCCs (Social Capital Credits) is an innovative community currency that helps people take charge of developing their own neighborhoods and improving their lives. SoCCs are earned for socially good tasks such as waste management, planting trees, tutoring or mentoring young people, and redeemed for personal benefits such as school fees, healthcare or home improvements.

SOCCs GLOBAL PROJECTS



EDUCATION HEALTH EMPOWERMENT

GHANA
Kumasi, Bantama Market Project with WomenStrong International
Accra, Mangyea Project with African Youth Guild

KENYA
Kisumu, Women's Empowerment Project with WomenStrong International

INDIA
Ahmedabad, Self Employed Women's Association Project with PepsiCo Foundation
Ahmedabad, Adolescent Girls and Women's Empowerment Project with Center for Development
Bori Sinh, Cattle Loans and Check Dams Project with Save Indian Farmers
Delhi, Women's Financial Inclusion Project with Ruaab Self Employed Women's Association
Kolkata, Nurse's Assistant Training Project with Avenue Welfare Society
Madurai, Vaigai Restoration Pageant Project with Dhan Foundation
Madurai, Vagai River Restoration Project with Dhan Foundation
Pune, Girls' Kishori Mandals and Karate Clubs Project with Ashta No Kai
Villupuram and Pudukottai, Well-desilting and Cattle Loans Project with M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation
Vinayagampet, Biovillage Program with M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation



SoCCs Empower Delhi Craftswomen

Ruaab is a garment production company owned and managed by craftswomen from Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Bharat, Delhi.

While Ruaab members have come a long way, many of them do not realize the importance of timely delivery and high-quality when working with global export houses. Most of them lack financial literacy and are not disciplined to send their daughters to school and colleges.

350 Ruaab members are participating in a SoCCs program to deliver garment orders on time, maintain export-quality standards, send their children to school, participate in savings programs, and vaccinate children. They redeem their SoCCs for eyeglasses, LED lights for homes, tutoring services and school tuition.



SoCCs in Bori Sinh Village for Cows and Water

Villagers in the drought-ridden state of Maharashtra, India, earn SoCCs for contributing labor to build check dams, send children to after school classes, get health checkups and attend skill-building sessions. iSoCCs thus earned is redeemed for a partial grant to buy a cow, which adds to the family's income and nutrition.

CommSoCCs is used for building check dams on the nearby canal, which not only ensures access to water after the monsoon season is over, but also raises water tables in the surrounding area. This allows farmers to harvest a second crop such as wheat, thereby increasing crop yield from the same land.



Center for Development, Ahmedabad, India

AI has been working for the past three years with the Center for Development (CfD).

Women earn SoCCs for attending community meetings, submitting required documents to and following up with relevant authorities to gain access to civic services, having safe institutional birth, attending healthcare workshops, ensuring regular health checkups for themselves and their daughters and providing first aid services in the community. SoCCs thus earned are redeemed for travel support, hygiene kits for women and adolescent girls, and mobile talk time.

SoCCs project with PepsiCo Foundation

Our SoCCs project funded by PepsiCo Foundation was launched with local partner SEWA Ahmedabad this December.

The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) - with its membership of 1.7 million in India kickstarted a SoCCs project where SoCCs are earned for waste management, keeping their neighborhoods clean and sending girls to educational and skill empowerment courses. SoCCs are redeemed for groceries (lentils providing much needed protein) and stationery produced by SEWA.



WWGC Grant for Kadam Resource Center

A grant from World Women Global Council (WWGC) and a matching grant from AI enabled Kadam (CfD), our partner in Ahmedabad to form a Resource Center for Girls. Here 20 girls who are either drop-outs from school or are from severely underprivileged families come three days a week to learn math, English and computer skills. These girls earn SoCCs by teaching five other girls ensuring that the whole community benefits from limited resources. Their mothers also earn SoCCs for sending their daughters to the Resource Center, as they forego the household help the girls could give them with the money they earned. They redeem SoCCs in return for math, English, computer classes and traveling expenses for their daughters to come to the Center.

SoCCs helps these girls overcome social and economic barriers to continue their studies, charting bright futures for themselves, their families, and communities.



SoCCs Aboso in Ghana

One of AI's oldest SoCCs programs, in which women gain entry after completion of health screening and joining a women's self-help group. Members earn SoCCs points for undergoing their own health screening, ensuring accurate and timely vaccinations for their children, maintaining a savings account, keeping a clean environment among other activities. SoCCs earned can be spent on accessing a small loan facility, procuring school supplies, skill training classes and career counselling services. The program which began in Bantama Market, Kumasi has been expanded to 3 other communities in Ghana including Adwumakaase Kese in Afigya Kwabre, Krobo in Kwabre East and Twedie in Atwima Kwanwoma.



Kisumu, Kenya's SoCCs project

AI is partnering with Alice Visionary Foundation Project (AVFP) and WomenStrong International (WSI) in a SoCCs program in the Manyatta neighborhood of Kisumu. SoCC members collect and sort garbage, clean up dumping areas and ensure clean neighborhoods. Kitchen gardens, giving the community a much-needed nutritional boost, are planted in the rehabilitated site. With the money earned from kitchen garden the women purchased plastic furniture and started a business to rent this furniture for events. AVFP is now planning to extend the SoCCs program to other areas.



ASIA INITIATIVES ANNUAL GALA 2015

Asia Initiatives used the occasion of its fifteenth anniversary gala to shine the spotlight on the transformative work it has done over the past decade and a half.

Every year, the gala gets just a bit bigger and better, and this year's event was the best yet, as reflected in the number of dedicated friends who graciously joined us October 12 in an elegant suite at the New York Athletic Club.



ASIA INITIATIVES ANNUAL GALA 2015

This year's honorees were Ms. Kerry Kennedy, who received the M. S. Swaminathan Human Rights Award and Dr. Nirmal Mattoo who received the M.S. Swaminathan Changemaker Award. Dr. Susan Blaustein interviewed the honorees and Dr. Eva Haller presented the awards.

The awards are named after the renowned agricultural scientist and humanitarian, M.S. Swaminathan also known as the "father of India's green revolution". He was named by TIME as one of the 20 most influential leaders of 20th Century along with Mahatma Gandhi, Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh.



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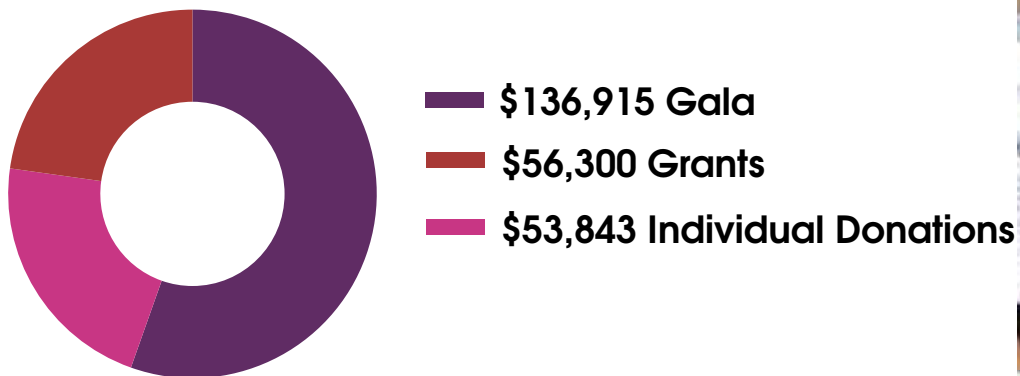


FINANCIAL STATEMENT

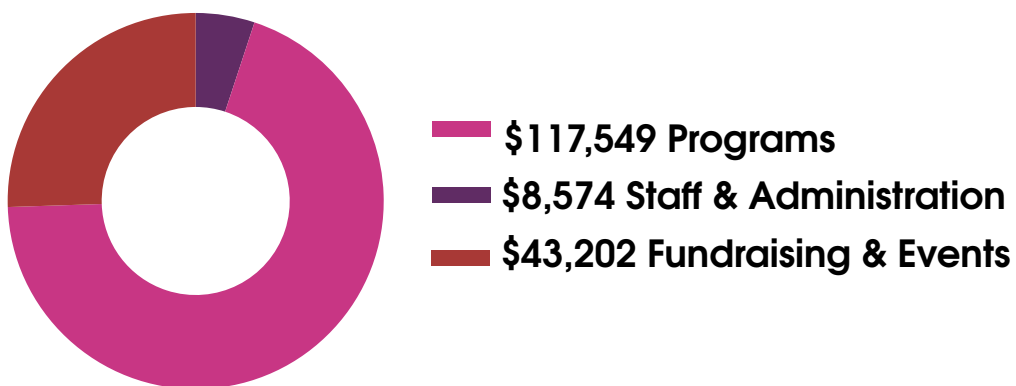
TOTAL INCOME



2015 INCOME SOURCES



2015 EXPENDITURE



NETWORK & PARTNERS

Field Partners

WomenStrong International, Washington D.C
Alice Visionary Foundation Project, Kisumu, Kenya
Women's Health to Wealth, Kumasi, Ghana
Bread for the City, Washington D.C
M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Chennai
SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association), Ahmedabad
Ruuab SEWA Delhi Trust, Delhi
Dhan Foundation, Madurai
Center for Development, Ahmedabad
Oxigen, Delhi
Ashta No Kai, Pune
Save Indian Farmers, Maharashtra
African Youth Guild, Accra, Ghana
Dharavimarket, Mumbai
SCSTEDS, Chennai

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