

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

di asia
initiatives®



Our mission

To empower under-served communities by leveraging the power of their social capital to promote better livelihoods, education, healthcare, and sustainable development.



From our president



Dear Friends of Asia Initiatives,

"There was never a night or a problem that could defeat sunrise or hope."— Bernard Williams

While we all hope that Covid-19 will be behind us soon, I am pleased to report that 2021 was Asia Initiatives' biggest year yet, in terms of the number of people we could serve and the level of support we were able to provide. Thanks to our many, generous supporters who stepped up their funding to provide a safety net for communities and strengthen their social capital, as they dealt with the pandemic, climate events, and the resultant financial shocks.

One highlight of this year was receiving the coveted **Jacobs Foundation Conference Grand Innovation Prize**, which helped us expand our **Cascade of Learning** program teaching young people employable skills in Lucknow, Odisha, and Yavatmal. Our girls in Lucknow held their first-ever Technology Fair inspired by our partner **KidsWhoCode**. Girls also learned life skills and health modules in the girls clubs organized by our partner **Global G.L.O.W.** We are grateful to our many volunteers who held Zoom classes for our children and also taught computer skills and financial literacy to formerly incarcerated women in **New York**. We supported **Covid-19 Care Centers** in Yavatmal, Bundelkhand, and Darjeeling in the lower Himalayas. Awareness campaigns were held across 154 villages that also provided testing, vaccinations, food kits, masks, hygiene supplies, and hand sanitizers across our programs.

We also launched our new **Cascades of Up-skilling** initiative this year. An example of this is in Maharashtra where women farmers learning the improved SRI (System of Rice Intensification) method and will teach other women farmers, who will then teach others. **Our Nutrition Gardens** in India and Kenya, partially supported by our partner **FrauenPower** are examples of the sustainable livelihood and environmental sustainability initiative. Our newly established **Maker Labs** are enabling young people from under-served areas to transform their innovative ideas into marketable products. Volunteer architects and urban designers in our team helped conduct a user survey at the **New York City Housing Authority** project, and designed **housing for migrant workers** in Maharashtra.

We were thrilled to be selected for the **Ernst and Young Ripples** program, through which we received three months of intensive mentoring from two wonderful professionals in preparing our strategic plan. Our Gala had to be online this year also. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon was our chief guest again this year, and conferred the **5th Annual Ban Ki-moon Award for Women's Empowerment** on Dr. Paul Polman and Dr. Lee Bae-yong.

All our work is made possible through our partnerships with local NGOs, the hard work and resilience of the people we serve, our staff, and the generosity of our donors.

With my deep gratitude to all for this wonderful support,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geeta Mehta". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Geeta Mehta

Our impact in 2021



2021 Annual Asia Initiatives Gala



“During my tenure as Secretary-General, I always worked to make women’s empowerment a top priority, and I can see that Asia Initiatives is carrying on that legacy.”

—Ban Ki-moon, Eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations



Dr. Paul Polman,
Gala Honoree 2021



Dr. Lee Bae-yong,
Gala Honoree 2021



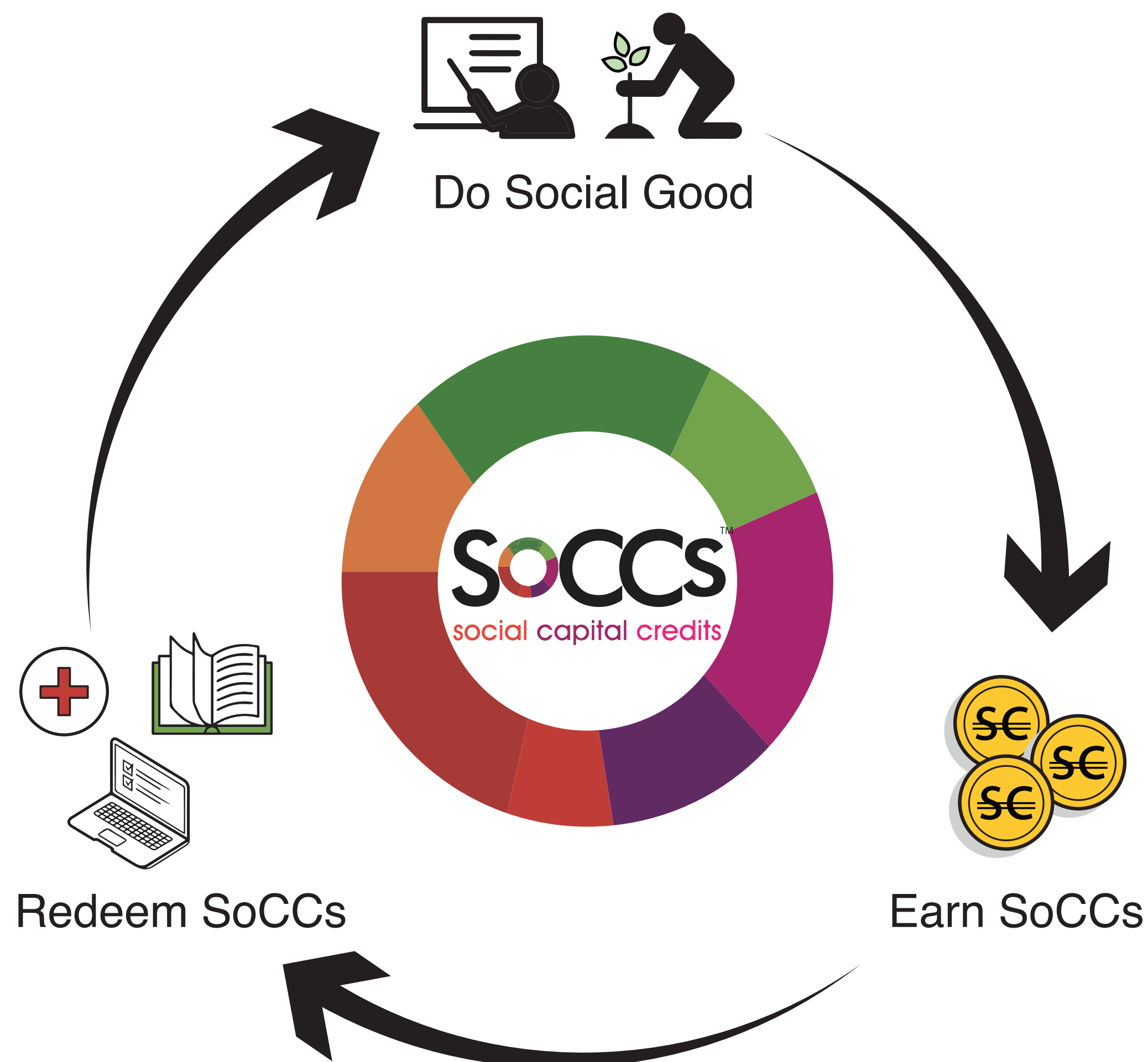
Ricky Kej,
AI Goodwill Ambassador



Natalie Nascenzi,
Gala MC

Social Capital Credits

Our community currency for social good



SoCCs (Social Capital Credits) is an award winning community currency created by Asia Initiatives that helps people take charge of developing their own communities and improving their lives. SoCCs are earned for performing acts of social good, such as waste management, planting trees, rainwater harvesting, and tutoring or mentoring youth.

SoCCs can be redeemed for critical resources like very low interest micro-credit, digital and financial skills training, healthcare and livelihood support. Since 2015, SoCCs have been implemented successfully in over 26 sites across India, Ghana, Kenya and the United States.

SoCCs Are ONLINE!

social capital credits

We welcome you to join our SoCCs community

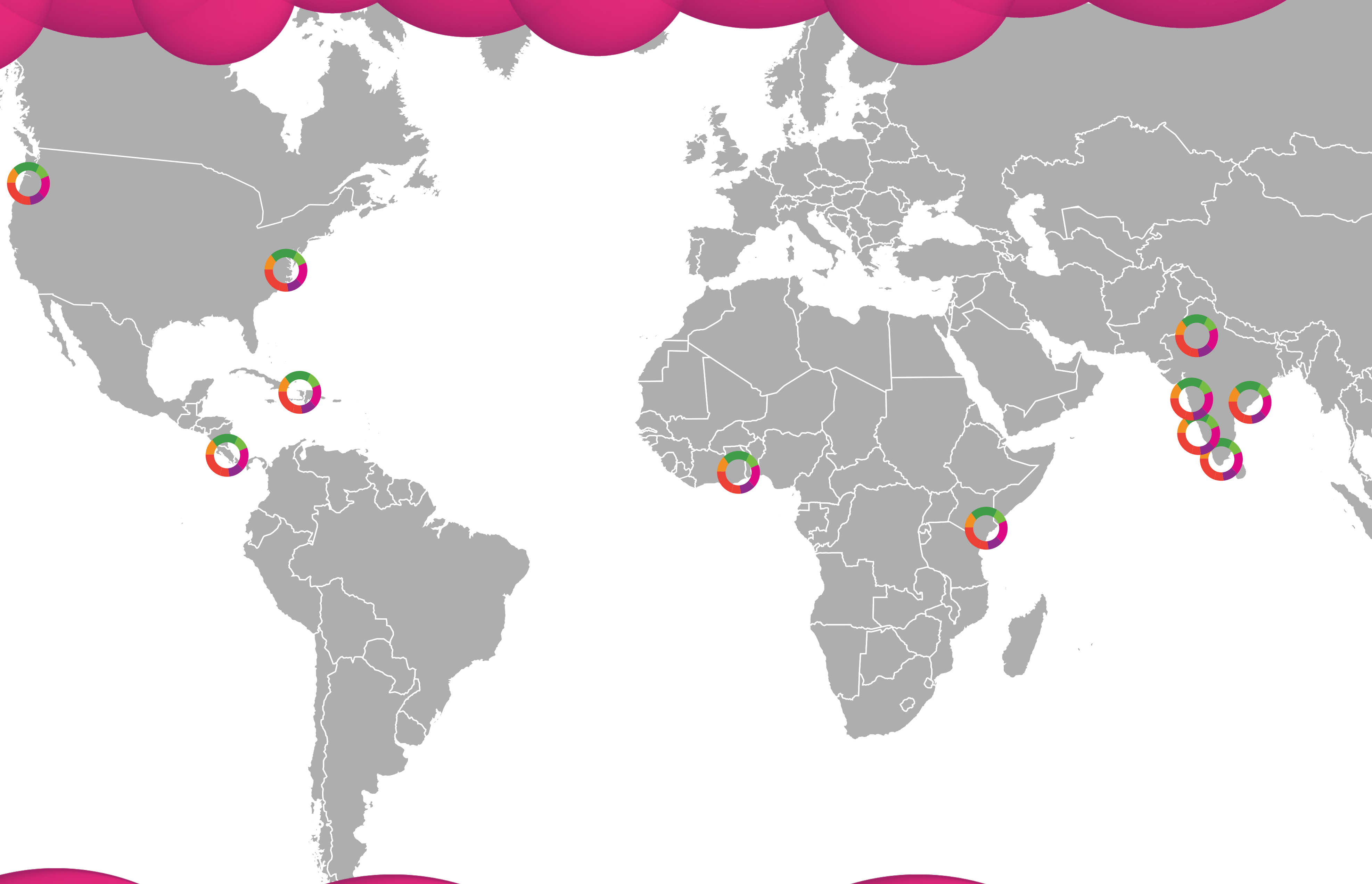
Click [**HERE**](#) to register on the SoCCs web platform.



The SoCCs App and Platform facilitates all steps of the SoCCs process.

SoCCratic dialogues help our communities develop their own SoCC Earning and Redeeming menus. SoCC data collection methods range from completely online to hybrid versions. This data is carefully analyzed to ensure that communities are making progress towards the goals they have set, or to make modifications in the nature or number of activities. It also allows our key funders to get transparent reports on how their donations have a multiplier effect with SoCCs.

SoCCs Projects & Recognition



**JACOB'S
FOUNDATION**

CONFERENCE GRAND
INNOVATION PRIZE 2021

EY

Asia Initiatives was selected for the **EY Ripples** program and received 3 months of consulting help for our Strategic Plan.



**Vodafone
Americas
Foundation**



**WORLD
CHANGING
IDEAS 2020**

Initiatives & Projects

Poverty is a result of an interlocking set of circumstances. So Asia Initiatives projects take a multifaceted approach for sustainable development.



**Education &
Technology
Initiative**



**Micro Credit
and Livelihood
Initiative**



**Environmental
Sustainability
Initiative**

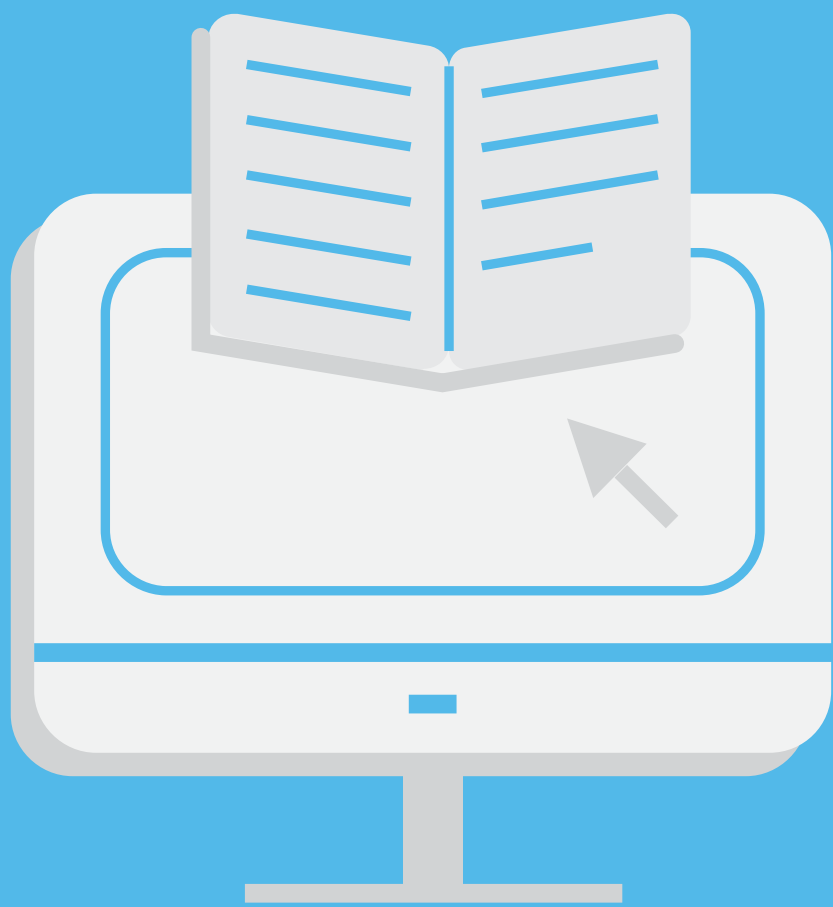


**Health
Initiative**



**Community
Initiative**

EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE



Technology has become synonymous with opportunity. Our digitally linked Learning Centers provide under-served communities access to cutting edge educational and digital learning opportunities that lead to better livelihoods.

CASCADES OF LEARNING: Computer Skills For Adolescents From Underserved Communities

Location: Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Maharashtra, India

Partner: Shohratgarh Environmental Society, Voluntary Integration for Education and Welfare of Society, Deendayal BahuUddeshiya Prasarak Mandal

Knowledge partner: Kids Who Kode

Funding partner: FrauenPower

Through our Cascades of Learning program, Asia Initiatives is transforming digital learning by incentivizing peer-to-peer mentoring. Adolescents tutor two children 3 years or more younger, to earn SoCCs (Social Capital Credits) that they redeem for courses designed by Kids Who Kode in AI funded Learning Centers. Through these trainings, the girls are developing job readiness skills.



CASCADES OF LEARNING: Zoom SoCCs Buddies

Location: Lucknow, Odisha and Yavatmal, India

Partners: Shohratgarh Environmental Society, Voluntary Integration for Education and Welfare of Society, Deendayal BahuUddeshiya Prasarak Mandal

Over 200 youth across our educational programs have been receiving tutoring on spoken English and other subjects through our interactive “SoCCs Buddies” program since 2020. This was especially helpful when children could not attend school due to the lockdowns. Our wonderful volunteers from all over the world conduct sessions using material designed by our education advisors and the Center for Living City. Students are also developing critical thinking skills through this program.



CASCADES OF LEARNING: Design Thinking and Entrepreneurship Training Through Maker Labs

Location: Rajasthan, India

Partner: Mantra Social Services, Vidhyalay Udhyam

The 5 Maker Labs supported by Asia Initiatives are currently serving 500 young children from vulnerable socioeconomic groups who are at great risk of being forced into child labor. SoCCs are earned by each participant by peer-mentoring 2 younger children, and redeemed to attend Maker Labs, where they learn design thinking, entrepreneurship and get seed grants to develop prototypes for their innovations. Solar powered phone chargers for farmers and touch free hand sanitizer dispensers are just some of the exciting innovations emerging from this program!



MICRO CREDIT & LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVE



Women in Asia Initiatives projects are using the SoCCs program to secure low-interest loans to develop or expand their businesses, ensuring financial security for their families whilst advancing their sense of confidence and personal empowerment.

Tribal Microcredit Cooperative

Location: Maharashtra, India

Partners: Shramjivi Janata Sahayyak Mandal (SJSM)

This program helped the tribal community in remote areas of the Western Ghats region form a microcredit cooperative with 2353 members with the help of our local partner SJSM. The cooperative provides low-interest loans to support education, livelihood and food security among the indigenous populations. The program had a 97% loan recovery rate. SoCCs are redeemed for low-interest micro-credit from the cooperative and livelihood activities such as poultry and fishing. SoCCs were also used to incentivize COVID-19 vaccination and regular participation in cleanliness and sanitation drives.



Low-Interest Micro-Credit Loans for Sustainable Livelihoods

Location: Bundelkhand, India

Partners: Parmarth Samaj Sewi Sansthan

Funding Partner: Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation

This program is helping 200 female farmers launch micro dairy farming enterprises. The women earn SoCCs by attending monthly meetings and managing waste in their neighborhoods. They redeem SoCCs for low-interest micro-credit, veterinary support to purchase and rear goats, and insurance. Women also meet with agriculture department representatives, form linkages with government-sponsored schemes, and attend goat health camps. Despite immense challenges resulting from the second wave of COVID-19, this program provided a safety net to many families during multiple lockdowns and in the absence of regular income.



Job Readiness for Formerly Incarcerated and First Generation Immigrants Women

Location: New York City

Partner: HOUR Working Women

Funding Partner: PricewaterhouseCoopers

This program includes formerly incarcerated individuals and first-generation immigrants. Participants earn SoCCs for office and boutique upkeep, language support and tutoring to others, computer help, and cooking for new arrivals and their families. Participants redeem SoCCs for computer and financial literacy classes to acquire job readiness skills.



THE ZURI INITIATIVE: Sustainable Beauty Products

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

Partner: The Zuri Initiative; FrauenPower

Zuri Women's Empowerment Program (2020 – 21) provided training on technical, marketing and entrepreneurial skills for women to work as sales agents for the Zuri Hair Products. These are organic products created especially for black hair, and sold on commission basis. Having learned leadership skills, several participants of the program also supported Covid awareness campaigns for their communities.



THE ZURI INITIATIVE: Vertical Kitchen Gardens

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

Partner: The Zuri Initiative; FrauenPower

This project helped women in the informal settlements of Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya, one of the largest informal communities in the world. Over 100 women earned SoCCs for planting native trees in their community spaces, segregating, and managing their waste. SoCCs were redeemed for vertical nutrition garden kits. By growing spinach and other leafy vegetables, they strengthened the nutritional security of their families. There were many challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the women came together to help each other through this initiative.



Organic Nutrition Gardens

Location: Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Chhatisgarh, India

Partners: VIEWS (Voluntary Integration for Education and Welfare of Society), Deendayal BahuUddeshiya Prasarak Mandal, Samanta Foundation, Mata Balak Utkarsha Pratishthan, and Savera Foundation

Funding Partner (Partial): FrauenPower

The AI-supported Organic Kitchen Garden program helped ensure food security and improved incomes for rural communities. We also incentivized forest fringe communities to restore the local ecosystem upon which they are dependent. Participants earn SoCCs by planting fruit trees, preparing and throwing seed balls for forest restoration, waste management and activating village-level women-led institutions. Participants redeem SoCCs for vegetable seeds, inputs, equipment, horticulture training, and marketing assistance. The 2000 Organic Kitchen Gardens created within the villages proved very helpful during Covid-19 when many families lost other sources of income. Women who excelled at this program are now teaching others.



Seedless Lemon Tree Plantation Agro-business

Location: Assam, India

Partners: Sankalptaru Foundation

AI is supporting a seedless lemon tree planting program to empower 200 small female farmers in Assam, India. Women earn SoCCs by segregating waste, contributing to organic compost, and engaging in community waste management activities. They redeem SoCCs for seedless lemon tree saplings, training on the care and management of seedless lemon trees, and marketing assistance. The trees bear fruit in 3-5 years, after which there is a significant income increase over the next decade or more.



Organic Farming For Income Generation in Drought-Prone Regions

Location: Maharashtra, India

Partner: Deendayal Bahuudeshiya Prasarak Mandal

This project helped 800 women farmers earn an income and become self-reliant by building nutrition gardens using low-cost farming techniques and nature-adapted solutions. Women earned SoCCs by planting native trees, installing bird perches in their agroecosystems, preparing herbal inputs for improved yields, and setting aside funds for monthly savings. They redeemed SoCCs for regular training from experts, and also reproductive health and hygiene products. Women were proud to become earning members of their household, and enhance food security for their families.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE



SoCCs promote economic and environmental sustainability in communities through improved farming techniques, water conservation, reforestation and waste management.

Cascade of Up-skilling: System of Rice Intensification

Location: Maharashtra, India

Partner: Dilasa Janvikas Pratishthan

This project is helping 550 women farmers in the Konkan region adopt the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) to increase yields and provide multiple nature-based benefits for the local ecosystem. Women earn SoCCs by installing improved cooking stoves to reduce firewood use and smoke, setting up bird-perches and homemade sticky traps on their farms, and making bunds for water conservation in the fields. They redeem SoCCs for local variety rice seeds, inputs such as Cono Weeders, which frees them from having to bend over paddy for hours. They will also earn SoCCs for training 1100 other farmers in SRI techniques.



Rejuvenation of Traditional Watershed Structures

Location: Jharkhand, India

Partners: Savera Foundation

This project is ensuring water security and sustainable livelihood opportunities for 500 households in rural panchayats by reviving traditional watershed structures. The project is also helping to restore the vegetative cover in the area, which in turn enhances water and food security and improves livelihoods by integrated and sustainable watershed management. Participants earn SoCCs by participating in the work, and redeem SoCCs for various items on their SoCCs Redeeming menu.



HEALTH INITIATIVE



Participants learn ways to improve their health and hygiene in the health camps we organize. Women and girls also learn about reproductive healthcare choices and resources.

COVID 19 RESILIENCE PROGRAM: Covid-19 Care Centers as Alternatives to Inaccessible Hospitals

Location: Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and North Bengal, India

Partner: Deendeyal Bahuudeshiya Prasarak Mandal, Shramajivi Janata Sahayyak Mandal, Darjeeling Jesuits, and Samanta Foundation

AI supported a rapid response initiative during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic that gripped India early in 2021. AI-funded education centers were converted into isolation facilities and supported with qualified doctors and nurses. Awareness camps, safety kits, medicines, blood and plasma donation drives, free ambulance services, and outpatient clinics were also established by our local partners. AI helped distribute over 1,000 grocery packages to low-income families and help them establish kitchen gardens for food security during lockdowns. We also organized care centers for children who lost both parents to COVID-19. We will support their education until age 18.



Empowering Women through Health, Education and Training Support

Location: Uttarakhand, India

Partner: Samanta Foundation

Funding Partner (Partial): Women's Rehabilitation Group, NJ

This project supported healthcare, education, and empowerment of over 200 Van Gujjar tribal women living on the outskirts of Rajaji National Park. The Van Gujjar women, who did not have access to formal education opportunities, earn SoCCs by sending their children to school, documenting traditional practices, planting trees, and creating traditional beaded jewelry. Women redeem SoCCs for reproductive health and hygiene products, training on tailoring, and sewing machines for their hamlets. The women also established kitchen gardens as part of AI's COVID resilience effort.



COMMUNITY INITIATIVE



This initiative encourages people in rural and urban communities to actively participate in improving their neighborhoods.

Movable Housing Design For Migrant Laborers

Location: Mahad, India

Partners: Shramjivi Janata Sahayyak Mandal (SJSM)

Tribal workers migrate for about 6-month periods to work in brick kilns and agricultural farms. Consequently, they require a versatile shelter that can travel with them. In collaboration with SJSM, AI's volunteer architects designed a portable model for the Katkari Tribe in the Mahad area. The design consists of four telescopic columns and a corresponding truss system that is versatile and easy to assemble and dismantle. Once erected, this metal structure can accommodate a roof and walls made of indigenous materials. This degree of customization also enables the users to express their rich cultural identity and claim ownership of their space.



Jefferson Houses User Survey to Improve Public Spaces

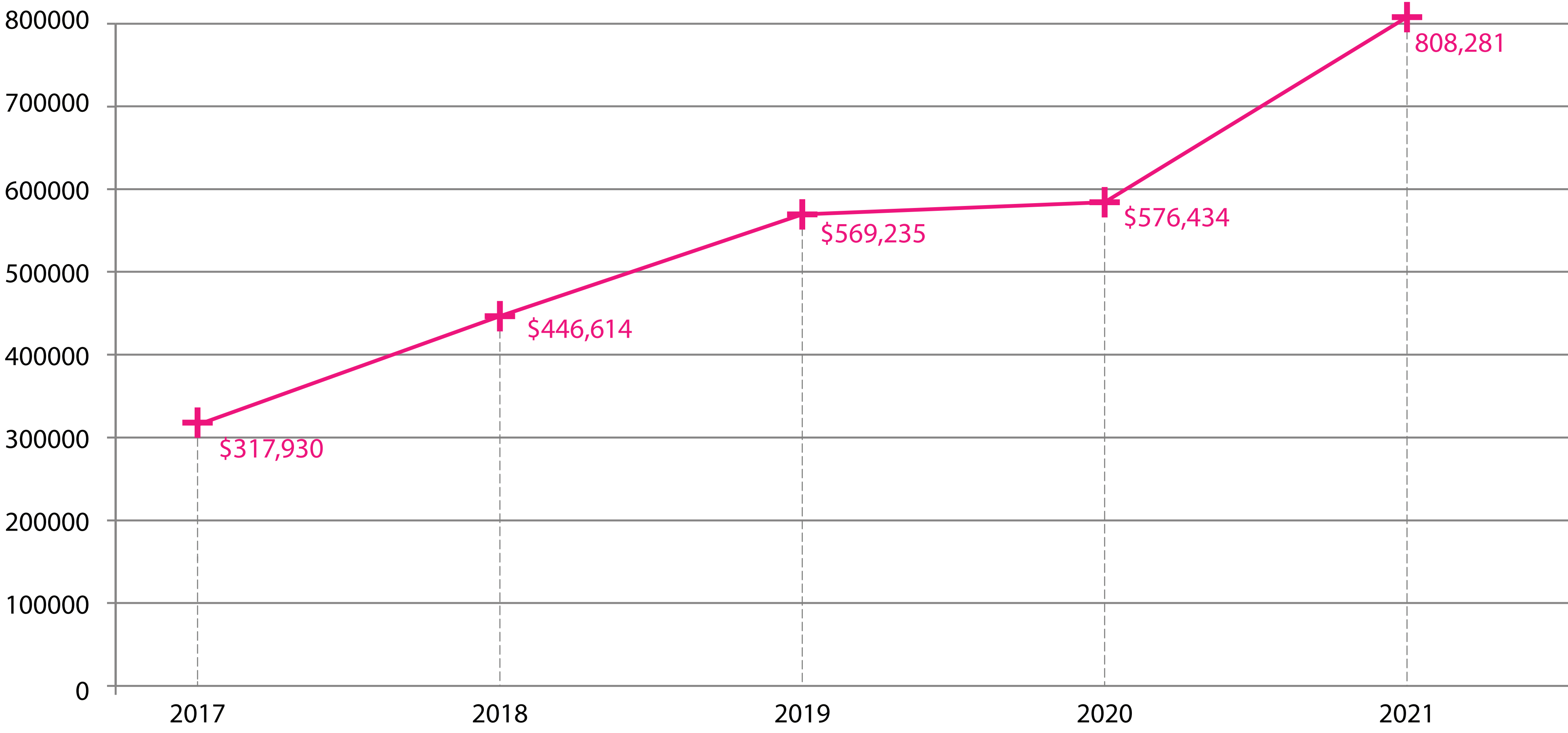
Location: New York City

Partners: American Institute of Architects (AIA) New York and New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)

AI joined a design team to develop a community engagement process to re-imagine the future of public outdoor spaces at NYCHA Jefferson Houses when the City of New York allocated a \$3 million budget for this endeavor. The goal was to provide a replicable community engagement model that would inspire other volunteer design teams to partner with NYCHA to engage with volunteer design teams and residents communities.



Financial Statement



2021 Revenue
Net Revenue: \$808,281

- 47% Gala Donations
- 24% General Donations
- 28% Grants
- 1% Art Sales and Other Revenue

2020 Expenditure
Total: \$523,971

- Programming: \$464,062
- Admin/Office Expenses/Management: \$59,909

Thank you to our 2021 supporters

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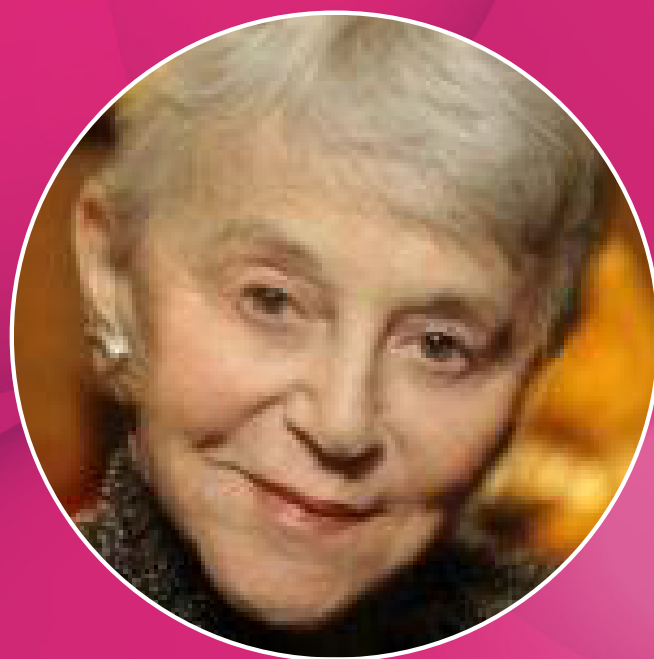
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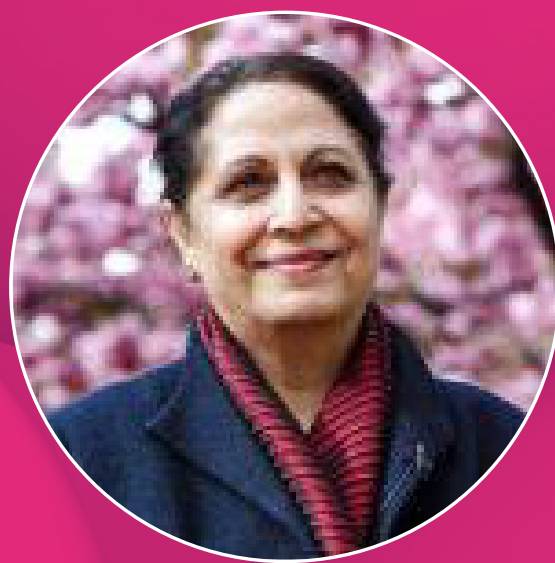
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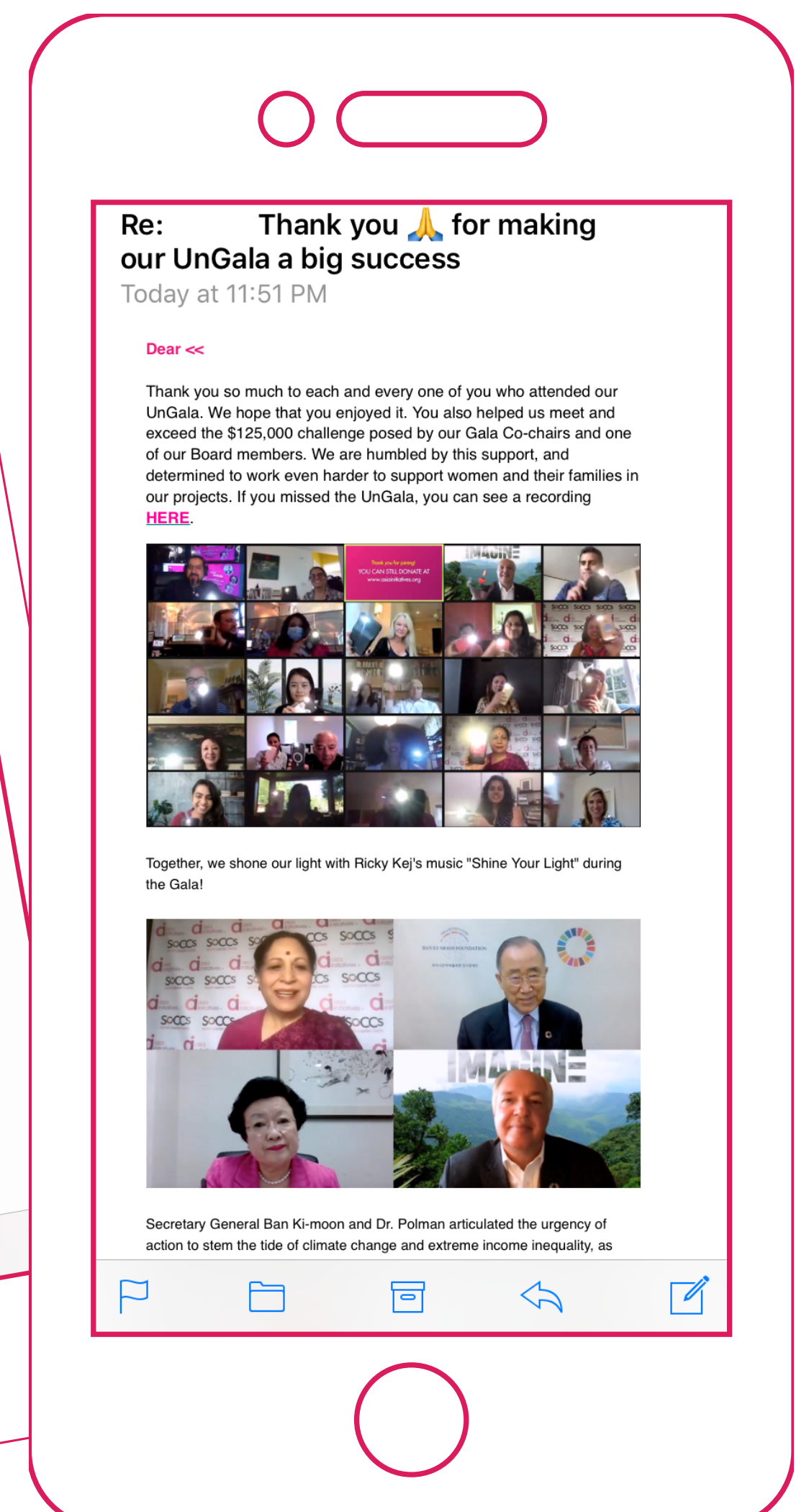
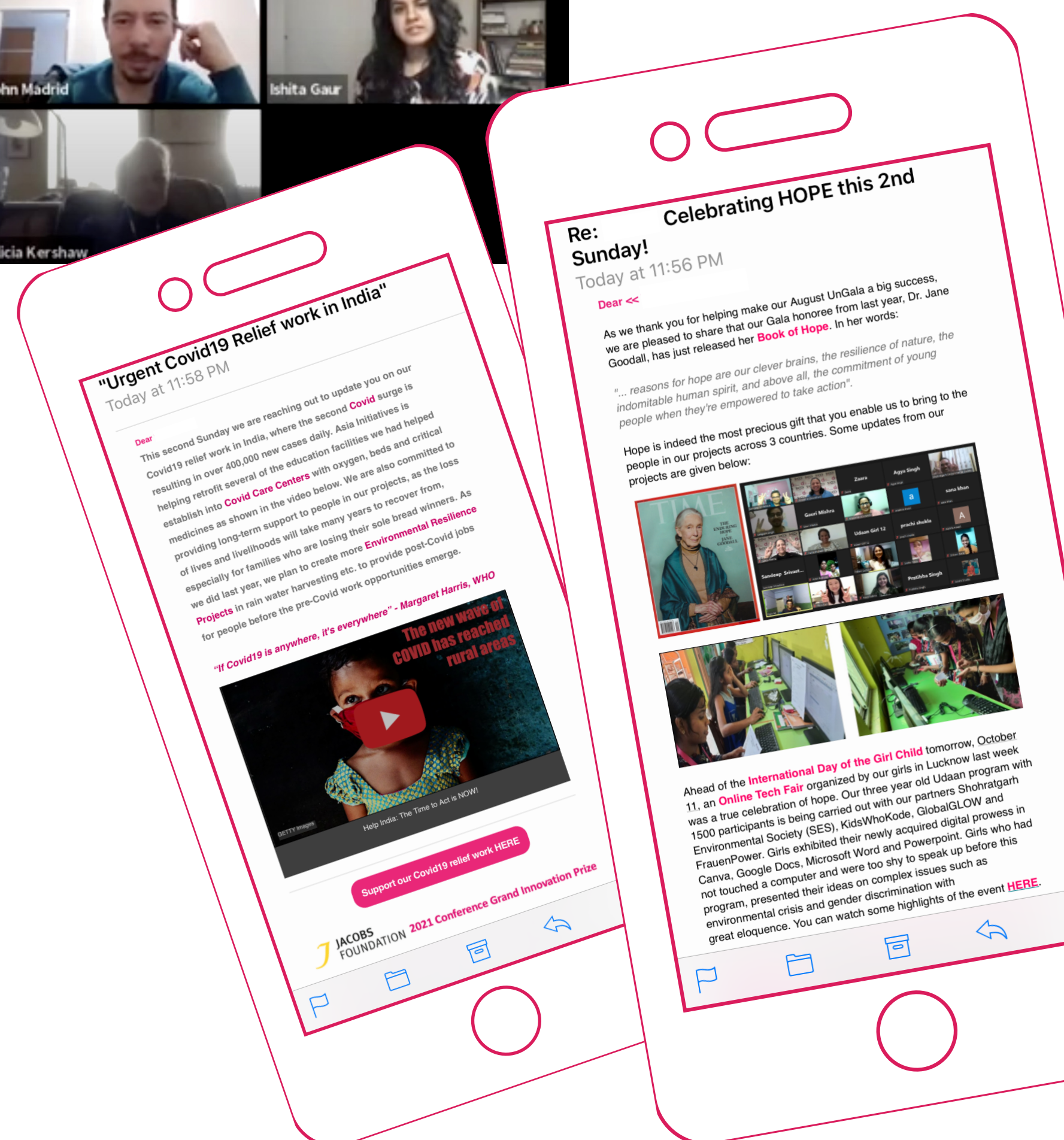
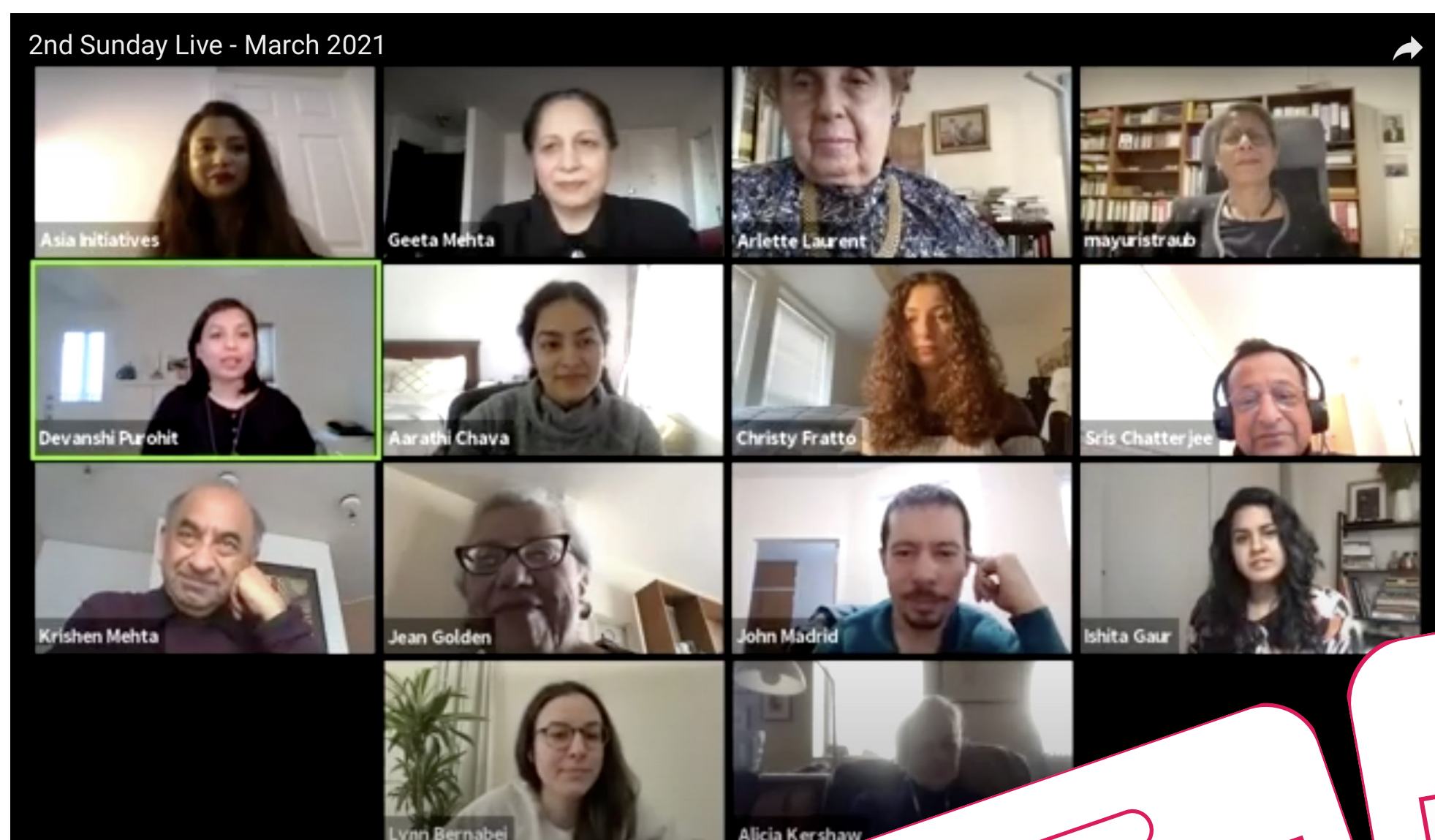
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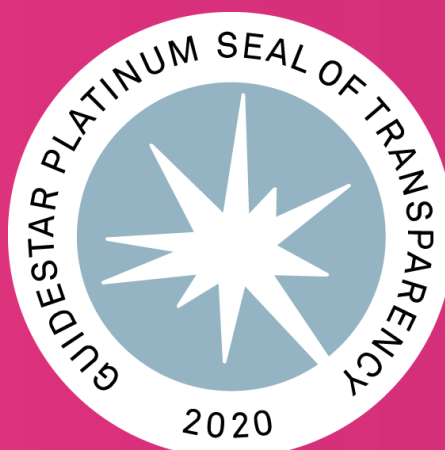
Second Sunday Communications

Our Second Sunday Newsletters kept our members informed of our work and events. We also held Zoom meetings with our members and local partners to speak directly with each other.





Asia Initiatives has special consultative
status with the Economic and Social Council
(ECOSOC) of the United Nations



Asia Initiatives has received the GuideStar
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