


The Swiss Re Foundation
in 2017

Voices for change




Archana Sinha
of Ashoka India
on how
kids can help
fight malnutrition

page 4



Focus Report by Ashoka India

Since 2011, the Swiss Re Foundation has worked with Ashoka, a pioneer in social entrepreneurship, on how to improve nutrition in rural India. With support from local entrepreneurs, schools and governments, the Nourishing School programme engages 9- to 14-year-olds in activities that encourage people of all ages to grow, prepare and eat healthy foods. It began in Assam and Maharashtra (pictured here) and will soon reach children in more than 400 schools across several Indian states.



**“Together we’re
working toward a
world where everyone
is well nourished
and able to be a
changemaker.”**

Archana Sinha

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

We created the Swiss Re Foundation with the objective of empowering communities to build resilience. One important way in which the Foundation works towards this goal is through capacity building, or helping communities develop skills to improve their conditions of living. Another is by funding research and innovation, that is, efforts to develop fresh perspectives on risk management or poverty reduction which make pioneering solutions possible. This year's report on the Swiss Re Foundation's activities showcases two initiatives that illustrate the power of these different approaches.

We have invited a Foundation partner to narrate the Focus Report. In her story, Archana Sinha of Ashoka, the world's largest network of social entrepreneurs, takes you on a journey to rural India. Since 2011 the Swiss Re Foundation has worked with Ashoka India and its partners to tackle endemic malnutrition by developing and implementing a programme called Nourishing Schools, which teaches children the importance of healthy food and empowers them as changemakers in their communities. In recounting her travels, Archana Sinha highlights the progress and challenges of this innovative effort to improve public health through a combination of education, agriculture and nutrition.

You'll find much food for thought in our interview with Esther Duflo, Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She argues that real-world experiments based on behavioral research can make development aid more effective. Understanding how people make economic decisions can help policymakers direct funds to programmes that have the biggest impact on people's lives. It seems fitting that the interview took place at the Zurich Center for Economic Development at the University of Zurich, which the Foundation helped establish in 2016. I am convinced that supporting academic research and enabling tangible projects like Nourishing Schools are equally necessary to effect change.

Let me conclude by thanking our partners, the Swiss Re employees whose voluntary engagement we count on and the Foundation team. Together they're making a difference.



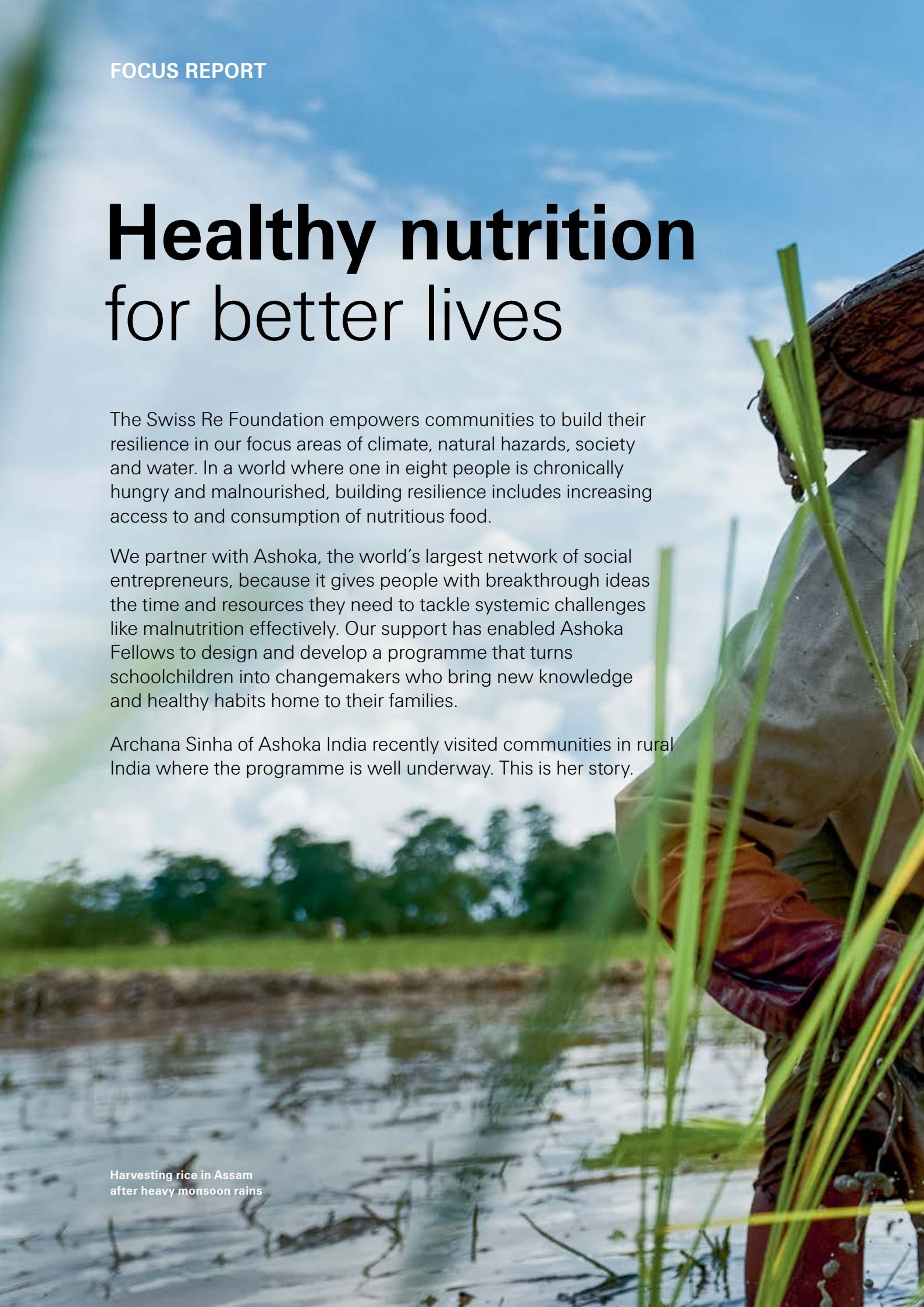
Walter B. Kielholz
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Swiss Re Foundation

Healthy nutrition for better lives

The Swiss Re Foundation empowers communities to build their resilience in our focus areas of climate, natural hazards, society and water. In a world where one in eight people is chronically hungry and malnourished, building resilience includes increasing access to and consumption of nutritious food.

We partner with Ashoka, the world's largest network of social entrepreneurs, because it gives people with breakthrough ideas the time and resources they need to tackle systemic challenges like malnutrition effectively. Our support has enabled Ashoka Fellows to design and develop a programme that turns schoolchildren into changemakers who bring new knowledge and healthy habits home to their families.

Archana Sinha of Ashoka India recently visited communities in rural India where the programme is well underway. This is her story.





FOCUS REPORT

My name is Archana Sinha. Growing up in Delhi, I loved writing, so my first career was journalism. I discovered the world-changing potential of social entrepreneurship from meeting Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank. That experience ultimately inspired me to join Ashoka, a pioneer in advancing entrepreneurial solutions to pressing social problems, where I now lead the Health and Nutrition Initiative in India.

Last August I travelled to the states of Maharashtra and Assam. My mission was to meet with some of the social enterprise partners, schools and government officials with whom we're implementing a programme called Nourishing Schools. At each stop, we discussed the progress made so far and where to take the programme next.

Packing my bag, I thought back to how Nourishing Schools began in 2011 – with a partnership between Ashoka and the Swiss Re Foundation.

Getting a grip on the problem

At first, we and the Foundation planned to elect Ashoka Fellows who would introduce system-changing innovations in India's healthcare sector, first piloting and then replicating their ideas.

Soon, however, we agreed to sharpen our focus to increase the potential for impact.

So, we engaged more than 60 leading institutions and entrepreneurs across India to help us identify and define principles for transforming a complex sector like healthcare. Along the way, we realised that a focus on controlling and preventing disease has too often resulted in a definition of health as absence of illness rather than presence of wellness. Even as mortality and other illness indicators have dropped, many people in India remain undernourished – a health crisis in itself.

This groundwork made it clear that by improving nutrition as a precondition for health, we could start shifting the dialogue toward promoting wellness and resilience to disease. It also highlighted the challenges we would face in addressing malnutrition in India: a dearth of timely, in-depth government data, a lack of collaboration between stakeholders across sectors and inadequate monitoring of the impacts of specific interventions.

We began by surveying pregnant women and young mothers in more than 2 100 households in Karnataka and Odisha to understand the gaps in existing efforts to improve nutrition in rural and semi-rural communities. Then we met with the Swiss Re Foundation and Ashoka Fellows to present the results, which highlighted that our task would need to include promoting behaviour change as well as providing information. Across income levels, 97% of the women surveyed knew, for example, that millets are more nutritious than rice, but were 26% less likely to consume them. Finally, together we brainstormed interventions that would tackle the problem of undernutrition and bring about lasting change.

Seeds of a solution

Thus was born Ashoka's Nourishing Schools programme, which we designed to empower children between nine and 14 years old to improve both their own and their communities' nutrition. Children of this age are ideal changemakers because they are still receptive to new habits and ideas and will shape the future of their communities. We decided to focus on schools because they are the best place to reach this age group and to work across sectors to promote nourishment and vitality.

We wanted to boost the demand for nutritious foods as well as the supply.



Above: **Archana heads to her next location by taxi**

Top right: **Street scene in Assam**



Together with several Ashoka Fellows, we developed the Nourishing Schools “toolkit”. This is a holistic set of interventions that schools can use to ensure that children acquire knowledge, skills and habits that improve nutrition in their families and communities, such as games that teach which foods are healthy and a meal preparation manual for school kitchens. The interventions are also

intended to strengthen the links between education, agriculture and nutrition by helping communities raise their incomes and cultivate more nutritious foods.

In other words, we wanted to boost the demand for nutritious foods as well as the supply. This became the focus of our partnership with the Swiss Re Foundation.

WHY ASHOKA?

Healthy nutrition is a prerequisite for a thriving society and depends, in turn, on climate resilience – both areas of focus for the Swiss Re Foundation. We chose to team up with Ashoka to improve nutrition because of its pioneering work in social entrepreneurship. Since 1980, it has provided over 3 000 Ashoka Fellows – men and women with ground-breaking solutions for the world’s most urgent social problems – with living stipends, professional support services and connections to its global network. It is this network of Fellows that Ashoka leverages to co-create and implement programmes in any sector. Ashoka has collaborated with the Swiss Re Foundation on the Health and Nutrition Initiative since 2011.

FOCUS REPORT



Interactive activities and clever recipes make learning about and eating healthy foods more appealing to kids. The Swiss Re Foundation has supported the programme from its beginnings.



The journey begins

Almost seven years later, it's amazing to think that Nourishing Schools is already reaching more than 35 000 children in 154 schools in India. I'm excited about visiting some of these schools and entrepreneurs who have contributed to the programme's implementation.

I begin where we started, in the state of Maharashtra with Ashoka Fellow Sunanda Mane. Her organisation, Lend-A-Hand India, works to bridge the gap between education in secondary schools and real-life skills required in rural India. It enlists local micro-entrepreneurs such as farmers and welders as role models and vocational instructors to teach students practical business skills. The model was recently included in the Central Government's National Skill Qualification Framework, which took it from Maharashtra to over 10 other states in India. Thanks to an early commitment from Sunanda, 14 schools from Lend-A-Hand India's network were the first to pilot Nourishing Schools.

We are on our way to visit the headmaster of one of those schools, the government-aided Gyansanvardhini School in Satara, Maharashtra. Teachers and parents there were alarmed by the high rate of junk food consumption revealed by our baseline survey of children at the school, 49% of whom reported eating snacks outside school once a week.

Even before it launched our toolkit, this school set up a canteen under the leadership of Vandana P., a teacher trained on Lend-A-Hand India's vocational skills curriculum. The canteen serves healthy snacks made from ingredients such as peanuts, dates and a natural sweetener called jaggery. The school also has a terrace garden that the children cultivate as part of the same curriculum. In a more recent survey by Ashoka, only 22% of kids at the school reported eating snacks outside school once a week. It's satisfying to see not only that the kids now have better access to nutritious food, but that they're actually eating it!



The next day, I visit a private school in Satara, the Parents' Association School, which has installed an additional hand-washing station. Our baseline survey in Maharashtra schools found that children who don't wash their hands with soap and water after using the toilet were eight times more likely to get diarrhoea than children who do. At baseline, only 5% of children in this school reported washing their hands with soap and water. In a survey one year later, 100% did – a remarkable improvement!



WHAT'S INSIDE THE TOOLKIT?

The Nourishing Schools toolkit helps schools track and promote nutrition in their students and communities. Local partners monitor and guide schools on its use, while schools give feedback and suggestions on how to improve it. Only schools that show consistent implementation and significant progress on measured outcomes are recognised as Nourishing Schools. The toolkit's contents include:

Survey app

developed by Ashoka, and a tablet on which to run it, to collect data from each school at baseline and every year thereafter. The survey asks about nutrition, hand-washing, sanitation, diseases, academics and attributes of the school.

Nutrition manual

for teachers that highlights strategies for improving nutrition through the school's existing curriculum in a fun, interactive way.

How-to guide

with games that make nutritious foods more appealing to kids and other hands-on activities, such as a do-it-yourself soap-making kit.

Food preparation manual

for midday meal cooks focusing on improving food safety, hygiene and the nutritional value of midday meals.

Comic book

that integrates messages about nutrition into an engaging story for kids.

Community guide

with tips on cultivating nutritious foods, nutritious recipes and traditional remedies for various diseases.

FOCUS REPORT



Children are learning lessons at school, such as how to make compost using worms, that benefit whole communities



Enterprising young farmers

The next stop on my tour is more than 3 000 kilometres away: Jorhat, Assam. On arrival, I am greeted by Deep Jyoti Sonu Brahma. Deep received an Ashoka Fellowship in 2015 supported by the Swiss Re Foundation and was essential in bringing Nourishing Schools to Assam. His organisation, Farm2Food Foundation, teaches children in northeast India to see agriculture as an exciting entrepreneurial opportunity through its “farmpreneur” clubs in schools.

Run by the children themselves, the clubs encourage kids to explore how to cultivate crops, improve soil quality and manage pests using chemical-free farming techniques. Each participating school has a garden that serves as a learning lab and a source of green leafy vegetables for the free midday meals that government schools provide.

Deep has contributed immensely to our programme. He participated in our workshop on improving the government’s midday meal scheme and co-leads our partnership with

India’s food standards regulatory body to teach schoolchildren what foods are safe and nutritious.

The first school Deep and I visit is Mohonating Charia Pathar Middle English School, one of 41 schools in Farm2Food Foundation’s network that are implementing Nourishing Schools. We recently completed the baseline survey and will launch the toolkit here next month. The school primarily serves students from an ethnic tribal group called the Mishings.

Each school has a garden that serves as a learning lab and a source of green leafy vegetables.

The headmaster shows us pictures of farmpreneur club activities that students in his school have participated in, such as raised bed farming. We admire how they have tabulated the varieties of green leafy vegetables they can grow and, courtesy of a local nutritionist, the nutritional content of each. The headmaster looks forward to using the toolkit to enhance these activities.

We tour the school garden and ask the kids what they have been growing. Recent heavy rainfall and flooding have limited crop cultivation,



Top right: **Rashmi G. and her family cultivate aquatic plants as livestock feed behind their home**

Below: **Surveying a garden at a school in Farm2Food Foundation's network**



but they are enthused about their progress with vermicomposting, which relies on worms to break down organic waste. They sell the compost under their own brand, earning an income as well as learning entrepreneurial skills. The vice-captain of the club, Bimal T., shows off the quality of the compost and names all the plants in the garden from memory.

When the school day is over, we accompany Bimal to his home, where he shows us how he's preparing vermicompost in his family's garden too. His mother tells us how glad she is to see her son use what he has learned. Teaching children to

apply lessons from the school garden at home is an innovative aspect of Farm2Food Foundation's work.

The next day, we visit Gyandeeep Middle English School in Golaghat district. We launched the Nourishing Schools toolkit in this school last year and will soon run a survey to assess the impacts so far. The school primarily serves students whose families work in the tea gardens for which Assam is famous.

The kids sell the compost under their own brand.

The headmaster tells us the school has been recognised by the government for its implementation of the national campaign "Swachh Bharat: Swachh Vidyalaya", which in Hindi means "Clean India: Clean Schools". In addition to setting up a handwashing station for students where soap is provided, the school has built a filter that uses activated charcoal and gravel to purify drinking water. When we stop by the kitchen, we note that the cook-cum-helpers are wearing the proper uniform, apron and head cover, and grains are stored in line with government food safety guidelines. This school could be a model for hygiene practice.



>Read more on page 20





Archana's main hosts on her journey, social entrepreneurs Sunanda Mane of Lend-A-Hand India and Deep Jyoti Sonu Brahma of Farm2Food Foundation, have contributed their expertise and contacts to the Nourishing Schools approach from the start.

They are two of the dozens of Ashoka Fellows who helped design the programme and are supporting its implementation, refinement and scale-up with funding from the Swiss Re Foundation.



Students in Maharashtra use the newly installed handwashing station at their school. The proportion who reported washing their hands with soap and water rose from 5% to 100% in one year.

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PARENTS ASSOCIATION
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My diary



Arriving in Jorhat brought back memories of how Nourishing Schools began.



These children welcomed us to their school with a lively traditional dance.

The kids are growing a wide variety of plants including aromatic herbs like these. So it was all the more impressive that one student knew all their names by heart!



I'm thrilled that Bimal is applying at home what he has learnt in school. He's very proud of his vermicompost.



The midday meal at this school in Golaghat district was tasty as well as nutritious.



Assam's lush tea fields took my breath away.



We paid a visit to Virendra Mittal (centre), Deputy Commissioner of Jorhat district, to invite him to join the upcoming Nourishing Schools launch.



Deep and I used a tea break between school visits to brainstorm ways to strengthen our initiative in Assam.



I shared my insights with Ashoka colleagues Vishnu and Susanne in preparation for a later talk with the Swiss Re Foundation.



It's satisfying to see how far this school has come on hygiene, with a new water filtration system and well-maintained handwashing stations for students.



Playing kabaddi, a game popular in South Asia, during recess at the Gyansanvardhini School

विद्यया ऽ मृतमश्नुते





Nutrition as child's play?

We play games from the Nourishing Schools toolkit with the kids at Gyandeeep Middle English School, getting their feedback and teaching them a way to play "Friends & Foes" in large groups. In this game, players must match a "foe" card, which shows a symptom of a nutrient deficiency, with its respective "friend" card, which lists foods rich in that nutrient. The objective is to collect as many friend-foe pairs as possible. We also meet with parents from the school's mothers' group, who share their perspective on the community's nutritional needs.

When classes are over, we visit the home of Rashmi G., a proud member of the school's farmpreneur club. She and her family have created a small homestead garden where they grow vegetables. With her father's help, Rashmi is now preparing for another round of sowing after heavy rainfall. Behind their house, we spot a small pond covered by the aquatic plant azolla, which Rashmi has learned from the Farm2Food Foundation is a useful source of livestock feed.

The next day, we visit Kanaighat Tribal Middle English School in Golaghat district, which serves children from diverse communities and began

implementing Nourishing Schools last year. The teachers give us feedback on the toolkit. Some distribute pages from the recipe book to students and encourage their parents to try the recipes at home. As the kids have been asking to play the toolkit's games during free periods, the teachers suggest we add puzzles or quizzes to engage them even more.

Toward the end of the trip, I call Vishnu Swaminathan, who leads Ashoka in South Asia, and Susanne Wittig, in Switzerland, to share insights from my field visits and plan for our next talk with the Swiss Re Foundation. From my trip and our survey findings so far, hands-on activities and games seem to be the best way to get kids interested in growing and eating healthy foods. Tapping into their playfulness and curiosity will be a priority as we move forward.

Looking forward

On my way back to Delhi, I reflect on how we've come since 2011. I'm happy to see the progress we have made, but there is still much more to do. In addition to continuing our work in the schools where Nourishing Schools is already underway, we have ambitious plans. Thanks to the extension of our partnership with the Swiss Re Foundation till 2020, we'll

be able to elect two more Ashoka Fellows and add 280 more schools. In this time, we may also hive off our programme into a separate entity called the Nourishing Schools Foundation. As we focus on scaling up our work, I'm grateful to be collaborating with such committed entrepreneurs to engage young people as advocates and agents for better health in their communities.



Above: **Healthy snacks made with peanuts, dates and jaggery**

Top: **Games and hands-on activities make learning about healthy foods fun. Here a student tries to guess what food item she "is" based on nutrition-related clues from her classmates.**



IN DEPTH

A slow-motion health crisis

In India, almost 39% of children under five are chronically undernourished. At 48 million, the number of children in this age group who are moderately to severely stunted exceeds that in any other country.

The Swiss Re Foundation invests in nutrition programmes because poor nutrition undermines the resilience of individuals, communities and society at large. In childhood, chronic undernourishment – also called stunting – diminishes cognitive ability and the capacity to learn and thus school performance. In adulthood, it leads to lower earnings and a higher risk of nutrition-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity.

Born disadvantaged

Stunting is a vicious cycle. It usually begins before conception, when a woman is undernourished and anaemic before becoming a mother. It continues throughout pregnancy and worsens if the infant eats poorly and is exposed to inadequate sanitation and hygiene. By age two, the effects of chronic undernourishment are irreversible.

According to UNICEF, stunting in childhood is strongly linked to anaemia in adolescence, especially in girls. Anaemia not only compromises a girl's physical and cognitive growth. It also dampens her appetite, reducing food intake and leading to irregular menstrual cycles as well as lower physical fitness and work productivity later in life.

As pregnancy is too short to build the iron stores required by a growing foetus, expectant mothers with anaemia are at higher risk of giving birth to pre-term

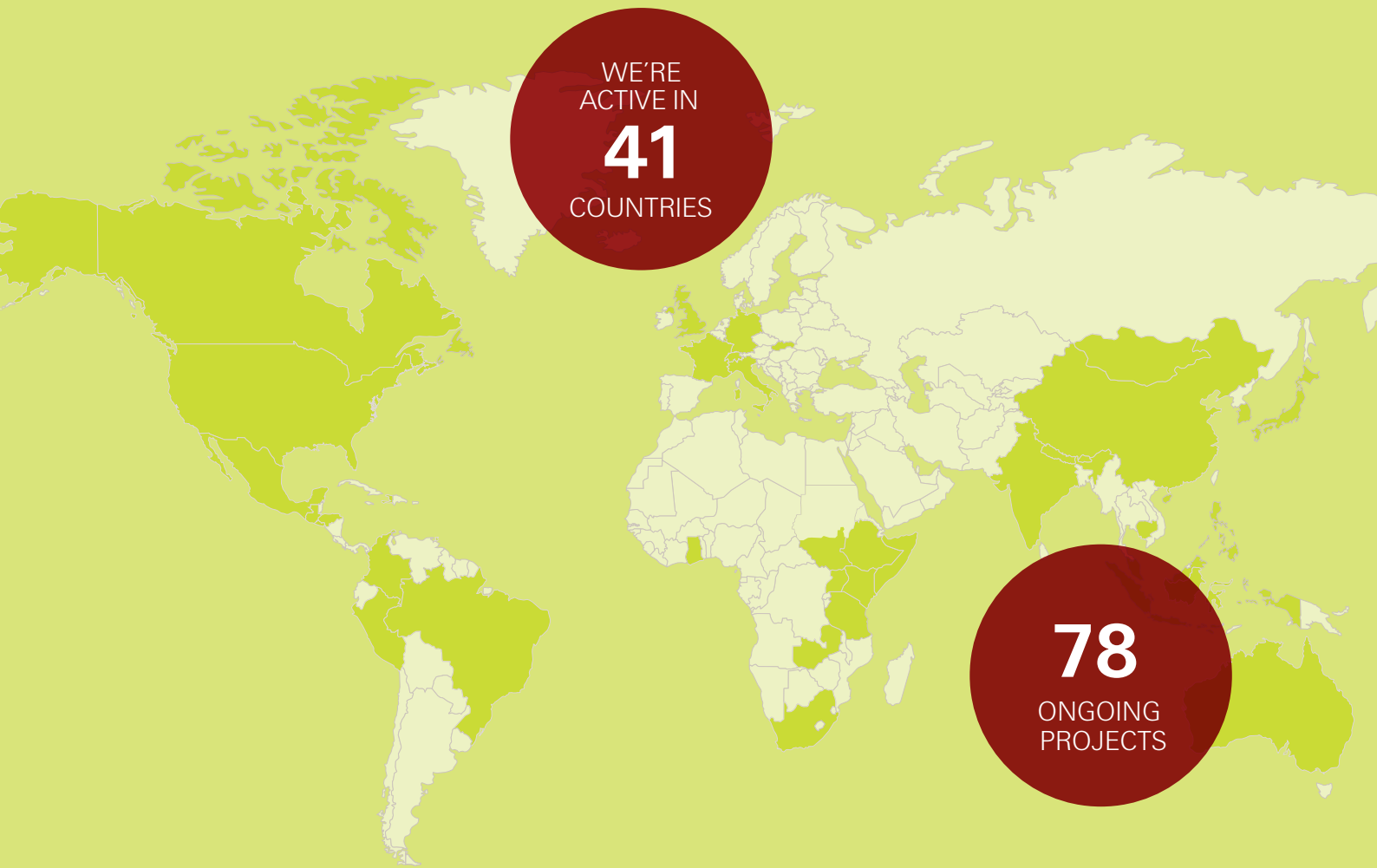
or underweight babies and of dying in childbirth. Their children, in turn, are more likely to die before the age of one and to be sick, undernourished and anaemic themselves.

Breaking the cycle

Preventing stunting is critical to both immediate survival and long-term health and productivity. Typically, nutrition programmes focus on providing services and awareness during pregnancy and the first two years of life, such as by giving pregnant women supplements and educating them about breastfeeding. School-age children, boys in particular, have received comparatively little attention. Yet it is important to reach both girls and boys before they become the next generation of parents.

Initiatives that use schools to reach out to young adolescents and equip them to improve their own and their communities' nutrition have the potential to break the intergenerational cycle of poor health. This is the gap Ashoka India and the Swiss Re Foundation are addressing with the Nourishing Schools programme – which sees children as multipliers of nutrition knowledge and healthy habits.

AT A GLANCE



Fostering entrepreneurship

In 2017, the Swiss Re Foundation found more ways for Swiss Re employees to lend their time and know-how to initiatives like the Global Entrepreneur Program (GEP), which challenges them to work with social entrepreneurs in teams to build up community-based Learning Centers in Mongolia, Cambodia and Sri Lanka. As well as doubling the number of GEP spaces, we launched one-to-one Learning Partnerships, which pair entrepreneurs in these countries with employees who have complementary skills.

A broad range of renewable energy technologies is already available in poor communities. Why is the uptake so low? The Swiss Re Foundation's 2018 Entrepreneurs for Resilience Award will recognise innovative initiatives that address the economic and other hurdles that keep low-income households from adopting renewable energy sources.

We remain convinced that business-minded solutions can address challenges in our focus areas of climate, natural hazards, society and water

effectively and long term. In 2017, we expanded our roster of such projects and saw promising results from projects launched earlier. Our collaboration with Hand in Hand International, for example, has already created almost 500 jobs in Kenya, more than one-third of them in the "green" sector.

For a detailed overview of projects supported by the Swiss Re Foundation, visit our redesigned website:

[swissrefoundation.org](https://www.swissrefoundation.org)

FOCUS AREAS



CLIMATE

We help people adapt to climate change and adopt climate-friendly practices.



NATURAL HAZARDS

Disasters hit poor communities hardest. We help them prepare for, prevent and bounce back from the worst.



SOCIETY

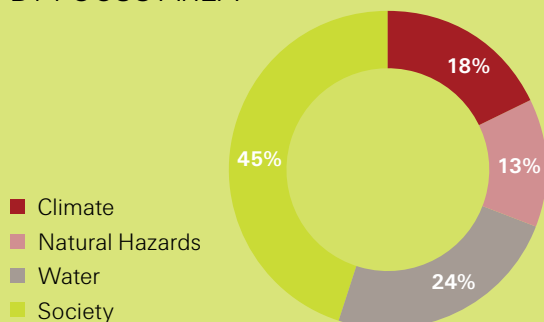
We address the big challenges facing the world today, from migration and urbanisation to rising longevity.



WATER

Water and sanitation are as central to our work as to the survival of the planet and the people living on it.

TOTAL PROJECTS* BY FOCUS AREA



* Ongoing projects over CHF 30 000 as of end 2017

REGIONS

AMERICAS

Commitments (in CHF)	1 788 500
Number of projects (above CHF 30 000)	23
Number of Community Days	22

AFRICA

Commitments (in CHF)	1 431 900
Number of projects (above CHF 30 000)	18
Number of Community Days	1

APAC

Commitments (in CHF)	1 034 030
Number of projects (above CHF 30 000)	19
Number of Community Days	24

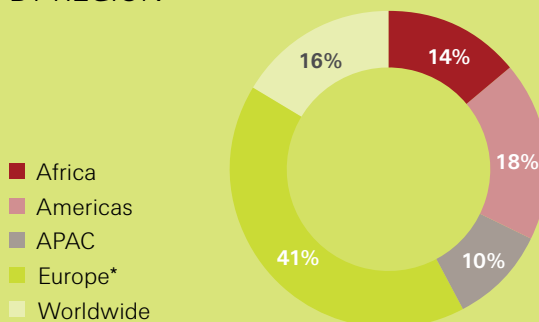
EUROPE*

Commitments (in CHF)	4 058 000
Number of projects (above CHF 30 000)	11
Number of Community Days	63

WORLDWIDE

Commitments (in CHF)	1 576 570
Number of projects (above CHF 30 000)	7

TOTAL COMMITMENTS BY REGION



* Commitments in Europe include our support of Swiss Re 150th anniversary projects.



9 889 000

TOTAL COMMITMENTS
IN CHF



2 020

SWISS RE
VOLUNTEERS



17 768

VOLUNTEERING
HOURS



110

COMMUNITY
DAYS



ReSource Award Winner 2017

The Swiss Re Foundation's International ReSource Award fosters entrepreneurial thinking and leadership in managing water sustainably. It both recognises past success and nurtures promising approaches. The prize combines coaching and expert advice, which the winner enjoys for up to three years, with a USD 150 000 grant that is shared among the three finalists.

For profiles of the 2018 finalists, visit:
resourceaward.org/winners-finalists

As populations grow and lifestyles change, the pressure on the world's water resources is intensifying. Climate change worsens water shortages by disrupting rainfall patterns and raising average temperatures. For millions in developing countries, these pressures combine to threaten access to clean water, putting health, safety and even survival at risk. Our ReSource Award supports social entrepreneurial initiatives that help prevent or mitigate water shortages by promoting sustainable management of water resources in low- and middle-income countries.

The winner of this year's ReSource Award, Clearwater Farms, aims to improve the region's supply of vegetables and fish through an

aquaponic farming system. Independent of rainfall and using as little as half as much water as drip irrigation, the technique creates opportunities for farmers to earn income, brings production closer to local markets and eliminates water loss to soil, making it ideal for arid regions.

Clearwater Farms produces fish and edible plants synergistically, using the water in which fish are raised to irrigate an adjoining vegetable bed through a connecting pipe. In Lusaka, Zambia, where fish is an important source of protein, it's now piloting a system that is expected to produce 240 000 heads of lettuce and 30 tonnes of fish and save 13 million litres of water per year. It will sell the produce to premium supermarkets, hotels and restaurants.

If this test of the approach is successful, Clearwater Farms will train and mentor local smallholder farmers in aquaponics techniques and help them form cooperatives to operate aquaponic systems together and sell their produce to Clearwater Farms for marketing and distribution. As well as serving hungry local markets, the model will enable farmers to earn income and investors a return on their capital.



Entrepreneurs for Resilience Award 2018

The Swiss Re Foundation created the Entrepreneurs for Resilience Award to recognise young enterprises with innovative approaches to building resilience in vulnerable communities and realising the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This year's award focuses on affordable access to renewable energy.

For profiles of the 2018 finalists, available from April 2018, visit:

[swissrefoundation.org/our-work/key-initiatives/resilience-award/](https://www.swissrefoundation.org/our-work/key-initiatives/resilience-award/)

We believe the Swiss Re Foundation can make the most valuable contribution to social ventures in their early stages. Our funding therefore targets the development and testing of fledgling business models and the scale-up and expansion of successful small enterprises. Launched in 2016, the Entrepreneurs for Resilience Award is a good example of this approach.

While the award's core theme is always resilience, its specific focus changes with trends and developments in our focus areas – climate, natural hazards, society and water. In the 2018 award cycle, we're looking for business-minded approaches that tackle behavioural and/or other barriers to successful adoption of renewable energy in poor communities and are able to cover local

households' basic energy needs. In-scope technology areas include improved cookstoves, solar lanterns, solar home systems, decentralised grids, productive uses, mini wind turbines and biogas generators.

The award programme encompasses a financial grant from the Swiss Re Foundation and, depending on the nature, scope and needs of a given enterprise, non-financial contributions from Swiss Re employees such as coaching and technical advice.

In May 2018, the finalists will pitch their ventures in Accra, Ghana, to an award jury consisting of senior Swiss Re experts, academic representatives and selected Swiss Re clients. All three will also participate in the award ceremony

where the winner is announced. The total prize money of CHF 800 000 will be divided between the winning initiative, which may receive up to CHF 400 000, and the two runners-up.

Employee Engagement

Swiss Re's employees drive the company's success, bringing their knowledge and passion to making the world more resilient. We involve them in many of the Swiss Re Foundation's activities to support their sense of shared purpose, broaden their growth opportunities and tap their expertise.

Swiss Re's vision is to make the world more resilient. The Swiss Re Foundation's vision is to empower communities to build resilience on their own. Since our focus areas are closely linked to the company's core competences, Swiss Re employees represent a trove of know-how and experience that can benefit our partners and projects.

In 2017, we continued adding to the ways in which Swiss Re employees can get involved in our initiatives and the number who can participate. For

instance, we launched Learning Partnerships – in which employees are paired up with entrepreneurs to exchange ideas and know-how – and engaged employees as judges for the Entrepreneurs for Resilience Award.

Rather than describe all the ways in which employee volunteers contribute to the Swiss Re Foundation, we've asked some of them to reflect on their experiences in their own words.

For more information, visit:

swissrefoundation.org/our-work/key-initiatives/employee-engagement/

“I joined the Foundation's Learning Partnerships programme in Mongolia. **Coaching and exchanging ideas with a community-based entrepreneur** who's working to provide psychological services to prevent domestic violence has taught me **the value of stepping back to look at the big picture.** I'm so grateful for this opportunity.”



Barbara Mittler

Senior Underwriter Technology E&O and Cyber,
Zurich

“**Being a Resilience Award judge** has opened my eyes to **the innovativeness and breadth of the social enterprises** we can support to build resilience.”



Sharon Joanne Ooi
Head Property & Casualty Underwriting Asia & ANZ,
Singapore

“I lead a local initiative that provides access to **better education to underprivileged children** on the outskirts of Bangalore. **Our focus is on creating infrastructure necessary for holistic education, not just literacy.** The Swiss Re Foundation has been a strong financial supporter of our efforts in bringing smiles to the faces of our next generation.”



Rajesh Acchandra
Senior Governance Manager,
Bangalore

“**Community Days encourage us to come together to achieve a common goal outside the office.** Volunteering creates a relaxed atmosphere for collaboration and gives everyone a chance to give back and learn more about initiatives that deserve our continued support.”



Heather Lytle
Standards Analyst,
Fort Wayne



MIT
professor
Esther Duflo

studies how poor people in poor countries make choices that affect their health and income and what this means for development policy.

Putting development aid to the test

Esther Duflo is Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics and co-founder of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the USA. She and her colleagues have pioneered the use of randomised experiments to test the effectiveness of anti-poverty programmes and policies, challenging widespread assumptions about how poor people make economic decisions. In a talk with the Swiss Re Foundation, she shared lessons from her field research.

Q Why isn't development aid better at fighting poverty?

A When you look back at the history of aid, you see that it usually targets a particular problem in a particular place – say, by opening a school for orphans. Any good outcomes could be due to the school, but they could also be due to a particular teacher, the particular students who attend or something else. We'll never know for sure how such a school affects literacy, health or later earnings or if it would work anywhere else.

Even in the poorest countries, aid accounts for only a fraction of total spending. So, aid dollars can't solve the problems of poverty, but they can point to solutions.

Q How can we make aid smarter?

A Anyone who gives international aid should ask, "How can I get the maximum leverage for my dollar?" In other words, where can my relatively small investment have the biggest impact on people's lives?

One area where this is the case is after a natural disaster, when a lot of money must be spent quickly and in a coordinated way to ensure people's survival and safety. Aid could also shed light on how to broaden insurance access to people who can't afford conventional catastrophic protection or to areas of risk where insurance models don't yet exist – both interesting topics, I'd imagine, for you as a foundation supported by Swiss Re.

Another area where aid has potential leverage is research and development. By becoming a sort of venture capital investor in tests of social policy, you increase the supply of a scarce global public good: knowledge built on hard evidence.

Q What does such R&D involve? And why fund it when people are going hungry?

A If I'm an international foundation and I use my money to develop a promising new approach or test a more established one, I learn a lesson that can be applied

elsewhere. Broad applicability is important because it enables me to help people in more than one place.

The best way to find out whether a policy works is to do a randomised controlled trial, or RCT, of the kind used to test and compare medical treatments. Suppose we want to know if people in malaria-endemic regions are more likely to use bed nets, which protect against malaria-carrying mosquitoes, if they can get the nets at a subsidised low price versus for free. First, we identify a set of communities to participate. Then we assign those communities, at random, to one of the two "treatments", offering half of them cheap bed nets and the other half free bed nets.

Over time, we may find differences between the two groups of communities, such as a higher rate of bed net use or fewer new malaria cases in the free bed net group than in the low-price group. This is indeed what researchers in my lab and elsewhere have found in Kenya. Thanks to randomisation, if the groups are large enough, it's safe to conclude that the free bed net group in our study fared better because their bed nets were free. That's the power of RCT.

Q Are randomised experiments a panacea for efforts to reduce poverty?

A Programmes that address the problems of the poor go through different stages, from early incubation to regional, national or international scale-up. Descriptive and exploratory methods can be more useful than RCT in the early stages, such as when you want to understand a problem better or you're still working out a solution. Later on, RCTs are the best way to generate information about what works and what doesn't.

Q Most social enterprises and local NGOs can't afford RCTs. What else can they contribute?

A RCTs are no substitute for insight and on-the-ground experience. Smaller players can and do come up with innovative ways to address the problems of the poor. Once their ideas are up and

running, they need people and organisations with deeper pockets to support RCTs to test whether those ideas really work.

It's a good idea to involve academics in this process because they can help build a solid evidence base. Less obviously, academics can become passionate advocates for models they believe in. I see this in myself and my collaborators all the time.

Q How can the Swiss Re Foundation support such efforts?

A Your contribution to a professorship at the University of Zurich is a great way to support the development of new ideas. And I'm not just saying that because I collaborate with people here!

I'd suggest that you focus on initiatives in their earliest stages of development. In a study that Michael Kremer – a development economist at Harvard University – and I conducted of USAID's start-up innovation lab, we looked at the ratio between the number of people reached by social ventures and the amount of money invested.

Even though most of the ventures failed, investments in the least advanced ones yielded the largest return. We also know that start-ups that survive the earliest stages of development generally get picked up by investors – and governments – later on, making them less reliant on aid in the long run.

Finally, you can put the Swiss Re Foundation's strong partner network to good use by matching up promising initiatives with researchers who have the expertise and commitment to discover which ones really make a difference in people's lives.

Remembering Angela Marti



We were deeply saddened by the passing of Foundation Head Angela Marti after a serious illness in November 2017.

Angela's distinguished career with Swiss Re spanned 25 years and two continents. As head of marketing and communications at Swiss Re Capital Partners in San Francisco, she led the development of a knowledge exchange platform between San Francisco and Zurich. After moving to Switzerland, she established Swiss Re's first global programme for recent graduates and, in 2011, became Co-Head and later Head of the Swiss Re Foundation.

Angela's combination of business savvy, creativity and commitment helped ensure the Foundation's successful launch and evolution from traditional philanthropy to supporter of entrepreneurial efforts to build resilience. Her energy inspired everyone around her, including the many Swiss Re colleagues and partner organisations she brought into our activities and projects. In many ways, Angela was the face of Swiss Re Foundation, representing it both inside and outside Swiss Re.

Angela cared deeply about inequality and its consequences for society. She made field visits regularly. Her last was with our partner Ashoka in rural India, where she visited communities taking part in the initiative featured in this report. When she came back, she remarked, "I realise now how immense the challenges are. That's why we must support people and organisations that roll up their sleeves rather than throw up their hands."

Angela's absence is keenly felt, but her insights and legacy as leader of the Swiss Re Foundation live on in our memories and in our work.

Board of Trustees and the Swiss Re Foundation team

Angela on a field visit in India in 2016



Board of Trustees

The Swiss Re Foundation is governed by a Board of Trustees, which sets our strategic direction. The Board meets four times a year to hear about our activities and progress, to give guidance and to take decisions on governance and grant requests.

Individual Board members sometimes visit our initiatives on site. In July 2017, Swiss Re CEO Christian Mumenthaler participated in a Community Day in Switzerland's Tamina Valley. There he and 50 other Swiss Re employee volunteers helped *Bergwaldprojekt*, a long-time partner of the Foundation, construct barriers to protect fragile alpine forestland.



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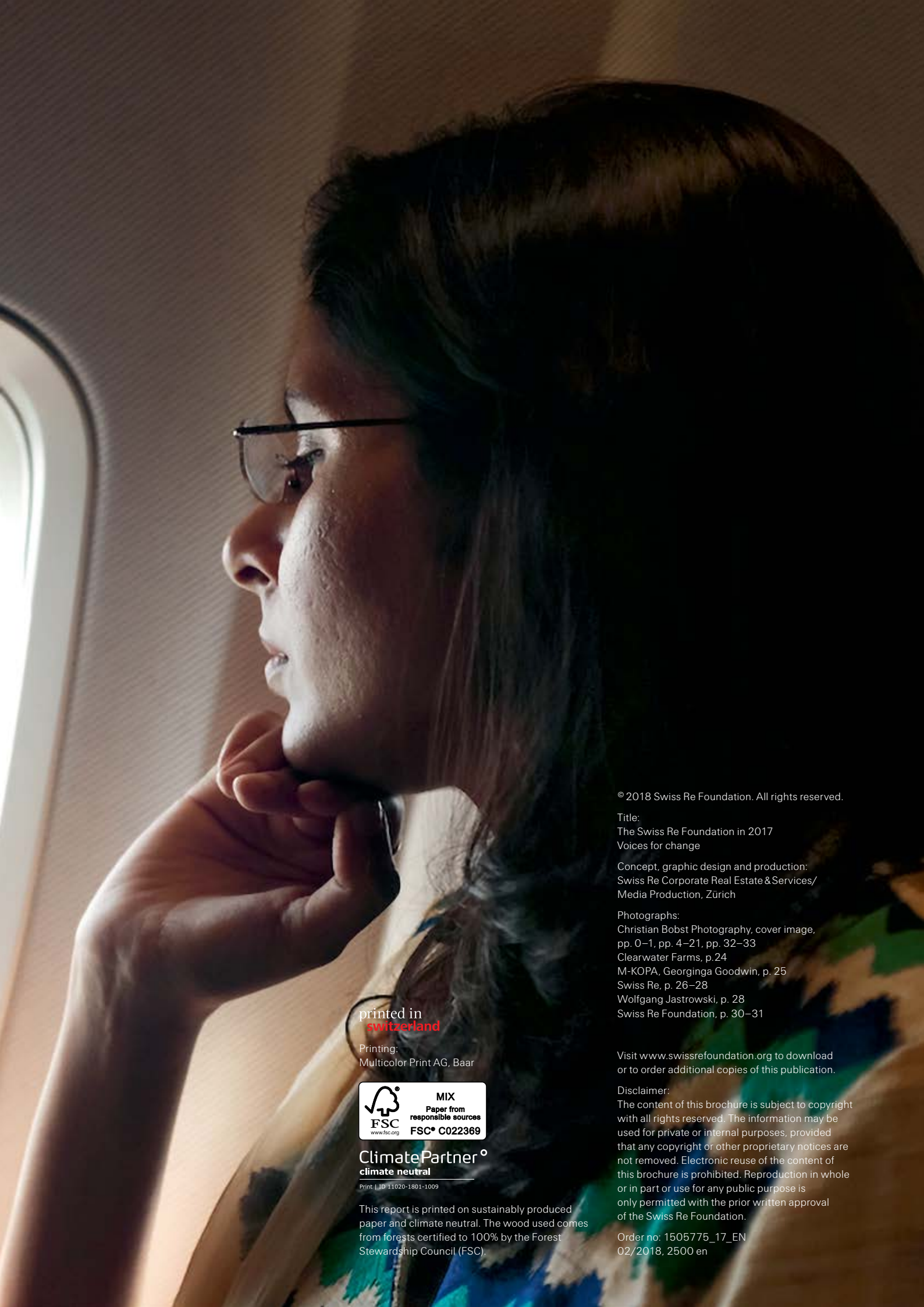


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**“I’m grateful
to work with committed
social entrepreneurs
to engage young people
as advocates and
agents for improving
public health.”**

Archana Sinha



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