

# Strong partners building forward futures worth living in

REPORT FROM SOUTH ASIA & LATIN AMERICA  
January 2021 - May 2022



# Together leading the way

Ashoka is the world's largest network of social entrepreneurs. We pioneered the field 40 years ago and have supported nearly 4,000 Ashoka Fellows across the globe, guiding them to grow unexpected ideas into transformative social progress.

The story is the same across the globe – from Central America to South Asia – with trusted local leaders championing creative solutions to their countries' most pressing social problems. Ashoka accompanies Fellows along their journey – with catalytic investments, with strategic guidance, and with an unmatched peer-to-peer community. This is one reason why they consistently achieve significant impact in their fields, not only reaching large populations directly but shifting policies and markets and the underlying conditions that cause problems to persist generation after generation.

We believe that the most effective solutions emerge from where problems are felt, and Ashoka Fellows have lived the problem. It is in these proximate leaders that we place our trust. They have the problem, and most importantly in designing and growing their solutions they create roles for everyone in community as changemakers. This creates agency and shifts power.

The Target Foundation is committed to enabling shared prosperity and opportunity by upholding equity and inclusion for all communities.

Together we are leading the way to an Everyone is a Changemaker world.

# Telling our story in this report

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

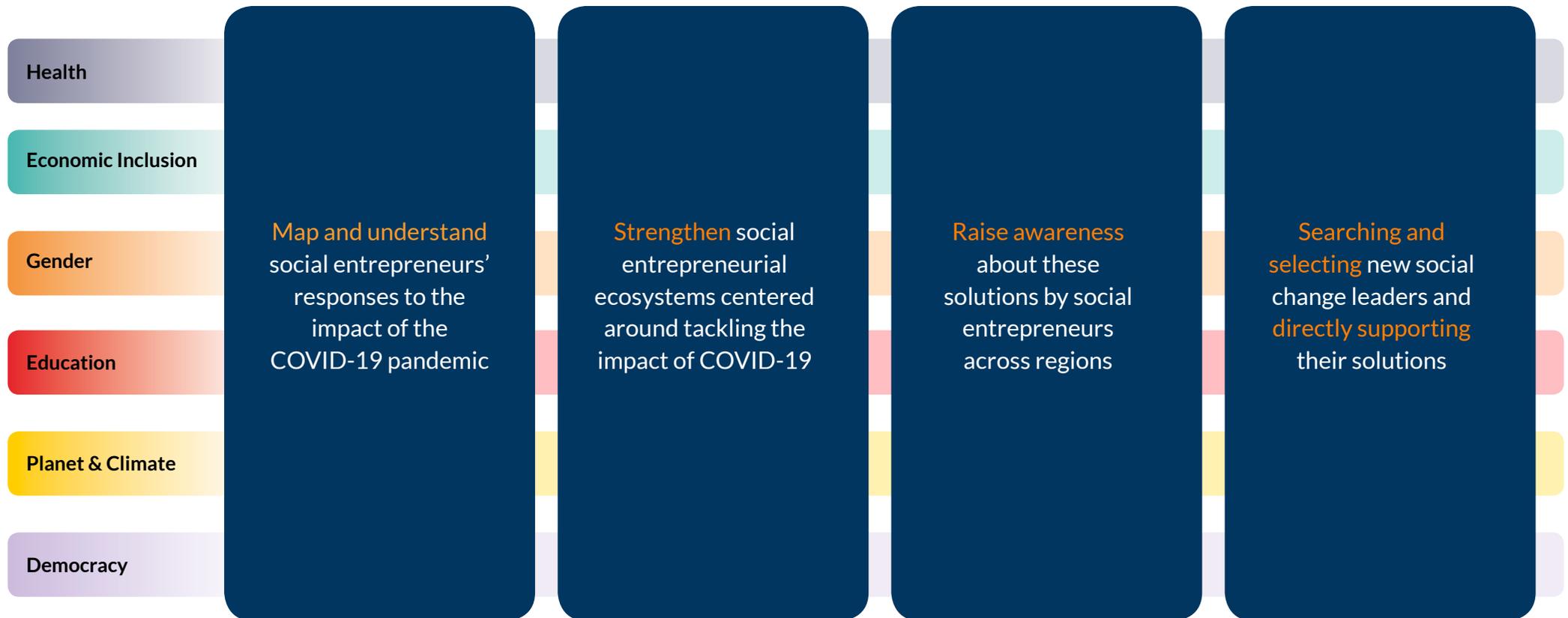
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# 4 pillars framed our work in South Asia & Latin America

Our partnership was built on four pillars reflecting the context of the pandemic, yet forward looking. After we mapped long-term effects of the Covid-19 crisis, we centered our work around six systems, ranging from health to democracy.



Read more about the critical fields [HERE](#)

# Translating the pillars into action in times of crisis

The Foundation stepped in (A) to reinforce Changemakers United, Ashoka's Covid response with a systems change view, and (B) to surface new transformative innovators, elect them to Ashoka Fellowship, support them with a living stipend, provide visibility to their solutions, and accelerate their impact. Additionally, we were able (C) to leverage Ashoka's network and strengthen our collaboration across the regions. The pandemic was challenging us greatly and we had to constantly adapt our plans.

## Changemakers United (Ashoka's Covid response)

This global accelerator program identified Ashoka Fellows with solutions responding to the pandemic. We supported them by mentorship, expertise and funding to scale their impact. Each region adapted its implementation to their local context.

In 2021, communication and story-telling were key areas to build capacity in Latin America. We focused on narratives, crisis resilience and donation management in South Asia.

## Surfacing more social entrepreneurs

Later in 2021, we were able to restart our search & selection process, work closely with candidates to mature their social ventures and assess them against our criteria on the way.

Still mostly limited to the virtual space, we conducted several panels in both regions. Later in 2022, we plan to host in-person panels for the virtually elected Fellows to provide them with full experience.

In Central America we also revised our strategy to strengthen our local connections, scouted for new candidates and joined or organized events to bring our community together.

## Collaboration across regions & learning

The partnership provided us with stability in times of uncertainty, allowed us to keep key team members with us, build stronger connections and share learning across both regions.

Thanks to that we were able to facilitate opportunities for social entrepreneurs on a global level – deliver workshops, organize networking events with philanthropists and create spaces to share experience around topics such as wellbeing, leadership and systemic changes in the aftermath of the pandemic.

- Global Impact Report, July 2021

## Our premise

The pandemic exposed weaknesses of many social systems. What we need are solutions that address the source of a problem in order to eradicate it in the long run.

Thankfully, many of the solutions are already out there: in the hands of social innovators and changemakers rooted in the communities living with these challenges.

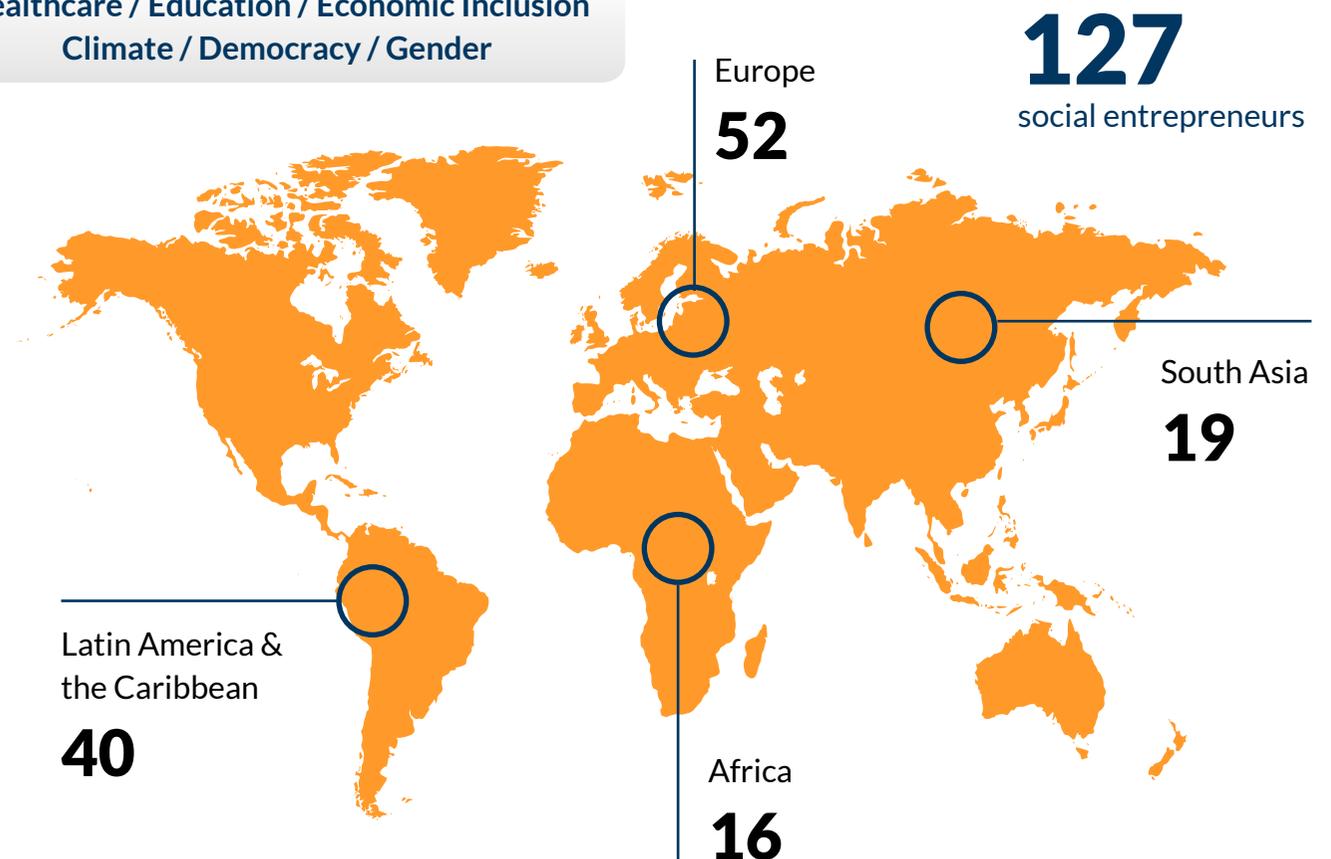
Together we support them on their way to systems change.



# Changemakers United responding to Covid-19

What started in Europe, as an immediate response to the Covid-19 crisis in April 2020, is today a **global initiative**. It has showed pathways to changemaking to **more than 30 partner companies, 123 mentors and 236 pro-bono experts**. They stepped up to support the efforts of social entrepreneurs from **Europe, Africa, Latin America and South Asia**.

Healthcare / Education / Economic Inclusion  
Climate / Democracy / Gender



# Searching, selecting & supporting...

Every year, Ashoka elects new Fellows into its network based on a rigorous and tested process, with the same standards everywhere in the world. We assess holistically the entrepreneur and their solution to ensure that we invest in systems-changers embedded in their communities.

1 2

3 4 5

## SELECTION PROCESS



### Mapping & understanding

Regional teams review nominations and conduct a due diligence process to **better understand entrepreneurs' thinking and approach**, including interviews, reference checks, innovation benchmarking, and a site visit.

**Ashoka invests in leaders, not organizations** – we look for people who are so committed to creating a better world that they are able to shift their focus and strategy to solve a problem and will continue to create impact throughout their life.

With this focus, **our selection process digs deep into both entrepreneurs' solution and their leadership**: how they build partnerships, envision systemic changes, overcome challenges creatively, and inspire and engage others as changemakers.

Through this process of mutual learning, Ashoka works with candidates to **craft a story that helps others understand their solution and journey as changemakers**.

### Asssing their venture

#### New Idea Call

The local team presents candidates to an international Ashoka Senior expert (2<sup>nd</sup> Op) to verify their alignment with Ashoka's criteria.

#### Panel with Ashoka and external experts

Candidates are invited to an in-person panel to be interviewed by the 2nd Op and three external experts, who decide by consensus if they advance to the next stage.

#### Board review

A brief with the candidate's story and notes from the panel discussion is sent to Ashoka's Board of Directors, which reviews all candidates from around the world and makes a final decision.

#### Providing feedback

Candidates are informed of the decision and receive the feedback shared by the Panel and Board.

# ...transformative social entrepreneurs

## Assessing needs

### Onboarding

New Fellows learn about the opportunities and resources they can access and complete a needs assessment. They receive an account for the Ashoka Fellow Directory to connect with the network.

### Matching with opportunities

Based on the needs assessment, the regional team creates a tailored support plan and matches Fellows with relevant opportunities on an ongoing basis.

### Connecting

Fellows benefit from Ashoka's global network. Through events, courses, thematic learning groups and other spaces, they have multiple opportunities to connect with other entrepreneurs and partners across sectors.

## Impact

Ashoka's selection process is designed to challenge entrepreneurs' thinking and open opportunities to grow their impact even before election, such as joining events and courses and connecting with leaders in different sectors.

**“Whilst going through the selection process to join Ashoka, it really pushed me to think further about my business goals as it relates to the impact I wish to make. The questions were very rigorous and caused me to think about my personal values as a social entrepreneur and how they align to the core values of Ashoka. Considering the extremely thorough process to be selected, I can safely say that it sets the right tone to fulfill your journey as a changemaker.”**

Alpha Sennon, Ashoka Fellow

# Examples of engaged system-changers

EMERGENCY RESPONSE  
CARE



Rajesh Trivedi

 India, Tamil Nadu, Chennai  
Alert  
 <https://alert.ngo>

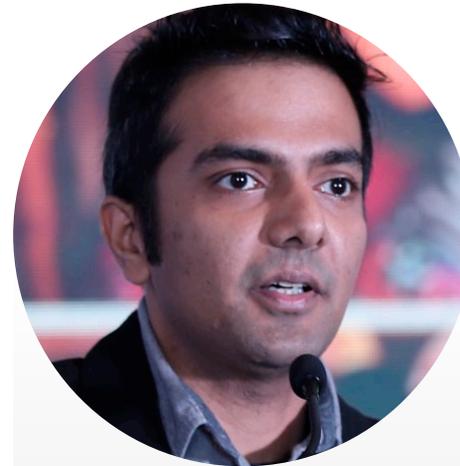
RURAL DEVELOPMENT &  
COMMUNITY BUILDING



Manisha Ghule

 India, Maharashtra, Beed  
Navchetna Sarvangin  
Vikas Kendra  
 <http://navchetna.org/>

CLIMATE ACTION &  
LIVEHOODS



Saurav Malhotra

 India, Assam, Guwahati  
Rural Futures  
 [baliparafoundation.com](http://baliparafoundation.com)

EMPLOYMENT  
– FOOD SECURITY



Alpha Sennon

 Trinidad and Tobago  
WhyFarm  
 <http://whyfarmit.org/>

# Strengthening collaboration across the regions

## Strengthening & Connecting

### Data Story-telling workshops

(October 13<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021)

This 3-hour workshop helped participants to understand the tools and frameworks of data-driven storytelling, and to apply that to their practical use cases.

Explore details [HERE](#)

### ASN Connect (December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021)

The virtual ASN Connect event presented best practices of successful collaborations between Ashoka Supporters and Fellows across the globe. Together they discussed how successful collaboration could emerge and reflected on principles important to form a meaningful connection.

## Raising awareness

### Ashoka Changemaker Summit

(September – December 2021)

This series of panel discussions provided spaces to discover the social innovation trends around 9 social issues. Its reach was almost 600 thousand people.

### Online sessions

- **Changemakers United: Spotlight for wellbeing, leadership and systemic changes in the aftermath of the pandemic**
- Other sessions diving into topics such as education, gender, equity or climate were hosted

### In-person event in Torino, Italy

Learn about its impact [HERE](#)

## Learning together

### Ashoka team

Our team-of-teams worked closely together guided by shared values - empathy, diversity, agility, learning and co-creation with our communities.

Regular exchange of best practises and stronger integration across regional teams built key capacity and we supported each other in facing challenges that the pandemic posed.

Thanks to flexible funders supporting us, we were able to maintain talents in the organization and prioritize well-being of the team and our Fellows.



# South Asia

Let's zoom in on this  
region in 2021-22

**CHANGEMAKERS UNITED**  
**IN COVID TIMES:**  
**South Asia**

# Needing support when the Covid crisis there deepened in early 2021

As the situation in South Asia escalated in April 2021, many social entrepreneurs were shifting to urgent responses that ranged from decentralizing supply chains for oxygen and other life-essentials, to addressing mental health & care gaps, and expanding vaccine access.

## Urgent response

The Changemaker United South Asia initiative set up an [online page](#) which highlighted Fellows' work and facilitated donors' access to supporting them. Many of the South Asian Fellows were struggling with manual processes and multiple people dependencies that was delaying the funding and support process. India's top fintech unicorn, Razorpay, enabled a 24-hour set up of the payment page, with all required documentation being processed quickly so that Ashoka Fellows could find timely support for their mission critical work.

## Ashoka Fellows transforming and strengthening communities on the ground

Explore how Ashoka Fellows continue create inspiring solutions that transform and strengthen communities in India amidst the current COVID-19 crisis, and how you may support them

### Holistic Health Care

- Ashwin Naik (Manah Wellness / Lets TALK)
- Biplobketan Paul (Naireeta Services)
- Jebmalai Stanislaus (Sangath Center)
- Kallol Ghosh (OFFER)
- Mukti Bosco (Healing Fields)
- Manu Gupta (SEEDS India)
- Nalini Saligram (Arogya World)
- Piyush Tewari (SaveLife Foundation)
- Sohini Chakraborty (Kolkata Sanved)
- Sunil Kumar (Indian Society of Agribusiness Professionals)

### Supporting Education and Youth

- Gloria De Souza (Parisar Asha)
- Janardhana GL (Environmental Study Centre (KIDS(R))
- Kavita Anand (Adhyayan Foundation)
- Priya Agrawal (Antarag Foundation)
- Dr. Urvashi Sahni (Study Hall Foundation)
- Vishal Talreja (Dream a Dream)

### Technological and Legal Empowerment

- Apar Gupta (Internet Freedom Foundation)
- Kuldeep Dantewadia (Reap Benefit)

### Resourcing Vulnerable Populations

- Anil Patil (Carers Worldwide)
- Anita Ahuja (Conserve India)
- Anshu Gupta (Goonj)
- Ashif Shaikh (Jan Sahas)
- Ashraf Patel (ComMunity - The Youth Collective)
- Dr. Ashok Khosla (Development Alternatives Group)
- Bharath Paravalli (Fields of View)
- Deep Jyoti (Farm2Food)
- Jessica Mayberry (Video Volunteers)
- Mathew Jose (Paperman Foundation)
- Mohammad Quereshi (Koshish)
- Pranjan Baruah (Mushroom Development Foundation)
- Pravin Khandpasole (DISHA)
- Sachin Kuma Jain (Vikas Samvad)
- Sanjeev Kumar (Goat Trust)
- Seema Prakash (Spandan Samaj Seva Samiti)

# Insights not making the news cycle from Covid struck India & opportunities for systemic action

## Live from India

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, **Fellows Anshu Gupta, Ashwin Naik and Priti Krishtel** lent their perspectives on how they were responding to the urgency then, while also leading long-term change in India and beyond. More information about this Welcome Change session and the main highlights from it can be found [here](#).

Learn more about Welcome Change series [HERE](#)

WELCOME **LIVE**  
CHANGE



## Responses from India as the Covid crisis deepens

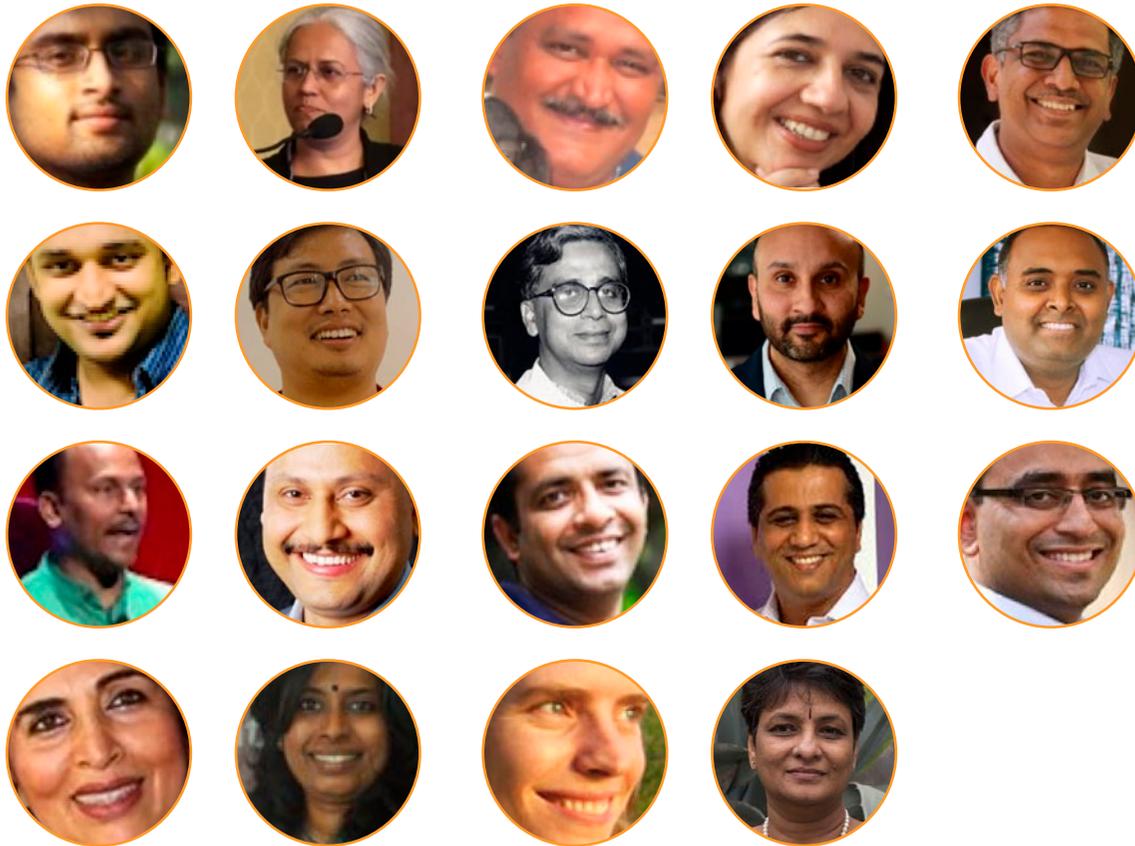
Anshu Gupta  
Ashwin Naik  
Priti Krishtel



May 19

6:00 San Francisco · 10:00 Sao Paulo  
16:00 Nairobi · 18:30 Delhi

# Gathering insights and detecting patterns to move fields forward



## Interviews with Fellows

Beside mapping their urgent needs, we looked beyond to understand long-term impact and patterns emerging from social entrepreneurs' work. We conducted in-depth interviews with 17 Ashoka Fellows from India who were recognized for bringing systems change in critical fields affected by the pandemic.

You can find highlights from the conversations on following slides or see the full report [HERE](#).

Browse through the profiles of those social entrepreneurs [HERE](#)

# Example of supported CMU Fellows



India

Farm2Food Foundation

## ECONOMIC INCLUSION

# Deep Jyoti Sonu Brahma

One of the most vulnerable communities in Assam are the tea garden workers who are landless. When the pandemic hit, their only source of food was the dry ration kits distributed by the government. Farm2Food was one of the organizations responsible for the distribution of direct relief supply to the tea garden workers and they encouraged them to start their own kitchen gardens. Leading this were the young Farmpreneurs who were well trained in initiating and maintaining their school kitchen garden enterprise. They were now trained in disseminating Covid-19 related information and safe practices to the community. Youth also took on the responsibility of teaching younger children

which enabled learning and engagement for children in the absence of functioning schools during the pandemic.

### **What changed during the past year?**

Farm2Food focuses now on creating economic and social resilience in Assam through building cooperatives of primarily women-led agri-business enterprises. One of the first such enterprises is a cooperative to produce and market Araknut (Tamul) plates from Assam. Operational women-led businesses are brought together under this cooperative to build sustainability and collective resilience.

# Ashoka Fellows reaching millions through various strategies

## Impact by Ashoka Fellows

In South Asia the Ashoka Fellows provided services and support in fighting the pandemic in multiple ways. The initial phase of the pandemic saw them collectively providing direct relief to over 9 million people. They also went beyond direct emergency relief and focused on education, where they ensured they could work with governments to enable hybrid learning models for over 1,000 schools. Through the technology platforms that some of the Fellows were able to leverage, the impact of their work was scaled across 27 states. They also had a strong focus on co-creating and delivering their solutions, by developing over 600 partnerships with various organizations.

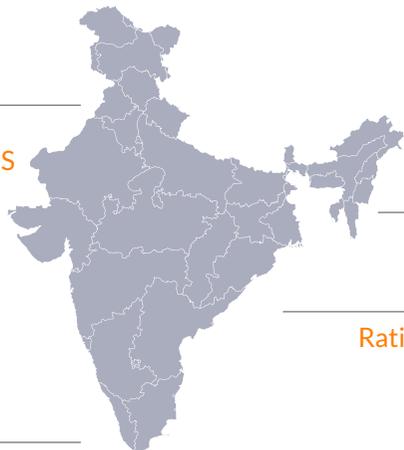
Collaborations

OVER 600 PARTNERSHIPS

Helplines

Technology platforms

27 STATES



Embedding into government system

OVER 1,000 SCHOOLS WITH HYBRID EDUCATION

DIRECT RELIEF TO OVER 9 MILLION PEOPLE

Ration, ready meals, sanitary kits, hygiene kits, medicines

Lending expertise

## Observed strategies to help

A few of the organizations had not worked specifically in disaster response earlier but had a **wide reach** in the severely affected and vulnerable groups, such as migrant workers. They used this reach to help many people through these **main strategies**:

- **Collective action:** creating structures and protocols to work collectively with large set of volunteers and institutions to provide relief in their own areas of expertise.
- **Leveraging technology:** making quick adaptations to existing technology platforms and products to help with the emergency response.
- **Using data for action:** building a large database of contacts and issues the vulnerable were facing which shaped their own actions, collaborations, and government response.
- **Starting local:** building strength within local communities in terms of economic production and delivery.
- **Support for the marginalized:** creating specific relief programs and immediate livelihood opportunities for extremely vulnerable groups such as sex workers, transgender people, people with disabilities, folk artists, members of tribal communities, and manual scavengers.
- **Rebuilding skills of the team members for the future.**

# Emerging learning to build resilience and seeing new opportunities

## Additional strategies for action

- **The collaborative approach:** Fellows who had invested early in collaboration found it easier to cope with the unprecedented need for action and support at every level. This has given significant impetus to collaborations, making it easier to enroll team members and external partners to work together on a large scale.
- **Partnering for scale:** during Covid-19 many Ashoka Fellows had to quickly create partnerships and collaborations to expand their reach. This has made them envision a different outreach structure for achieving scale.
- **Community resilience:** An overarching concern today is how to build resilience of communities that helps them face uncertainties and crises. Organizations are working on the ground to build economic and social cohesion, so that community members strengthen each other in peacetime as well as during crises.
- **Formalizing the unorganized sector:** India still has approximately 90% of the working population working in the unorganized sector. During the pandemic, many services could not reach vulnerable groups as they were unorganized and unaccounted for. This glaring inequity has led many Ashoka Fellows to launch long-term programs to formalize the informal economy and workers.
- **Emerging hybrid models for the future:** organizations were compelled to move their operations online during the lockdowns and they are now imagining the new normal with hybrid models of work. The digital channels will help expand reach but at the same time, the Ashoka Fellows recognize the importance of in-person interactions for social change.
- **Working with the government:** The Covid-19 crisis led to the government seeking specific support from civil society organizations, largely for their tech expertise. The experience of working closely with the government has given Ashoka Fellows confidence and opportunity to institutionalize their approaches.
- **New pathways of changemaking:** The majority of Ashoka Fellows managed to continue their work, to improve their solutions and expand their reach during the pandemic. This has energized and motivated them to persevere and work for larger impact in the future.



# Key needs we saw surfacing and recognized where Ashoka has a role to play

## Strategies for support

Given the continuing nature of the crisis, the South Asian team planned their support and work for Ashoka Fellows by focusing on:

### 1 Building new narratives and working with data

Many inequities have been exposed during the pandemic. Ashoka Fellows can work collectively on initiatives that help marginalized groups become economically and socially resilient in the long term. Some of the initiatives with the purpose of building new narratives could be quick action research, media campaigns, public speaking and events with Fellows.

### 2 Resilience for the next crisis (climate action)

Frequent emergencies and disasters are expected with the looming climate crisis. As Ashoka, we can bring together a community of Fellows to create an emergency preparedness plan that includes common principles or protocols on how to handle emergencies.

### 3 Flexible funding and managing donations

Covid-19 has seen donor money being diverted to mainstream government efforts. We could create a flexible fund to support Fellows that are severely impacted by loss of funding. Crisis often creates opportunities for innovative work on the ground and this fund could also fuel this innovative work during emergencies.

# Building new narratives and working with data

## Learning together

### Data Story-telling workshop (October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021)

This 3-hour workshop was designed in India and replicated for Fellows in Europe, Latin America and Africa. It covered these key topics: the art of storytelling, using data to build credibility, sharing your story with an audience, methods for communicating your story.

Explore details [HERE](#)

## Impact

During the workshop, a 4-step process and framework was shared - from understanding audience, building the right story structure, creating relevant visualization, to building storytelling into a habit. One of the key learnings that came during the workshop was that participants believed that storytelling just provided the emotional connect in communication. But, as they delved into examples, and worked with the real context of the organizations during the workshop, they all agreed that adding the layer of data to storytelling allows for storytelling to be more persuasive by bringing in a more logical structure and by adding credibility through data.

In India 35 participants from 15 organizations attended the workshop.

## Accelerating impact

### ASPIRe Program

The ASPIRe program journeys with social entrepreneurs to reimagine their theory of change and impact model to adopt a framework change and platform thinking approach in order to go from creating regional impact towards global impact. Currently there is a cohort of 18 Ashoka Fellows that are on this 3-year journey together, being connected with partners to help redesign, execute and finance these new prototype models.

Learn about ASPIRe [HERE](#)

## Impact

More Fellows benefit from sessions and workshops of the ASPIRe program. Among them for instance Mukti Bosco or Priya Agarwal – Fellows supported by Changemakers United.

# Resilience for the next crisis (climate action)

## Conducting a research

### Climate Action Report (2021)

Between January and July 2021, Ashoka and Green Artha conducted a research study with 100+ social innovators, entrepreneurs, capital allocators, communication experts, industry bodies, policy makers and think tanks in the climate field, and held in-depth interviews with 82 of them. Through this process, we identified common patterns in the approaches adopted by different stakeholders to create widespread change in the ecosystem. These exemplars point to powerful ways to reframe problems and novel strategies for addressing them.

The study participants highlighted the imperative for a systemic re-imagining and re-engineering of systems, strategies, and existing paradigms to mitigate the effects of climate change. To maintain the balance of people, planet and profit, it is vital to unleash a powerful new trifecta of Creativity, Innovation, and Collaboration.

This study focused on identifying and showcasing diverse, innovative large-scale ideas and systems-change approaches that accelerate the adoption of collaborative action. The four axes for our study were:

1. paradigm shifts (social and cultural changes);
2. planet impact goals (meaningful scale for meaningful impact);
3. temporal goals, (the speed of response);
4. equity goals (striving for a just transition).

Download the climate report [HERE](#)

## Roundtables to inspire action

From the launch of the report, two virtual roundtable events were organized for key stakeholders in the field to disseminate the learning and talk about emerging opportunities in the area of climate action.

### Climate Action Round Table 1 (October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021)

Key topics covered: Using data as decision-making tools for creating climate solutions that can scale. New trends and opportunities in the climate action ecosystem.

Please find the recording of the session [HERE](#)

### Climate Action Round Table 2 (November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021)

Key topics covered: Trends and opportunities in raising finance for climate action programs. Financing experimental and new innovations for climate solutions.

30 participants from 15 organizations attended.

# Resilience for the next crisis (climate action)

## Deriving insights on strategies

### Key takeaways from the Climate Action Report (2021)

- **Women as Climate Stewards and Early Adopters:** creating structures and protocols to work collectively with large set of volunteers and institutions to provide relief in their own areas of expertise.
- **Data as a Driver for Change:** making quick adaptations to existing technology platforms and products to help with the emergency response.
- **Creative and Collaborative Climate Finance:** While there is a marked uptick in funding activity, some clear whitespaces have emerged around funding for ecosystem facilitation, models that accommodate decentralized needs, support for demonstration and commercialization at scale, and risk funding.
- **Equip Everyone with Tools & Opportunities to Play a Role in Climate Action:** For social entrepreneurs, transformative change will happen when there is a groundswell of people actively engaged in climate action. To enable this, they support individuals with the tools and opportunities to engage in changemaking.
- **Strengthen the Interconnectedness of Nature, Wisdom and Science:** Social innovators leverage the power of local wisdom and scientific knowledge to protect forests and common lands, offset the harmful effects of greenhouse gases, and regenerate these areas to maintain ecological functions and resources within the biodiversity they harbor.

Find additional details [HERE](#)

# Flexible funding and managing donations

## Consulting for Fellows

### **Financial consultations** (December 2021- February 2022)

There has been a growing need among non-profits in India to raise funding locally due to the FCRA rule becoming more stringent and licences being revoked which has curbed their opportunity to raise funds globally. In response to this, Ashoka organized consultative support for our recently elected Fellows to support them in setting up their personal and organizational financial systems that would make them compliant and sustainable.

### **Series of one-on-one consultations and sessions**

- 15 Fellows supported
- Led by Venkata Raveendra, Global Finance and Reporting Manager
- Goal: to support their FCRA setups, personal finance and taxation

# Showcasing resilience, leadership and systemic solutions

## Inspiring globally

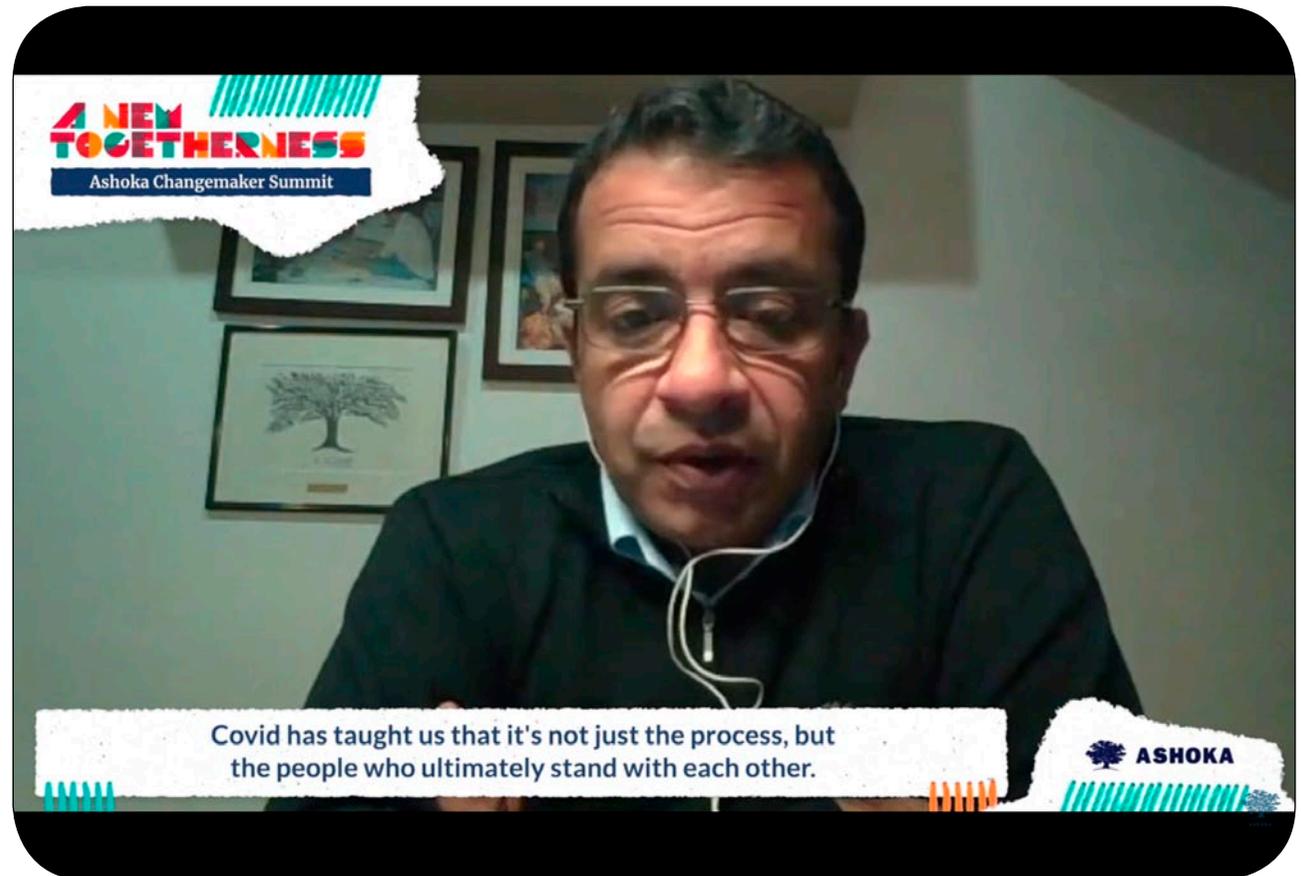
### Ashoka Changemaker Summit (ACMS)

The summit is a global event that gathers the main protagonists of change and social transformation. **Ashoka India co-organized one of the ACMS sessions** and our Ashoka Fellow represented the region in the panel. Anshu Gupta from Goonj joined the discussion to put a *“Spotlight for wellbeing, leadership and systemic changes in the aftermath of the pandemic.”*

Snippets of wisdom from Anshu:

- **Charity kills people's dignity & It's about people, not processes**

Watch the whole session [HERE](#)



**SURFACING MORE SOCIAL  
ENTREPRENEURS:**

**South Asia**

# Searching and selecting new social change leaders

## Surfacing new Ashoka Fellows

### Selection process

- The climate mapping interviews led to a large pipeline of nominations of candidates to Ashoka Fellowship. For example, Jagdeesh, Saurav and Vishwanath were participants in the climate study.
- Focus areas: Environment and sustainability, livelihoods, rural development and citizen mobilization/participation
- 70 candidates were reviewed across South Asia
- Important part of the process is to meet candidates in person (site visits), travelling domestically however resumed only recently

### Venture Panels

- Organizing still heavily affected by international travel restrictions to ensure safety of panellists from abroad
- 10 virtual panels have been conducted – 2021: January, March, June, August (2) and November; 2022: February, March, April and May
- With the support of Target Foundation, we elected 5 Ashoka Fellows and will organize an in-person panel and a Fellows retreat for them in the fall 2022.

## Collecting insights in the process

### Learning from candidates

- Large innovations and opportunities in the intersection between livelihoods, climate and gender – especially in a rural context
- Trends of systemic impact seen greatly through network and platform-based models of impact
- Covid-19 has resulted in a large reverse migration from urban to rural areas, creating need and focus on sustainable livelihoods

### Types of Ashoka Fellows

- Ashoka Fellow in need of a living stipend
- Ashoka Fellow funded by other resources (non-financial support)
- Ashoka Senior Fellow bringing valuable know-how and benefiting from the network, without a living stipend

# Ashoka Fellow supported by stipend



## EMERGENCY RESPONSE CARE

# Rajesh Trivedi

**Solution developed:** Through his organization, ALERT, Rajesh is making networks, resources, tools, and knowledge accessible so that one person in every family can become an emergency caregiver. He is doing this by bringing together stakeholders across the first response ecosystem, starting from communities on the ground and including the government, education institutions, healthcare systems, and law enforcement, to ensure last mile delivery of emergency care.

Along with the partnership with the government of Tamil Nadu, ALERT has collaborated with the government of Karnataka, department of Home, Health, and Transportation

in 2017, Apollo hospitals and is a part of the core committee that is tasked to formulate the Emergency Response framework for India along with the World Health Organization & All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

**Intended impact:** In terms of direct impact, by working with individuals from various walks of life over the years, like auto drivers, security guards, coast guards, the Indian Army, roadside shop owners, and various corporates among others, ALERT has empowered over 150,000 individuals by the end of 2020. These empowered individuals have saved over 1,500 lives using emergency response skills.

 India, Tamil Nadu, Chennai  
Alert

 <https://alert.ngo>

# Ashoka Fellow supported by stipend



## RURAL DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY BUILDING

# Manisha Ghule

**Solution developed:** In remote interior villages of Maharashtra, India, Manisha Ghule is opening up new jobs and career pathways (known as Sakhis) that enable the most invisible and excluded rural women to earn with dignity, while transforming the agricultural economy and social structures of their regions. Across villages affected by global climate change, migration, declining agriculture, and joblessness, Manisha is shaping a new and sustainable employment model for rural women – one that establishes them as leaders of economic progress and social equity. Through her work, she is redefining the roles of women in rural areas and building new jobs and career pathways that transform rural women into leaders

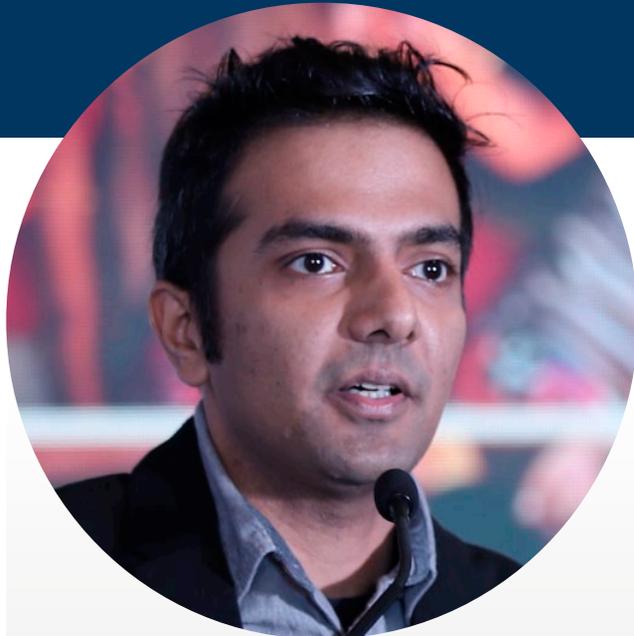
of village development. These women ‘front-line development professionals’ (called Sakhi or friend) are drawn from denotified tribes, Dalits, and other backward communities.

**Intended impact:** So far, Sakhis have served 15,000 families, incubated 4,500 micro-enterprises, and engaged 3,500 farmers in bio-farming of high-value crops. They have enabled 20,000 women to become joint owners of property and unlocked access to social protection schemes for 5,000 women. Riding on the capable shoulders of its Sakhis, villages are now reporting a 60-80% increase in household incomes. As a result, more than 3,500 families have altogether stopped inter-generational migration.

 **India, Maharashtra, Beed**  
Navchetna Sarvangin Vikas  
Kendra

 <http://navchetna.org/>

# Candidate for Fellowship



 India, Assam, Guwahati  
Rural Futures

 [baliparafoundation.com](https://baliparafoundation.com)

## CLIMATE ACTION & LIVELIHOODS

### Saurav Malhotra

**Solution developed:** Rural Futures framework is for socioeconomic mobility through habitat restoration and agroforestry, empowering Eastern Himalayan communities to be stewards of their natural assets – paving the way for natural capital-based delivery of universal basic assets such as education & healthcare. The organization manages 4,000 hectares of forest land with 5 million natural assets and has supported over 10,000 people across Bodo and Mising communities along with the Arunachal Pradesh – Assam – Bhutan border.

By training youth in capital skills and creating youth-based organizations, Saurav aims

to scale up Rural Futures itself by making them into training centres. They carry a dominant part of on-ground exercises identified with reforestation, agroforestry, and the building capacities of their fellows. Further, women of the region are empowered and made self-sufficient by incorporating traditional knowledge of mushroom cultivation to build profitable, self-sustaining businesses.

**Intended impact:** More than 35,000 women have been directly and indirectly impacted by the initiative. These communities will play a huge role in ecological governance by being stakeholders of natural resources in the region.

# Ashoka Fellow supported non-financially



 India, Karnataka, Bangalore  
Biome Environmental Trust  
 <https://biometruster.org/>

## WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### Vishwanath S

**Solution developed:** Vishwanath is shifting the long-accepted view of Indian cities as large-scale water consumers facing water scarcity crisis, to those same cities as innovation hubs for water production who are confident in their management of water resources and can export water it produces to distant areas in the urban periphery experiencing water scarcity.

To meet the challenge faced by cities tackling declining water tables, Vishwanath led the effort to recharge Bangalore's aquifers by engaging traditional well diggers, a scheduled caste whose members had dwindled as the demand for their traditional open shallow wells had declined.

**Intended impact:** The success of this effort (150,000 new shallow wells dug so far) has led the Government of India to announce plans to replicate the approach in 500 cities across India. Alongside this, Vishwanath worked with the Karnataka Government to design and implement the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage (Amendment) Act, 2009, which made it mandatory for households in Bangalore to use harvested rainwater. Another aspect of Vishwanath's work is empowering women at the local level to come up with solutions to problems communicated at the local level

India

# Example of selected Ashoka Senior Fellows



 India, Gujarat, Anand  
Foundation for Ecological  
Security (FES)  
 <https://www.fes.org.in/>

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

### Jagdeesh Rao

**Solution developed:** Through the Foundation for Ecological Security, Jagdeesh has built an integrated methodology that brings together principles of self-governance, community cohesion and justice to enable the revival of the commons in India.

Instead of considering farming as crop production alone, Jagdeesh views its interconnections with the larger farming system. The larger system includes other resources beyond the farm, such as forests, pastures, bodies of water, livestock, pollinators and pest predators, which connect different land and water resources. As Jagdeesh's work is often located in ecologically degraded and poverty prone areas, he engages

local communities in deciding options that meet subsistence requirements and generate income, as well as the likely impact of their choices on the ecological thresholds over time.

**Intended impact:** FES has brought together 28 NGOs to implement a program in 14 districts of Andhra Pradesh, along with academicians, policy makers, and funded and worked with 7 networks – ground water, NGOs, coastal waters, pastoralists, knowledge commons and urban commons through the International Conference on Commons. They have reached 20,290 villages across 10 ecological regions of India, restoring 6.3 million acres of common lands and impacting the lives of 11 million people.

# Example of selected Ashoka Senior Fellows



## MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

# Aparna Hedge

**Solution developed:** Aparna is using an innovative Tech plus Touch model to strengthen the existing healthcare system in India to deliver timely care and information for pregnant women and children. In doing so, she is creating a future where the experience of pregnancy and childbirth is one of hope and courage as opposed to fear and trauma.

Through ARMMAN (Advancing Reduction in Mortality and Morbidity of Mothers, Children, and Neonates), Aparna is using technology to strengthen the capacity of frontline government health workers while also developing interventions that provide timely information and data to both patients and medical professionals

on nutrition, adherence and other key areas related to maternal and child health.

**Intended impact:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) partnered with ARMMAN through the Kilkari initiative and has now reached 23 million women and their children across 16 states and Union Territories of India and has 2.5 million active users. The partnership with the government also includes a mobile learning platform, Mobile Academy, that trained 150,000 government frontline health workers, reinforcing and refreshing their knowledge of life-saving preventative health behaviors and improving the quality of their engagement with pregnant women, mothers, and children.

 India, Maharashtra, Mumbai  
Armaan

 <https://www.armman.org>

# Embracing an Everyone A Changemaker vision

## Connections & visibility

### Everyone A Changemaker Web Series (from April 2022)

The vision behind this initiative is to highlight powerful stories from Ashoka Fellows in India. We will be capturing their life journeys, ideas, impact and growth to share it with Ashoka's wider audience. We aim to create a platform where people can listen and learn, and inspire them to become changemakers within their communities. We aspire to build a movement where changemaking becomes a message that spreads across every sphere of society.

#### Objectives

1. Inspire changemaking among audiences in high schools, colleges and young professionals
2. Build visibility and create a platform to highlight Ashoka Fellows
3. Map innovations, trends and patterns in emerging areas of social entrepreneurship and systems change
4. Facilitate quarterly engagements with Fellows to build collaborations and design co-created impact models

#### Timeline

- 5 interviews conducted with Fellows in Planet & Climate so far
- Web series to launch publicly by end May (interviews available on YouTube, Spotify and Apple)
- Project to run from May 2022 till April 2023

## Collected insights

### Insight & Learning from starting conversations

- Key emphasis on redefinition of livelihoods to focus on climate adaptation
- Women seen as the champions of climate action and stewards of environmental sustainability
- Large opportunity in providing education and training to young people for climate resilient programs

# Lessons learned for the Ashoka team

## Learning & Insights

**Emergence of new areas for social entrepreneurship and innovation:** Ashoka started its rich 40-year-old history of identifying transformative ideas carried by social entrepreneurs in South Asia and built a fellowship of 650+ members there. We have a strong opportunity now for mapping new trends and innovations in new fields. Many Fellows have adapted the core functioning of their impact models towards a post covid world and responding to new focus areas. E.g. education systems in a post covid ecosystem, last mile health solutions, sustainable livelihoods in rural areas that can meet the challenge of river migration.

**Developing an EACH movement:** Beside our core mission to support and grow the field of social entrepreneurship, we are strategically working with Fellows that champion a decentralized changemaking approach and facilitating a wider audience to become active changemakers within their regions and contexts. By partnering with companies, education hubs and media, Ashoka is working to expand the Everyone a Changemaker vision at an ecosystem level that embraces empathy and problem solving.

**Expanding regionally within South Asia:** Ashoka South Asia has its hub in Bangalore, Karnataka. As we globally expand through partners that align to the EACH movement, an opportunity arises for strengthening our work in countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. This would require both strategic efforts as well as operational expansion to serve these emerging regions.

# Latin America

Let's zoom in on this  
region in 2021-22



# CHANGEMAKERS UNIDOS: Latin America

CONSTRUYAMOS UN  
FUTURO DE CAMBIO

CHANGE  
MAKERS  
UNIDOS

# The pandemic exposed major problems and gaps across many systems

## Healthcare

With 58.8%, users of health systems in Latin America said that the biggest problem was the shortage of medicines and supplies, followed by the capacity of the system with 38.5%, appointments of politicians or relatives with 38.2%, long waiting lines with 34.6% and fraud with 29.5%.

(According to INCAE, Central American Institute of Business Administration)

Insights from Ashoka Fellows [HERE](#)



## Gender

Women are 30% less likely than men to be employed, more likely to be poor and to grow old without a proper pension in Latin America. Yet, their participation in the labor force has increased by over 60%.

(According to BID, Inter-American Development Bank)

Insights from Ashoka Fellows [HERE](#)



## Economic Inclusion

Extreme poverty in the region has reduced by more than 50%, yet most of the poor who moved up the income ladder did not join the middle class, but rather a "vulnerable" group halfway between the poor and the middle class.

(According to data from the [OECD](#))

Insights from Ashoka Fellows [HERE](#)



## Education

In Latin America and the Caribbean, more than 170 million children are missing school due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 50% of children, at the age of 10, could not read properly and under 60% use the Internet.

(According to data from World Bank)

Insights from Ashoka Fellows [HERE](#)



## Democracy

Support for democracy has gone from 61% in 2010, to 53% in 2017, which means a loss of eight percentage points.

(According to The New York Times)

Insights from Ashoka Fellows [HERE](#)



# Social entrepreneurs have been bringing new models to transform those systems



The network in Latin America is the largest, connects over 1,000 Ashoka Fellows and engages Young Changemakers as well.

More than 40 outstanding social entrepreneurs and young changemakers from 10 countries have been recognized for bringing systems change in the critical fields and supported by the Changemakers Unidos initiative.

Their impact spans from Mexico, Guatemala, Trinidad and Tobago, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil.

Browse through profiles of the supported social entrepreneurs [HERE](#) (2020) and [HERE](#) (2021)

# They emphasized connection, visibility and inclusivity...

## Lessons learned

Based on the analysis of survey responses, interviews, and various conversations with the social entrepreneurs, pro-bono experts and mentors, and Ashoka teams involved, we extracted some key learnings from Changemakers Unidos in 2020. These points served to shape the initiative moving forward in 2021.

Realize more **peer-to-peer connections between participating Fellows** and more community activities as they are valued a lot to build knowledge, trust and a basis for collaboration.

Building **new and even stronger alliances with media** partners can bring valuable distribution of ideas and work of the Fellows.

More **investment in technology training and development**. Latin America team is looking into a new platform for online events to guarantee a more fluid process and simultaneous translation to ensure inclusivity.

# ...and we designed a program reflecting those priorities.

## Strategies for support

### 1 Learning and Mentoring Sessions

Training to improve their communication strategies at different levels through masterclasses, and personalized mentoring sessions.

### 2 Media Positioning at Regional Level

Interview sessions with social entrepreneurs around selected fields to showcase their expertise and place their impact on the map.

### 3 Media Visibility

Connecting with emergent media opportunities throughout the region to boost their visibility with the local communities that they represent. Engaging with opportunities such as the Ashoka Changemaker Summit provided by Ashoka's global network to position the impact of Latin American innovators across continents.

# Over the next months we built a network of support together

We strengthened knowledge and skills focusing on communication for the selected entrepreneurs throughout different masterclasses and mentorship support. Building a community of social change leaders and guaranteeing that every participant felt included by having all sessions in Spanish and Portuguese were important elements as well.



# We carefully selected social entrepreneurs across Latin America

In 2021, we engaged social change leaders across fields and countries with diverse representation of gender, language, and age. We mapped their needs specifically around communication by conducting individual interviews and onboarded them to the program.

Selected **Ashoka Fellows** 2021 and its positive impact areas were:

- 4 Social entrepreneurs in **health**
- 3 Social entrepreneurs in **economic inclusion**
- 4 Social entrepreneurs in **gender**
- 3 Social entrepreneurs in **democracy**
- 1 Social entrepreneur in **education**

This time, **Young Changemakers** were also included. Their positive impact areas were:

- 1 Young changemaker in **health**
- 1 Young changemaker in **economic inclusion**
- 2 Young changemaker in **education**
- 1 Young changemaker in **democracy**

Moreover, the representation by gender among the cohort was mostly female with **14 women leaders** in charge of their respective projects.



# Example of supported CMU Fellows

Venezuela



## HEALTH

# Mercedes de Freitas

**Solution:** Transparencia Venezuela is a non-profit, non-partisan, and plural civil association dedicated to promote conditions, procedures and factors to prevent and diminish corruption. Being apart of this worldwide web of anti-corruption organizations allows for the sharing of methodologies, tools and good practices to propel Venezuela towards international standards. Under the pandemic's context, Mercedes made it visible that emergencies are also an opportunity for corruption. Along the team, they evidenced it so that the healthcare systems reached everyone all the same. While living in a country with so many risks and crises, they already had protocols for telework, power outages and others in their

organization. Therefore, with the arrival of the pandemics, they already knew how to proceed. Especially since an important part of the workforce lives in regions. Long-distance work wasn't a novelty. National crisis had prepared them for the pandemics.

**Intended impact:** Mercedes' dream is for the country to change its structure. The way in which the public and the private are related. She looks to generate trust and respect to the public, a place where there exists a justice system that is transparent and safe.

 **Venezuela**  
Transparencia Venezuela  
 [www.transparencia.org.ve](http://www.transparencia.org.ve)

# Example of supported CMU Fellows

Chile



Chile

CIDEM – Interdisciplinary Center for Women



<https://cidemchile.cl/>

## GENDER

# Nerea de Ugarte Lopez

**Solution:** During the pandemic, Nerea recognized the damage on women’s mental health due to the lack of co-responsibility, violence and abuse. Through her clinical work, activism, her civil society organization of education and her writing, she has worked on raising awareness that the communitarian and clinical approach to mental health must be influenced by a gender’s perspective. With her CIDEM project, Nerea looks to rethink and redefine the way in which psychotherapy and mental health investigation have been done so far.

Along her team, they aim to achieve a collective and communitarian approach to be able to augment the impact and reach more people.

**Intended impact:** Nerea says that Chile, considering its political and cultural situation where everything can be improved from a gender’s perspective, must be perceived as an opportunity to innovate basic structure. They aim for a more inclusive society towards gender, where personal process can’t be limited to be individual, where women’s experiences must be understood in an uneven sociocultural context.

# Example of supported CMU Fellows



Argentina



## ECONOMIC INCLUSION

# Pablo Ordóñez

**Solution:** Pablo and his team work to be a channel that bonds important sized companies and pymes, uniting the products or services demand with small local producers. During the pandemics, they promoted a campaign along Ashoka named “One million face masks”. Through assertive communication, they aim for it to be transcendent and for it to be able to modify the decisions of the “decision makers”. They are based on the generation and sustainment of jobs in small producers from the area under the emergency scenario of COVID. Besides, they have made a big effort to be more inclusive to women, especially since they've realized that co-responsibility does not exist. Nevertheless, Pablo establishes that the

biggest challenge, on the side of the companies, is to accelerate the process of awareness raising to where their areas see it as an opportunity to associate with small producers.

**Intended impact:** The ideal is that many families will be able to sustain themselves with a respectable job and have quality of life. Pablo and his team see the CODE as a system with the potential of being replicable by others. They emphasize the need that they must lead conscious shopping and the generation of work on a scale. The inclusion and the radiation of poverty can be associated to the conscious consumption, since it has a transforming power.

-  **Argentina**  
CODE Distribute Opportunities
-  [www.codearg.com.ar/wp/](http://www.codearg.com.ar/wp/)

# Example of supported CMU Fellows

Colombia



## EDUCATION

# Luis Camargo

**Solution:** Luis and his team look to support schools in accelerating the inclusion of educational tools based on nature, including the implementation of outdoors classrooms, which have been proven to diminish the risks of COVID-19 being transmitted in the learning environment. Additionally, they turn into the door of evolution towards a nature-based education. From his approach, nature-based education provides tools and strengthens the construction of harmonic relationships up to three levels, me, us, nature.

**Intended impact:** Luis says that his dream is that the relationship with nature is considered a fundamental factor in human beings. He emphasizes that children are agents of regeneration, and that we must achieve a “transforming army” of children related to nature.

 Colombia  
OpEPA

 <https://opepa.org/>

Mexico

# Example of supported CMU Young Changemakers



## DEMOCRACY

### Ana Sofía Sada

**Solution:** Puente y Coma is a social company dedicated to link companies, social and environmental initiatives with each other, in other that, through strategic alliances, they can build high impact projects.

In the context of the Covid 19 pandemic, Ana Sofia and her team focused even more on their goal. Their task was to connect, as if it were supply-demand, people with companies and organizations that wanted to help, with all the initiatives, people, and hospitals that needed support. Many people wrote to them to contribute, but they did not know how to reach companies or organizations, and in parallel the companies asked them for more help. This is how they discovered that,

by creating networks, they could generate more positive impacts in their community so affected by the pandemic.

**Intended impact:** The impact Ana Sofia and her team seek to achieve is to increase the number of powerful partnerships between the social and private sector. They want all the bridges/partnerships they build to be sustainable over time and have a real impact. In addition to scaling nationally in Mexico.

 Mexico  
Puente y Coma  
 [puenteycoma.com](https://puenteycoma.com)

# We mobilized these changemakers to provide their guidance and resources

## Engaging with mentors

### 20 strategic mentors matched with social entrepreneurs

Each entrepreneur was paired with a mentor to boost their communication strategy. Employees of Sarape Social, Kearney, and Ecomsur took on the mentoring role. Others joined in their personal capacity building on their expertise from Sud Producciones, Pvblic, and Disruptivo TV.

## Engaging with companies

### Partners supported financially and with know-how

Target Foundation, Beiersdorf, Boehringer Ingelheim, and BMW Foundation enabled Ashoka to run this program thanks to their financial donations.

Experts from Facebook, Sarape Social, and Impaqto prepared and facilitated the masterclasses to build capacity and share insights from their sector.

"I learned about the importance of working in teams and to have empathy with the organization's purpose. When you start a new project, it can be complex, but once you understand it, you become part of the purpose. That's where the magic is: you become part of this "philosophy" and you adopt it."

"To support project that aims to generate social change is fundamental to ensure equity in all aspects. Regardless the scale of the project or the change, at least one person could be impacted and change their local reality and inspire new changemakers."

"Changemakers Unidos is a huge initiative, which goes beyond hours of mentoring, it can generate long term collaborations."

**Beiersdorf**

 **foundation**

**BMW Foundation**  
Herbert Quandt

 **Boehringer  
Ingelheim**

 **Sarape  
social.**

**FACEBOOK**

 **IMPA  
QTO**

# Sharing insights and inspiring our wider community

## Inspiring globally

### Ashoka Changemaker Summit (ACMS)

The summit is a global event that gathers the main protagonists of change and social transformation. Changemakers Unidos co-organized one of the ACMS sessions and a young changemaker represented the region in the panel. Ana Sofia Sada Cazarín from Puente y Coma joined the discussion to put a “*Spotlight for wellbeing, leadership and systemic changes in the aftermath of the pandemic.*”

Snippets of wisdom from Ana Sofia:

- **Contribute to the solution, not the problem & The power of relationships for impact during Covid**

Watch the whole session [HERE](#)



## Changing mindsets

### Video series with Ashoka Fellows

To highlight issues in critical fields, we put Ashoka Fellows in the driver's seat, asked them to articulate their systemic view and inspire our community with their work and perspectives. A series of 5 videos captures insights to Gender, Education, Democracy, Health, and Economic Inclusion in Latin America.

Watch the playlist [HERE](#)

### Engaged mentors and experts

Changemakers Unidos was a great opportunity to engage new mentors and partners with specific expertise. It presented new ways to contribute for those who in the past worked only on specific and limited projects, while this program permitted them to work alongside social entrepreneurs, build stronger connections and bring learnings back to their teams.

# When reflecting on the given support and opportunities...

“**Teamwork** and empathy aiming organization.”

“**Personal and professional growth** was highly important to me as well as making contact with influential projects that generate social changes in Latin America.”

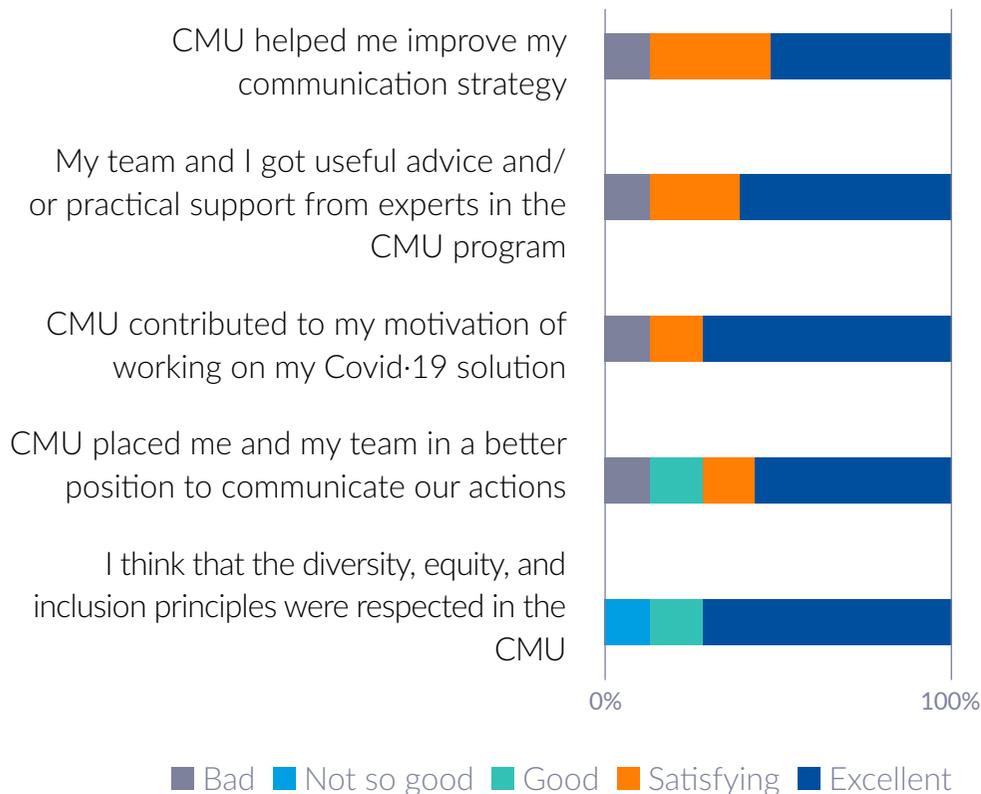
“Mentoring was excellent. The **exchange of knowledge**, the working plan and every developed strategy.”

“I realized that I didn’t have much information about social media tools, and I reinforced the perception of zero interest in new and well-known tools and “advanced” technology in general to guarantee access to information for people with low literacy, disabilities, elderly, etc. It was then **a double learning: new knowledge and the awareness** of how old and poor are the newest tools when combating ableism, confirming neurodiversity, and promoting inclusion.”

“Changemakers United has broken into the path of our initiatives which **generates an impact for our beneficiaries** accompanying us during this journey. My deepest appreciation!”

# ...we were amazed by the impact of the Changemakers Unidos initiative.

## 1 Mentoring and learning rating of the participants



2 Mentors rated their **experience** with a **4.3** of a maximum of 5 points.

- 3 The greatest learnings and works during mentoring were in subjects related to:
- A) Marketing base and project communication
  - B) Segmentation of internal and external communication
  - C) Communication strategies tailored to showcasing internal and external programs
  - D) Corporate coded messages
  - E) Creation of a communications strategy

4 The perception of social change after the program grew, thanks to the increased understanding of Latin America reality.

“I am glad to know that the same challenges are faced in different parts of the region.”

# Lessons learned for the Ashoka team

## Learning & Insights

**Media as a Driving Force:** Social entrepreneurs concentrate their focus and energy on their impact and economic sustainability, yet they do not prioritize communication strategies that could accelerate their goals and expand their reach to new communities and stakeholders.

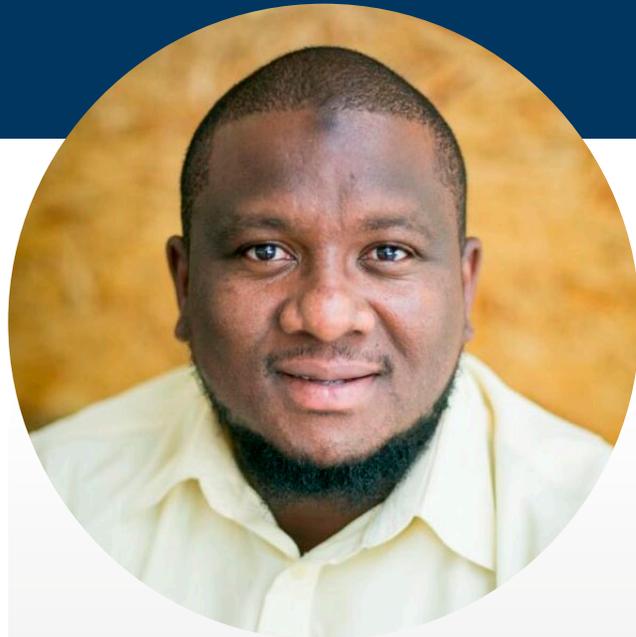
**Creating Value for Media:** Ashoka Fellows are innovators, experts in their field, and can give valuable insights and perspectives to media partners. A shift in perspective is needed from “how can media help me” to “how can I give value to the way social issues are portrayed in the media”.

**Leadership within networks:** Social entrepreneurs join impact communities and sector networks to position their organizations and gain credibility, but more active participation is needed to leverage the full potential of their membership to form meaningful connections and advance their goals.

**Awareness of opportunities:** There is low awareness of the numerous resources and tools that exist for content creators, including social organizations, to help communicate their impact and expand their visibility and growth. Teams need more support to help find low-cost, high-impact, resources available online.

**SURFACING MORE SOCIAL  
ENTREPRENEURS:  
Central America**

# Ashoka Fellow supported by stipend



 **Trinidad and Tobago**  
WhyFarm  
 <http://whyfarmit.org/>

 **Trinidad and Tobago**

## EMPLOYMENT – FOOD SECURITY

### Alpha Sennon

Alpha is addressing the global food security crisis by inspiring a new generation of farmers in Trinidad & Tobago. His programs encourage young people to consider careers in agriculture by exposing them at an early age to animations, music, poetry and drama that convey the importance of farmers and the accessibility of their profession, by integrating agricultural knowledge into local STEM curricula, and by equipping young "agripreneurs" with the business skills necessary to create systemic change in the agricultural sphere.

He also exposes children firsthand to the world of agriculture through various courses that combine farming with art, giving children opportunities to put their learning to use at a farm run by the NGO. Alpha also runs an 8-week accelerator program geared towards finding the best young "agricultural entrepreneurs," who are provided with mentorship and trainings related to social entrepreneurship, business models, and fundraising, with the aim of creating business plans to address local agricultural challenges.

# Alpha: Surfacing a new social change leader and boosting his solution

## SOURCING

Alpha connected through a Network Partner.

## CULTIVATION

**2018** Seeing his potential, he was invited to participate in the CEMEX-TEX Bootcamp (co-led by Ashoka) where he won First Prize.

**2019** Alpha received start-up funding and joined CEMEX-TEC as keynote speaker.

## SELECTION

**2019-2020** Ashoka took Alpha through a selection process that emphasized learning and connecting with other impact leaders to refine his narrative and think more systemically.

**2021** Alpha was elected and onboarded to the Ashoka Fellowship.

## ENGAGEMENT

**2022** He was presented to the community during an in-person event in Monterrey and in a Latin American summit online. Currently participating in a mentorship program with Target Foundation.

**Onwards** Alpha will receive intensive support during his first year at Ashoka through Nexos, a journey shared with peers in Latin America.

[CLICK HERE](#) to hear Alpha share his story and experience in CEMEX-TEC



[CLICK HERE](#) to hear Alpha introduce himself and what an Everyone a Changemaker world means to him



# Alpha: Leveraging Ashoka's network for growing his venture

## Introduction to the network

**Ashoka LATAM Changemaker Summit** (April 26-28<sup>th</sup>)

Alpha and other social entrepreneurs elected in 2020 and 2021 were publicly presented at an online summit that will convene Ashoka's network across Latin America.

They participated in thematic, cross-sector roundtables to share their expertise and connect with potential allies.

Explore the event [HERE](#)

**Public event in Monterrey** (April 29-30<sup>th</sup>)

As part of the Summit, Alpha joined his regional cohort in Monterrey, Mexico for an in-person event. He did present his work before leaders from the national impact ecosystem and other sectors, receive 1-1 mentoring, and meet the local Fellow community.

## Learning opportunities

**Nexos**

This program was designed by Ashoka Latin America to support, connect and catalyze social entrepreneurs during their first year in the Fellowship.

Through this online learning journey, Alpha and his cohort will:

- Develop and hone systems change strategies while learning from peers
- Form meaningful connections with changemakers across the region to multiply their collective impact
- Build resilient leadership that empowers other leaders
- Gain tools to improve their wellbeing

## Pro bono support

**Target Foundation's support**

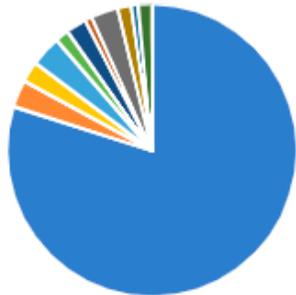
Alpha is currently being mentored by a team of Target Foundation experts to develop strategies that will bring his solution to the next level.

What he is seeking to learn:

1. Build a marketing plan
2. Improve WhyFarm's digital content and communications
3. Develop sustainable packaging for WhyFarm products
4. Craft a winning pitch to source funding for an AGRIman cartoon series

# Diving deeper in the search and selection process in Central America – 2021 Insights

Nominations by country- 2021 Cycle



**35**  
Nominations from Central America (263 total)

- Mexico
- El Salvador
- Nicaragua
- Saint Lucia
- Costa Rica
- Guatemala
- Panama
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Belize
- Honduras
- Dominican Republic
- Haiti

## Ecosystem “Warm Spots”

Most nominations from Central America came from the two countries identified by Ashoka as potential social innovation hotspots – **Guatemala (9)** and **Costa Rica (8)**.

Nominations by Field of Work -Central America

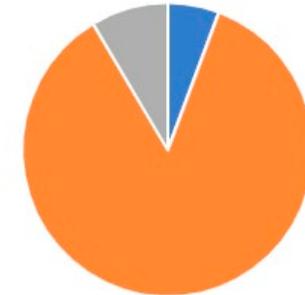


- Education
- Economic Development
- Human Rights
- Civic Participation
- Environment
- Health

## Trending Fields

**Economic Development** and **Education** were the most common fields, while Civic Participation and Human Rights were the least common.

1st Review Results - Central America



**14%**  
Candidates from Central America shortlisted

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

- **Improvement need in quantity + quality:** Only 13% of nominations came from Central America and out of 35 candidates, only 5 advanced beyond the first interview.
- **Ecosystem building is key:** Most rejected projects from the region were early stage, showed low innovation, or were not systemic.
- **Dominance of for-profit models:** 1/3 of projects were not eligible due to a for-profit model. Possible causes include fundraising challenges faced by non-profits in the region and a lack of legal alternatives.

# Diving deeper in the search and selection process in Central America – 2022 Site visit

## (Re)connecting with the ecosystem

The Ashoka team travelled to Central America – Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica – to re-connect with local Fellows and network partners, meet potential nominators and candidates, and gain insight into trends in the region's social innovation ecosystem. We identified these countries as potential hotspots through ecosystem mapping, interviews with network partners, and desk research.

### KEY FINDINGS

#### – Challenges

- **Awareness of social entrepreneurship is limited and superficial.** Social impact is largely associated with charity, although B-corp models are gaining traction. In Costa Rica where the concept is better known, it is sometimes co-opted for marketing.
- **The economic crisis exacerbated fragmentation in local ecosystems.** Financial insecurity, a sense of burnout and persecution by the government (in the case of Honduras and Guatemala) leave little energy available for collaboration. This has a knock-on effect on innovation and scaling impact.
- **Few funding sources,** lack of a legal framework for hybrid options, and public distrust of social organizations lead many to turn to for-profit models.
- **Available support for social entrepreneurs is not inclusive.** While digitalization in the pandemic allowed programs to reach people beyond large cities, connectivity gaps and lack of specific support mean they remain exclusive.
- **Impacts of climate change are already being felt.** However, the environment is not a priority in the public agenda except in Costa Rica.

#### + Opportunities

- **Grassroots responses to Covid-19 created momentum for changemaking.** Many launched social projects for the first time and are eager to continue creating impact. With the right support, the emergency response can evolve into systemic solutions. Common themes are economic recovery, education technology, and food security.
- **Civic participation is a field ripe for disruption.** Corruption is a key concern across the region and innovations are emerging to increase transparency and accountability, often leveraging tech.
- **Funders play a key role in fostering connections.** Donor networks are one of the main ways social entrepreneurs connect with each other and find partners. Engaging them is critical to improve outreach.
- **Migration can be an entry point to increase collaboration.** As a challenge that transcends borders and cross-cuts fields, it can be a rallying call to engage stakeholders in different countries and sectors.
- **The private sector is increasingly interested in social impact.** To tap into this momentum, there is a need to raise awareness about concepts, best practices, and the needs of social entrepreneurs. Existing relationships with universities are a potential lever.

# Candidate for Fellowship

Guatemala



- 🌐 Guatemala / Canada  
Ecology and Solidarity International (ECOSOL)/ Instituto Mesoamericano de Permacultura (IMAP)
- 🌐 <https://ecologyandsolidarity.org/>

## PLANET & CLIMATE – FOOD SECURITY

### Ronaldo Lec

Ronaldo seeks to transform the global agri-food system **to improve access to food that is healthy for people and the planet**. Working with indigenous communities with high levels of malnutrition in Guatemala, Colombia, and Canada, Ronaldo has 20+ years of experience doing trainings to **recover native seeds and ancestral farming techniques**, strengthen their **food security**, and help strengthen their role as producers for a global market.

To address the other end of the food chain, **Ronaldo has now launched a new venture that invites consumers to reconnect with the origin of their food and learn about its economic, cultural and ecological impact**

while also promoting the recognition of indigenous knowledge and crops. Additionally, he seeks to create networks to foster knowledge-sharing and collaboration among indigenous people around the world.

His proposal **closes the gap between the well-being of rural communities and the availability of healthy, quality and environmentally friendly food for all**.

# Inside look: Site visit in Guatemala

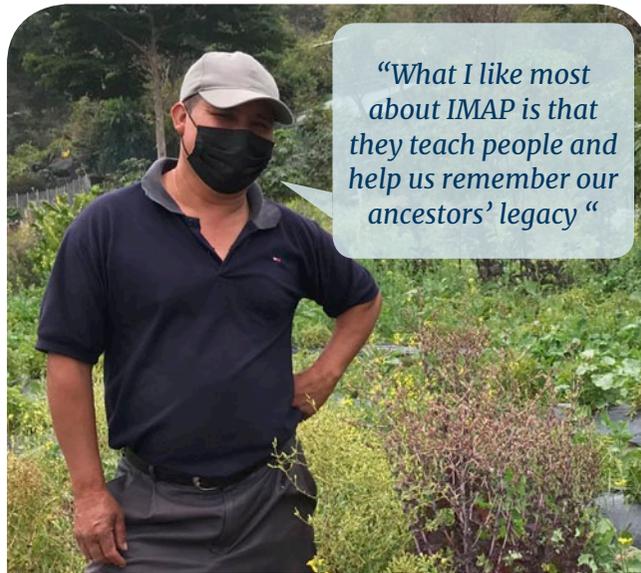


*“My plans for IMAP are to involve more women and youth and to launch a research and innovation lab“*

## Empowering leadership

As a leader, Ronaldo prioritizes **empowering others to take ownership**. Although he now lives in Canada, his organization in Guatemala continues working and innovating thanks to the leadership he nurtured in his team. Inés (pictured), stepped up as Director at IMAP after working there for 10+ years.

Explore more pictures [HERE](#)



*“What I like most about IMAP is that they teach people and help us remember our ancestors’ legacy “*

## Catalyzing new changemakers

Ronaldo’s Farmer to Farmer model engages farmers who have completed their training as teachers for the next cohort, **creating a role for them to contribute to the solution**. They are encouraged to train others independently beyond IMAP’s programs. Farmers like Juan (pictured) shared that they have helped their family and their neighbours to adopt more sustainable habits and agricultural practices.

See Juan’s field [HERE](#)



*“IMAP showed me a different way to do agriculture that is more conscious of people and nature.“*

## Scaling through replication

Ronaldo has **increased his indirect impact by enabling replication**. After training with IMAP, participants can receive follow-up support to establish their own projects. Some have become leaders in the field. Gregorio (pictured) now owns 4 demonstration farms where he hosts students and experts from around the world to learn innovative sustainable agriculture techniques.

See Gregorio’s Food Forest [HERE](#)

# Candidate for Fellowship

Costa Rica



 Costa Rica

Consortio de Turismo Inclusivo de las Américas (CONTURIA)/  
Centro Socioambiental Osa

 [CentroSocioambientalOsa](#)

## PLANET & CLIMATE – SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

### Roberval Tavares

Roberval is building the infrastructure in Latin America to **make tourism inclusive for people with disability**. As a person with visual disability himself, he firmly believes that through the senses, people with and without disability can **connect more with natural ecosystems and raise awareness about the importance of protecting them**. Further, improving accessibility contributes to **economic development** by creating new job opportunities for people with disability and allowing community-based tourism providers to tap into a new market.

Roberval collaborates with the public and private sectors (e.g., tourism agencies) to

ensure that nature tourism destinations are fully accessible, while also building capacity at the community level to receive visitors.

He is currently working to **consolidate national and international networks** of organizations that work on disability issues to work towards **accessibility in all public spaces** in a coordinated way.

# Inside look: Site visit in Costa Rica



## Changing mindsets

Roberval believes that accessibility goes beyond infrastructure – it is about **changing attitudes around disability**. His work seeks to demonstrate that making tourism inclusive is not only possible but a right that creates value for all. He **engages the full spectrum of stakeholders** (people with disability, authorities, businesses, and local communities) to raise awareness and co-create solutions. Jenny (pictured), Co-Director of CONTURIA, thought she would never see a national park again when she lost mobility.

See the accessible path pictured in action [HERE](#)  
Explore more photos [HERE](#)



## Systemic Innovation

Multiple sources interviewed during the site visit confirmed that Roberval **pioneered inclusive tourism in Costa Rica 10+ years ago**. Used to being in nature as a biologist, after losing his sight he quickly noticed a gap and started piloting programs to bring people with disability to natural reserves for recreation and therapy. He was able to use tourism as an entry point to **create impact on multiple levels**: human rights, health, economic development, and environmental conservation. His ability to identify root causes and connect the dots shows that he is a systemic thinker.

Click on the image above to watch a short “sensory exercise”. Hear the explanation [HERE](#)



## Scaling impact

After proving his approach at the grassroots level, Roberval decided to shift away from direct service and instead **build capacity in key sectors to implement solutions at scale**. One of the main ways he does this is by working with public institutions to **shape policies for inclusive tourism**. With the municipal government of Pérez Zeledón (pictured), Roberval is piloting the first canton-wide strategy that can serve as a blueprint for others.

Read Roberval’s proposal with Pérez Zeledón for the 2021 Local Innovators Contest, a program co-led by Ashoka [HERE](#)

# Diving deeper in the search and selection process in Central America – Looking ahead

## Over the next months we will:

- Bring to a panel and select a new cohort of Fellows
- Launch a call for applications for the 2023 cohort and start a new cycle of pipeline review
- Strengthen sourcing in Central America by engaging a nominator network and outreach partners
- Continue supporting Alpha through Nexos and other programs

### MAY

May 30 - Jun 3  
Selection Panel for 2022 cohort in Mexico City

### JULY

LATAM Systems change course for 2021 cohort

### JULY

Prep for 2023 Cycle:  
Nominator trainings and outreach with network partners

### AUGUST

- Board decision expected
- Aug 1: Call for applications opens; first interviews
- Planet & Climate bootcamp

### SEPTEMBER

- Sept 8-9: Social Entrepreneurship Forum
- Sep 30: Applications close
- Candidates shortlisted; due diligence process starts
- Onboarding for 2022 Fellows

### OCT/NOV

- 2022 Fellows presented to the network in an in-person event
- Fellows Wellbeing Retreat

# Lessons learned for the Ashoka team

## What worked well?

### **Emphasizing a long-term view:**

Supporting entrepreneurs from an early stage helps guide them towards systemic approaches, increasing their chances of joining the Fellowship.

### **Working through partnerships:**

Collaboration allows us to expand our reach and engage entrepreneurs at different stages to build pipeline.

## What to improve?

### **Limited network outside Mexico:**

Ashoka needs to be better positioned in Central America. Without strong local partners, outreach is limited and engages few quality candidates.

### **Lack of inclusion:**

Pipeline-building activities must be adapted to meet the needs of entrepreneurs from marginalized communities to increase diversity.

## When moving forward

### **Ecosystem building:**

Invest in strengthening the impact ecosystem and aligning stakeholders around a shared vision to increase social innovation.

### **Broadening our network:**

Engage a network of nominators and co-leaders to build our capacity for sourcing innovations.

### **Creating demand:**

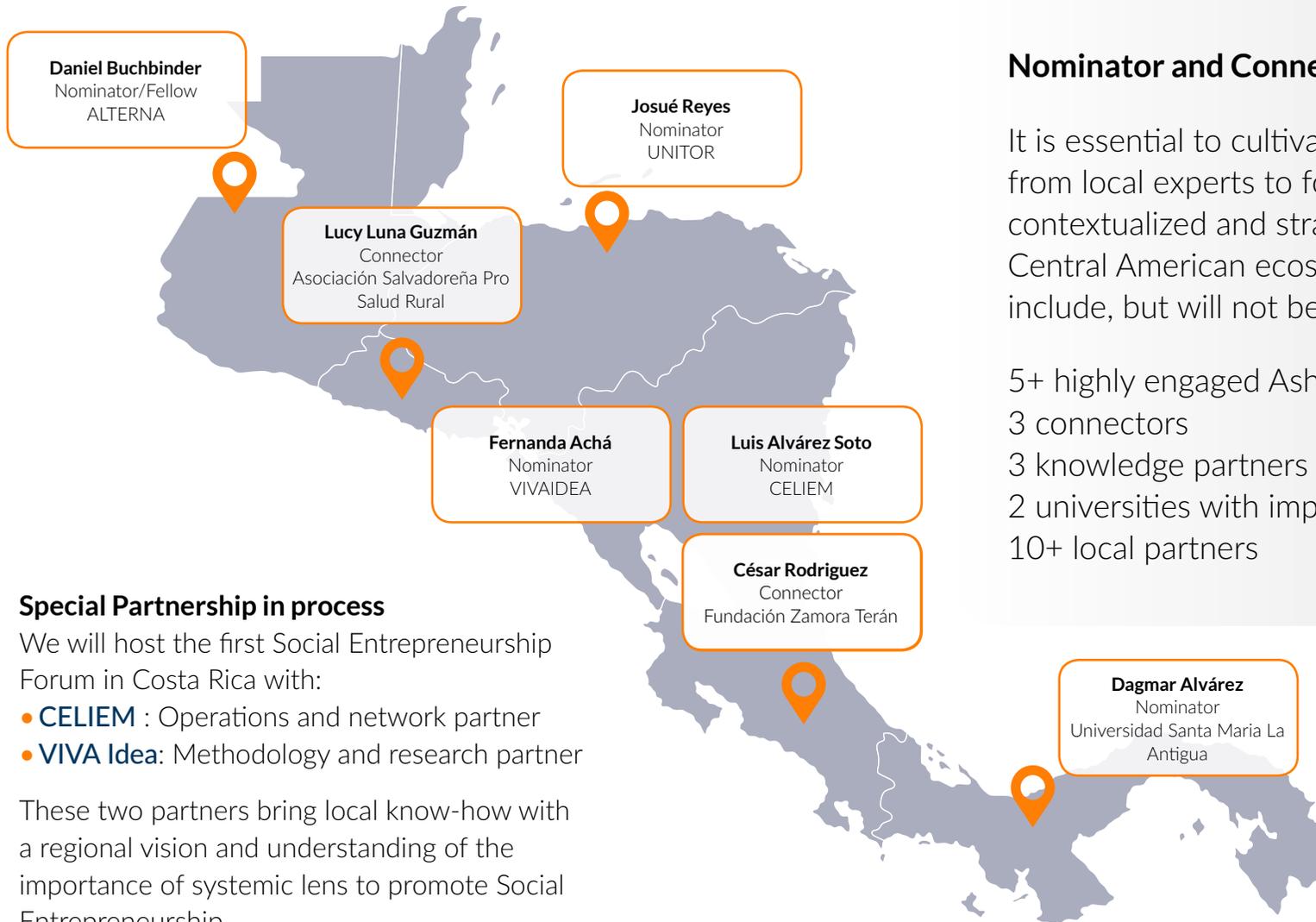
Leverage communication strategies to create awareness of changemaking, systemic social entrepreneurship, and collective impact as a pillars for transformative change.

### **Knowledge capture and dissemination:**

Document and share insights to catalyze social innovation in the region, as well as spot emergent patterns in fields of interest.

**THE ECOSYSTEM WORK FOR  
SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:  
Central America**

# Reinforcing our network in Central America



## Nominator and Connector Base in the region

It is essential to cultivate insights and knowledge from local experts to formulate the most contextualized and strategic next steps for the Central American ecosystem of impact. They include, but will not be limited to:

- 5+ highly engaged Ashoka Fellows
- 3 connectors
- 3 knowledge partners
- 2 universities with impact vision
- 10+ local partners

## Special Partnership in process

We will host the first Social Entrepreneurship Forum in Costa Rica with:

- **CELIEM** : Operations and network partner
- **VIVA Idea**: Methodology and research partner

These two partners bring local know-how with a regional vision and understanding of the importance of systemic lens to promote Social Entrepreneurship.

# Connecting with the social sector, searching for new ventures and sharing insights

## Raising awareness

### Latin American Impact Investment Forum (FLII) Moonshot 2022

FLII is the leading convening of impact investing and social entrepreneurship in Latin America. Since 2011, the forum has served to foster a community of institutions and individuals committed to social change across the region.

The Ashoka team participated in the **2022 edition which hosted around 700 participants**. Our goal was to re-connect with the sector (finally in person again), spot potential candidates for our Fellowship and build new alliances with funders and other partners.

As part of **PES LATAM**, a partnership of five global organizations committed to accelerating social entrepreneurship in Latin America and the Caribbean through direct support to entrepreneurs, as well as ecosystem-building activities, **Ashoka co-led one panel in the program**.

The discussion focused **on how investing in systems change solutions can help** accelerate growth, impact, and success. Aimed at funders and entrepreneurship support organizations, the session shared key principles to rethink and adapt current practices to better support social entrepreneurs with systems change approaches, including how funders need to think differently about investing in gender mainstreaming.



# Maturing the ecosystem of impact in Costa Rica

## Ecosystem work

Costa Rica Social Entrepreneurship Forum (September 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 2022)

**Ashoka** in partnership with CELIEM, VIVA Idea and the University Latinamericana is organizing a 2-day event in Costa Rica. We first and foremost seek to identify the barriers to be able to redefine Social Entrepreneurship as a pillar of social transformation. Additionally, we aim to recognize and gather the strength of the impact community, as well as connect the leaders of change to build a common vision of impact from entrepreneurship.

### Objectives

1. “Planting the seed”: Recognize the barriers and the strength of the impact community in Costa Rica to develop the ecosystem in entrepreneurship and social innovation.
2. Contribute to the construction of alliances: Form and enrich the collaboration of key social actors that are aligned to the systemic transformation in the ecosystem of change, particularly in Costa Rica.
3. Promote an ecosystem of impact: Engage key leaders to the perspective within their organizations, while being active participants and promoters of change within the ecosystem.

### Target Group

50 Social Entrepreneurs, Government Officials, Top local universities, Business Leaders

### Intended Outputs

After the Forum, we aim to have a learning-oriented action plan and next steps, as well as an impact report together with a memorandum that collects the learning achieved.

# Your Team of Teams within Ashoka

**Ella Goncarova**  
Partnership Lead

**Santiago Mejia & Maria Cerdio**  
Ashoka Mexico, Central  
America and the Caribbean

**David Menezes**  
Ashoka South Asia

