TAKING ACTION AGAINST HUNGER

Action Against Hunger
Coral Restoration
Forest Restoration
Mangrove Restoration

Myanmar Stoves Campaign
Hornbill Reintroduction
Soneva Namoona
Across the globe, a staggering 150 million children face the harsh reality of inadequate meals and insufficient access to crucial health and nutrition services. Childhood malnutrition, a grave health concern, looms as a potentially fatal threat.

In this critical battle, the Soneva Foundation works with global humanitarian organisation Action Against Hunger UK to fight hunger and malnutrition. For the past four years, our joint efforts have been concentrated in southern Bangladesh, where we have diligently worked to fortify households' capabilities for climate-resilient livelihoods, aiming to confront the twin challenges of food insecurity and malnutrition head-on.

In collaboration with our implementation partner, Action Against Hunger, we have embarked on a transformative journey, equipping families with invaluable skills and essential business acumen. Moreover, we have revolutionised food production dynamics at the grassroots level by introducing innovative, climate change-resistant organic farming techniques. This holistic approach ensures that families not only cultivate nutritious crops within their homesteads but also foster sustainable livelihoods, augmenting income streams.

To date, we have extended a helping hand to 470 households, catalysing positive transformations in the lives of 2,350 individuals. Below, we present a comprehensive overview of the profound impact generated by our collective endeavours.

Positive impact

470 households impacted
2,350 people benefitted
In today’s world, the harsh reality is that according to the UN World Hunger Report one in 10 people – totalling 800 million individuals – grapple with the daily struggle of inadequate food access. This staggering statistic underscores a profound disparity: while there is an abundance of food globally, millions remain at risk of life-threatening hunger.

The United Nations’ second sustainable development goal, Zero Hunger, epitomises the collective aspiration to eradicate hunger by 2030. Despite strides made, recent trends reveal a troubling reversal as global hunger, once in decline, now shows signs of resurgence.

Why does hunger persist? The answers are multifaceted. Poverty stands as a formidable barrier, often leading to food insecurity. Additionally, conflict and violence disrupt food distribution channels, depriving communities of sustenance. Moreover, the increasing impact of climate change and natural disasters further jeopardise food supplies, exacerbating the hunger crisis worldwide.

49 MILLION people in 43 countries across the globe are at risk of falling into famine or a severe hunger crisis

1 IN 10 people globally do not have enough food to eat

3 BILLION people cannot afford a healthy, nutritious diet

Source: UN World Hunger Report
Wasting or acute malnutrition strikes swiftly, particularly affecting young children who face calorie deficits or illness. Children who are ‘wasted’ are too thin for their height and more vulnerable to disease.

Stunting or chronic malnutrition unfolds gradually, leaving children undersized for their age and vulnerable to illness. Children who are ‘stunted’ are too short for their age and may be more prone to illness.

Micronutrient deficiencies arise from insufficiently nutritious diets, leading to severe health conditions such as weakened immune systems and low birth weights.

Overnutrition, fuelled by excessive calorie consumption, is emerging as a global concern, afflicting children with various medical ailments, including Type 2 diabetes and hypertension.

Characterised by inadequate food intake or an imbalance in nutrients, malnutrition poses a significant challenge worldwide. With 3 billion people unable to afford a nutritious diet according to the UN World Hunger Report, the issue is both vast and avoidable on a global scale.

This multifaceted problem manifests in various forms, impacting every corner of the globe.

Addressing malnutrition and hunger yields far-reaching benefits, enhancing the health and vitality of both children and adults. A well-nourished individual not only contributes to the welfare of their family and community but also bolsters the entire economy.
Climate change continues to intensify, unleashing more frequent and severe weather events such as floods, wildfires and droughts. These catastrophic phenomena not only devastate homes and crops but also serve as a significant driver of escalating hunger worldwide.

Since 2008, according to the UN World Hunger Report an alarming 175 million individuals residing in some of the most impoverished and vulnerable nations have been uprooted from their homes due to climate-induced disasters – a figure steadily climbing with each passing year.

Across the globe, nations grapple with a surge in climate-related calamities. Severe drought, in particular, stands as a prime reason behind undernutrition in over a third of countries witnessing heightened levels of hunger over the past 15 years.

The long-term ramifications of climate change on food security and nutrition loom large. By 2050, the threat of hunger and malnutrition could surge by 20% if decisive action isn't taken to mitigate and avert the adverse impacts of climate change.
Shamoli Gain, 43, resides in Dhulihar, Satkhira in southern Bangladesh with her husband Swapan, two daughters and mother-in-law.

Their tranquil surroundings belie the harsh reality of their living conditions, as their village is frequently submerged for months due to waterlogging, rendering the soil inhospitable for vegetable cultivation due to high salinity content.

"We tried to grow vegetables before but were not able to grow much," shares Shamoli, reflecting on the struggles her family faced.

The family's financial stability relied heavily on Swapan's sporadic, low-wage labour, a source of income that often fell short of covering necessities. Recalling the perpetual struggle, Shamoli vividly remembers the days of insufficient food and financial strain.

Embracing opportunities
In late 2023, a glimmer of hope emerged in the form of the Soneva Foundation programme, recommended by neighbours who had witnessed its transformative impact. Shamoli and her husband eagerly enrolled in the programme, immersing herself in training sessions focused on organic farming, aquaculture, goat rearing and essential entrepreneurial skills.

Shamoli with her daughters Tuktuki (13) and Sonali (2).
The programme's teachings proved invaluable as Shamoli and her family implemented innovative farming techniques such as mulching, boxed vegetables, drip irrigation and permaculture principles.

"Before we grew three or four varieties. Now we grow 13 to 14 varieties of vegetables as well as different types of fruit," says Shamoli, reflecting on the transformative impact of the programme's training.

This diversification not only boosted their consumption but also facilitated surplus sales, providing a much-needed financial cushion.

“We eat double amounts of vegetables now. We are very happy to eat our own produce as we know it is organic and taste better. We feel much better and healthier now than before,” says Shamoli.

**Celebrating success**

In addition to training, the family received USD 110 in grants over two instalments to get their income-generating activities going. The funds were invested in seeds, materials, small fish, fish feed and two goats. Despite setbacks, including the loss of their goats to a stray dog, Shamoli and her family persevered.

"We have a fishpond that was not very successful. We received training on how to improve it and have now added four fish varieties," Shamoli explains, highlighting their resilience in the face of adversity.

With newfound empowerment, Shamoli expresses her joy at contributing to the family's income, enabling Swapan to work from home and fostering a sense of unity within their household.
"We work together and make decisions together. This is great for our family," she shares, epitomising the incredible journey they’ve embarked upon.

Shamoli’s story serves as a testament to the profound impact of the Soneva Foundation programme, transcending financial constraints and fostering resilience in the face of adversity. Through dedication, education and collective effort, Shamoli and her family have not only secured a sustainable livelihood but also discovered newfound hope for a brighter future.

Tuktuki (13) shows her cherry tomatoes are growing well.
At 71 years old, Binoy Krishna Mondol calls Dhulihar, Satkhira in southern Bangladesh home. With his wife Ranuka, son Dibbas, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren by his side, Binoy faces the challenges of living in an area prone to waterlogging, where the village is submerged for months, rendering the soil inhospitable for vegetable cultivation due to high salinity.

Despite maintaining a large vegetable garden, Binoy and his family struggled to make ends meet, relying on poorly paid and unstable labour work. However, hope dawned when Binoy learned about the Soneva Foundation programme from a team seeking potential families to join. Recognising the potential in Binoy's garden, the team envisioned transforming it into a training centre for the local community.

"We received USD 110 in grant that we used to buy seeds and materials to develop the garden," shares Binoy.

Turning Challenges into Success

Binoy showing fine produce.
Collaborating with his son Dibbas and daughter-in-law Bithika, they used innovative techniques like raised beds, mulching, boxed vegetables and drip irrigation, coupled with permaculture principles, that saw their vegetable output skyrocket.

"We produce five times more vegetables than we used to," Dibbas beams with pride, echoing his father’s sentiment.

Transitioning full-time into vegetable production, they now earn USD 140 per month, a significant improvement from their previous earnings of USD 45 per month.

**Empowering Others, Transforming Lives**

Their garden now serves as a training centre for 25 beneficiaries of the Soneva Foundation programme and other local farmers. Experimenting with advanced techniques like hydroponics, Binoy and his family are proud to impart knowledge and uplift their community.

"I am very happy as people now give me more respect and call me teacher," reflects Binoy, acknowledging the newfound social status he earned through his contributions.

By providing training and start-up capital, individuals like Binoy can not only improve their family’s lives but also contribute to their community and fostering resilience.

"We produce five times more vegetables than we used to," Dibbas beams with pride together with his wife Bithika and son Shurave (7).
38-year-old Aroti Bairagi resides in Dhulihar, Satkhira in southern Bangladesh with her husband, two daughters and sister-in-law. Despite the tranquillity of their surroundings, their village grapples with frequent submersion due to waterlogging, rendering the soil unsuitable for cultivation due to its high salinity content.

Aroti’s life took a positive turn when she joined the Soneva Foundation programme back in 2021. Struggling as a rice paddy labourer earning less than USD 30 a month, she embraced the opportunity to receive training in vegetable growing and animal rearing. With a grant of USD 110, she embarked on her entrepreneurial journey.

"I bought two goats, two chickens and seeds to start growing vegetables," Aroti recalls.

Today, her farm has flourished, boasting seven goats, nine chickens, eight ducks, 12 pairs of pigeons and four cows, alongside a thriving vegetable garden. She takes particular pride in her cows, pigeons and China ducks, which provide a stable income for her business.

Celebrating Success, Securing the Future

"I am very happy now. I earn a lot more than before and have built up my income so that I am even able to put aside savings in a separate account," Aroti shares enthusiastically.
With her savings, she joined the Village Savings and Loan Association, providing a safety net for her family and fellow community members. Together, they accumulate savings, enabling them to access low-cost loans for business expansion, freeing them from reliance on expensive loan sharks.

"Before, all my income was spent on food. Now I am self-sufficient with vegetables, milk and eggs. We eat better now and, as a result, are healthier, less ill and spend less on medicine and doctor visits," Aroti remarks, highlighting the tangible improvements in their quality of life.

**Inspiring Progress, Ensuring Sustainability**

Aroti's journey serves as an inspiration for newcomers to the Soneva Foundation programme, showcasing the potential for long-term sustainability in providing improved livelihoods and better nutrition. Her determination and success underscores the transformative impact of the programme, empowering individuals to build brighter futures for themselves and their communities.
Deforestation is responsible for around 11 percent of global carbon emissions. Restoring forests is an important solution to reversing climate change and improving biodiversity.

The Soneva Foundation started forest restoration in Thailand in 2011 and has since expanded to Mozambique, Nepal and the Philippines. These projects will restore 4,000 hectares of natural forest by planting 5.2 million trees from a variety of native species by 2025.

The Soneva Foundation’s philosophy on forest restoration is to use a wide variety of indigenous tree species, which are planted by the local community.

To date, the Soneva Foundation has planted nearly 3 million trees.

Danito Alberto Zembe prepares a seedling that will be planted in the forest.
Mangrove forests are coastal guardians and play a vital role in ocean biodiversity. One of its biggest strengths lies in the forest’s ability to capture and store carbon.

The Soneva Foundation engaged Worldview International Foundation to plant 2.5 million mangroves in Myanmar, restoring 1,000 hectares of mangrove forests. The last 1 million mangroves were planted in the soil on September 2023.

The mangrove restoration project is being registered under VERRA and is expected to generate 1.5 million carbon credits.

Positive impact

- 2.5 million mangroves to be planted
- 1,000 hectares to be restored
- 1.5 million tonnes CO2 to be mitigated

Mangrove planting in Kyun Chaik, Myanmar
The Myanmar Stoves Campaign is a Soneva Foundation programme that distributes fuel efficient cook stoves to thousands of families. It is the first Gold Standard-certified carbon project in Myanmar.

Indoor cooking on inefficient stoves is a silent killer. Air pollution from domestic cooking is responsible for the premature deaths of over four million people a year worldwide, more than HIV/AIDS and malaria combined.

Myanmar has one of the fastest rates of deforestation in the world, with most of the wood used for domestic cooking.

Each fuel efficient stove saves 2.5 tonnes of wood per year and reduces air pollution by 80 percent – improving the health and safety of the whole community.

The Myanmar Stoves Campaign has been successfully operating for 10 years, together with our implementation partner Mercy Corps Myanmar. So far, 56,000 stoves have been distributed, benefitting 265,000 people.
The Soneva Foundation, in collaboration with the Hornbill Research Foundation, is spearheading the reintroduction of hornbills to Koh Kood in Thailand, a species that faced extinction on the island approximately 40 years ago.

The significance of the hornbill lies in its crucial role as a key species for the island’s ecosystem. By aiding in the dispersion of seeds from larger trees, these majestic birds contribute significantly to enhancing the biodiversity of the island’s forests.

Under the auspices of Thailand’s Zoological Parks Organization, the hornbills have been carefully released on Koh Kood, following approvals from the Department of National Parks and in cooperation with local authorities.

Since May 2022, a total of nine oriental pied hornbills have been successfully reintroduced. Additionally, two hornbills are currently acclimating to the island’s forests within an enclosure, ensuring they adapt seamlessly to the environment before their eventual release.

While the newly released oriental pied hornbills are initially sticking close to familiar territory, there is a noticeable and encouraging trend of them exploring and venturing further afield as they gradually tap into their natural instincts.

We are thrilled to share that just before this edition went to press, our biologists heard hatching sounds from one of the artificial nests where a female hornbill had enclosed herself this mating season. Though the exact number of chicks remains unconfirmed, this is fantastic news! We eagerly await the birth of Koh Kood-born hornbill chicks, marking a crucial milestone in restoring the island’s ecosystem and preserving its natural heritage.
The Maldives, an enchanting island nation, boasts captivating underwater beauty. Corals, essential to ocean biodiversity, host 25% of sea life on the reef.

Soneva Foundation Coral Restoration aims to restore precious coral reef systems, establishing a thriving coral hub in the Maldives.

To execute this vision, the Soneva Foundation established a new Maldivian NGO known as Soneva Conservation. Operating from the AquaTerra science centre at Soneva Fushi, Soneva Conservation oversees the largest coral farm in the Indian Ocean, equipped with both in-situ and ex-situ capabilities.

Commencing with a one-hectare coral nursery, one of the world’s largest utilising Mineral Accretion Technology (MAT) at the outer edge of the house reef, our efforts expanded to include the Maldives’ first Coral Spawning and Rearing Lab at AquaTerra. This lab replicates the reef’s natural environment, enabling coral spawning. To complement our in-situ lab, we introduced 30 micro-fragmenting tanks, a technique involving breaking healthy coral colonies into tiny pieces, nurturing the fragments and then transplanting them onto damaged reefs.

Based on these initiatives, we expect to produce approximately 150,000 coral fragments each year.

- 6,163 coral micro-fragments growing
- 31,500 coral colonies outplanted
- 33,000 coral colonies rescued
- 150,000 coral fragments per year
Soneva Namoona is driving the transformation towards zero-waste communities in the Maldives, employing a strategic approach centered on three pillars: 'Reduce,' 'Recycle,' and 'Inspire' to instill a mindset of environmental stewardship.

At the forefront of their initiatives is a water bottling facility in Maalhos, established to combat single-use plastic consumption. Serving households, guesthouses, cafes, and restaurants in Baa Atoll, this facility has prevented over 840,000 plastic bottles from entering landfills or polluting oceans. A second bottling operation is slated to commence in Kudafari in 2024.

Concurrently, Soneva Namoona is actively involved in raising awareness about sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics, extending to products like menstrual cups. Collaborating with UNFPA Maldives and Zero Waste Maldives, the NGO has conducted workshops benefiting over 200 women across nine islands in Baa and Noonu, distributing more than 100 menstrual cups.

Working in tandem with Women’s Development Committees (WDC), Soneva Namoona is fostering a culture of reuse through the Alun Balun’ second-hand market.

Positive impact

459 tonnes recyclables collected in three years
703 tonnes waste removed from 11 islands in three years
841,421 plastic bottles saved in three years

A noteworthy achievement occurred on World Tourism Day when 6 WDCs in Baa Atoll collectively extended the useful life of more than 200 clothing items, significantly reducing landfill waste.

Engaging with 22 islands in various stages of adopting sustainable waste management, Soneva Namoona, supported by a second USAID Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO) grant, is implementing projects on four islands to promote home composting and introduce waste collection guidelines with WAMCO, the state-owned waste collection entity.

The ‘Fehi Madharusa’ (Green School) framework, co-developed with the Ministry of Education, is expanding to 44 schools this academic year, furthering the integration of sustainable practices into educational curricula.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Maldives Swimming and Life Saving Skills Training School, Soneva Namoona has trained 36 swimming and water rescue instructors across all 12 islands, enhancing the aquatic skills of over 700 youth.