Rising Together
70 YEARS
Fighting Hunger and Poverty

Freedom from Hunger – 2016 Annual Report
Dear Friend,

When we unite our efforts to combat poverty and hunger, we all rise together toward a better and more fulfilling life. This is true whether it is an African woman caring for her child, a donor contributing to our cause, or a staff member delivering the health training that our research has proven works. We united our efforts successfully in 2016 toward the goal of eliminating hunger and poverty. Through our joint efforts, we made significant changes in people’s lives.

You will read on the following pages how our work improved the incomes, health and resilience of the poor. You will learn how African women can deposit savings digitally in a mobile wallet, and how a young man from rural Ecuador received a critical diagnosis through telemedicine. Here are just a few highlights from this year:

- **Livelihoods.** In Ecuador, women received customized training to become better entrepreneurs.
- **Nutrition.** In India, women learned how traditional customs deprived themselves and their children of needed food, and how to correct this problem.
- **Financial Services.** In Burkina Faso, mobile phone technology helped rural women open savings accounts at banks.
- **Health.** In the Philippines, pregnant women and new mothers received services at health fairs to reduce maternal and infant mortality.
- **Technology.** Our e-learning module reduced our partners’ costs of training field staff.

Through the power of women’s self-help groups, local partnerships, and thousands of generous supporters, Freedom from Hunger is helping millions of families move toward a brighter future. Please enjoy the stories in this Annual Report and join us in celebrating what we have accomplished together.

With sincere gratitude,

Kathleen E. Stack
Interim CEO
Livelihoods

**Mas Mujeres (“More Women”) in Ecuador**

Partner: CARE

In poor, semi-rural areas of Ecuador, the women we serve are always busy. They grow Andean grains and vegetables, raise guinea pigs, and create beautiful crafts. But too often, these activities don’t produce enough income to meet their families’ needs.

This year, we launched the Mas Mujeres project to contribute to the well-being of women living in poverty in Imbabura and Esmeraldas Provinces. The project strengthens women’s income-generating activities and trains them to plan for a stronger business. We begin by working with groups of women to affirm their strength, set life and business goals, and empower them with knowledge on how to become successful entrepreneurs. Then, with improved knowledge of their rights and how to use financial services wisely, women make personal and professional strides toward a better life for themselves and their families.
Nutrition

*Rajasthan Nutrition Project*

Partners: Freedom from Hunger India Trust, Vaagdhara, Pradan, and Chetna

In Rajasthan, India, women and girls eat last and least. In a region where the very poor rely on a limited supply and variety of foods, this makes women especially vulnerable to malnutrition and puts children at risk for physical and mental developmental delays.

We’re responding by building on an already successful self-help group model to inform and empower mothers with basic nutrition information. Lessons encourage groups to discuss why men and women are fed differently and how to distribute food equally. Cooking techniques maximize the nutritional value of available foods, such as cauliflower leaves. Mothers learn to boil water and treat diarrhea, a common condition that can lead to the death of malnourished children.

Midway through the two-and-a-half-year project, we’ve trained more than 2,500 Community Nutrition Agents in two exceptionally vulnerable regions of Rajasthan. These agents lead trainings, make home visits, and connect families with government services. So far, over 8,000 women have learned to fight malnutrition and give their children the best chance possible of a healthy future.

Financial Services

*Savings accounts in Burkina Faso*

Partners: RCPB (Réseau des Caisses Populaires du Burkina), SEMUS (Solidarité et Entraide Mutuelle au Sahel), SOFIPE (Société de Financement pour la Petite Entreprise) and ODE (Office de Développement des Eglises Evangéliques)

An essential step on the ladder out of poverty is access to financial services. But distance, cost, and an intimidation factor conspire to keep rural women and banks far apart. Freedom from Hunger has learned that it is possible to bridge the gaps by adapting and combining strategies to bring financial services directly to our clients.

For instance, in Burkina Faso, we leverage the power of savings groups to teach women financial literacy. In a new effort, we’re training community agents to use mobile money technology so rural women in savings groups can open savings accounts at a bank or credit union.

We are proud to report that thousands of women are beginning to receive access to mobile money solutions and the numbers are growing. We look forward to using the valuable lessons from this pilot to expand and improve our services across West Africa starting with Benin.
**Kotine: Shared progress is secured progress**

Life on the margin of survival is stressful for a woman like Kotine. Just one drought, one flood or one case of malaria could undo all her progress. This level of vulnerability is terrifying for a woman who, newly widowed, is the sole support for her children.

Yet, Kotine is hopeful because she is not alone. She joined a women’s collective formed by Freedom from Hunger’s partner in Burkina Faso, Réseau des Caisses Populaires du Burkina (RCPB). She now has access to financial services, health education and the collective courage of her group.

Kotine used her loans to buy seeds, a watering can, and a small cart to bring her modest crops to market. More recently, she bought chickens to sell their eggs. In education sessions, she learned to improve her farming as well as how to budget, save, and feed her children. And, if an emergency arises, she knows her group will support her.

“My life has improved,” Kotine says. Not surprisingly, she wants others to share in the benefits of a women’s group. “You should join a savings group,” she tells her neighbors, “so we can all help each other and reinforce each other’s lives.”
Health

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies

Partner: CARD MRI (Center for Agriculture Rural Development Mutually Reinforcing Institutions) and RESULTS Educational Fund

When everyone comes together to solve a problem, the results can be extraordinary. And no problem has more immediate and long-term consequences than maternal and infant mortality. In the Philippines, we are confronting the dangers that worsen maternal and infant mortality rates with creativity, collaboration, and innovation.

With our partners, we designed and implemented participatory maternal health education about prenatal health to more than 815,000 women throughout the country. At nine health fairs, over 9,000 women received ultrasounds, checkups for their babies, and free vitamins. The three-year program concluded in 2016, but more than 20 institutions are continuing this work.

As thousands more mothers become connected to health services that offer prenatal care and a safe place to deliver, we expect this collaboration to have long-term impacts for mothers in the Philippines. In the meantime, this program has already helped hundreds of thousands of women maintain healthy pregnancies and deliver healthy babies.

Technology

E-learning

Training field staff in remote areas is both expensive and logistically difficult. But for our microfinance partner organizations to best serve vulnerable clients, it is important that their field agents and other staff receive superior training that is adapted to their needs and opportunities.

Freedom from Hunger’s new e-learning product makes it possible to create customizable, high-quality training. This interactive platform ensures that all trainees receive the same level of quality training, allows them to learn at their own pace, reduces time away from the office, and enables supervisors to better manage the training programs using an online system. By reducing the cost of training, e-learning allows more resources to be used to deliver services to clients.

This year, 13 organizations registered 227 employees to be trained through e-learning who then in turn have the potential to deliver financial services and education to 83,000 women entrepreneurs.
Kevin’s nickname is Robocop because he’s been fighting all his life to overcome obstacles. He lives in San Cristobal, an island in the Galapagos that belongs to Ecuador. As a young child he survived stomach cancer.

At 17, he began to suffer from severe stomach pains again. His parents, fearing the cancer had returned, took him to the local hospital, but it was hard to get an accurate diagnosis. Fortunately, his mother is a client of our local partner that introduced telemedicine services with our help.

Via telemedicine, doctors in the capital, Quito, were able to diagnose Kevin with Hepatitis A and ensure he received the right treatment. Today he’s back to playing basketball, once again feeling like the “Robocop of San Cristobal.”
Financial Highlights
Freedom from Hunger carefully manages its finances to make the most of each and every dollar. For a copy of our full audit, Form 990 and/or a digital copy of the 2016 Annual Report, please visit our website at www.freedomfromhunger.org/AR2016.

Our Partners in Alleviating Poverty and Hunger
If you supported our work in FY16—at whatever level—please accept our gratitude. Here are the names of some of our most ardent contributors and collaborators.
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Looking Ahead with Excitement

Dear Friend,

I have long been inspired by the prospect of a world free from hunger and poverty—a world where every family has access to resources that enable them to work, provide for their loved ones and feed their children. That vision has inspired Freedom from Hunger for 70 years and continues to do so as we unite with Grameen Foundation under the Grameen banner.

While it doesn’t always seem so, we are, indeed making progress in the fight against hunger and poverty. There are a billion fewer people living in poverty now than 20 years ago. Our integration with Grameen Foundation enables us to combine our skills and expertise to build on what we have accomplished and reach more of the 800 million women and families who are still living in dire poverty.

The mission of our newly unified organization is to “Enable the poor, especially women, to create a world without poverty and hunger.” To that end, we together are focusing on health, agriculture, and financial services to reach some of the poorest and most remote families through village-based savings, farmers’ groups, and mobile technology.

It has been an honor to have been part of the integration of Freedom from Hunger with Grameen Foundation. I’m proud of what Freedom from Hunger has achieved, and thank you for your part and partnership in making those achievements possible. I am excited about what more we will achieve—together.

With Sincere Thanks,

Marianne Udow-Phillips
Board Co-Chair of Grameen Foundation Board
(Former Board Chair of Freedom from Hunger)