



# 2019 Annual Report

January 2020

Focusing Philanthropy is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that believes donations should be made with the same level of strategic intent, information, and confidence as other investments. We target serious human challenges that individual donors can successfully address, choose tactics that are demonstrably effective, identify confidence inspiring implementing partners, conduct ongoing monitoring, and assure substantive reporting. These services are provided free to both donors and partners in an effort to scale interventions that work.

Last year, we asked the question, “Can we—and will we—build on what we have done together to achieve much more?” Since 2012, we have been targeting serious human challenges that individuals can successfully address through proven programs we rigorously evaluate and continuously monitor. We had seen our approach yield confirmed, confident, life-changing impacts at scale, and we felt we had the opportunity, the experience, and the resources to do something bigger.

Therefore, in the spring of 2019, we launched our first Bold Initiative with longtime implementing partner One Acre Fund. Our five-year Trees for Resilience campaign (pg. 9) is our most ambitious, far-reaching initiative ever, and we are already transforming more than a million lives through this single giving opportunity. Then, last November, we began working with New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof (p. 8) and helped raise ~\$3M for four deserving organizations showcased in his annual “holiday gift guide.” The amount was triple the original goal and about 10x the dollars contributed in response to Nick’s prior holiday appeals.

2019 was also a milestone year for our core programs. We wrapped up a successful four-year growth campaign with Peer Health Exchange (p. 10), ensuring that 5,724 low-income high school students no longer lack access to a comprehensive health education or the resources necessary for reducing unplanned pregnancy, substance abuse, and poor mental health. We also completed a three-year effort with charity: water to provide clean water and sanitation at 100 schools in eight countries. The response was so strong that we were ultimately able to address 130 schools. With the Seva Foundation (p. 11), we cleared the threshold of 56,000 blind people who can see again thanks to our matching campaigns over the past eight years. Our 2019 campaign was the largest ever, restoring the sight of more than 11,000 adults and children who can now resume productive lives and allowing an equal number of family caregivers to return to work or school.

When Focusing Philanthropy officially launched in 2012, 8,000 people benefitted via \$1.4M in donor contributions. In 2018, 335,000 benefitted via \$8M. And in 2019, 1,522,000 benefitted via \$16.5M. As we begin 2020, we can confidently answer last year’s question: Yes! We can achieve more and, with the continued support of our generous donors, our wonderful team and our inspiring nonprofit partners, we will. On behalf of all of us, and especially the millions of people whose lives have been—and will be—permanently and profoundly improved, thank you.



Larry Gilson  
Chairman





# Impact since inception at a glance

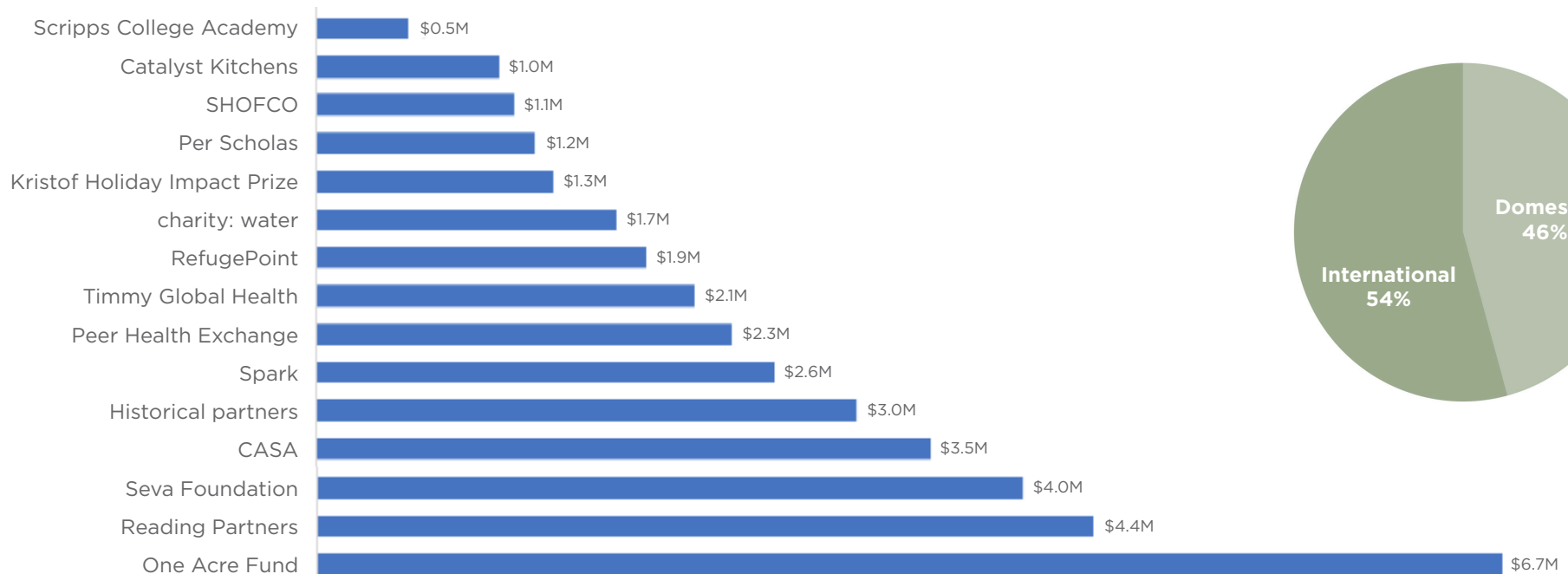
**2,311,069** lives changed

**\$46.6** million contributed

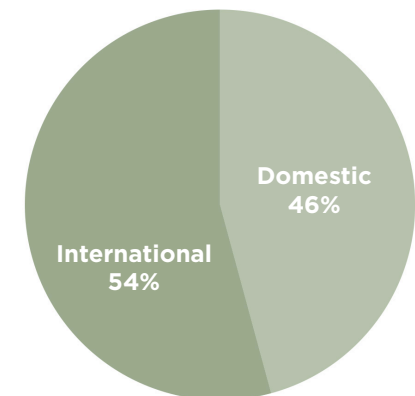
**86** successful campaigns

**138** diligence and monitoring visits

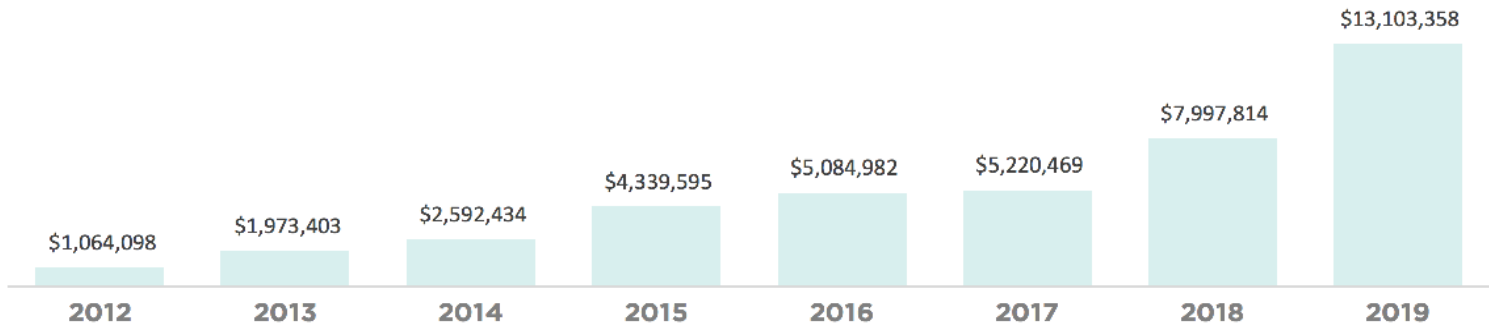
## Funding by organization\*



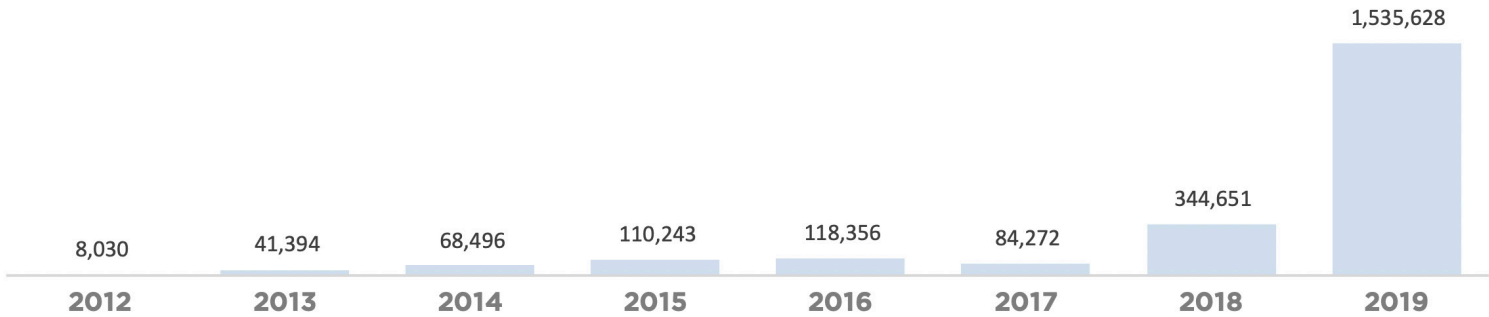
**\*100% of overhead costs are covered by our founders**



Dollars per year



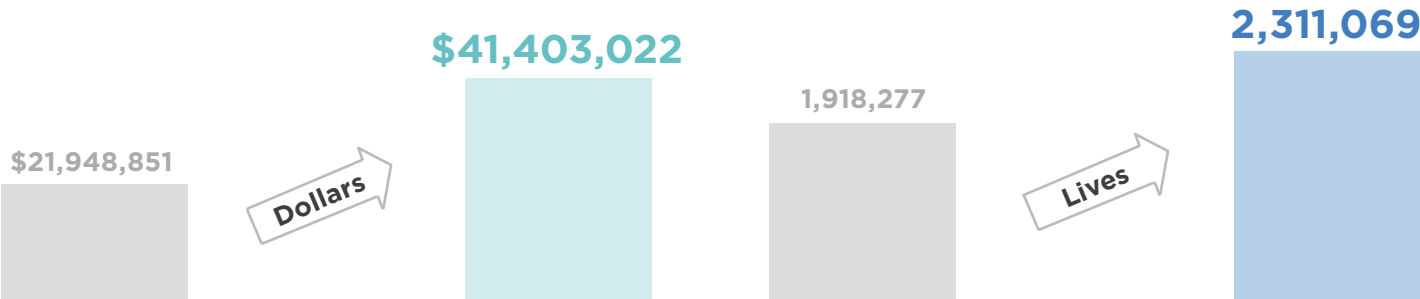
Lives per year



Leverage to date

Through the leverage of our matching campaigns, the impact of our donors' contributions was multiplied by 1.9x:

This has transformed an additional 392,792 lives as a result:



## Transforming lives here and around the world

### Internationally

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513,957 subsistence farm family members permanently out of starvation poverty through our partnership with One Acre Fund

1,440,285 members of Africa's rural poor are building long-term cashable savings plans through a transformative tree planting initiative we launched with One Acre Fund

56,371 blind people can see again as a result of sight-restoring surgeries with Seva Foundation

65,852 villagers are gaining access to clean water and sanitation with charity: water

40,274 of the world's most vulnerable refugees are being resettled with RefugePoint

1,930 urban refugees are on a path to self-sufficiency through the delivery of interventions such as shelter, healthcare, and business training with RefugePoint

40,304 slum residents have permanent access to high quality health care with Shining Hope for Communities (SHOFCO)

450 extremely poor, academically promising girls are getting an excellent K-8 education in Africa's largest slum each year at a school we built with SHOFCO

### In the United States

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2,077 disengaged middle school drop-out candidates on track to graduate high school 92% of the time with Spark

9,152 ninth graders completing a semester-long health education curriculum to help address personal health choices, peer pressure, bullying, and mental health issues with Peer Health Exchange

463 low-income high school girls without credible prior college prospects admitted to top colleges and universities with Scripps College Academy

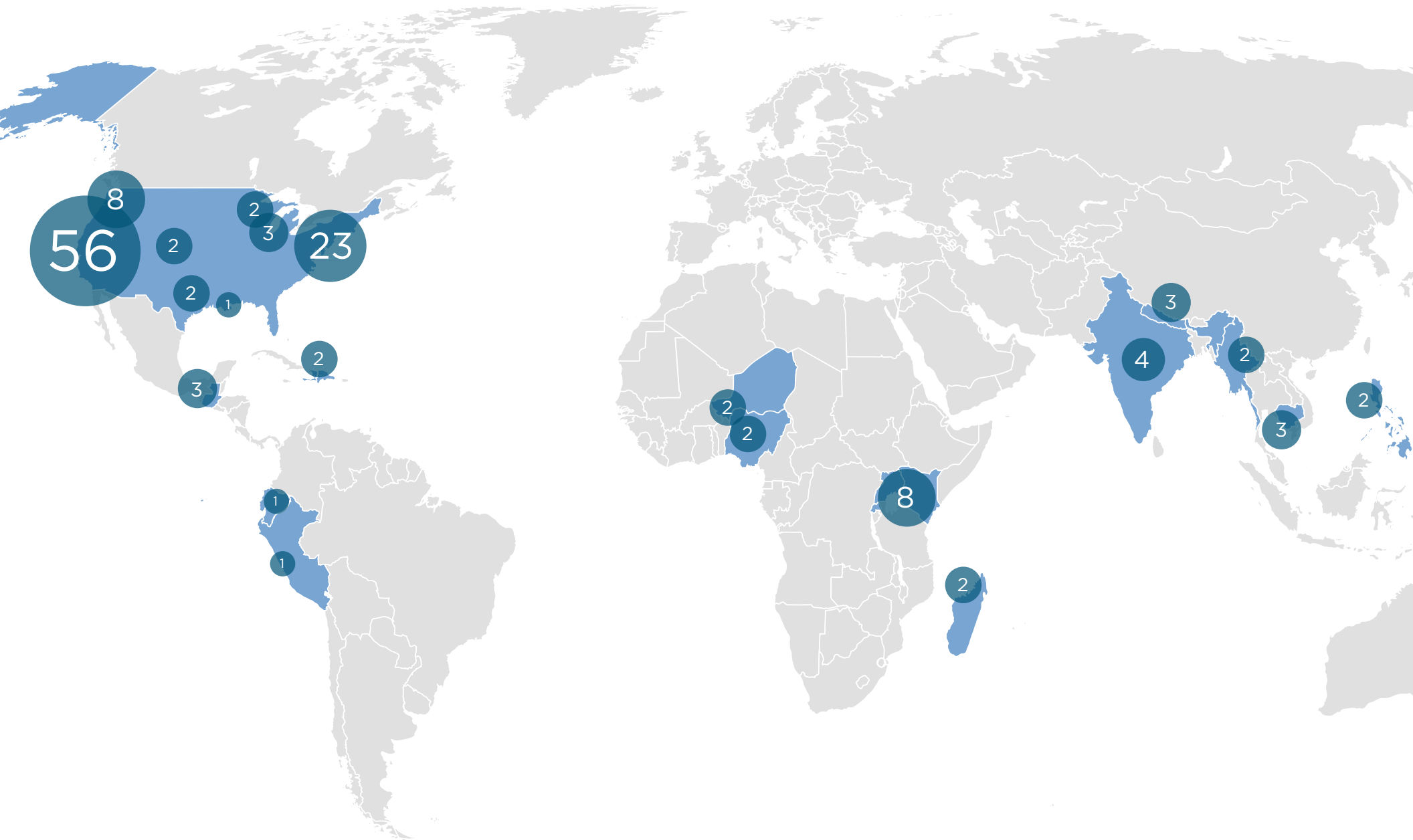
2,188 foster youth receiving a full year of life-changing, intensive advocacy provided by a highly-trained volunteer with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

3,831 homeless or recently incarcerated receiving culinary job training and wrap-around social services, then obtaining good-paying jobs with Catalyst Kitchens

4,502 underperforming elementary school students closing the gap with their reading-proficient peers with Reading Partners

464 low-income students attending an IT job training course providing intensive hands-on technical skills, job placement, and career development services with Per Scholas

**138 site visits  
worldwide**





# 2019 Impact at a glance

**1,535,628** lives changed

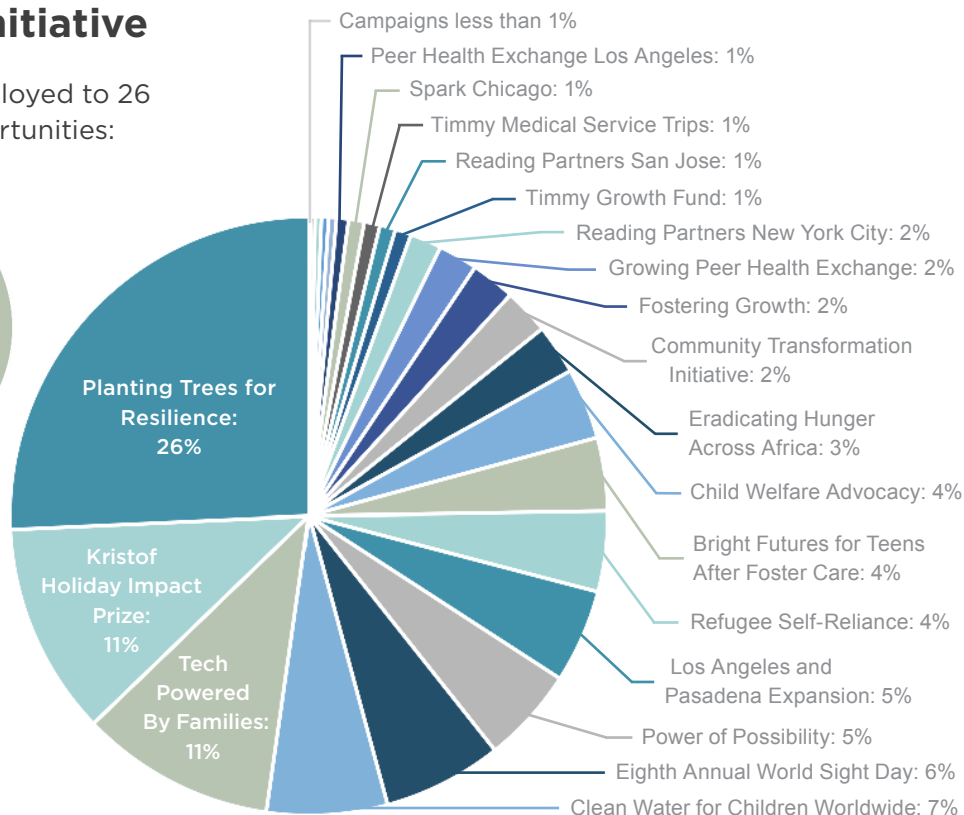
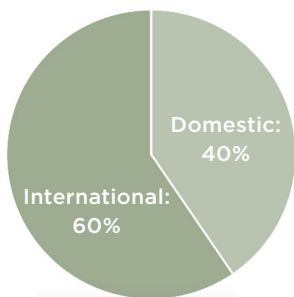
**\$16.6** million contributed

**12** nonprofit implementing partners

**20** diligence and monitoring visits

## Funding by initiative

\$11,722,088 was deployed to 26 curated giving opportunities:

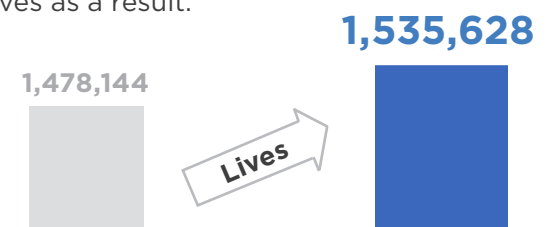


## Leverage

Through the leverage of our matching campaigns, the impact of our donors' contributions was multiplied by 1.5x:



This has transformed an additional 57,484 lives as a result:



# 2019 Highlights

## Featured in The New York Times

Focusing Philanthropy partnered with New York Times columnist and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Nicholas Kristof to establish his inaugural Holiday Impact Prize and help raise ~\$3,000,000—triple the original goal—for four little-known organizations working to make the world a better place.

Since 2009, Nicholas Kristof has written an annual “holiday gift guide” to bridge a philanthropic gap: readers who wanted to help but didn’t know how, and heroic individuals and organizations who desperately needed resources but were off

donors’ radar. The column has helped raise the profiles of nonprofits that work on the issues he covers in his journalism—health, education, human rights and women’s rights, both domestically and abroad. In 2019, Focusing Philanthropy and two

other supporters committed to funding a new annual Holiday Impact Prize that Kristof will award to the nonprofits he showcases. Each year, in addition to the usual donations from readers, his top winner will receive \$100K and \$50K will be split equally among the runners-up.

The 2019 Prize was awarded to the following four organizations:

### HOLIDAY IMPACT PRIZE

WINNER

Edna Adan Maternity Hospital  
- working to end preventable child and maternal death in Somaliland

RUNNERS-UP

The END Fund - dedicated to ending neglected tropical diseases

Maya Health Alliance | Wuqu’ Kawoq  
- providing high-quality healthcare to rural indigenous Maya of Guatemala

Reach Out and Read - promoting the benefits of reading aloud, from infancy, as part of routine pediatric care

Before his partnership with Focusing Philanthropy, Kristof had no platform for his “holiday gift guide” readers to give and no means of tracking data or impact. He estimated that aggregate dollars raised through the guide ranged from \$300-\$400K each year.

Focusing Philanthropy coordinated the 2019 Holiday Impact Prize to help create a more ambitious campaign and ultimately increase donations. Our team aggregated information from honorees about planned use of funds, interacted with a PR firm, and built a dedicated landing page through which donors could support individual honorees or split their gift equally among all four.

Throughout the campaign, we processed thousands of donations, fielded hundreds of reader queries, and conducted regular check-ins with honorees to collect and report on key data, including dollars raised, number of donors, and website traffic. Focusing Philanthropy reimbursed all credit card donations made on the Prize landing page so that 100% of funds contributed went to Kristof’s showcased nonprofits.

Kristof had hoped to hit \$1,000,000 in gift guide reader donations with the launch of the Holiday Impact Prize. When the initiative closed in January 2020, contributions through the campaign landing page and directly to honorees totaled ~\$3,000,000. Focusing Philanthropy will continue to interact with recipient organizations to track and share campaign impact.

Opinion

## Forget the Scarf. These Gifts Change Lives.

My 2019 holiday guide has some great causes. And one is already promised \$100,000 from a reader.



By Nicholas Kristof  
Opinion Columnist



# 2019 Highlights

## Introducing our first Bold Initiative

Focusing Philanthropy and One Acre Fund (1AF) launched a five-year campaign to implement 1AF's tree program across eight African countries. With a goal of raising \$30M to fund 250M trees planted by 2.4M farmers, it is the most impactful, large-scale opportunity we have ever offered our donors.



One Acre Fund has helped ~900,000 farmers in Africa increase their crop yields and grow their way out of extreme hunger. Prior collaboration with Focusing Philanthropy has resulted in the expansion of this core program into five new countries and additional areas of Kenya.

Gains from the program make it possible for farm families to achieve food security, nutritional wellbeing, and income sufficient to

fund primary education, basic medical care, and some diversification in their sources of agricultural revenue.

What the core program does not do in itself is enable farmers to build assets—the indispensable change that provides the resources to deal with challenges like crop failure and medical emergency, while still allowing families to send their children to school

and make other material investments on the path to a better life.

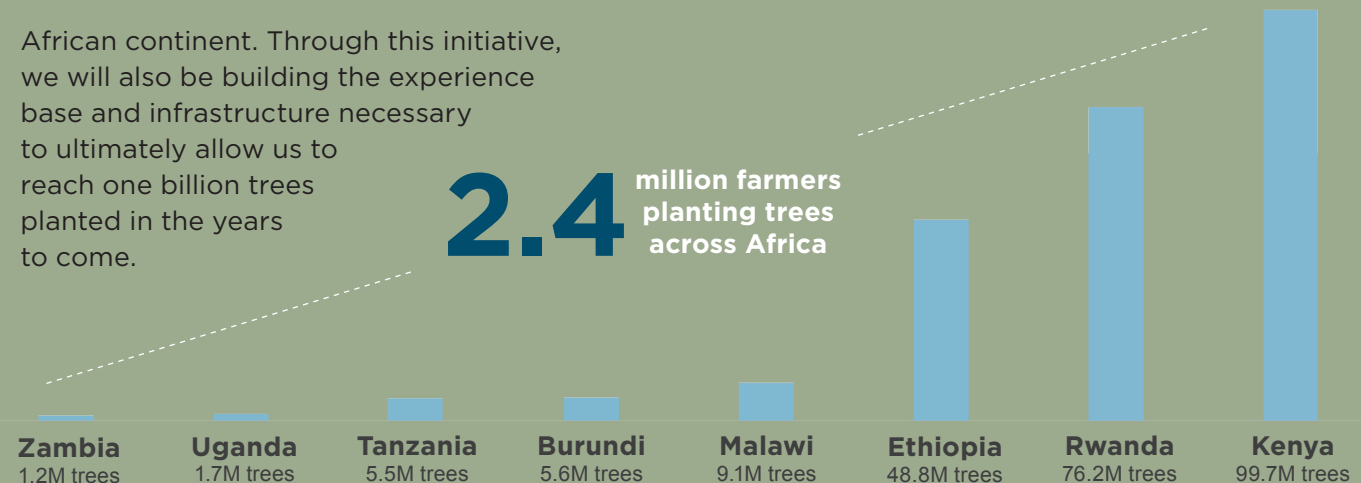
After years of increasingly robust testing, 1AF has concluded that tree-planting is the single most productive asset-accumulation vehicle for rural households, generating farmer ROIs above 500% in addition to mitigating climate change by preventing erosion, replenishing soil, and sequestering carbon.

Our Planting Trees for Resilience campaign leverages the institutional strength 1AF has built, its deep relationships with a rapidly growing number of farmers, and the experience gained over five years of tree planting experimentation at increasing scale (40M to date), to orchestrate the planting of 250 million trees from 2019-2023.

The campaign will profoundly improve the financial circumstances of over two million participating farmers and achieve a level and diversity of positive environmental impacts we believe is substantially unmatched on the

African continent. Through this initiative, we will also be building the experience base and infrastructure necessary to ultimately allow us to reach one billion trees planted in the years to come.

**2.4** million farmers planting trees across Africa



# 2019 Highlights

## Improving teen health outcomes

Focusing Philanthropy and Peer Health Exchange (PHE) wrapped up a four-year matching campaign to provide more young people with access to health education. The initiative raised over \$1.7 million and served 6,933 students across the country, exceeding all of PHE's national growth targets.



Preventable health concerns contribute to the staggering reality that over one million teenagers drop out of high school each year.

  
**30% of teenagers are sexually active**

  
**18% binge drink**

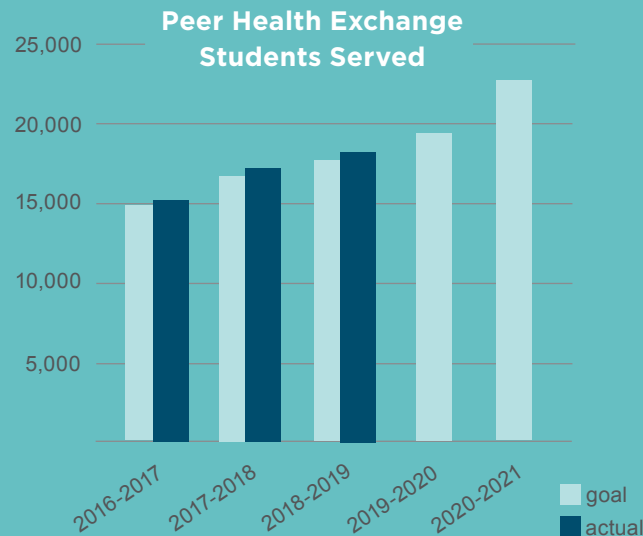
  
**30% feel consistently sad or hopeless**

Peer Health Exchange works with under-resourced high schools—in which the majority of students live in poverty—to deliver a skills-based health curriculum taught by selectively-recruited, rigorously-trained volunteer college undergraduates.

As slightly older peers, PHE educators are well-positioned to connect with students through a series of 14 workshops aimed at increasing help-seeking behavior and reducing unplanned pregnancy, mental health challenges, and substance abuse. High schoolers who

receive the program gain sexual health knowledge at more than 5x the rate of non-PHE students and are nearly 2x as likely to visit a health center on their own.

Our 2016-19 Growing Peer Health Exchange campaign helped catalyze PHE's next phase of growth. To date, PHE has exceeded all of the annual growth targets outlined in its 5-year strategic plan, serving 18,447 students last year:



### Added focus on Los Angeles County

From 2017-19, our national campaign was augmented by a special initiative to support Peer Health Exchange's three-year plan to grow and deepen its impact in South LA. Together, we raised nearly half a million dollars to help PHE establish and launch a partnership with California State University Dominguez Hills as a new hub for recruiting and training college student volunteer health educators, with the ultimate goal of extending health education to more low-income high schoolers in the area. As a result, PHE expanded its program to four new South LA schools, including two in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).

In early 2020, Focusing Philanthropy and Peer Health Exchange launched a new matching challenge. The three-year initiative will continue to grow PHE student reach at core sites in addition to piloting scalable versions of the PHE model. College affiliate programs are already underway in four new geographies.

# 2019 Highlights

## A sight-restoring surgery milestone

Focusing Philanthropy and Seva Foundation celebrated the success of our eighth annual World Sight Day campaign, crossing the threshold of 56,000 formerly blind people who can see again as a result of sight-restoring surgeries performed around the world through our longtime partnership.

Focusing Philanthropy partners with the Seva Foundation to provide medically underserved people with basic eye care and sight-restoring surgery. The leading cause of vision loss, cataracts, is treatable through a simple 15-minute procedure delivered for only ~\$50 in the developing world. Not only can a person with renewed sight resume a productive life, but his or her caregiver can return to work or school. Thus, each surgery changes the lives of at least two people.

Throughout our eight-year partnership, we have also provided diagnostic and surgical equipment where it was lacking and funded the construction and equipping of an eye hospital and satellite eye clinic.

Our 2019 World Sight Day Campaign—our largest to date—will enable 11,275 blind people (including 700 children) to see again by funding sight-restoring surgeries in 15 countries and vital sight-saving equipment in three.

Since 2012, we have worked with Seva Foundation to run annual matching campaigns around World Sight Day, a global event focused on increasing awareness of blindness, visual impairment, and universal eye care.

Our campaigns have raised nearly \$4,000,000 and funded over 56,000 surgeries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America—all performed free of charge for patients who cannot afford to pay.

**56,371** formerly blind people who can see again



Because of our generous donors, we have been able to consistently increase the size and impact of our initiatives each year. In 2019, we funded 2.7x the surgeries made possible by our inaugural campaign:

4,208

2012



11,275

2019

Additionally, we are expanding our efforts by launching a special initiative to address a growing pediatric blindness epidemic in areas of the world where increasing numbers of premature babies survive. The pilot module will serve nearly 2,000 individuals at scale—including training and equipment for the prevention of Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP), a condition causing irreversible loss of vision in newborns—with the goal of rolling out the program more broadly in refined form.





# We have accomplished powerful things together

For more information, please contact:

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