



We sow hope... and hope is growing!

# NEWSLETTER



Women from Claudaline's economic agricultural project celebrate the SowHope team's visit.

## CELEBRATION IN DR CONGO

Program team members recently evaluated 14 SowHope funded projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Claudaline, one of our partners in the DRC, has several projects under way which are changing the lives of women from a major city and two rural villages. One education project teaches sewing, and an economic project has women planting, weeding, and harvesting food for their own table and to sell the surplus at their village markets. The economic training includes how to handle money, the importance of freshness when selling, and more.

In the same region, there are also projects in progress that are teaching literacy, sewing, and wellness – and local leaders have created four birthing centers! Women in these villages knew little about their bodies, and now they understand basic facts which will enable them to make better decisions about their own health and their family's health.

Many women had been in hopeless conditions, and they could not believe that there was anyone who cared about them. The SowHope projects have let them know that there are people who care. They were so amazed by this that they wrote their own song to sing to those who made these projects possible. Claudaline told the women, "See? Somebody is supporting you! Now they've come to see us!" And the dancing began.

*Honor a Woman in Your Life*  
with a Lovely Brunch  
Sunday, May 1st or Saturday, May 7th  
11:00am-1:00PM

**Location: JW Marriott - Grand Rapids**  
**six.one.six - Tickets \$100 each**

Visit our website to order your  
tickets & for more info:

[www.sowhope.org/events](http://www.sowhope.org/events)

Limited seating so purchase your tickets now!

## SOWHOPE'S REBRANDING STORY



SowHope was founded on January 30th, 2006. For the past ten years, we have planted the seeds to sow hope into the lives of over 59,000 women. We are pleased to announce and reveal our new look after helping empower women over the past decade.

We felt that a simple, clear, and memorable logo would express the growth that we see happening through our local leaders' projects around the world. Our logo has changed, but our vision remained the same; we want a world where women can access opportunities which allow them to be inspired, pursue their dreams, and achieve their potential.

As SowHope continues to grow and change lives, we felt that it was time to develop a brand design that complemented growth. We heard input from various stakeholders over several months and feel confident that this simple, clean design is classic and can be utilized cross-culturally. We decided to create a simpler design that would look great on our photos, website, and printed materials. You'll also notice that "hope" is bolder than "sow" to help with the pronunciation of our name. The "o" in hope represents a seed where new life is rising up and spreading its hope for all to see.

### SOWHOPE EXISTS

TO INSPIRE  
WOMEN AROUND  
THE WORLD  
BY PROMOTING  
WELLNESS,  
EDUCATION, AND  
ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITIES

## YOU'RE INVITED - SAVE THE DATES!

### 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Sunday, May 15, 2pm - 4pm  
at the SowHope Office

### CELEBRATION of HOPE

Thursday, September 29th, 6:30pm  
at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park  
*Be an event sponsor or table sponsor*

### RSVP

online at [www.sowhope.org/events](http://www.sowhope.org/events)  
or mail to P.O. Box 234, Rockford, MI 49341

## OPPORTUNITY THROUGH VOCATION - INDIA

Vinita, SowHope's partner and local leader in India, has begun a 2-year project, with the expectation of enrolling 200 women. The focus is on encouraging and empowering women through education, with the women learning a vocation and discovering ways to look after themselves and their families. Vinita's drive to offer such training comes from knowing the reality of what life could be for the women without this education and resulting opportunities for employment. Recently, a leading newspaper cited that in the city of Delhi alone, six rapes are reported to the police every day! Vinita wants to help women protect themselves from violence and to prevent them from falling victim to the sex trade.

Recently she reported, "Many Afghan refugee women have joined the training. One girl was being pushed by her sister, who is a dancer in a bar, to join her. She decided instead to join beauty parlor and tailoring classes." The young women earn certificates of completion after passing their exams, and some of them have quickly gotten jobs.



Women in a tailoring class take advantage of good weather and hold their class outside.

Responses from the young women about their training, in their own words, are:

- "My life is going to change totally as I have taken these classes with you."
- "I have never before heard such teaching. I am shocked to learn so much about my own body."
- "I have been a community slum worker for so many years, but I have never heard teaching with such great teaching aids like we are shown here."

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY!

March 8th is International Women's Day. See how it is celebrated in other parts of the world. Let's join in and celebrate this great day!

Visit [www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com).

## MEET A BOARD MEMBER

Genevieve Sabala, professor of Social Work at West Texas A&M University, was a member of the Cook Leadership Academy when she met Mary Dailey Brown at an event in Grand Rapids, MI. Very quickly, Genevieve realized that SowHope was unique in offering women assistance in three areas: wellness, education, and economic opportunities. She saw the evidence of success in partnering with local leaders using local solutions to solve local problems. She accepted an invitation to join the board of directors of SowHope.



Genevieve Sabala

Genevieve, who speaks four languages, was born and raised in Kenya by a mother who was denied the opportunity of an education. As a result, Genevieve's parents decided to instill in their children the values of hard work, commitment, and determination. She is bringing all of those characteristics to SowHope. She has seen that the women SowHope serves have great ideas about how to improve their lives and are only limited by a lack of resources to implement their own ideas. Genevieve is now part of the team that reviews applications for grants and helps SowHope identify projects that will have high impact.

She sees SowHope becoming a movement because the strategy is simple and can work in any culture: local leaders using local solutions to solve local problems. Genevieve thinks there is a time coming when the world will realize that communities do not need an outsider to tell them how to resolve their problems - instead, the best solutions come from within. As long as accountability measures for the projects are in place, Genevieve believes that SowHope will witness great success through partnerships with local leaders around the globe.



Join us on  
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[www.facebook.com/sowhope](http://www.facebook.com/sowhope)

### WALL OF HONOR



Do you have a mother, daughter, wife, girlfriend, sister, niece, grandmother, aunt, or anyone who you would like to honor? Is there someone who has made this world a better place for women? Honor that special person by visiting our website at [sowhope.org/donate](http://sowhope.org/donate) and making a tribute donation. Be sure to provide the name of the person you would like to honor and any short message. We will post the name and your message to our Wall of Honor.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Lizbeth Leeson - Chairperson  
David Kelson - Vice Chairperson

Alfred Longtin - Treasurer  
Ndeye R. Ndao - Secretary

Jonathan Williams  
Carol Washburn

Genevieve Sabala  
Aaron Hoxworth

Katie Kirouac