



## Strategy Paper for SowHope

*"Where there is despair let me sow hope."* Francis of Assisi

### Executive Summary

SowHope, founded in 2006, is an international charitable organization dedicated to inspiring impoverished women around the world. This is accomplished by promoting wellness, education, and economic opportunities.

The target recipients are women who reside primarily in developing nations. These women constitute the poorest, most oppressed, least healthy, and most uneducated group in the world. They live on an average of \$2 a day or less. Poor women carry a disproportionate burden due to long standing cultural traditions that socially oppress women. Female discrimination is evidenced by a greater vulnerability to violence, rape, and AIDS, higher incidences of illiteracy and under-education, under-payment, and a broad lack of human rights.

The goals of SowHope are achieved through forming strategic partnerships with *local leaders using local solutions to solve local problems*. These leaders have an established reputation for helping women. SowHope collaborates with their partners by funding measurable, time-limited, and outcome-based projects that match SowHope's three program areas.

SowHope relies on individual, group, business, foundation, and government donors for the funding to carry out its mission.

### Organization History, Mission, and Strategy

Over the past thirty-five years, Mary Dailey Brown has traveled abroad to approximately 60 countries and has been active in helping the poor both here in the USA and in the developing world. Based on her exposure to various cultures, Ms. Brown has concluded that the neediest, most neglected people in the world are women in developing countries.

Sensing an unshakeable burden to do something to help these women, Ms. Brown searched for a job at a multi-national organization dedicated to meeting basic needs of women around the world, but could not find such an organization. As a result of her travel and research experiences, SowHope was founded in January 2006. The mission of the organization **is to inspire women around the world by promoting wellness, education, and economic opportunities**. SowHope works under the assumption that by providing women with essential opportunities they will improve not only their lives, but also the lives of their families, villages, and nations.

The strategy of SowHope is to partner with **local leaders using local solutions to solve local problems**. SowHope believes that, in every group of people, the answer to solving problems lies with competent and passionate national leaders who are able to recognize concerns, problems, and the corresponding solutions specific to their own society and culture. SowHope seeks out and develops partner relationships with national leaders who demonstrate an effective performance history in the service area or a related area for which he or she is requesting project funds.

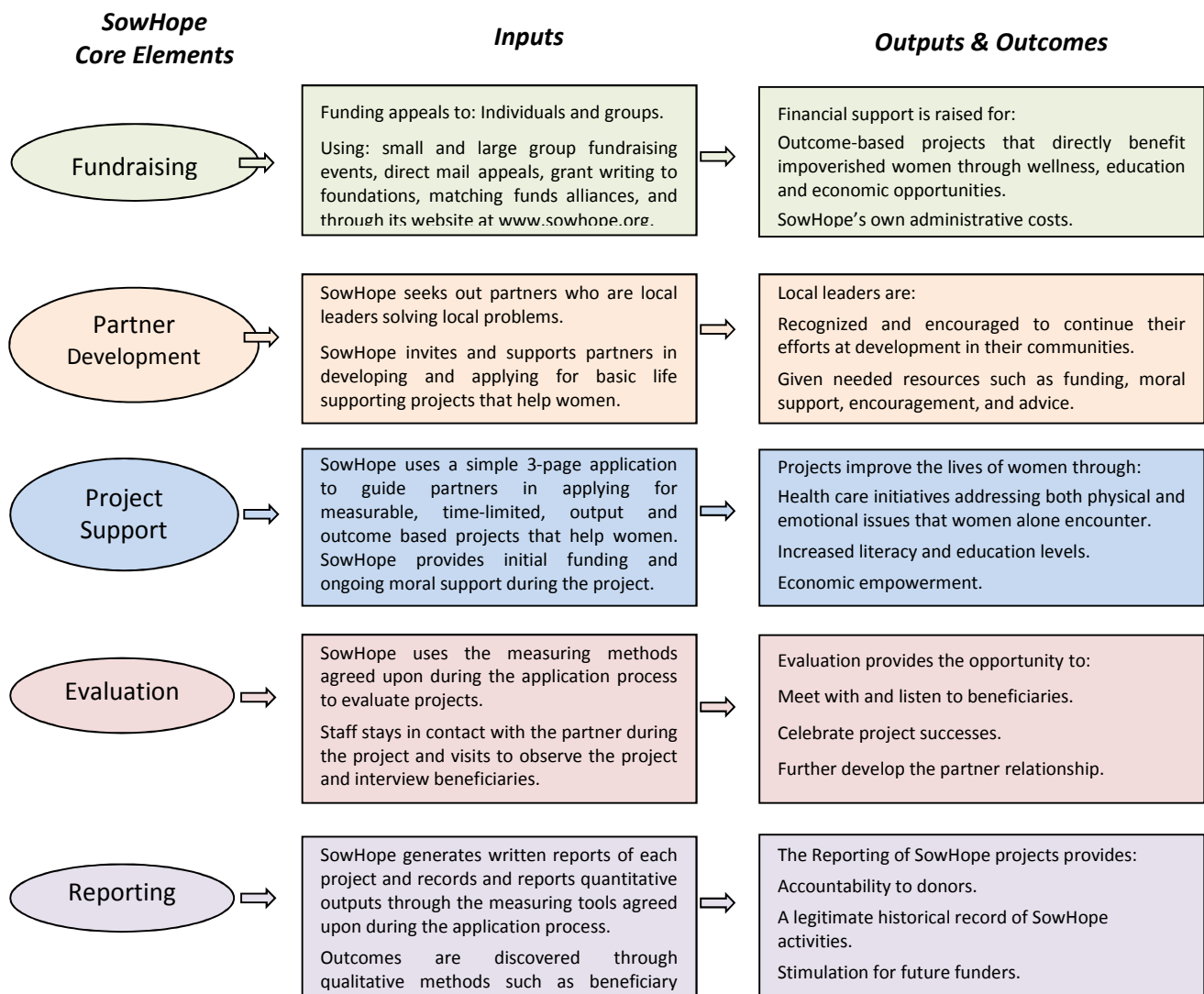
## Current Operating Model

### Description of the Program

SowHope serves the most deserving women by providing opportunities within three very basic, yet essential, program areas to promote the largest amount of change.

- **Wellness:** Includes programs to serve the physical and emotional needs of women including clean water, AIDS care and prevention, women’s healthcare, and safe places for those who have been abused or traumatized.
- **Education:** Encompasses programs that teach literacy and offer vocational and technical training.
- **Economic:** Focuses on micro-loans and small business training programs.

### Organization Logic Model (key outputs and outcomes)



### *Core Elements and Success Factors*

The core elements of SowHope are fundraising and partner development/project support within the three identified SowHope program areas, project evaluation, and reporting.

SowHope solicits funding for outcome-based projects that directly benefit women and for its own administrative costs through appeals to individuals and corporations, small and large group fundraising events, direct mail appeals, grant writing to foundations, matching funds alliances, and through its website, [www.sowhope.org](http://www.sowhope.org).

Partners are invited to submit measurable, time-limited, outcome based projects specifically addressing wellness, education, or economic opportunities for impoverished women in their local areas. In their grant application, partners stipulate the number of women and how they intend to impact them. They submit the output measuring tool they will be using to track the progress of the project. SowHope provides project support in the way of funding and, at times, suggestions for efficiency and effectiveness.

Projects are evaluated by a review of the measuring tool established at the time of application. Also, SowHope staff may visit the project at various stages, and usually near completion, to observe the impact of the project and to review the record keeping and encourage the partner. Interviews with beneficiaries and other local people are utilized to evaluate the project.

Reports of each project are generated from the evaluation and the results are utilized in fundraising, determining partner relationships, and to assess future project applications.

### *Evidence of Results*

All the projects that SowHope has funded through the end of 2015 have achieved, or exceeded, the original targets set by the partners in their applications. Partners submit written reports which were agreed upon during the application process to track the numbers of beneficiaries and project costs.

#### **Organization**

##### *Organization Structure and Governance*

The president of SowHope, Mary Dailey Brown, oversees the administration, fund development and programs of SowHope. The president is assisted in these tasks by the administrative director, who also manages volunteers and coordinates inter-organizational communication. Skilled volunteers are utilized in many

<b>SowHope Program: Project Description</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>	<b># of Women Impacted</b>
<b>Wellness:</b>		
Africa	\$121,971	26,080
South Asia	\$5,520	125
Western Hemisphere	\$300	50
<b>Education:</b>		
Africa	\$109,454	4,995
South Asia	\$183,480	7,172
<b>Economic:</b>		
Africa	\$225,099	14,492
South Asia	\$100,000	8,929
Western Hemisphere	\$500	3
<b>TOTAL as of 12-31-2015</b>	<b>\$746,324</b>	<b>61,846</b>

roles such as writers, accountants, computer hardware and software experts, website administrators, marketing and fundraising assistants, strategic planners, and general administrative assistants. Furthermore, SowHope draws on the expertise of its current nine board members, all of whom are highly experienced professionals and who volunteer their service to the organization.

#### *Current Impact*

Since its inception, SowHope programs have impacted nearly 62,000 women in the world who are earning and living on \$2 or less per day. SowHope has funded projects in 15 countries to date. The cultures in which these women live are highly discriminatory regarding women's status and rights.

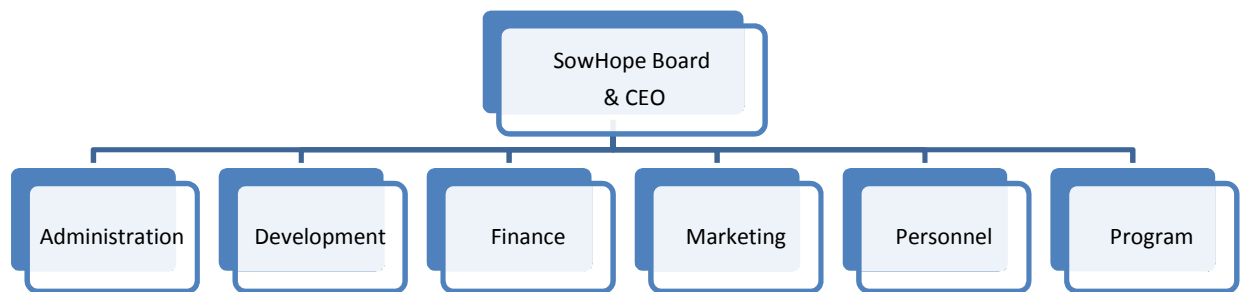
<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Countries Served</b>	<b># of Projects</b>	<b># of Women Impacted (As of Dec 31, 2015)</b>
<i>Wellness</i>	<i>Bangladesh, DRC, Egypt, Haiti, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>26,255</i>
<i>Education</i>	<i>DRC, Egypt, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>12,167</i>
<i>Economic</i>	<i>Bangladesh, Benin, DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>23,424</i>
<b>Total</b>		<b>121</b>	<b>61,846</b>

#### *Countries where SowHope has funded projects and the year of the first project:*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Year of First Project</b>	<b>No. of Projects</b>
Bangladesh	2007	5
Egypt	2007	4
India	2007	13
Kenya	2008	17
Nigeria	2008	16
Uganda	2010	25
DRC	2010	32
Haiti	2010	1
Rwanda	2010	1
Ghana	2012	1
Benin	2012	1
Mexico	2013	1
Pakistan	2014	1
South Sudan	2015	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>121</b>

### *Management Team*

The full-time president/CEO of the organization, one full-time administrative director, and one half-time projects director are the only paid employees at this time. Contractors are currently being used for book-keeping, social media, IT, and branding. Two regional representatives volunteer to support the marketing of SowHope. They reside in North Carolina and Colorado. The working board (12 members maximum) has six teams and each board member sits on at least one team along with other committed volunteers. These teams meet outside of the regular board meetings to accomplish team tasks and present proposals to the board. Other volunteer teams work under these teams.



### **Scaling Plan**

#### *Description of Proposed Scaling Plan and Type*

In order for SowHope to scale its operations it is essential that more full and part-time staff be hired. The organization hopes to continue to increase employed staff by hiring at least two full-time directors for the areas of fund development and marketing. As funding continues to increase, the half-time projects director will be increased to full-time and full-time program officers will be hired in proportion to expanding income levels. As more funds become available, SowHope will use the added program officers in specific global regions to increase partner development and fund more projects to help impoverished women in as many countries as possible. As SowHope grows, more full and part-time support staff are needed to support each team listed above and more USA regional marketing representatives are being recruited.

#### *Timetable, Milestones & Performance Goals*

SowHope would like to become the vanguard global organization holistically serving impoverished women; first, in all the developing countries, and ultimately, every nation. A simple model of operation was intentionally designed, so that others could easily follow, thereby starting a worldwide movement to improve the lives of women.

**Actual\* and Projected Number of Countries Served:**

19												
17												
15*												
13*												
12*												
11*												
9*												
5*												
4*												
2*												
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

\*denotes actual figures

**Actual\* and Potential Number of Women Impacted (Cumulative):**

>85,000												
>75,000												
>62,000*												
>55,000*												
>36,000*												
>35,000*												
>32,000*												
<25,000*												
>15,000*												
>10,000*												
>2,000*												
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

\*denotes actual figures

**Projected Social Impact**

Empowering women in poor countries and inspiring them to hope for a better future is one of the best ways to improve quality of life conditions for everyone in those countries. Research statistics identify that women are much more likely than men under the same circumstances to

take any opportunity for improvement offered them and capitalize on it for the benefit of their children, families, and communities.

The wellness, educational, and economic programs of SowHope are essential to meeting the most pressing needs of women in the developing world. When women—who are the primary caregivers—are cared for, everyone benefits.

## Financial Plan

### *Projected 2-Year Revenue and Expense Budget*

Over the last 10 years, SowHope has grown revenues at an annual average rate of 33 percent. For the first three years, SowHope revenues grew at a rate of more than 50 percent annually. In 2008, SowHope received a one-time foundation gift and matching grant totaling \$90,000. Since the 2009 economic crisis, SowHope has been building annual revenues at a steady rate. It took seven years (Dec 2012) to reach \$1 million in cumulative revenues. Within two more years, (Dec 2014) SowHope had cumulative revenues of just over \$1.5 million. SowHope has always operated in the black.

### ***Historical\* and Projected Income***

\$400K												\$400,000
\$350K											\$375,000	
\$300K									\$336,124*			
\$250K						\$262,752*		\$270,605*				
\$200K						\$204,259*	\$204,372*					
\$150K			\$198,111*		\$122,144*							
\$100K		\$79,050*		\$108,952*								
50K	\$52,337*											
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017

*\*denotes actual figures*

One goal is to keep management and fund development expenses at or below 10 percent of all revenues and to use the vast majority of revenues for programming, while maintaining some savings. So far, that goal has been accomplished, due to the high volume of committed and talented volunteer support. As staff and fund development personnel are added, the percentage goal for programming will be at or above 90 percent. It is crucial for SowHope, as a granting organization, to create a vigorous savings plan in order to have funds in place for

funding projects of existing and new partnerships. On average, SowHope has been able to save 12 percent per year, during the first 10 years. At the end of 2015 there was \$228,559 in savings.

*Current Funders and Commitments*

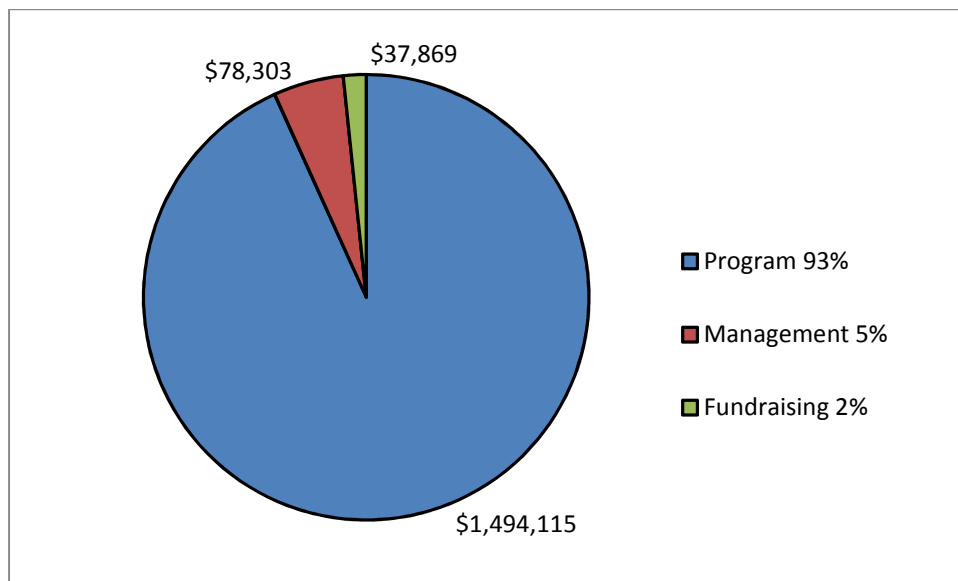
Over 1600 donor units have contributed to SowHope during the first 10 years. Below is a table showing the various categories of givers and income since SowHope began operation in January of 2006 through December of 2015.

**Income Categories- Jan 2006 - Dec 2015**

Alliance Contributions (like-minded Orgs sharing the cost of projects)	\$147,618
Individual Contributions	\$1,270,224
Business Contributions	\$328,168
Donated Stock	\$14,836
Foundation Contributions	\$75,560
Interest on Savings	\$2,438
<b>Total Income 2006 – 2015</b>	<b>\$1,838,844</b>

**Expense Categories – Jan 2006 - Dec 2015**

Expenses totaled **\$1,610,285** from 2006-2015. Program expenses reflect 93% of total expenses. Management costs had a 5% share of the expenses, and Fundraising expenses were 2%.





**Appendices available upon request or at website**

*IRS Form 990's – Available at <http://sowhope.org/financials/>*

*Bios of Board & Senior Management – Available at <http://sowhope.org/meet-the-sowhope-team/>*

*Copies of all SowHope newsletters – Available at <http://sowhope.org/newsletter>*

*Relevant Research Studies – Research Paper on Microloans – Available upon request*