



## 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 \$2.50 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

Mary Dailey Brown, President, Co-Founder, and CEO of SowHope, grew up on a dairy farm in Illinois. She attended Southern Illinois University where she received two Bachelor of Arts, in Photography and Psychology. After graduating, she became a summer intern at the White House and was soon hired on as a White House Photographer, serving both Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan.

Mrs. Brown was inspired by the way that President Carter and Mrs. Carter treated people, regardless of whether the people were heads of state or maids, including greeting everyone, even on elevators and back halls. She was always impressed that somebody that important would take time for everyone. It also showed her the value of each person.

Later in life, Mrs. Brown became the Director of Missions at a large church and was able to travel to dozens of countries within the developing world. During this time, she noticed that the local women seemed to be doing all of the hard labor. The local leaders of the communities confirmed this fact to her and told her it would not change any time soon. Emboldened, Mary set out to look for an opportunity to work for a multinational organization dedicated to the holistic care of women.

In 2005 after her long search came up empty, Mary and her husband Doug Brown were compelled to start a nonprofit. In 2006, SowHope was founded with the mission ***to inspire women around the world by promoting wellness, education, and economic opportunities***. The idea was simple: start something so easy to duplicate, that many other organizations would copy the strategy and serve the billions of women and, by doing so, their families, who are the most impoverished in the world. This strategy, ***partnering with local leaders using local solutions solving local problems***, became the best way to serve local communities – funding projects that the people truly needed, using the ideas they dreamed up themselves. 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.

This was an empowering concept that conceivably would spread like wildfire.

Thirteen years later, SowHope continues to be one of the only multinational organizations solely dedicated to the holistic care of women. With the help of its donors, SowHope has impacted over 90,000 women in 20 countries, funding over 200 projects. Projects have been funded in the areas of maternal healthcare and AIDS training, literacy and vocational training, microfinance, and many other locally dreamed ideas.

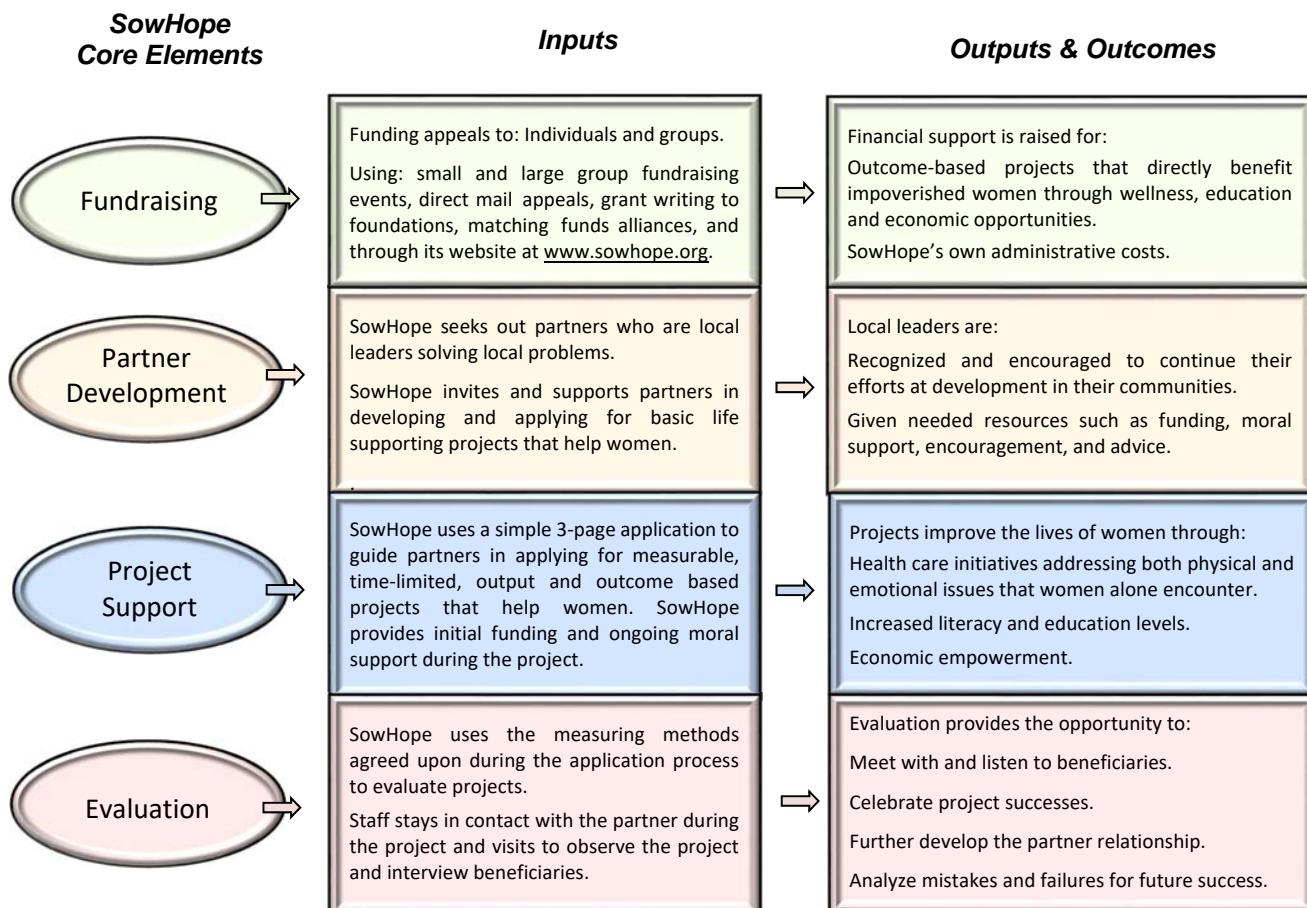
### Current Operating Model

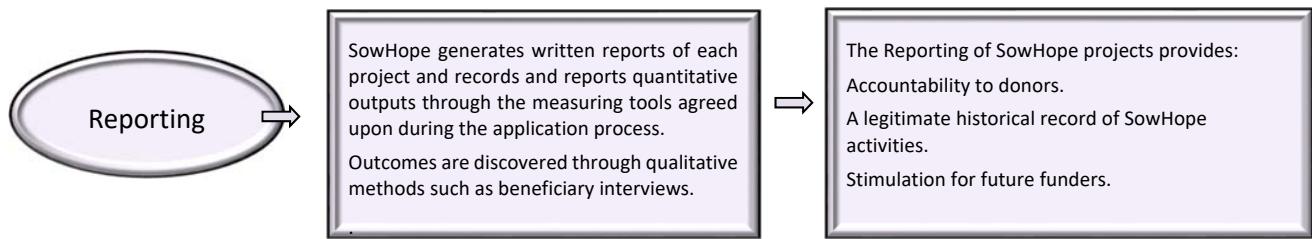
#### Description of the Program

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, women's maternal and healthcare, AIDS care and prevention, counseling 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's work are local leader 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, group fundraising events, direct mail, grant writing, matching funds alliances, and through its website, [www.sowhope.org](http://www.sowhope.org).

Local leaders 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 applications, local leaders identify the number of women that they intend to serve and how they intend to impact them, including the output measuring tool they will use to track the progress of the project. SowHope provides project support through funding and, at times, suggestions for efficiency and effectiveness. Memorandums of Understanding are signed for each project.

Projects are evaluated via 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 recordkeeping and encourage the partner. Interviews with beneficiaries and other local people are also 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*

<b>SowHope Program: Projects Description</b>	<b>Projects Cost</b>	<b># of Women Impacted</b>
<b><u>Wellness</u></b>		
Africa	\$117,105	23,843
South Asia	\$18,537	334
Middle East	\$13,847	7,938
Western Hemisphere	\$2,300	100
<b><u>Education</u></b>		
Africa	\$129,542	8,783
South Asia	\$198,296	9,734
Middle East	\$40,580	232

All the projects that SowHope has funded through the end of 2018 have achieved, or exceeded, the original targets set by the partners in their applications. To track the numbers of beneficiaries and project costs, partners submit written reports in the form agreed upon during the application process.

<b>Economic</b>		
Africa	\$328,209	21,026
South Asia	\$100,000	9,616
Western Hemisphere	\$500	3
<b>TOTAL as of 12-31-2018</b>	<b>\$1,084,405</b>	<b>92,113</b>

## 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 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 eight current board members, all of whom are highly experienced professionals and who volunteer their service to the organization.

### Current Impact

Since its inception, SowHope has impacted over 92,000 women in the world who are earning and living on \$2.75 or less per day (adjusted for inflation over time). SowHope has funded projects in 20 countries to date. The cultures in which these women live are highly discriminatory regarding women's status and rights.

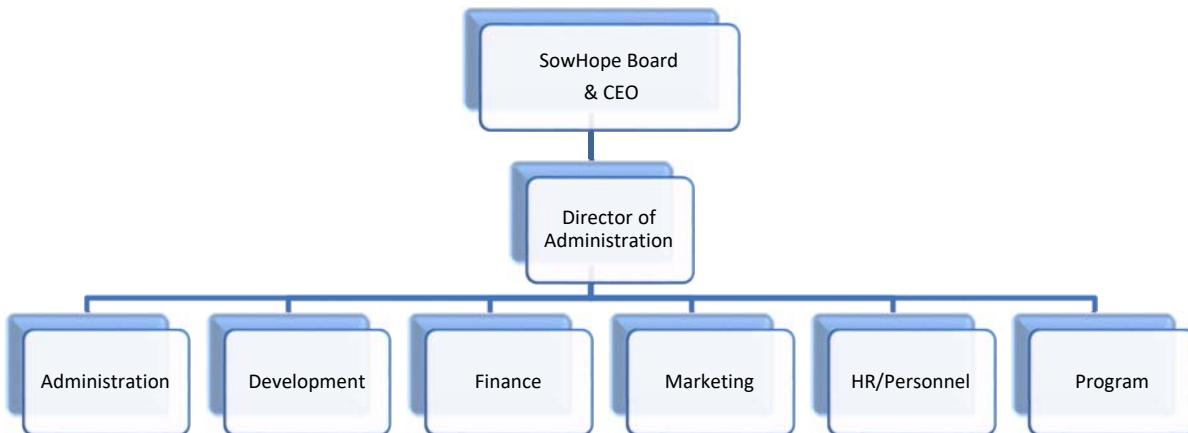
Program Area	Countries Served	# of Projects	# of Women Impacted (As of Dec 31, 2018)
Wellness	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, DRC, Ethiopia, Egypt, Haiti, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, Jordan	53	37,738
Education	DRC, Egypt, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda, Kenya	65	20,219
Economic	Bangladesh, Benin, DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia	80	34,156
<b>Total</b>		<b>198</b>	<b>92,113</b>

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

Country	Year of First Project	No. of Projects
Bangladesh	2007	6
Egypt	2007	6
India	2007	15
Kenya	2008	23
Nigeria	2008	43
Uganda	2010	34
DRC	2010	44
Haiti	2010	3
Rwanda	2010	1
Ghana	2012	1
Benin	2012	1
Mexico	2013	1
Pakistan	2014	1
South Sudan	2015	10
Jordan	2016	3
Zambia	2016	1
Thailand	2017	1
Afghanistan	2017	2
Burkina Faso	2018	1
Ethiopia	2018	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>198</b>

### *Management Team*

The full-time President/CEO of the organization and one full-time Director of Administration are the only paid employees at this time. Contractors are currently being used for Bookkeeping and Information Technology. The Board of Directors, also called 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**

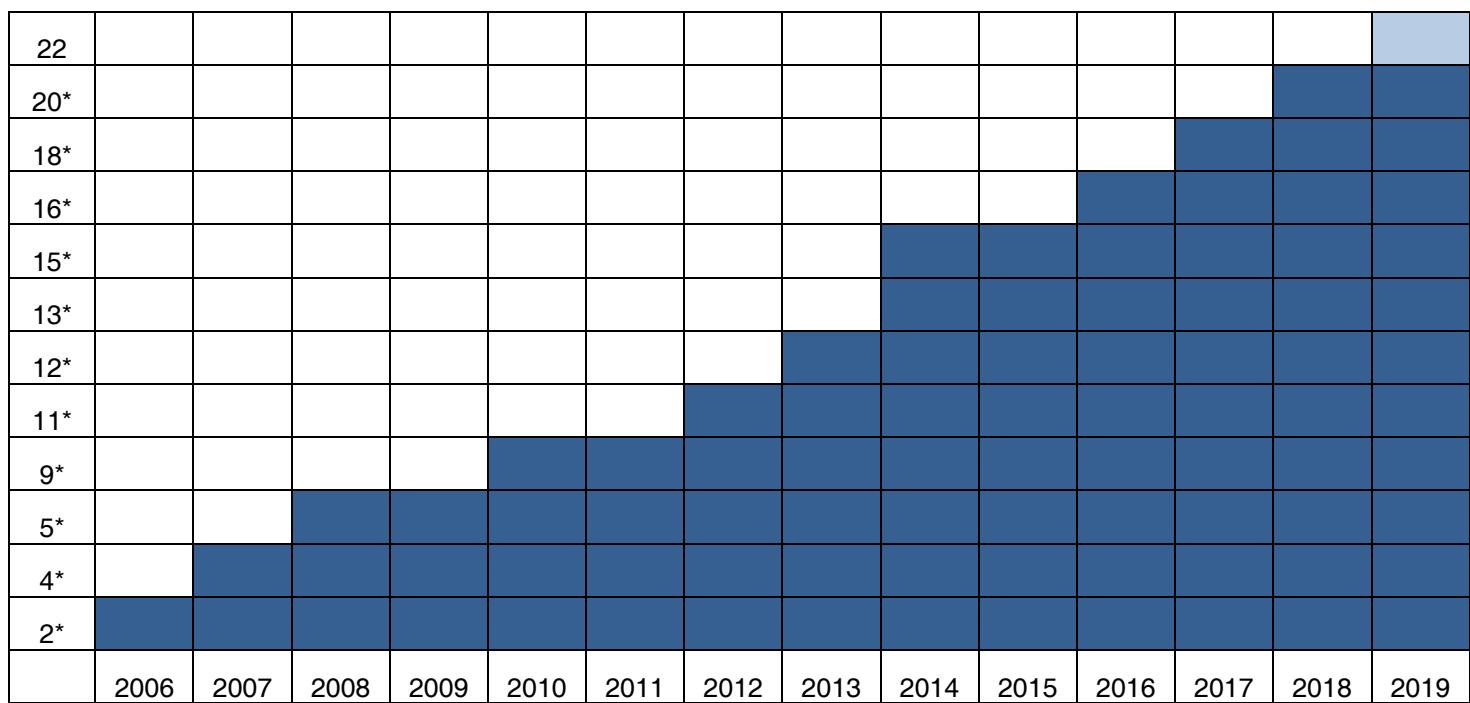
### *Description of Proposed Scaling Plan and Type*

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 a full-time Donor Relations & Marketing Coordinator. As funding continues to increase, a Projects Director will be hired. As more funds become available, SowHope plans to employ Program Officers in specific global regions to increase partner development and manage more projects aimed at supporting 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, including the recruiting of USA regional marketing representatives.

### *Timetable, Milestones & Performance Goals*

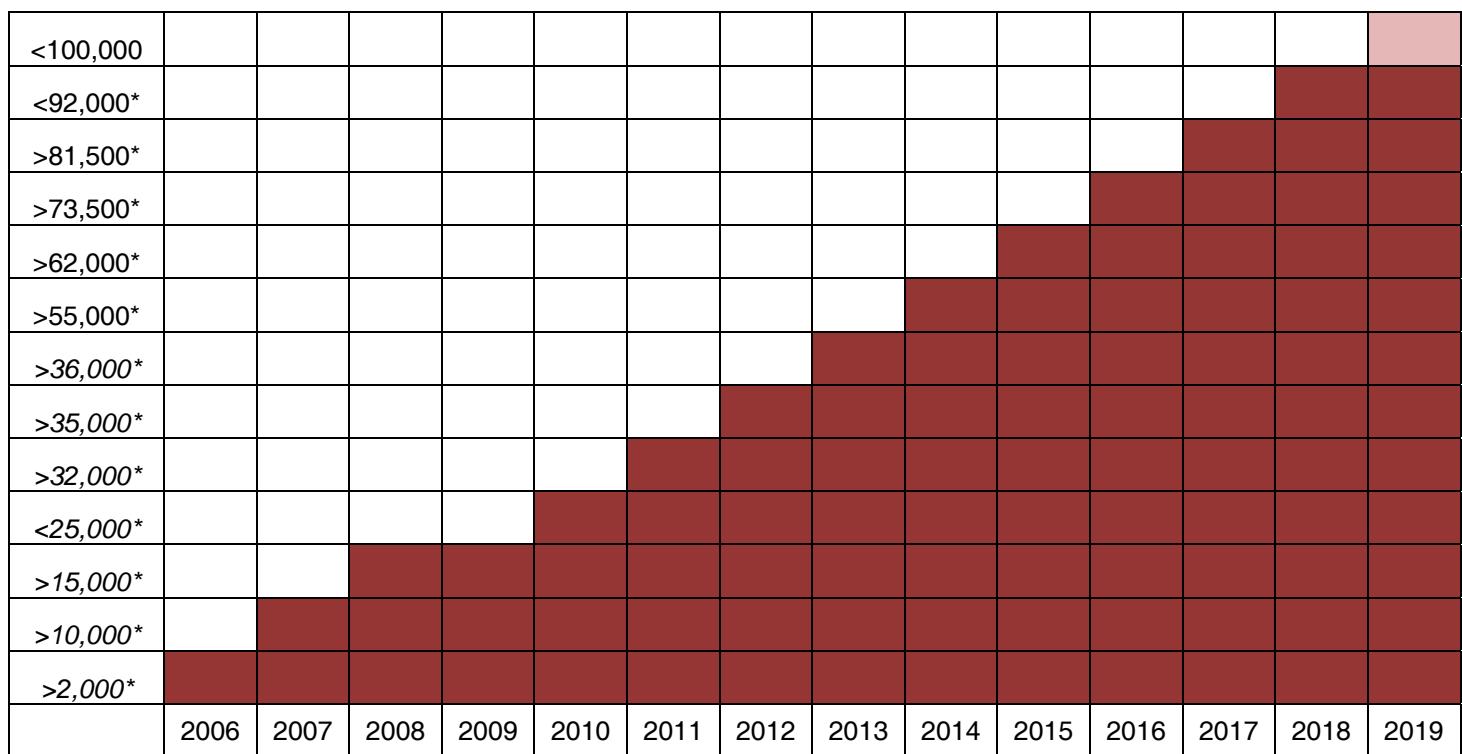
SowHope would like to become the vanguard global organization holistically serving impoverished women; first, in all the developing countries, and ultimately, every nation. A simple model of operation was intentionally designed so that others could easily follow SowHope's lead, thereby starting a worldwide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

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



\*denotes actual figures

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



\*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 an 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 13 years, SowHope has grown revenues at an annual average rate of 25 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 six more years, (Dec 2018) SowHope had cumulative revenues of almost \$3 million. SowHope has always operated in the black.

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

\$400K													\$416,035*	\$450,000
													\$366,431*	
													\$336,124*	\$319,365*
													\$270,605*	
													\$262,752*	
													\$204,259*	\$204,372*
													\$198,111*	\$122,144*
													\$79,050*	\$108,952*
50K														
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019

\*denotes actual figures

One goal is to keep management and fund development expenses at or below 15 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 85 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 almost 15 percent per year during the first 13 years. At the end of 2018, SowHope had \$429,738 in savings.

#### ***Current Funders and Commitments***

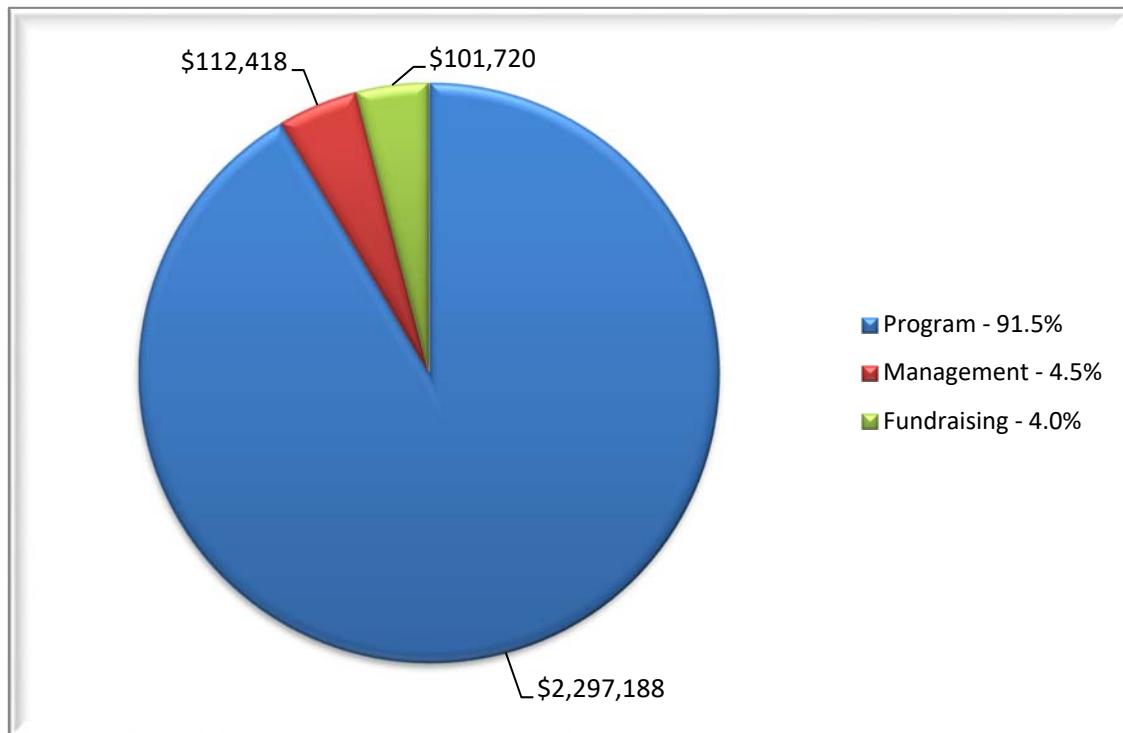
Almost 2,500 donors have contributed to SowHope during the first 13 years. Below is a table showing the various categories of givers and income since SowHope began operation in January of 2006 and continues to operate today.

#### ***Income Categories- Jan 2006 - Dec 2018***

Alliance Contributions (like-minded Orgs sharing the cost of projects)	\$211,590
Individual Contributions	\$1,981,464
Business Contributions	\$576,412
Foundation Contributions	\$168,027
Interest on Savings	\$3,571
<b>Total Income 2006 – 2018</b>	<b>\$2,941,064</b>

**Expense Categories – Jan 2006 - Dec 2018**

Expenses totaled **\$2,511,326** from 2006-2018. Overall, program expenses reflect 92.2% of total expenses while management and fundraising expenses reflect 4.4% and 3.4% respectively.



**Appendices available upon request or at the SowHope website**

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

*SowHope Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, 501c3 Determination Letter, etc. at  
<http://sowhope.org/organizational-policies-legal-documents/>*

*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*