



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 with the mission to inspire women around the world by promoting wellness, education, and economic opportunities.

The target recipients are women who reside primarily in developing nations who constitute the poorest, most oppressed, least healthy, and most uneducated group in the world. They live on an average of \$2.75 a day or less. Impoverished 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.

SowHope achieves its goals through forming strategic partnerships with *local leaders solving local problems using local solutions*. 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, and foundation 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 over 60 countries and has been active in helping the poor both in the United States and in the developing world. Based on her exposure to various cultures, Ms. Brown understood that the neediest, most neglected people in the world are impoverished women in developing countries.

Sensing a burden to do something to help these women, Ms. Brown sought work at a multi-national organization dedicated to meeting basic needs of women around the world. In 2005, after her long search came up empty, she 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**. SowHope works under the assumption that by providing women with essential opportunities they will improve not only the lives of the women, but also the lives of their families, villages, and nations.

The idea was to start something so simple that it could easily be duplicated, leading to many other organizations copying the strategy and begin a movement to serve the world’s 1.5 billion most impoverished women (and, by proxy, their families). 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 determining and serving the needs of women.

Fifteen years later, SowHope continues to be one of the only multinational organizations solely dedicated to the holistic care of impoverished women. With the help of its donors, SowHope has directly impacted over 105,000 women in 23 countries, funding 261 projects. All the projects were original ideas from and carried out with the courage and compassion of its partners. Through the years, SowHope has encouraged and funded the projects of 63 partners.

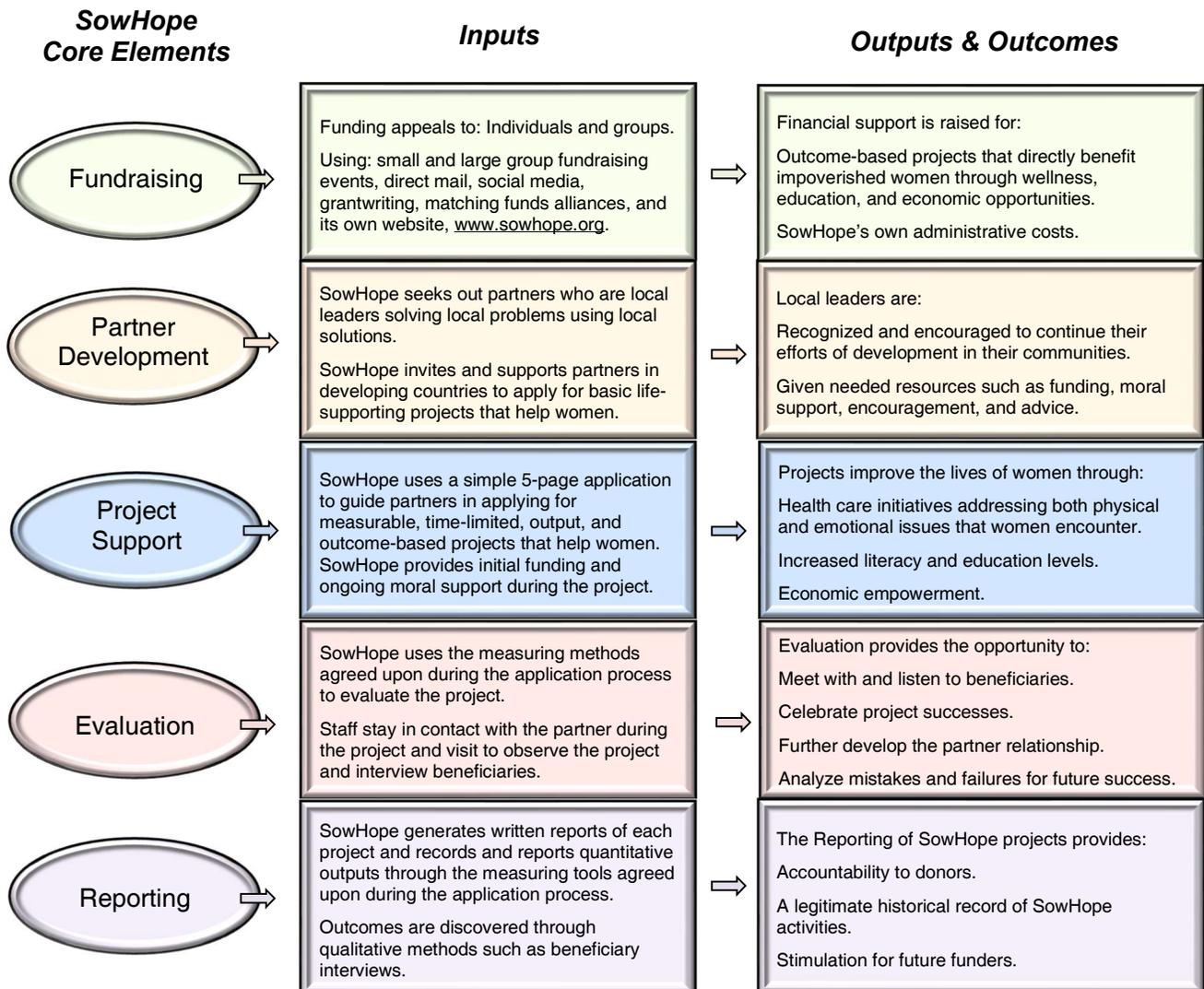
Current Operating Model

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:** Programs to serve the physical and emotional needs of women including maternal health and specialized women’s healthcare such as fistula repair surgery, AIDS care and prevention, counseling, and safe places for those who have been abused or traumatized.
- **Education:** Programs that teach literacy and offer vocational and/or technical training.
- **Economic:** Microfinance and savings programs 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 fundraising, 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, large and small group events, social media, email and direct mail, grantwriting, matching funds alliances, and through its website, www.sowhope.org.

Local leaders are invited to submit grant applications for measurable, time-limited, outcome-based projects addressing wellness, education, and/or economic opportunities for impoverished women in their local areas. In the application, local leaders identify the number of women they intend to serve and how they intend to impact them, including the outputs-measuring tool they will use to track the progress of the project. SowHope provides support through funding and, at times, suggestions for efficiency and effectiveness. An MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) is signed for each project.

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

Evidence of Results

Partners submit project reports mid-way through and at the end of each project. SowHope conducts a sustainability assessment interview with the partner one year after the project has concluded. Field reports are generated when SowHope staff visit a project. Results from all reports are utilized for effective evaluation, marketing and fundraising, to determine partner relationships, and to assess future project applications.

Organization

Organization Structure and Governance

SowHope is governed by its eleven current board members and draws upon their expertise, all of whom are all highly experienced professionals that volunteer their service to oversee the organization. The President/CEO of SowHope oversees the administration, fund development, and programs of SowHope. The Administrative Director manages volunteers, oversees data management, coordinates extra- and intra-organizational communication, and assists in marketing and myriad various tasks. Skilled volunteers contribute in many roles such as programming, marketing, fundraising, human resources, strategic planning, and general administration.

SowHope Program: Projects Description	Projects Cost	# of Women Impacted
<u>Wellness</u>		
Africa	\$254,491	42,350
South Asia	\$21,817	955
Middle East	\$14,160	425
Western Hemisphere	\$42,300	50
<u>Education</u>		
Africa	\$222,386	14,969
South Asia	\$210,924	9,937
Middle East	\$21,875	140
<u>Economic</u>		
Africa	\$478,073	27,808
South Asia	\$112,146	9,020
W. Hemisphere	\$900	13
TOTAL as of 12-31-2020	\$1,379,072	105,667

Current Impact

Since its inception, SowHope has impacted over 105,000 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 23 countries to date. The cultures in which these women live are highly discriminatory regarding women's status and rights.

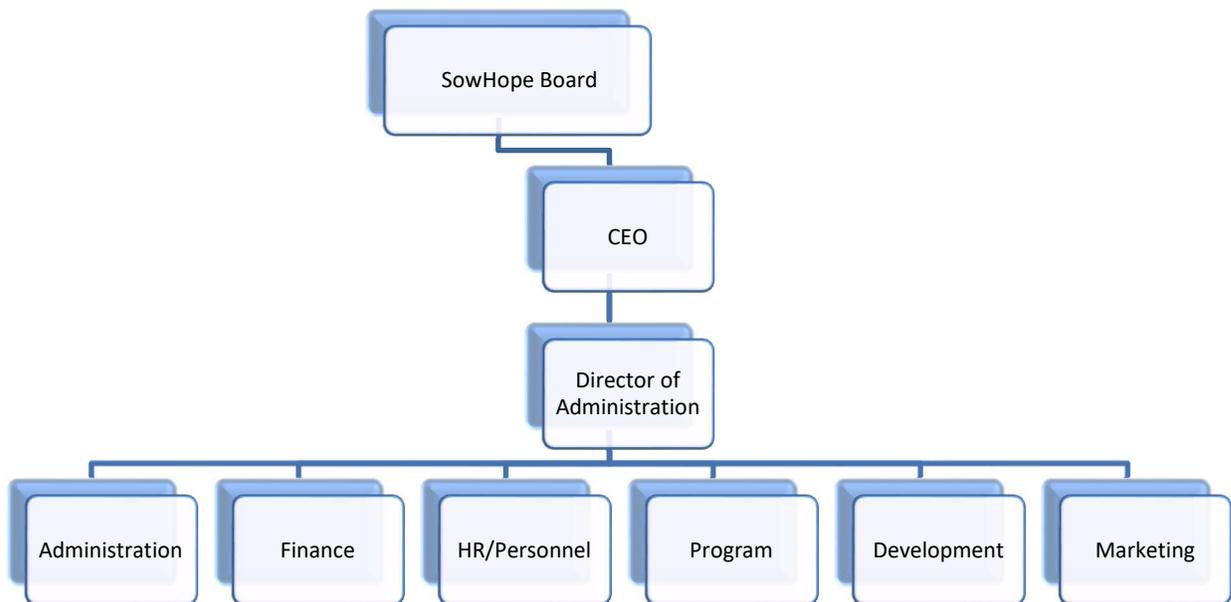
Program Area	Countries Served	# of Projects	# of Women Impacted (As of Dec 31, 2020)
Wellness	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, DRC, Ethiopia, Egypt, Haiti, India, Jordan, Kenya, Nigeria, Nepal, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda	81	43,780
Education	DRC, Egypt, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Uganda	74	25,066
Economic	Bangladesh, Benin, DRC, Ghana, Haiti, India, Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Nepal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia	106	36,821
Total		261	105,667

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

Country	Year of First Project	No. of Projects
Bangladesh	2007	8
Egypt	2007	7
India	2007	18
Kenya	2008	27
Nigeria	2008	56
Uganda	2010	43
DRC	2010	54
Haiti	2010	5
Rwanda	2010	1
Ghana	2012	1
Benin	2012	1
Mexico	2013	1
Pakistan	2014	1
South Sudan	2015	17
Jordan	2016	3
Zambia	2016	1
Thailand	2017	1
Afghanistan	2017	2
Burkina Faso	2018	4
Ethiopia	2018	1
Sierra Leone	2019	5
Myanmar	2019	2
Nepal	2020	2
Total		261

Management Team

There are two paid full-time employees at SowHope. The President/CEO is Mary Dailey Brown and the Director of Administration is Aaron Hoxworth. They work with six teams to complete the tasks at SowHope. Contractors are currently utilized for Bookkeeping and Information Technology. The Board of Directors, operating as a volunteer working board (12 members maximum), provides oversight for the organization and participates in the six volunteer working teams. 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

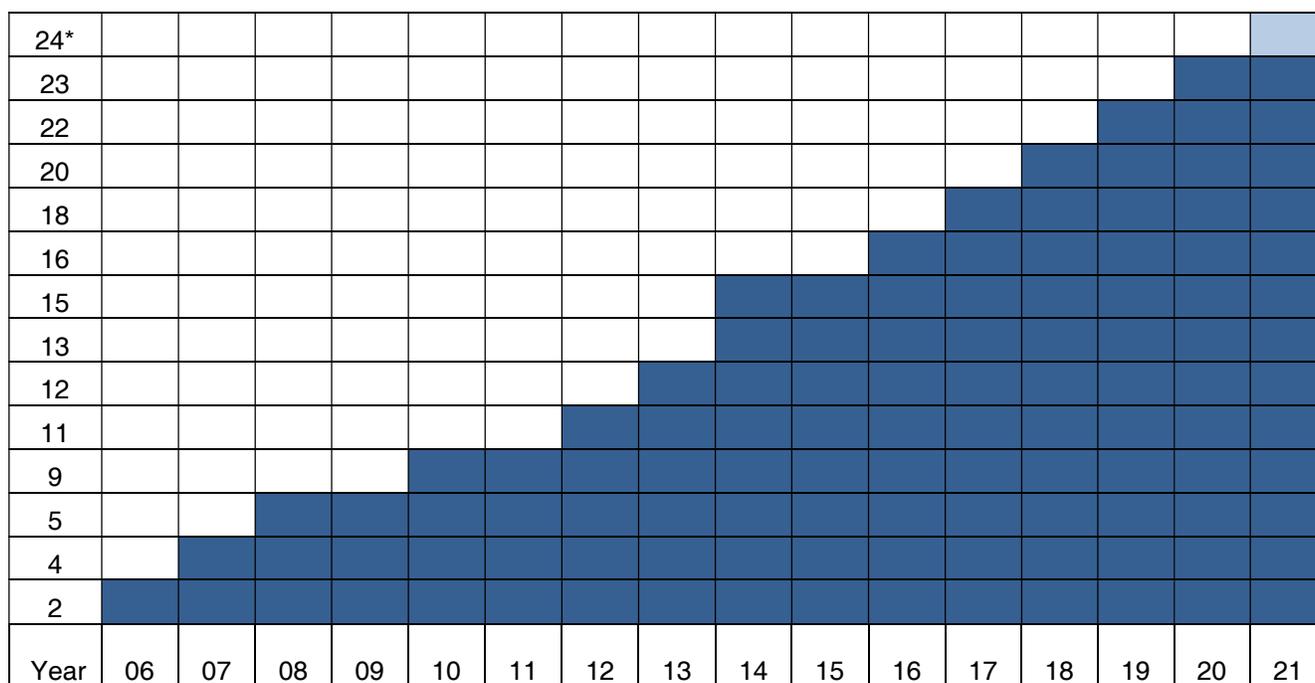
Description of Proposed Scaling Plan and Type

For SowHope to scale its operations it is essential that more full and part-time staff be hired. As funding continues to increase, a Fund Development Director and a Program 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 unique areas as possible. As SowHope grows, more full and part-time support staff will be needed to support each team listed above, including the recruiting of USA regional marketing representatives.

Timetable, Milestones & Performance Goals

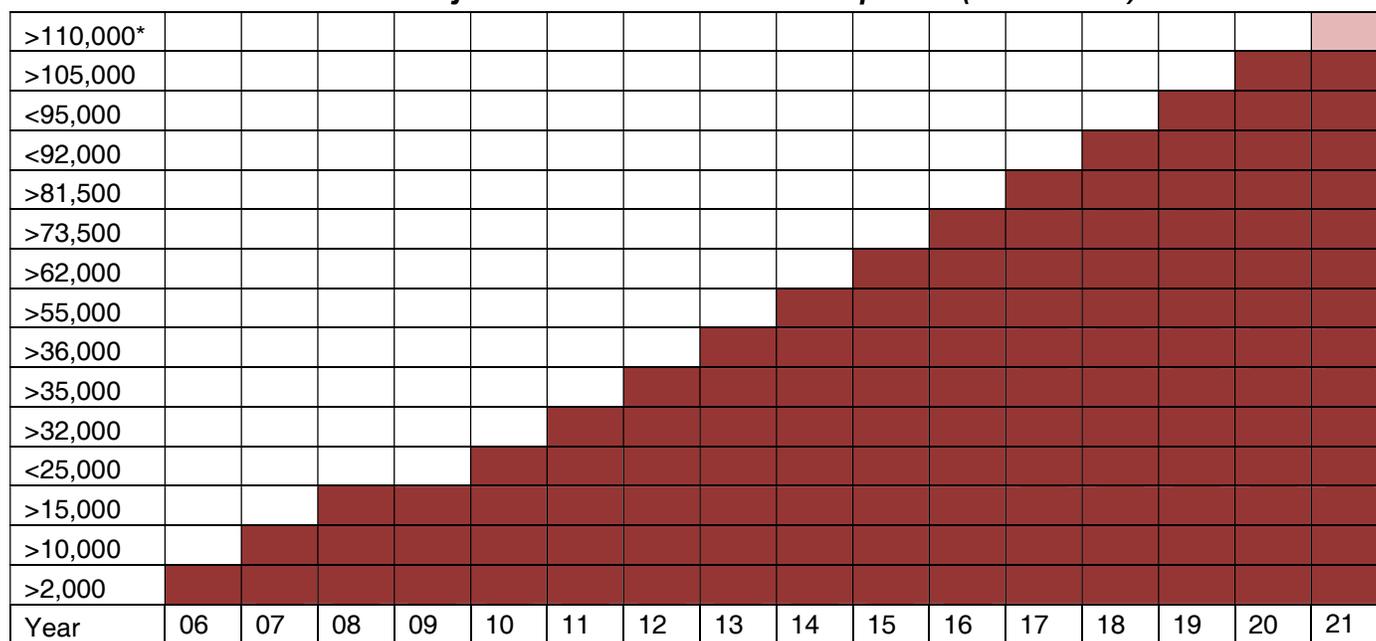
SowHope would like to become the vanguard global organization holistically serving impoverished women; first, in all developing countries, and ultimately in every nation. A simple model of operation was intentionally designed so that others could easily follow SowHope's lead, thereby starting a worldwide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

Actual and Projected* Number of Countries Served:



*denotes projected figures

Actual and Projected* Number of Women Impacted (Cumulative):



*denotes projected 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 the 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 to them and capitalize on it for the benefit of their children, families, and communities.

The wellness, education, 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 Revenue and Expense Budget

Over the last 15 years, SowHope has grown revenues at an annual average rate of 22 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 (2012) to reach \$1 million in cumulative revenues. SowHope reached the \$2 million mark just four more years (2016) and then four years (2020) to pass \$3.8 million in cumulative revenues. SowHope has always operated in the black.

Historical and Projected* Annual Income

500k														\$463k	\$500k*	
450k													\$416k	\$418k		
400k												\$366k				
350K									\$336k							
300K						\$263k		\$271		\$320k						
250K					\$204k		\$204k									
200K			\$198k													
150K				\$109k	\$122k											
100K																
50K	\$52k	\$79k														
Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021

*denotes projected figures

SowHope maintains the goals of keeping management and fund development expenses at or below 10 percent of total revenue, using most of the revenue for programming and for preserving savings. That goal has always been met due to prudent spending and the high volume of committed and talented volunteer support. As staff is added, the percentage goal for programming will be at or above 85 percent of expenses. It is crucial for SowHope, as a granting organization,

to create a vigorous savings plan to have funds in place for funding projects of existing and new partnerships. At the end of 2020, SowHope had assets of \$518,377.

Current Funders and Commitments

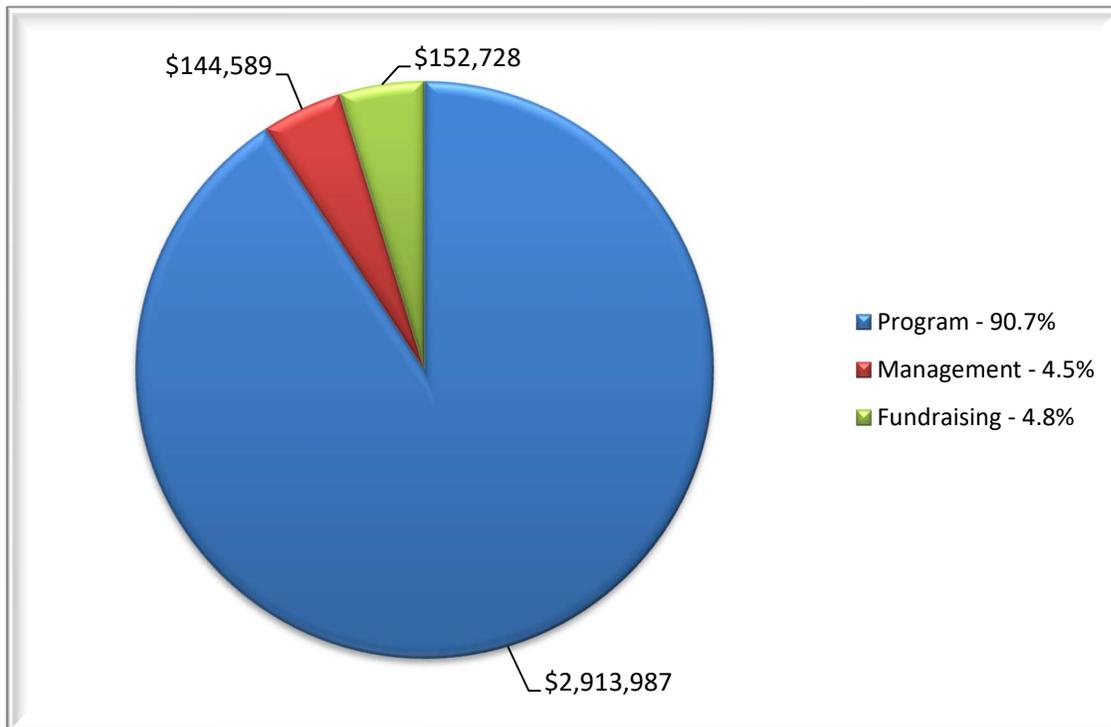
Over 2,500 donors have contributed to SowHope during the first 15 years. Below is a table showing the various revenue categories since SowHope began operations in January 2006.

Income Categories- Jan 2006 - Dec 2020

Alliance Contributions (like-minded Orgs sharing the cost of projects)	\$215,225
Individual Contributions	\$2,668,021
Business Contributions	\$721,361
Foundation Contributions	\$187,638
Government Grants	\$24,524
Interest on Savings	\$5,309
Total Income 2006 – 2020	\$3,822,078

Expense Categories – Jan 2006 - Dec 2020

Expenses totaled **\$3,205,098** from 2006-2020. Overall, program expenses reflect 90.7% of total expenses while management and fundraising expenses reflect 4.5% and 4.8% 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