



# Sharing Opportunities with Women NEWSLETTER



*The finished two-story clinic*

## FULFILLING A DREAM

Four years ago, SowHope met Dr. Itengré, a surgeon specializing in obstetric fistula repair. We were so moved by the stories of women living with fistula and the life-

changing results of the fistula repair surgeries, that we hoped to provide \$50,000 to cover the cost of surgeries for 100 women over two years. At the time, Dr. Itengré only had access to a local operating room, allowing him to perform 50 surgeries per year, making a dent in a country that has some of the highest incidences of obstetric fistula in the world.

Dr. Itengré has a dream to build his own hospital dedicated to obstetric fistula repair. The price tag would be around \$1 million and seemed to be a goal for the future. In 2020, to alleviate the issue of capacity, SowHope helped raise \$50,000 towards renovating a building to serve as a fistula repair clinic. Supporters like you gave generously to not only make this clinic a reality, but you helped build a second floor! In addition, your giving provided the opportunity for SowHope to procure and send a shipping container full of necessary medical supplies to fill both floors of the clinic. In two years' time, you helped us raise over \$114,000 to make this dream a reality.

We are ecstatic to announce that the building project has been completed and the shipping container arrived full of all the items that had been purchased. Miraculously, customs did not even open the container upon arrival, as the original seal was still intact. This was a huge blessing since there have been many problems of theft during customs clearance. The new two-floor clinic will allow Dr. Itengré and his staff to perform, conservatively, about **250 surgeries** each year, **5 times the capacity he had previously!**

Dr. Itengré is so grateful for the generosity of our SowHope donors. He explained, "The clinic has contributed to improve the life of the community through employment and specialized clinical care in a community that has no health center. We are overjoyed!"



*Hospital beds received in the shipment*



*Hands of a student  
(used for privacy)*

## BEAUTY IN INDIA

Heavy snowfall cut the electricity at a vocational training project in India where women were learning how to become beauticians and to professionally apply makeup. Undeterred, they managed to carry on by using small firepots for light and warmth. No one wanted to give up the training opportunity they were receiving.

There are few jobs that women are encouraged to have outside the home in this tourist area of India, but doing makeup is one of the only gainful employment

opportunities within these constraints. Additionally, there is a strong tradition in the culture (as in many cultures) of using makeup for weddings and other important festive gatherings. This makes it a profitable business.

Kavita\*, a social worker and the local leader working with SowHope, was abandoned by her husband and left to care for two children with no way to earn income. She felt helpless. Her mother paid for her to take a beautician class and that made all the difference. Kavita and her children were able to survive, and thrive, because of this training.

She now wants to help women in similar situations. Kavita started this project with the goals of helping women become financially independent and teaching them to train other women about what they have learned. The training lasts one month and covers both theory and practical applications. Each woman who completes the course receives a makeup kit to take and use immediately to start her own business. The money they make in their new businesses is life-changing. We are excited to begin this partnership in an area that has some of the most impoverished women in the world.

*\*Real name reserved for safety concerns*

## IT'S BACK! SOWHOPE'S HONOR A WOMAN BRUNCH



Brunch at JW Marriott, Margaux  
Grand Rapids, MI

**Sunday, May 1, 2022 11AM-1PM**

\$125 per ticket

Visit [sowhope.org](http://sowhope.org) for more info

## VOLUNTEER BEVERLY JANSMA

It's safe to say: Beverly Jansma is mission-oriented. Over the past 32 years, she has put together quite the résumé, including participation in mission work in 7 countries and sitting on the board of 4 international nonprofit organizations. For one organization alone, she has traveled to Haiti over 70 times. So it's no surprise that when she learned about SowHope over 10 years ago at a SowHope fundraiser, she wanted to be involved. The following year, she volunteered at the event and didn't know anyone. When SowHope President Mary Dailey Brown walked up to her and said, "Hi, I'm Mary Brown, and I don't know you", a conversation was struck up and the volunteering and support of SowHope began.

Beverly Jansma worked as a nurse for 25 years, including almost 20 years at the Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. Now retired, she concludes that she is a "Care giver and fixer at heart", staying active in serving others as she did in her profession. It was SowHope's strategy and belief in locally-led projects that aligned with Bev's personal beliefs. She states, "Early on in mission work, I felt that going in and doing things for people was the right way. After a while, it became evident that imparting 'our' Western ideals, cultures, and medicine was not working... SowHope doesn't go in and try to fix things or tell people how to do things for their people. They provide resources and create opportunities to become sustainable and profitable to help people lift themselves out of poverty and benefit the whole community."



Beverly Jansma

Volunteering is a way of life for Beverly. When asked what inspires her to keep volunteering, she responded, "Why not? There is no greater joy than knowing that a person has been lifted out of poverty through education that empowers, provides dignity, and moves a life forward."

With SowHope, she regularly assists with mailings, helps out at events, and has even traveled with Mary abroad to South Sudan. "I enjoy volunteering at SowHope because of the camaraderie working with the staff and other volunteers, knowing that it works for the greater good and provides women with self-worth. Oh, and I enjoy talking with and traveling with Mary!"



Beverly Jansma (right) attends to a woman with cataracts in South Sudan

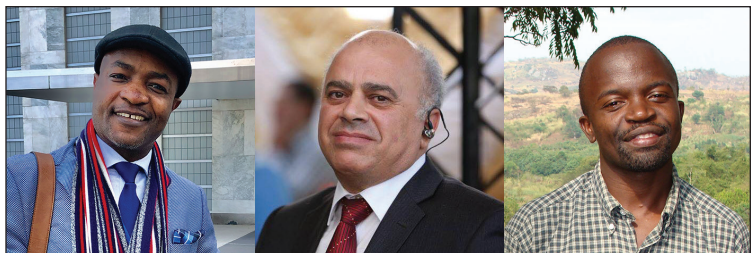
Of SowHope's three program areas, Beverly believes that education is the most crucial, but all 3 are intertwined. "One cannot survive with just education... education is needed to understand how to have wellness and care for oneself and community. Wellness is needed to have the energy to educate oneself and to maintain economic opportunities. Economic opportunities cannot survive if one does not have the education or maintain a life of wellness." From her own knowledge and experience, seeing real world problems be solved, she has advice for the next generation of women: "Educate yourselves while keeping in mind your background and culture. Going into a culture and understanding customs and beliefs lead to a new way of educating people... education needed to start with and incorporate their own customs and resources available."

Thank you for your wisdom, Beverly, and for your committed volunteer work for SowHope!

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY "A FEW GOOD MEN"

Every year we celebrate International Women's Day (IWD) on March 8th. For more than a hundred years, IWD has been celebrated around the world. It is a time to recognize the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women and a day that marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. This year we wanted to hear from some of our male partners what they think about IWD.

Three of our partners - Isaac from Uganda, Victor from DRC, and Bassem from Egypt - all weighed in during a short panel discussion led by SowHope President Mary Dailey Brown. There are some heart-warming quotes by these gentlemen. You can still watch it on our website by going to [www.sowhope.org](http://www.sowhope.org) and clicking on the video.



From left to right: Victor, Bassem, and Isaac

## LEAVE A LEGACY

You can invest in future generations of women through a legacy gift. By designating SowHope in your will or estate plan, you are making a lasting impact on the lives of women for years to come.

SowHope suggests you contact your financial advisor for any assistance setting up a legacy gift. Our charitable registration number is 14-1946849. Thank you for considering leaving a legacy to support impoverished women around the world.

## Save the Date!

SowHope's Annual Fundraising Gala will be held on Friday, September 30, 2022 at the **Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville, MI.**

We will be streaming the Gala LIVE online!

This year's theme is **Be A Hero!**

It's never too early to secure your corporate or table sponsorships. Please contact Aaron Hoxworth: [aaron@sowhope.org](mailto:aaron@sowhope.org) | 616-433-1575

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