



Women Inspired

## NEWSLETTER

## RIPPLE EFFECT IN SOUTH SUDAN



A shopper and her baby at the first local store

Earlier this year, a SowHope team visited South Sudan and witnessed the ripple effect of SowHope projects on our partner's work and the women they serve. In 2018, SowHope funded a project to build a grain grinding mill. This project allowed women to conserve time, generate income, and save money for future business endeavors. Many of the women in the community were able to use their savings to purchase farm land and produce excess crops, but the costs of traveling to the city severely impacted profits.

In 2021, super-partner Rhoda came up with the idea to build a small supermarket right next to the grain grinding mill. This would allow the women to sell their produce and provide an opportunity for the surrounding community to buy food without traveling far distances. SowHope agreed, and the supermarket was the first of its kind in the village.

Now the supermarket is thriving. The shelves are full of a variety of goods, and all members in the group are free to bring their produce and other merchandise for sale. The profits are shared between the store and the women. As a result of the continued success of the grain grinding mill and the exciting new local supermarket, other organizations have taken notice! They have provided Rhoda's groups with a mill to grind moringa leaves into tea and another mill to make peanut butter.

Rhoda is now a household name in the surrounding area. She also started a table-banking microfinance project that has 9 groups and is growing. Women who had lost trust in microfinance projects from outside organizations are now reaching out to Rhoda for help to start similar projects in their own villages. The joy on the women's faces now is priceless.

The ripple effect of the SowHope projects can be summarized by what one of the leaders said, "We are like a tree whose branches are growing. We don't know how far we are going to reach". Thank you for helping Rhoda to make big changes in South Sudan.

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

## LEARNING TO BEAUTIFY AND BEFRIEND

During a recent visit to SowHope projects in Pakistan and India, the long-held conflicts between these countries became quite apparent. Only 135 miles separate our projects, but we were not allowed to make what would have been a 2-hour drive. Instead, we had to fly through a neutral country, turning the would-be short trip into an 18-hour ordeal to reach our destination.



Suzana teaches eyeliner application

Although the conflict is about differences, the situations for women are very similar within the two countries.

In both places, women are very rarely allowed to go out unaccompanied by a male family member. Our project in Kashmir, India serves women who would otherwise not have an income. The partner, Suzana, is gathering women to teach them how to make money from weddings through embroidery, renting wedding dresses, and applying bridal makeup. Engaging in the task of preparing a bride for her wedding is one of the few ways women are allowed to make money

In addition to the potential for earning money, the group classes serve as a social outlet for women who have few occasions to gather outside their own family homes. The



Embroidery on wedding gifts

women say that making friends with others in the group is as much a benefit as learning skills to earn money.

Suzana reports that some women have already started their own businesses working from their homes, providing services for those in their villages and beyond.

## Required Minimum Distributions

Required minimum distributions (RMDs) are the minimum amounts you must withdraw from your retirement accounts each year after reaching a specific age. You generally must start taking withdrawals from your traditional IRA, SEP IRA, SIMPLE IRA, and retirement plan accounts when you reach age 72 or 73. If you don't need the funds, you can choose to donate all or part of your RMD to SowHope! Donating your RMD is a "qualified charitable distribution" (up to \$100,000). While the donation is not deductible, you will not have to pay federal income taxes on the amount of income that is donated. Please check with your tax advisor for more details.

## IN MEMORIAM - DR. SARAH MAIGARI, NIGERIAN PARTNER



Mary's 1st visit with Sarah in 2007

It is with overwhelming sadness that we announce the death of our very beloved partner in Nigeria, Dr. Sarah Maigari.

Sarah passed away suddenly on the evening of June 10th from heart complications. Her last day had been spent joyously celebrating the rebuilding and reopening of her "SowHope Technical School," which had previously been severely damaged by high winds.

When she was a child, Sarah's exceptional intelligence was noticed and announced to all by her loving father, "She must always be encouraged to study, even abroad!" Sarah was the fifth of eight children, and her father died when she was 8 years old. She went on to live out her father's dream for her, earning master's degrees in agriculture, technology, and business, a Doctorate degree in Ministry, and a PhD in Theology. She authored books on leadership, agriculture, theology, and women's global impact on farming.

Sarah worked as an agriculturist teaching farming, mostly to rural women farmers, in 5 states of Nigeria. Three of those states are beset by the terrorist group Boko Haram, which translates to "No Western Education for Women". Sarah was the Founder and President of DIWOM, a nonprofit dedicated to helping women. She continued to teach farming and added other income-generating skills to help empower rural women.

Sarah was still working when Mary first met her in 2007. "I was very impressed with her," explains Mary. "She lived in an extremely poor neighborhood with many poor women who were excited about Sarah as a leader. She had set up a room in her home for teaching women and would do so after working all day. Sarah showed me five things she was teaching the women: how to make cakes, how to use computers, knitting, sewing, and literacy. She had dozens of students who had graduated. Her place was like a little oasis of education, love, and care inside the poor neighborhood."



Sarah Maigari

When Mary asked her what she needed, Sarah said "\$400." Sarah was definitely someone SowHope would work with.

Sarah became a SowHope partner in May of 2007. She was not content to just do SowHope-funded projects, and she would introduce us to more and more leaders. A few years ago, we told her that we could not manage all the projects in Nigeria and asked her if she would oversee them. She did this voluntarily and without a salary. Over the years, she mobilized 30 leaders and oversaw 86 projects that impacted 17,700 beneficiaries.

Sarah once visited Mary for a week during one of her Christmas breaks while studying for a master's program in the United States. Mary offered to put on an exciting television show and thought they would watch 2 or 3 episodes of the show "24". They watched an entire season in 2 days - that is 24 one-hour shows of suspense while Jack Bauer tries to save the world in 24 hours. Mary said, "I think in many ways, Sarah was like Jack Bauer - a true hero."

While possessing a gentle soul and a pastoral heart, Sarah was a fearless leader. She was resolved in the face of constant, imminent danger. When asked if she was afraid of dying at the hand of terrorists, she replied, "I don't care if they kill me. If I die, I will die happy, helping women."

We are heartbroken to lose this amazing friend and partner. Sarah was a woman of courage and action. She had compassion for those in poverty and an abiding love of God. Oh, how we'll miss you! Rest in peace, dear Sarah.



Sarah & Sylvia in 2023

## 2024 SOWHOPE GALA: CHARITY REDEFINED™

On Friday, September 27th, beginning at 6:30pm, SowHope will be hosting its annual fundraising gala at The Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville, MI. This year, we are excited to release exclusive, never-before-seen clips of our upcoming documentary.

This year's theme is "Charity Redefined™". SowHope believes that our strategy of *partnering with local leaders solving local problems using local solutions* is the gold standard for how to operate as a development organization overseas. As the keynote speaker, Mary will be sharing inspiring stories from our past year's work and discussing why local partnership is so crucial in building sustainable projects that go beyond SowHope funding.

The evening will be filled with exciting activities. Individual tickets are \$150 and include live music, wine, dinner, and the opportunity to purchase SowHope merch. Doors open at 6:00pm.

Table of 8 sponsorships are available:

**\$5,000 Platinum level**

**\$2,500 Gold Level**

**\$1,000 Green Level**

**\$500 Purple Level**

Platinum and Gold Level sponsorships come with the option of filling a second table. Sign up for a table sponsorship at [www.sowhope.org/gala2024](http://www.sowhope.org/gala2024) Corporate sponsorships are also available, starting at \$1,000. For more information, please contact Aaron Hoxworth: [aaron@sowhope.org](mailto:aaron@sowhope.org) or 616-433-1575.

We hope to see you there!

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Mita Fitzjohn - Chairperson  
Leecie Brown  
Fridah Kanini

Lizbeth Leeson - Vice Chairperson  
Doreen Mangrum  
Mac McDonnell

Alfred Longtin - Treasurer  
Jason Radmacher  
Arnaldo Rodriguez

Lauren Spangler - Secretary  
Kim Rowsome  
Christie Unakalamba