



Women Inspired NEWSLETTER

WAGONS TRIPLE WOMENS' INCOME

In a remarkable effort to uplift women from poverty, our partner in India created and conducted a transformative project that provided 20 women with customized three-wheeler pedal wagons. This equipped them with the means to earn a sustainable income and gain newfound independence.



Previously, they struggled to afford even basic necessities, but now these women can travel farther, collect a much greater volume of recyclables, and sell them to large companies for higher prices. As a result, their incomes have more than tripled since the project began, allowing them to support their families, access medical care, and provide their children with better opportunities. The joy of receiving these wagons was evident, as many women celebrated together by singing songs.

Before the wagons, these women primarily relied on collecting recyclables in big bags from around local tea shops and bus stops. However, in the comprehensive training program, the women learned to maximize their efforts by targeting high-yield areas like railway stations and markets. They were also taught how to drive the wagons safely in traffic and were able to apply for official ID cards. Having a valid ID and a means of transporting their product has significantly reduced harassment from authorities. The wagons even served as temporary shelters during seasonal floods as the women and their children huddled together under the wagons to stay dry.



For many, this project has been life changing. Deepa (pictured above left), who escaped an abusive marriage, found solace and strength in her work with the new wagon. She even adopted an orphan. "This project from SowHope helped me," she said, "and because of the wagon, my character changed, and now I am even able to give help to other poor people."

GROUP OF 100 WOMEN PIONEERING BANANA GROWING IN ZIMBABWE

SowHope's approach of partnering with local leaders to address local problems using local solutions is making a tangible difference in the lives of women, perfectly illustrated in the story of our partner Tendai in Zimbabwe. As the severe effects of climate change impact Zimbabwe, farmers are seeking more climate-resilient methods of farming. During the 2023-2024 planting season, Tendai's groundbreaking idea of growing bananas in a semi-desert area was inspired by discussions with friends in Kenya and Zambia, and a visit to Honde Valley — the only region in Zimbabwe where bananas are currently grown.

Dr. Sylvia Juta, SowHope's Program Director, recently visited Tendai's new banana farm and was impressed by the incredible work being done by a group of 100 women. These women are



excited to be pioneers in the banana project and are filled with hope for the future. They shared their vision of creating various value-added products from their banana plantation, including banana flour for baking, instant baby porridge, and banana wine. The banana stalks will also be used to make woven goods, while the banana leaves will provide feed for poultry and pigs. The women are also raising pigs and guinea fowls, and growing pawpaw trees.

When Dr. Juta asked Tendai why the women were so enthusiastic about the project, she explained that women are particularly impacted by climate change because they are often responsible for feeding their families. This banana project offers them a sustainable source of both food and income. They also take great pride in being the first in their area to launch such a project and are now teaching men in the community how to grow bananas.

Your donations go directly towards projects like these in India and Zimbabwe. Give today at www.sowhope.org/donate/

MEET SOWHOPE BOARD MEMBER MAC MCDONNELL



Mac McDonnell is a valued member of the SowHope board. He is driven by a deep commitment to help empower impoverished women around the world. His desire to join SowHope comes from past trips he made to the developing world and his strong

belief in the power of hope.

Mac was introduced to SowHope through a former board member and was immediately drawn to the organization's approach. "We appreciate SowHope's goal to resolve issues expressed by the clients rather than imposing a solution. This is certainly one reason SowHope is so successful." This approach, listening to the women's voices and addressing their needs, has been

a key factor in SowHope's success.

A graduate of Hope College, Mac spent 33 years in the high-tech sector, specializing in turnkey cleanrooms. He and his wife, Joni, ran their own firm for 26 years before retiring in 2015. In retirement, they enjoy an active lifestyle, spending time with their grandchildren, painting, playing pickleball, and traveling.

Mac's travels exposed him to severe poverty and harsh conditions in Asia, Western Africa, the West Bank, and Central America. Initially, he believed these conditions were permanent, but after learning about SowHope's work, his view changed. "I now see that SowHope can and does change these conditions for thousands," he says, reaffirming his dedication to the cause.

Mac brings his expertise in business management to the board, particularly in the area of finance. He serves on the Finance Committee, ensuring the efficient use of resources. Additionally, he and Joni host the annual board retreat at their home, fostering collaboration and strategic thinking. Mac remains open to serving in other areas as he continues to learn and grow in his role.

SowHope
exists
to inspire
women around
the world
by promoting
wellness,
education, and
economic
opportunities

DOCUMENTARY UPDATE: CHARITY REDEFINED

We're happy to share the recent progress on our documentary, Charity Redefined! This impactful film is set to reveal a proven, sustainable approach that anyone can use to tackle extreme poverty – one that focuses on real, lasting change.

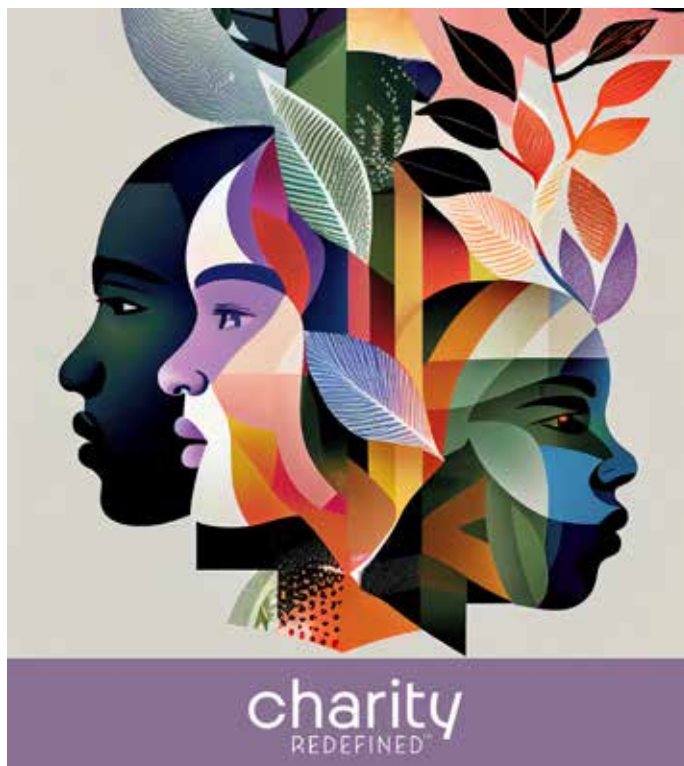
Our editor, Chad, has been busy conducting in-depth interviews and is currently editing film footage from our inspiring projects that uplift and empower women in some of the most impoverished areas in the world. Over the past 19 years, we've completed more than 350 projects across 25 low-income countries, and this documentary will showcase a handful of the incredible stories of transformation.

Once editing wraps up, we are applying to enter the film into some prestigious film festivals, many of which only accept premiere films that haven't been released publicly. This means we'll be holding off on the public release until after the festival showings. But don't worry – in 2026, we plan to unveil Charity Redefined as part of our organization's milestone 20-year celebration! We can't wait to share this incredible journey with you. Stay tuned for more updates!

Save the Date!

SowHope's Annual Fundraising Gala
will be held on Friday, September 26, 2025
at the **Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville, MI.**

Confirm your corporate and table sponsorships now!
Email info@sowhope.org | **616-433-1575**



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