



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 less than \$2.15 per day. 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 sustainable development 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

During her career, Mary Dailey Brown has traveled abroad to over 65 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 came to understand that the largest, poorest, most oppressed, and neglected group of people in the world are 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. On January 30, 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 children, 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 to begin a movement to serve the world’s nearly 1 billion most impoverished (living below \$2.15/day) women and, by proxy, their families. The strategy of SowHope is ***partnering with local leaders solving local problems using local solutions***. 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 culture and society. SowHope seeks out and develops partner relationships with national leaders who demonstrate an effective performance history in determining and serving the needs of women.

Nineteen 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 139,275 women in 26 countries, funding 386 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 over 100 partners.

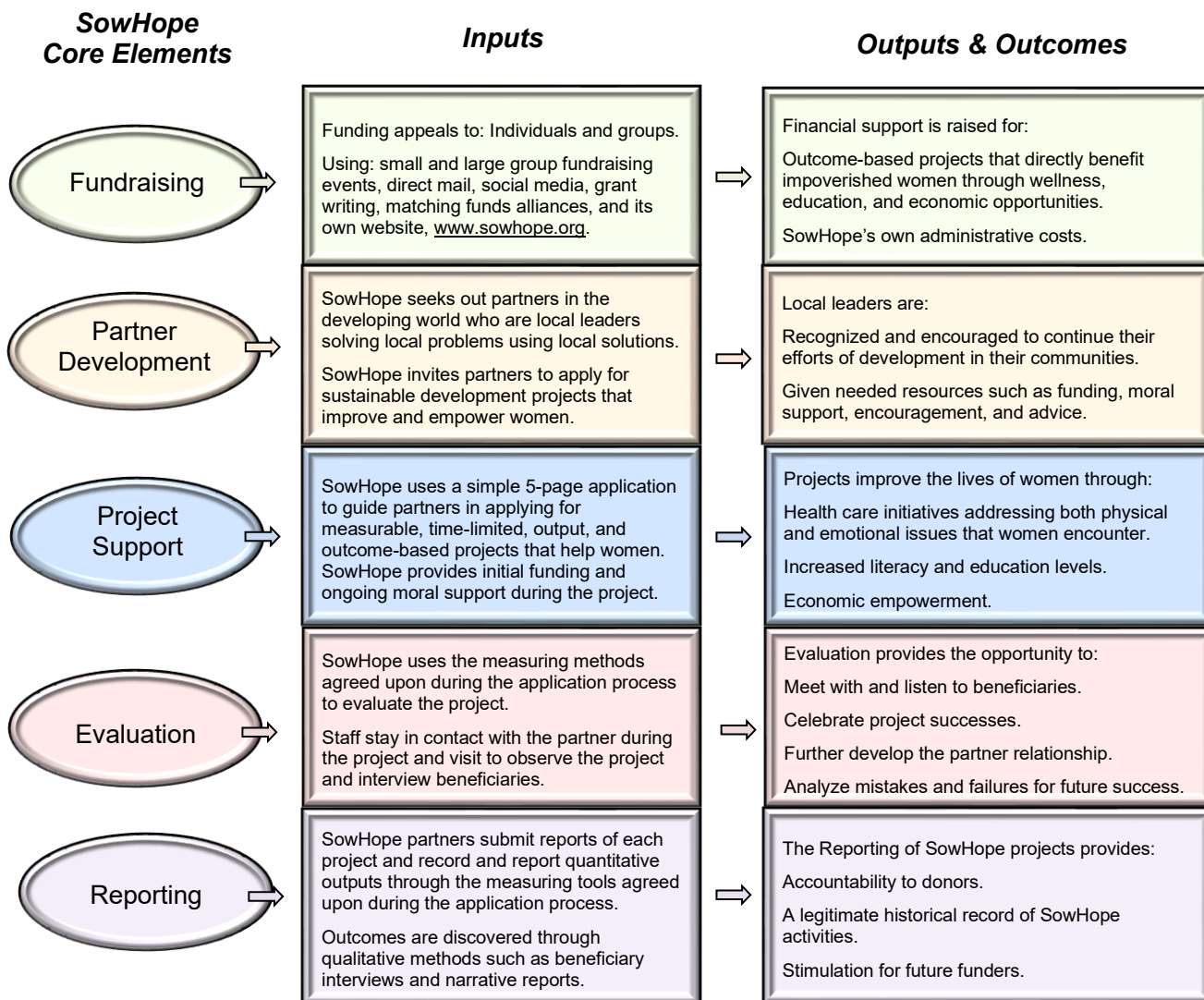
Current Operating Model

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)



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, grant writing, matching funds alliances, and through its website, www.sowhope.org.

Local leaders are invited to submit grant applications for measurable, time-limited, outcome-based sustainable development 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 output-measuring tool they will use to track the progress of the project. SowHope provides support through funding, encouragement, and, at times, suggestions for efficiency and effectiveness. An MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) is signed by the partner and SowHope 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, 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. Field reports are generated when SowHope staff visit a project. Results from all reports are used for evaluation, marketing/fundraising, to determine partner relationships, and to assess future project applications. SowHope conducts a sustainability assessment interview with the partner one year after the project has concluded.

Organization

Organization Structure and Governance

SowHope is governed by up to twelve board members (currently eleven) and draws upon their expertise, all of whom are highly experienced professionals that volunteer their service to oversee the organization. The President/CEO of SowHope oversees administration, fund development, programs, and serves as the primary representative of the organization. The Administrative Specialist manages internal operations, supports donor and data systems, coordinates organizational communication, and assists in marketing, logistics, and administrative projects. The Fund Development and Marketing Specialist leads donor engagement efforts, coordinates fundraising campaigns, and manages marketing strategies to expand awareness and support for SowHope. The Program Director oversees SowHope's global projects, including partner relationships, project implementation, and impact reporting. Skilled volunteers contribute in many areas, including program development, marketing, fundraising, human resources, strategic planning, and general administrative support.

SowHope Program: Projects Description	Projects Cost	# of Women Impacted
<u>Wellness</u>		
Africa ¹	\$498,632	54,286
South Asia ²	\$81,146	3,173
Middle East ³	\$4,160	417
W. Hemisphere ⁴	\$47,300	550
<u>Education</u>		
Africa	\$444,825	19,585
South Asia	\$286,371	10,633
Middle East	\$10,000	60
<u>Economic</u>		
Africa	\$889,932	37,922
South Asia	\$316,389	12,475
W. Hemisphere	\$7,400	78
TOTAL as of 12/31/2024	\$2,586,155	139,179

¹ Based on IRS geographic regions. Includes Burkina Faso, Benin, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

² Based on IRS geographic regions. Includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Thailand.

³ Based on IRS geographic regions. Includes Jordan.

⁴ Based on IRS geographic regions. Includes Guatemala, Haiti, and Mexico.

Current Impact

Since its inception, SowHope has impacted 139,179 women in the world who are living on \$2.15 or less per day (adjusted for inflation over time). SowHope has funded 379 projects in 26 countries to date. The cultures in which these women live are highly discriminatory regarding women's status and rights.

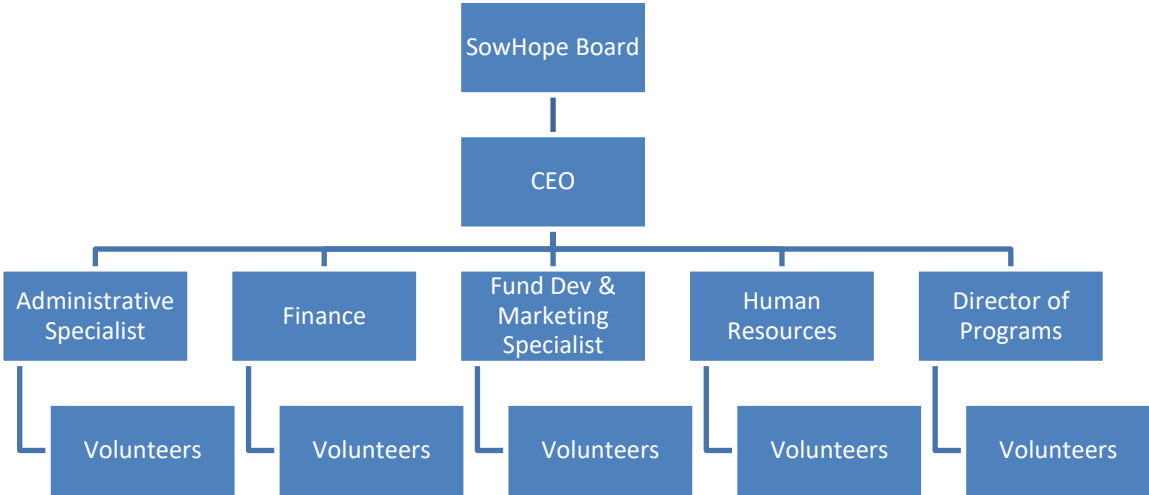
Program Area	Countries Served	# of Projects	# of Women Impacted
Wellness	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, DRC, Ethiopia, Egypt, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jordan, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda	123	58,426
Education	Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Jordan, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Thailand, Uganda, Zimbabwe	101	30,278
Economic	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, DRC, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	155	50,475
Total	(As of Dec 31, 2024)	379	139,179

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

Country	Year of First Project	No. of Projects
Bangladesh	2007	14
Egypt	2007	8
India	2007	23
Kenya	2008	40
Nigeria	2008	68
Uganda	2010	54
DRC	2010	73
Haiti	2010	5
Rwanda	2010	1
Ghana	2012	1
Benin	2012	1
Mexico	2013	1
Pakistan	2014	4
South Sudan	2015	25
Jordan	2016	3
Zambia	2016	1
Thailand	2017	1
Afghanistan	2017	5
Burkina Faso	2018	8
Ethiopia	2018	4
Sierra Leone	2019	16
Myanmar	2019	2
Nepal	2020	6
Guatemala	2023	2
Zimbabwe	2023	13
Total		379

Management Team

There are three full-time paid employees at SowHope and one part-time contractor. The President/CEO is Mary Dailey Brown, the Administrative Specialist is Jessica Lewis, the Fund Development and Marketing Specialist is Jennifer Frank Brenton, and the Program Director (part-time) is Dr. Sylvia Jutta. 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.



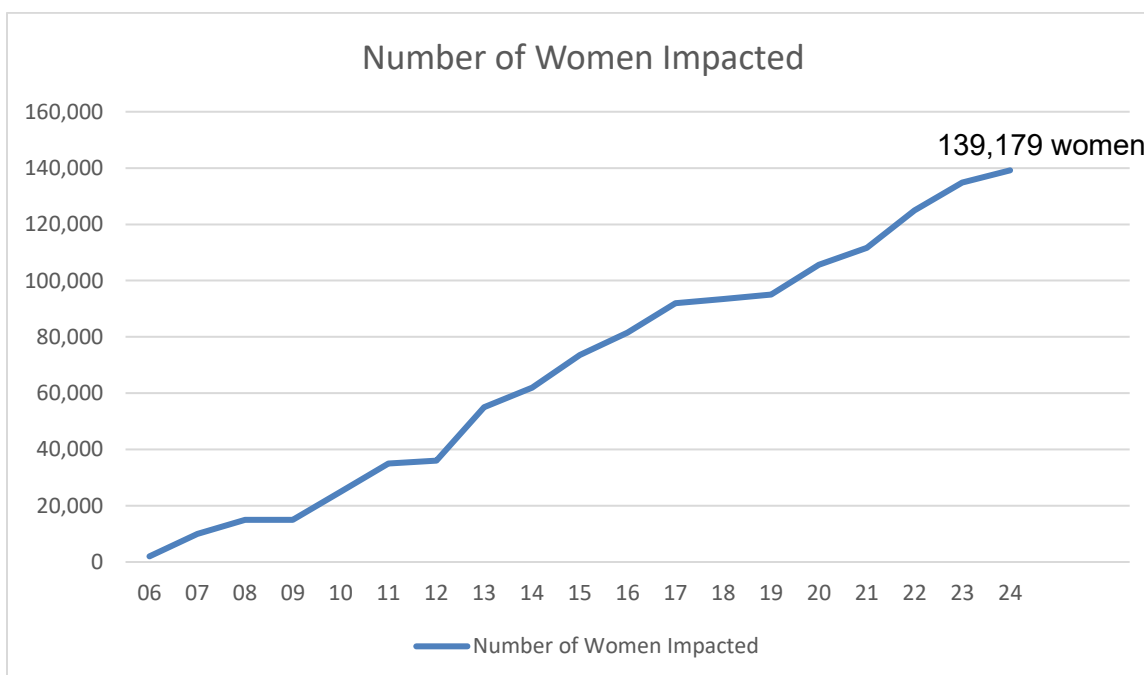
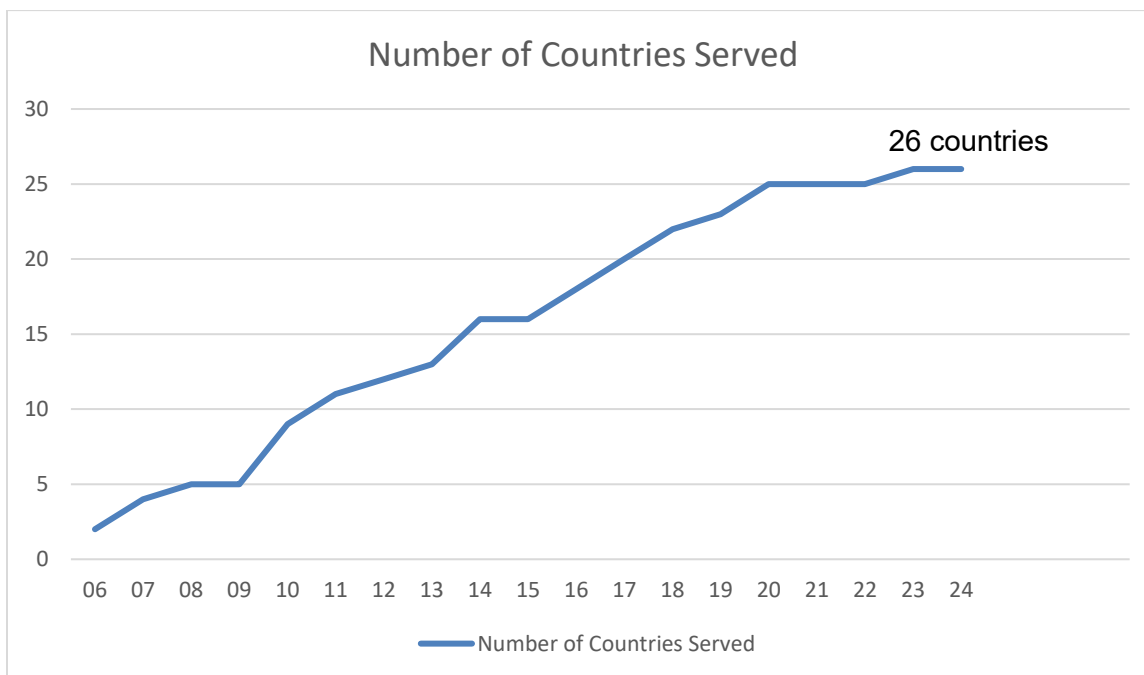
Scaling Plan

Description of Proposed Scaling Plan and Type

To scale operations, SowHope must hire more full and part-time staff. 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.



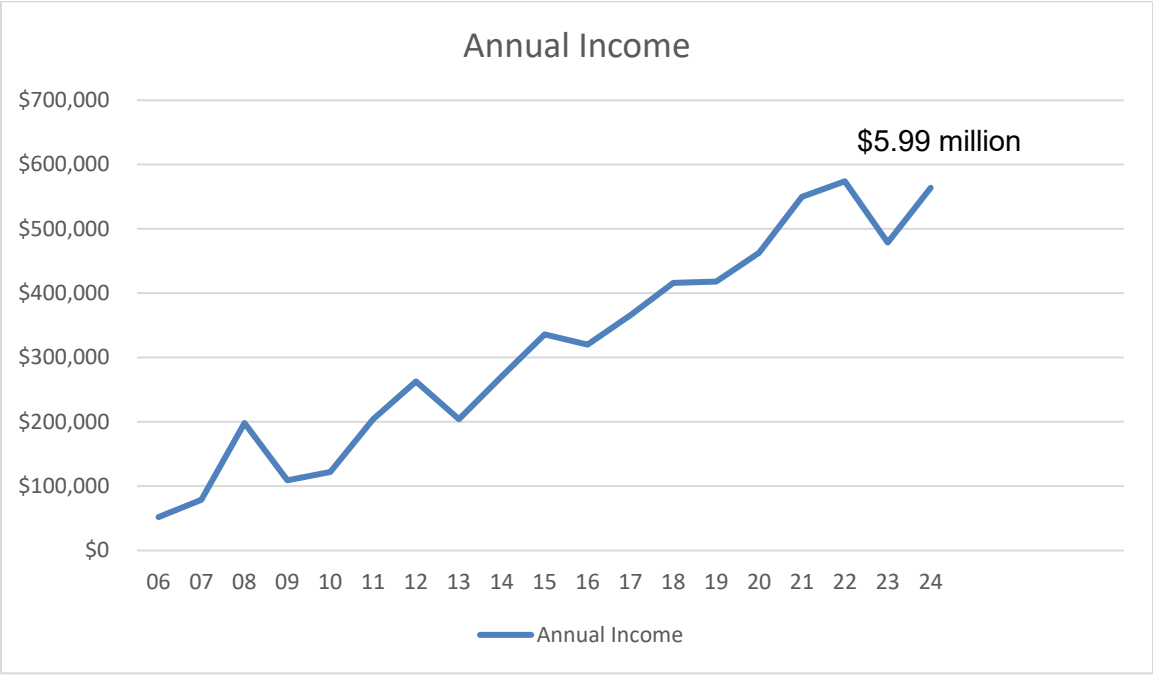
Projected Social Impact

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 show 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 19 years, SowHope has grown revenues at an annual average rate of 20 percent. For the first three years, SowHope revenues grew at a rate of more than 50 percent annually. It took seven years (2012) to reach \$1 million in cumulative revenues. As of December 31, 2024, the organization now has \$5.99 million in cumulative revenues. SowHope has always operated in the black.



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 2024, SowHope’s current assets totaled \$552,039.

Current Funders and Commitments

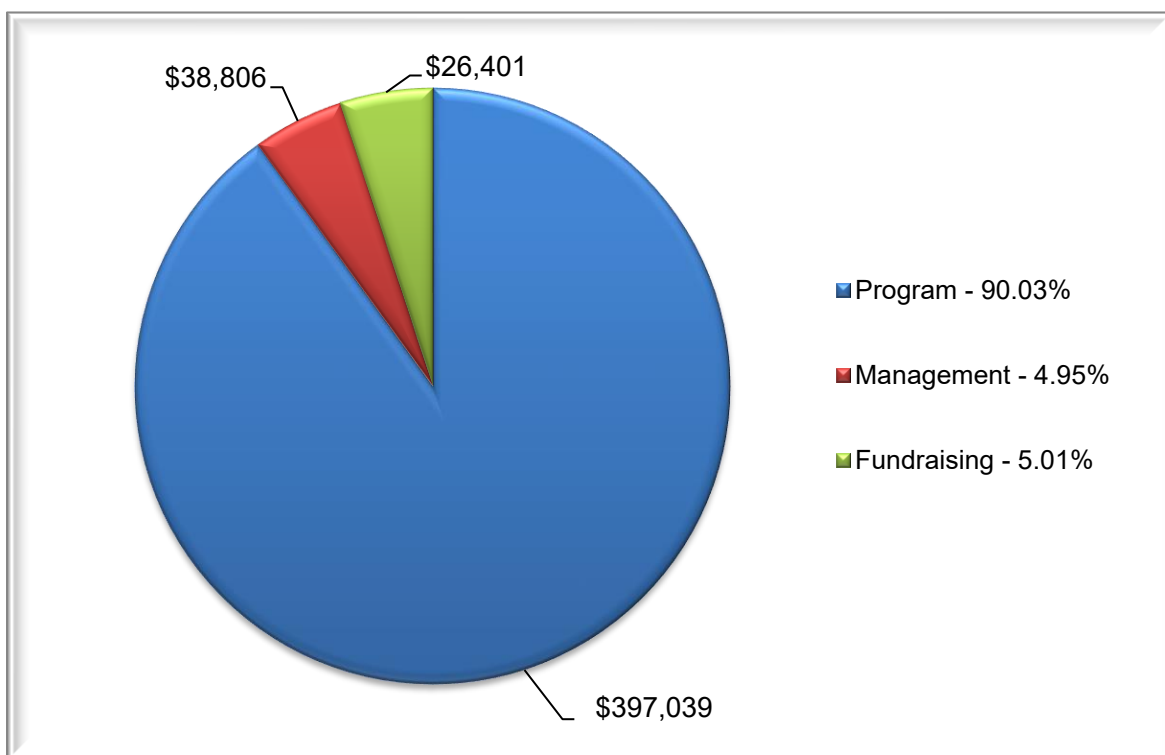
2,992 donors have contributed to SowHope during the first 19 years. Below is a table showing the various revenue categories since SowHope began operations in January 2006.

Income Categories- Jan 2006 - Dec 2024

Alliance Contributions (like-minded Orgs sharing the cost of projects)	\$252,381
Individual Contributions	\$4,413,693
Business Contributions	\$1,059,298
Foundation Contributions	\$187,960
Government Grants (PPP during Covid)	\$51,629
Interest on Savings	\$12,780
Total Income 2006 – 2024	\$5,977,741

Expense & Liabilities Categories – Jan 2006 - Dec 2024

Expenses totaled **\$5,411,338** from 2006-2024. As of 12/31/2024, current liabilities totaled \$5,456. Overall, program expenses reflect 90.03% of total expenses while management and fundraising expenses reflect 4.95% and 5.02% respectively.



Appendices available upon request or at the SowHope website

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

SowHope Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, 501c3 Determination Letter, etc. at <https://sowhope.org/financials-legal-documents/>

Bios of Board & Staff – Available at <https://sowhope.org/board-of-directors/> and <https://sowhope.org/staff/>

Copies of all SowHope newsletters – Available at <https://sowhope.org/newsletter>

Relevant Research Studies – Research Paper on Microloans – Available upon request