

Project Name: Sewing Hope/The Hope Factory
Organization: Springs of Hope Foundation, Inc.
Contact Name: Lisa Miara, Founder and President
Contact Email: springsofhopefoundation@gmail.com

Summary and Purpose:

This proposal serves as an invitation to our supporters, donors and funding agents to partner in the expansion of the Sewing Hope Project/The Hope Factory Program (Sewing Hope) through the Springs of Hope Foundation, Inc..

Please reference:

Attachment 1a/1b: PDF and Power Point Presentation of Sewing Hope.

Overview:

The Springs of Hope Foundation, Inc. (SOHF) is a United States-based 501(C)3 nonprofit organization, formed and incorporated in the State of Texas, with service provision based in Northern Iraq. SOHF is a registered Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Erbil, Iraq, within the Kurdistan region of Iraq, and in Baghdad, Iraq. The SOHF functions under governance from both the US and Iraqi Boards of Directors.

The SOHF has two primary operational locations in the Kurdistan region of Northern Iraq. The Hope Center is located inside the Shariya Camp, in Duhok. The Rainbow Zone community center is located in a tenement town (called War City), for refugees escaping the war in Syria, particularly the city of Aleppo and the region of Rojava. Both The Hope Center and The Rainbow Zone provide safe and peaceful spaces for women, youth and child survivors of genocide, slavery and war. They can begin rebuilding their lives through learning, creativity, beauty and play which encourages healing, community development and wholeness.

Mission:

The larger mission of the SOHF is to see victims of genocide and crimes against humanity restored, rehabilitated, and empowered; taking their place as the future leaders of their community and region.

The mission of Sewing Hope is to create stepping stones to self-sufficiency, healing and education through creative social enterprise for the 210 children, youth and women rescuees and 200 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) being served at The Hope Center at the Shariya Camp.

Who is Being Served:

The SOHF, through The Hope Center, has received and become a home to women, children and youth, from the Yezedi ethno-religious minority people group. These survivors were rescued from captivity as sexual slaves and child soldiers in the Islamic state and have been brought to safety to the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Most of the child and adolescent rescuees have no parents; some are sole survivors of their tribal family. They are alone, with no possessions, requiring the most basic necessities- food, clothing, shelter, medical care and a place to find peace and rebuild their lives. The women, youth and child rescuees have lost years of their lives; their childhoods, educations, employment, original languages, and cultural practices were stolen. Many have been raped, sold, abused, tortured, starved, and dehumanized in the caliphate of ISIS. Their identities have been stripped and their physical, spiritual and emotional health tyrannized.

SOHF, through the Hope Center is serving more than 210 children, youth and women rescuees and 200 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who are living in the Shariya Camp and other refugee camps in the area.

The Vision for and Story of Sewing Hope/The Hope Factory:

Several years ago, young women from The Hope Center approached staff with an entrepreneurial business plan. They requested sewing machines, some work space, and a sewing teacher for three months. Additionally, they asked for support in the form of food and basic needs provision for the three months of education and training. Their plan was to sell their manufactured clothing in the Shariya Camp, then expand to the city of Duhok market, then the city of Erbil, and then sell the clothing internationally.

From this beginning has come the Sewing Hope and the Dare to Dream programs which together under The Hope Factory umbrella, combine active counseling and empowerment for women survivors of Islamic State captivity with skill development and employment opportunities using creativity, sewing, fashion design, and make-up artistry.

Creative sewing itself provides therapeutic healing and sewing circles have been recognized as an evidence-based trauma therapy modality, particularly for women survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. These therapeutic circles revive traditional practices found in diverse contexts: women come together to create, to tell their stories, and to support one another. Clinically and statistically significant reductions in anxiety, depression, and PTSD symptoms have been documented. In research studies done with sewing and sewing circles, participants reported increased ability to build connections with others; increased feelings of mastery and self-efficacy; reduced levels of stress and trauma reactivity; increased levels of non-verbal communication and sensitivity; increased feelings of safety and empowerment; and an increased sense of cultural identity.

Goals of Sewing Hope:

The SOHF seeks to expand and augment the current Sewing Hope program, allowing both an increase in the number of women participating and an increased number of classes and services offered. The goals of Sewing Hope are to create opportunity, healing, empowerment and sustainable self-sufficiency for the women participants, their families, and their communities.

Programs and Objectives for Sewing Hope :

Current Program: Sewing Hope and the Hope Factory function within the SOHF Hope Center community education and rehabilitation programs. Women rescuees from ISIS come to the Sewing Hope facility three days per week for 2.5 hours as part of their therapeutic and educational healing paths. Women from the Shariya Camp come to Sewing Hope four hours a day, four days per week, for a four-month training class/apprenticeship.

Twenty women attend the sewing classes in a self-contained building with a kitchen and restroom, which they have made their own beautiful haven. Twenty sewing machines and two teachers are available to teach sewing skills and provide a supportive community and path to employment and self-sufficiency.

For the women rescuees from slavery, sewing for themselves is an act of redemption and celebration of survival. Many were forced to manufacture and repair the uniforms of their ISIS captors, under horrific conditions and circumstances. The Sewing Hope training/apprenticeship program becomes an important component in their overall healing. In addition, the rehabilitation program at The Hope Center provides a continuum of services to encourage individual and community restoration. These services include basic needs provision, psychological education, medical care, employment skills and readiness, trauma-responsive counseling, and education. The Hope Center has become a safe gathering place for the community where relationships can be formed and nurtured. In 2020, The Hope Center programs served 215 survivors/rescuees in the rehabilitation program

Current Limitations: At this time, there remain many obstacles to full participation and graduation:

- Sewing Hope training/apprenticeship slots are limited to 20 at a time; the waiting list to join is lengthy.
- The women, many widowed by ongoing wars and genocide, have young children and no educational programming or child care available.
- The roads in the region around the Shariya Camp are unsafe for solitary women to travel and many of the women rescuees and IDP/refugee women reside outside the Shariya Camp where the Hope Center and Sewing Hope are located. The resources of the SOHF transportation program are finite and stretched.
- Many of the rescuees and IDP/refugee women can neither read nor write and their future employment options are therefore limited.
- For the Sewing Hope graduates, there is no ongoing access to the Sewing Hope sewing machines, because the next class is beginning.

Acknowledging and responding to expressed participant needs and requests, SOHF is seeking to expand the capacity of the Sewing Hope program. The expansion would focus on the following areas:

Education:

Literacy Classes: In partnership with the existing educational programming at the Hope Center, Sewing Hope will offer an adult education and literacy program, teaching basic skills including reading, writing, math, language proficiency, and problem-solving. The addition of these classes would require a full-time salaried teacher as well as books, computers and educational materials.

Sewing and Design: SOHF seeks to increase the number of sewing machines from 20 to 30, eventually increasing classroom space to allow 40 machines and 40 students. In addition to existing basic sewing classes and apprenticeship, Sewing Hope will offer an Advanced Master Class in sewing and design. Doubling the class capacity will require the purchase of additional sewing machines and ongoing materials purchases. Increasing the number of students would require a third full-time teacher. Provision of an Advanced Master Class would require additional education/training for at least one of the existing teachers.

Financial Literacy and Business Education: SOHF seeks to offer financial literacy and basic business education to the women participating in the Sewing Hope program. The class would cover basic financial skills, budgeting, business planning and computer skills. The addition of this class would require a part-time teacher, educational materials, books and computers.

Tools and Materials: SOHF seeks to provide each graduate of the Sewing Hope training class with their own sewing machine and 10 meters of fabric to serve both as a congratulatory gift and a potential springboard for individual entrepreneurial projects.

Child Care/Education: Using the model of the SOHF Rainbow Zone Kindergarten, SOHF seeks to establish an enriched child care/early education program for the children of the Sewing Hope students. The addition of this program would eventually require increased building space and at least 2 full-time teachers.

Transportation: With the increased class capacity, SOHF seeks to expand transportation service provision. Transportation is required for the students to participate. Currently, the Sewing Hope transportation costs average around \$1500 (USD) per month and constitute a large percentage of programming expense.

Long-term Goals: Sewing Hope seeks to become a community educational center for women rescuee and IDP/refugee women to develop skills in sewing and design, literacy and social entrepreneurship. Future social enterprise possibilities include a Shariya Camp retail store-front for Sewing Hope designed and produced clothing and accessories; retail partnerships in the cities of Duhok and Erbil, Iraq; and international retail partnerships to expand potential markets. The increased markets and exposure will provide further income opportunities for the Sewing Hope participants.

Organization and Management:

The Hope Factory is structured as a basic needs, education and therapeutic provision program of the non-profit NGO and US Non-Profit Organization Springs of Hope Foundation, Inc. The organization(s) and work are directed by President and Founder Lisa Miara with oversight by the Iraqi and US Boards of Directors. The Co-Directors of Sewing Hope/The Hope Factory are Ms. Latifa Murad and Ms. Salwa Sleman, under the joint supervision of Dr. Saeed Khudeida, SOHF CEO/Director and Ms. Miara, Founder and President.

Financial Strategy:

To this point, Sewing Hope and The Hope Factory programs have been funded by the international donor community supporting the work of Springs of Hope Foundation, Inc. SOHF is seeking to expand the support community and inviting donors and funding agents to partner in the expansion of the Sewing Hope program serving women rescuees, IDP/refugee women, their families, and their communities.

SOHF considers Sewing Hope to be a basic needs and therapeutic provision program not a self-sustaining or larger entrepreneurial effort, though there will be social entrepreneurial opportunities for

those being served. As such, Sewing Hope will require ongoing funding after the initial period of expansion and development. The Sewing Hope budget is therefore divided in its presentation to include both initial fixed asset expenses and ongoing annual expenditures.

Initial Fixed Asset Expansion			
N	Description	Quantity	Price USD
1	Classroom/Child Care Building		\$15,000
2	Sewing Machine Purchase for classroom	10 x \$240 10 x \$240	\$4800
3	Generator	1 at 100 AMP	\$4000
4	Furniture- tables/chairs		\$200
5	Tailoring Equipment		\$100
6	Computers and software	6 x \$400	\$2400
7	Books-		\$500
8	Toys and Play Equipment		\$500
Total Cost			\$27,500
Ongoing Annual Expenditure			
N	Description	Quantity	Price \$
1	Sewing Teacher Salaries	3 x \$200 x 12	\$7200
2	Literacy Teacher Salary	1 x \$200 x 12	\$2400
3	Pre-K Teacher Salaries	2 x \$200 x 12	\$3600
4	Sewing Machines for Students	\$240 x 40 x 3 classes per year	\$28,800
5	Generator Fuel		\$2372
6	Materials - fabric, thread, notions		\$1844
7	Electricity		\$52
8	Books - Adult and Child		\$500
9	Toys/Play Equipment/Art Supplies		\$500
10	Transportation		\$3000
11	Food Supplies/Cleaning Products		\$525
12	Sewing Machine Maintenance		\$82
Total cost			\$50,875