Looking Forward: Embracing Challenges and Achievements

As we reflect on the completion of Strømme Foundation’s five-year Strategic Plan in 2023, we are reminded of the ever-changing landscape in our mission to fight poverty. This period has been marked by unprecedented volatility, with the global community facing unforeseen obstacles and setbacks.

Initially, in 2019, there was a glimmer of hope that we were on the brink of eradicating extreme poverty by the end of the present decade. However, as we reached the conclusion of the Strategic Plan, the reality is starkly different. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises, has exacerbated challenging conditions for millions around the world.

Over the past five years, Strømme Foundation has strategically focused its efforts on a select number of countries. Unfortunately, many of these nations have been plagued by political upheaval and mass displacement, leading to desperate circumstances. In fact, four of the ten countries where we operate are listed on the Norwegian Refugee Council’s roster of the world’s most neglected crises, underscoring the urgent need for sustained support and intervention.

In the face of these challenges, Strømme Foundation remains steadfast in our commitment to the communities we serve. We recognize the critical importance of amplifying the voices of those living in poverty, particularly in regions where media coverage and humanitarian aid are scarce. Despite the obstacles, we take pride in our accomplishments. In 2023 alone, we impacted the lives of 575,454 individuals through our education and job creation programmes, with a remarkable 70% being women and girls. Among them are young girls gaining access to education and empowerment, adolescents learning about their rights and advocating for change, and women acquiring skills to uplift their families out of poverty.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated donors who stand in solidarity with us in the fight against poverty. Whether through monthly contributions, one-time gifts, or corporate partnerships, your unwavering support fuels our mission and drives meaningful change.

As we look to the future, we remain resolute in our commitment to creating a world free from poverty. Though the path ahead may be uncertain, we are encouraged by the knowledge that our collective efforts will continue to make a difference in the lives of those most in need.

Thank you for joining us on this journey towards a brighter tomorrow.
2023 was the last year of implementation under SF’s 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. The economic impact of the pandemic continued in many of SF’s target communities in 2023 and has in combination with events such as the war in Ukraine, resulted in record-high inflation and a cost-of-living crisis in many countries. The challenging economic situation has been further exacerbated by the impact of climate change affecting crops and harvests, resulting in rising food insecurity. West Africa, South Sudan and Myanmar continued to be afflicted by political instability, conflict, and insecurity in 2023. The trend of military coups persisted in West Africa, this time in Niger. SF’s intervention countries in the region are now ruled by military regimes and the security situation is putting pressure on already strained public services.

Despite the challenges, SF’s programmes continued to perform well in 2023, and most targets were attained or exceeded. SF’s programmes enabled children to access education, empowered adolescents to take charge of their lives, supported women to become economically independent and facilitated communities to take the lead in their own development.

To prepare for exit as part of the five-year Strategic Plan, efforts were focused on ensuring the sustainability and capacity of the 791 community structures established since 2019, and enable community handover of programme activities by the end of 2023. Strong community structures are essential to SF’s efforts to build a strong civil society, and in Nepal, many of the community-based organisations received financial support from local governments which helped facilitate the construction of community centres, rehabilitation of irrigation channels, planting of tree saplings and distribution of agricultural seeds.

Ensuring access to inclusive quality education is important to provide a pathway out of poverty for children in marginalised communities. Across West Africa, children’s access to education continued to be severely affected as thousands of schools were forced to close due to insecurity. In this context, SF is playing an important role by providing out-of-school children with a second chance at education through the Speed School programme. Despite the challenging security context, 10,500 children (47% girls) enrolled in 390 Speed School centres in 2023.

Across all countries, SF’s economic inclusion programmes emphasize improving livelihoods and enhancing incomes for vulnerable families. SF’s Community-Managed Savings Groups (CMSG) have helped strengthen women’s financial position, providing an important safety net for households during difficult economic periods. By the end of 2023, 114,800 women were members of 5,411 CMSG groups and in West Africa, women saved on average NOK 490. Access to capital helped increase women’s economic activities and 76% started or expanded an income generating activity in 2023. In Asia, SF has combined training in income-generating activities with the establishment of collective production groups and facilities and strengthening of market linkages. This approach is showing good results with 41% of targeted families crossing the national poverty line in Bangladesh and Nepal by the end of 2023.

In West Africa, 96 percent of learners that completed the Speed School programme transferred to primary school.

Across the three regions, 2,888 community mechanisms successfully achieved an advocated issue.

By the end of 2023, 129,115 men and women (89 percent female) were members of 5,411 savings groups.
Funds received
Figures in NOK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector grants - Norway</td>
<td>127,446,034</td>
<td>130,878,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector grants - Foreign</td>
<td>20,564,324</td>
<td>18,480,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants from other organisations</td>
<td>25,242,870</td>
<td>8,860,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private donations</td>
<td>57,057,860</td>
<td>48,775,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate sector</td>
<td>27,138,110</td>
<td>21,900,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial income</td>
<td>15,185,572</td>
<td>-139,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>189,941</td>
<td>536,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Private donations</strong></td>
<td>57,057,860</td>
<td>48,775,268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New private donors in 2023

Despite a troubled global landscape with conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, Strømme Foundation has observed a strong willingness among the Norwegian people to support our education and job creation efforts in Africa and Asia. We are fortunate to have seen an increase in regular individual donors, who form the foundation of our income base. Additionally, we have received more testamentary donations than usual this past year, which makes us humble and extremely grateful.

In August, we have an extra focus on the importance of education as a way out of poverty. For the second consecutive year, we have organised a big event for all first graders in Kristiansand, to celebrate the first day of school and to highlight the importance of education.

A group of enthusiastic students from Kristiansand's Folk High School celebrate the sponsorship run to fundraisa for SF's adolescent programmes.

Photo: Kristiansand Folk High School.
What we achieved in 2023

Asia
Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar

Our focus
• Empowering families as a cohesive unit, fostering resilience and solidarity.
• Building strong civil society organisations within communities and strengthening the capacity of public sector institutions.
• Ensuring equitable access to quality education for marginalised groups, while also promoting the development of life and vocational skills.
• Elevating the voices of women and girls in decision-making processes and actively combating harmful practices like child marriage.
• Promoting livelihood diversification and fostering resilience against the impacts of climate change.

How we work
• Facilitate shared decision-making and income-generating activities through the implementation of Family Development Plans.
• Strengthen community structures to encourage collaborative actions that promote sustainable community development.
• Provide support for inclusive education initiatives and cultivate child-friendly environments within our supported schools.
• Deliver life skills training programmes aimed at boosting adolescents’ confidence and empowering them as agents of positive change.
• Offer vocational skills training opportunities tailored to the needs of youths, equipping them for future employment and success.

Support to partners/projects 2023
by country and thematic goal including distributed programme follow-up in the regions.

292,712
is the total number of beneficiaries in Asia.
• 59% are women.
• 112,458 are under 18 years old.
• 57% are girls.

Nepal
16,077,356
- 9,905,903
  Strong civil society and public sector
- 3,239,531
  Inclusive quality education
- 2,931,921
  Improved livelihoods

Bangladesh
12,245,023
- 2,605,674
  Strong civil society and public sector
- 6,136,753
  Inclusive quality education
- 3,502,597
  Improved livelihoods

Myanmar
5,855,381
- 2,287,618
  Strong civil society and public sector
- 2,352,347
  Inclusive quality education
- 1,215,471
  Improved livelihoods

Sri Lanka
11,718,971
- 11,718,971
  Strong civil society and public sector

Number of partner organisations

Distribution of support by thematic goal

Nepal
11,728,631
- 26,518,166
  Strong civil society and public sector
- 11,728,631
  Inclusive quality education
- 7,649,934
  Improved livelihoods

Bangladesh
5,082
- 22 adolescents participated in 222 Samvad/Shonglap/Sagar Wine centres. 91 percent of adolescents improved their life skills after completing the programme.

Sri Lanka
791
- Community Based Organisations (CBOs) were formed, and 73% achieved at least one advocated issue.

Myanmar
69,210
- children in 324 primary schools with improved classrooms and locally developed teaching and learning materials.

Nepal
1,277
- youths received vocational training. 87 percent of trainees were either employed or started an income generating activity 6 months after completing the training.

Support to partners/projects 2022
by country and thematic goal including distributed programme follow-up in the regions.

Nepal
8 partners
Bangladesh
20 partners
Sri Lanka
4 partners
Myanmar
2 partners
What we achieved in 2023

East Africa
Uganda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya

Our focus
- Enhancing access to Early Childhood Care and Development and elevating the quality of primary schools.
- Providing life skills training for out-of-school adolescents to empower them for success.
- Establishing community-managed savings groups to enhance access to and control over resources.
- Empowering women and youths to cultivate sustainable livelihoods, increase income, and foster entrepreneurship.
- Developing commercial villages and strengthening value chains to promote economic growth and sustainability.

How we work
- Improve the infrastructure and refine the soft skills of caregivers and teachers in supported ECD centres and primary schools to improve retention rates and enhance learning outcomes.
- Offer life skills and vocational training programmes tailored to out-of-school adolescents.
- Involve youths in viable trades that lead to lucrative employment prospects.
- Establish linkages between small rural producers and agricultural value chains to enhance their incomes and foster economic prosperity within communities.

201,281
is the total number of beneficiaries in East Africa.
- 76% are women
- 80,721 are under 18 years old
- 76% are girls

Support to partners/projects 2023
by country and thematic goal including distributed programme follow-up in the regions.

Uganda
47,376,361
- 110,586 Strong civil society and public sector
- 40,813,785 Inclusive quality education
- 5,452,990 Improved livelihoods

Tanzania
14,629,147
- 955,345 Strong civil society and public sector
- 5,793,562 Inclusive quality education
- 7,880,240 Improved livelihoods

South Sudan
20,572,975
- 1,332,962 Strong civil society and public sector
- 14,873,762 Inclusive quality education
- 4,366,251 Improved livelihoods

Kenya
3,333,398
- 1,739,424 Strong civil society and public sector
- 1,400,445 Inclusive quality education
- 193,529 Improved livelihoods

Number of partner organisations

Distribution of support by thematic goal

Uganda
5,137,315
Tanzania
62,881,555
South Sudan
17,893,011

Total support
85,911,881
Figures in NOK
What we achieved in 2023
West Africa
Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger

Our focus
• Establishing accelerated education centres for out-of-school children and adolescents.
• Providing literacy and life skills training for women.
• Promoting community-managed savings groups to overcome social and financial barriers.
• Training youth and women in various trades and waste management.
• Building capacity and advocating for community development.

How we work
• Implement the Speed School programme, offering a condensed curriculum to allow out-of-school children to catch up with their peers and transition to the formal education system.
• Support women by providing life skills, literacy, and numeracy training.
• Establish community-managed savings groups for women to enhance their control over resources and decision-making power.
• Empower youth through vocational training and entrepreneurship development.

81,441
is the total number of beneficiaries in West Africa.
• 91% are women
• 12,133 are under 18 years old
• 52% are girls

10,500
out-of-school children enrolled in Speed Schools in 2023. 97 percent transferred to primary school after completing the programme.

96%
of women are more involved in household decision making.

66,998
women were organised in 2,576 savings groups. 3,643 women took part in the Active Literacy programme.

614
youths received start-up kits for their income generating activities.

Support to partners/projects 2023
by country an thematic goal including distributed programme follow-up in the regions.

Mali
33,297,863
2,787,072 Strong civil society and public sector
25,421,184 Inclusive quality education
5,089,608 Improved livelihoods

Burkina Faso
16,164,521
689,796 Strong civil society and public sector
12,327,542 Inclusive quality education
3,247,183 Improved livelihoods

Niger
18,562,656
1,421,061 Strong civil society and public sector
15,292,600 Inclusive quality education
1,848,995 Improved livelihoods

Number of partner organisations

Distribution of support by thematic goal

Total support
68,025,041
Figures in NOK
What we achieved in 2023
Norway

Our focus
• Strengthening the capacity of regional and country offices as well as local partners.
• Enhancing fundraising efforts and fostering strong relationships with donors.
• Ensuring robust financial management and internal controls.
• Coordinating programme operations across all countries.
• Maintaining high standards for programme results, reports, and applications through quality assurance.

How we work
• Enhance digital monitoring systems to collect data on programme progress.
• Ensure timely submission of high-quality reports and applications to donors.
• Develop and maintain financial control systems and procedures to detect and prevent corruption.
• Build organisation-wide capacity to mainstream cross-cutting issues and foster innovation across programmes and field operations.

Achievements and challenges
• Coordinated and consolidated results reporting across the three regions.
• Developed and operationalised quality standards for all programmes.
• Partnered with research institutions to strengthen learning and innovation.
• Secured new donor contracts to expand our programmes.
• Adapted to new challenges brought by insecurity, high prices, and climate change.

Global programmes

Ukraine crisis mitigation:
Total 160,000

Ukraine crisis mitigation

Other global programmes:
Total 2,865,593

Act Now
4,175,034
Youth exchange programme

Digitalisation
1,613,617

How we used our funds in 2023
All figures in NOK

Total cost in 2023
264,207,148

Total purpose in 2023
232,765,840
88.1% of total costs

Total support to development partners/projects
208,647,897
79.0% of total costs

Information about development work in Norway
9,310,271
3.5% of total costs

Fundraising
22,639,357
8.6% of total costs

Strong civil society
43,151,611

Inclusive quality education
128,271,507

Improved livelihoods
37,224,780

Programme monitoring from Kristiansand
14,807,673
5.6% of total costs

Administration
8,801,950
3.3% of total costs

People benefited from our work in 2023
We achieved this in collaboration with 51 local partner organisations

Total number of beneficiaries
575,454

Female beneficiaries
399,319
69%

Male beneficiaries
176,135
31%

Under 18 years old
Female
131,862
73,450
36% of total outreach

Under 18 years old
Male
73,450
36% of total outreach

Total number of beneficiaries under 18 years old
205,312

36% of total outreach
Ongoing cases 2023

- Cases from 2021-2022: 1
- Old cases ongoing in legal process: 4
- New cases in 2023: 3
- Resolved cases in 2023: 2

Fighting corruption – one main goal

Strømme Foundation (SF) recognises corruption as a main cause of poverty and inequality and is committed to prevent and eliminate it. SF and its programmes advocate for zero corruption not only within its own staff and partners, but also empowers target communities to actively oppose corruption in society. SF programmes adhere to strict anti-corruption practices and the organisation has in place effective and responsive whistle-blower routines to act upon events of suspected corruption.

Strømme Foundation uses an online system for receiving and handling whistle-blower cases. The system manages both financial cases and all types of harassment cases. The whistle-blower channel is easily accessible on our web pages and accessible for all our staff and all partner staff.

Strømme Foundation’s efforts to combat corruption are targeted at three levels: our staff and systems, local partners, and local communities. Strømme Foundation (SF) continuously works to strengthen local partner capacities and raise awareness of the importance of having robust internal control systems. This is central to capacity-building efforts where partners are trained on SF financial procedures and other administrative-related issues. Results from East Africa show that all partners had significant improvements in organisational capacity (77%) and financial management and governance (83%) in 2023 compared to the baseline (59% and 57% respectively).

More extensive use of digital tools for programme monitoring and reporting has improved transparency and consequently SF’s ability to immediately follow up on challenges or deviations. Anti-corruption is integrated as a topic across SF’s global programmes. Programme participants are trained and empowered to prevent, recognise and address corruption in their community, and good governance anti-corruption measures are built into actual activities.

Strømme Foundation has zero tolerance for corruption.

Photo: Per Fronth
Global Strategy
2024-2030

**What we want:**

**Vision and Mission**

Strømme Foundation’s vision is a world without poverty. Our mission is to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goal 1 – To end poverty in all its forms everywhere, and by 2030, eradicate extreme poverty. Strømme Foundation is fighting poverty. Poverty is a condition characterised by deprivation of basic human needs, such as income, food and education. We work to ensure that all people, especially those who are most marginalised, excluded or discriminated against, have equal rights to economic resources and get their basic needs met and can live a dignified life. Promoting social justice and ending poverty requires a just transformation to a sustainable future. We want to contribute to a green economy that is socially inclusive, low-carbon and resource efficient.

**How we fight poverty:**

**Thematic focus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Income &amp; Job creation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote social change and sustainable development</td>
<td>Promote social change and sustainable development through improved livelihoods, income generating activities and green jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through inclusive quality education and lifelong learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Cross Cutting Issues**
   - Gender Equality
   - Climate & Environment
   - Inclusion
   - Preventing Corruption

**How we work:**

**Development approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights-Based Approach</th>
<th>Long-Term Development</th>
<th>Safeguarding</th>
<th>Strategic Partnerships with Civil Society, Businesses and Public Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote that people’s dignity and rights are respected and realised.</td>
<td>Promote societal change and build resilience.</td>
<td>Ensure that our programmes safeguard people and our planet.</td>
<td>Leverage resources to fight poverty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Impact-oriented**

**Community Based Approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact-oriented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change lives and communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who we are:**

**Strømme Foundation is an engaged and professional Development Organisation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values-based</th>
<th>Knowledge-seeking</th>
<th>Impact-oriented</th>
<th>Co-creative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Our values:**

**Human Dignity**

Strømme Foundation believes that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respect</th>
<th>Justice</th>
<th>Solidarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strømme Foundation strives to approach people with openness and respect, without distinction of any kind.</td>
<td>Strømme Foundation has a drive to ensure and fulfil human rights for all, especially those who are most marginalised, excluded or discriminated against.</td>
<td>Strømme Foundation believes in the obligation to promote the dignity, rights and development of all people, irrespective of differences and boundaries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Organisational priorities:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase our impact through quality programmes</td>
<td>Mobilise increased resources to fight poverty</td>
<td>Build one organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2023 Highlights

**Women’s Day**
SF Bangladesh marked International Women’s Day through rallies, discussions, and cultural programmes. In collaboration with local administrations, the events garnered participation from members of community-based organisations, youths, and residents alike. Centred on women’s rights and gender-based violence, the day served as a platform for sharing experiences and knowledge, fostering empowerment among women.

**Fighting child marriage**
Samvard Networks play a vital role in addressing child marriage. In Sundri Smriti Rural Municipality, they organised awareness raising campaigns and advocated for local government intervention. Consequently, the Municipality formed a committee, including the network’s chairperson, to combat child marriage. Together, they devised a strategic plan with the ambitious goal of eradicating child marriage by 2025. This plan has received official endorsement and is now being implemented.

**Empowering Adolescents**
The Sagar Wine initiative has empowered previously overlooked adolescents in project communities. Led by community-based organisations, support teams, and animators, Sagar Wine provides adolescents with knowledge of their rights and life skills, enabling them to promote positive behaviours among their families and communities. Adolescents are driving social development actions leading to impacts such as a decrease in early marriage.

**Waste management and job creation**
Mali’s Green Jobs project tackles plastic waste while simultaneously providing jobs for 30 youths. Through the processing of 130,316 kilograms of plastic, a total of 2,614 school benches have been produced. The project, implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, exemplifies effective environmental action and active youth involvement. Norway’s Engineers without Borders has provided technical support.

**Change in cultural gender practices**
In South Sudan’s remote Kuron village, the Toposa community’s cultural norm barring women from business and community talks with men has been overturned by CMSG’s efforts. Now, both genders engage in discussions, save together, and women have assumed leadership roles, marking a historic shift towards gender equality in savings and social discourse.

**First Day of School Celebration**
For the third year in a row, the Strømme Foundation organised a large party in mid-August for all first graders in Kristiansand. The town square was filled with happy schoolchildren who participated in various activities and enjoyed music and entertainment from the stage, including performances by Josefine and Oskar, NRK Super, and the Science Centre.

**Luncheon for esteemed donors**
Loyal, private donors are the cornerstone of SF’s fundraising work. To express our gratitude, we extended invitations to donors aged 67 and above for a luncheon filled with insights, motivation, and entertainment. A notable turnout of 200 donors graced the occasion, including our most senior donor, a remarkable 98-year-old woman who has faithfully supported SF for 41 years. Several donors have been committed supporters since SF’s inception in 1976.

**Improving Household Resilience**
In Fantou Zougou, women’s savings groups obtained 19 hectares of arable land from the local authorities through advocacy efforts to develop agricultural value chains. With the support of Strømme Foundation, they also secured a site to install a borehole. Their agricultural activities had a far-reaching impact, directly benefiting over 1,500 households and enhancing household resilience.

**Launched of the new Country Office**
SF Tanzania was inaugurated in Dar-es-Salam, presided over by the Chairman of the Council and Secretary General Erik Lunde. The event, attended by SF partners, stakeholders, and government representatives, marked the opening of the country office. This move aligns with SF’s global decentralization agenda, aiming to improve partner and beneficiary relations and stakeholder engagement and facilitate the expansion of Strømme’s work in Tanzania.
Our contribution to the SDG-goals

1. No Poverty

By 2023, Strømme Foundation and partners reached 575,454 beneficiaries

SF’s Outreach 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>205,312</td>
<td>131,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>267,057</td>
<td>267,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total outreach</td>
<td>575,454</td>
<td>399,319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36% of total outreach are participants under 18 years of age.

69% of participants are female.

4. Quality Education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

- 128,528 Number of children, adolescents, and adults in 4,847 centres getting a second chance to return to education.

5. Gender Equality

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- 454 early marriages stopped in Asia.
- 107,350 women and 31,268 adolescent girls take part in household decision-making.
- 74,004 women leaders in local community mechanisms and processes.

6. Decent Work and Economic Growth

Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

- 45,582 Number of families that form 2,279 self-help groups.
- 129,115 Number of members in 5,411 savings groups.
- 14,429 Number of youths in vocational training.

99,740 Number of children in supported primary schools.
52,846 Number of adolescents in 489 Adolescent Empowerment centres.
11,689 Number of education staff trained.
8,563 Number of School Management Committees trained.
8,493 Number of formal and non-formal education institutions provided with learning materials.
Annual report for 2023 from the Board of Directors

Strengthening recovery (SF) is a rights-based development NGO, estab-
lished in 1976 in Kristiansand by Chaplain Olav Kristian Strømme. SF aims at efforts to the UN Sustainable Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and halving relative poverty by 2030 and works towards a vision of a world free from poverty. Our values are human dignity, justice, and solidarity. Our most important interventions in the fight against poverty are education, job creation and strengthening of civil society.

Strømme Foundation’s origins and work are based on Christian values. We understand this as a practical commitment to protect the dignity of every person, show solidarity with the oppressed, marginalized and discriminated, and act against injustice. These are values that inspire people of different social, cultural, and religious backgrounds to work for and support SF’s mission. SF fights poverty irrespective of faith and other backgrounds. With a deep conviction of the value of equitable partnership, SF works together with local communities and actors to fight poverty.

Today, SF has grown into a professional organisation that has a framework agreement with NORAD and spends over NOK 200 million annually to help the world’s poor. As a rights-based NGO, SF provides the tools and training needed to lift people out of poverty with dignity and respect. SF works in the world’s most marginalised communities regardless of ethnic group, religion, nationality, or political affiliation.

SF has its head office in Norway (Kristiansand) and nine coun-
try offices in Asia (Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand and one in Africa (Uganda). Our programme in Kenya is managed by the Kampaal office.

BOARD ACTIVITIES 2023
The Board of Directors has held four ordinary meetings in 2023. The board has dealt with a total of 46 cases.

In 2023, the Board of Directors consisted of the following mem-
bers: Arvid Grudeksen (Chairperson of the Board), Kristin Tofte Andersen (Deputy Chairperson of the Board), Vidar Haukeland, Adelheid Fruing Hemshal, Knut Arild Hareide, Carol Asungi Draega and Ole Morten Stavland (staff representative).

2023 Board Deputies
Arild Hulse, Arnefd Lee-Helgesen and Terres Gilje (deputy staff representative).

Board Insurance:
Insurance has been registered for the board members and the Secretary General to protect them from possible personal liability for the organisation. The insurance applies worldwide, except in the United States and Canada.

Board election:
The Board of Directors is comprised of 7 members in total, and 6 deputies. The Board shall be elected as follows:
- The Council shall elect 6 members and 2 deputy members, of whom at least one member shall be elected from one of the countries in which SF operates.
- 1 member and 1 deputy member shall be elected from among SF staff.

The Council elects the Chairperson of the Board from among the appointed Board members. Board member elections shall be organised by an election committee.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES
2023 was the last year of implementation under the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. During the five-year period, SF’s intervention countries have faced numerous crises and challenges. While the economic impact of COVID-19 differs across SF’s target communities have also felt the impact of global events such as the war in Ukraine, a cost-of-living crisis and extreme weather events. In West Africa, the political instability continued in 2023 with a coup in Niger. All SF’s intervention countries in the region are now ruled by military regimes and the security situation is putting pressure on already strained public services. In East Africa, climate change is increasingly affecting crops and harvests, resulting in growing food insecurity. With families struggling to put food on the table, children are at risk of dropping out of school. In Asia, the conflict between the military regime and the opposition continues in Myanmar in 2023, while Bangladesh and Nepal experienced relative stability.

Our target groups are primarily women, children and young people, and people who live in poverty and who do not have their rights met. Based on our values, our goal is to ensure that “no one is left behind”, as advocated by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. SF, therefore, strives to reach persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and other marginalised groups through our programmes. Despite challenging circumstances, SF’s programmes performed well, and most five-year targets were met. Most notably, 14,014 families crossed the poverty line, 85% of the children are learning and performing well in school, and 75% of youths found paid employment or are self-employed after completing vocational training.

A key reason for the strong results is SF’s development appro-
ach where all programmes are implemented by local partners with a strong contextual knowledge and close relationships with local communities.

To prepare for exit, emphasis was placed on ensuring the sustainability and capacity of the 791 community structures established since 2019 to facilitate community handover of programme activities by the end of 2023. Strong community structures are essential to SF’s efforts to build a strong civil society, and in Nepal, many of the community-based organisations received financial support from local government which helped facilitate the construction of community centres, rehabilitation of irrigation channels, planting of tree saplings and distribution of agricultural seeds.

Ensuring access to quality education is important to provide a pathway out of poverty for children from marginalised communities. In West Africa, SF’s SPEED School programme provides out-of-school children with a second chance. Despite the challenging security context, 10,500 children (47% girls) enrolled in 390 Speed School centres in 2023. Since 1999, 96,908 children completed the programme and an impressive 99% transferred to host primary schools upon completion.

Rural women are disproportionately affected by poverty, and strengthening women’s economic empowerment is a key focus for SF’s efforts to improve livelihoods for the rural poor. By 2023, 114,801 women were members of 5,411 Community-Managed Savings Groups. In West Africa, women saved on average NOK 490. Access to capital helped increase women’s economic activities and 76% started or expanded an income generating activity in 2023.

FINANCIAL FIGURES
The consolidated accounts for SF and our microfinance group ended with a positive result of NOK 1,1 compared to a loss of NOK 23.7 in 2022. The total equity increased from NOK 217.2 in 2022 to NOK 229.8 in 2023. The cash flow from the operational activities is satisfactory; total liquid assets at the end of the financial year were NOK 176.3 compared to NOK 166.2 in 2022. The balance of liquid assets excludes Streume Micro Finance AS (SMF AS) which has been consolidated according to the equity method. Liquid assets in the SF group are NOK 54.9, and in SF to NOK 67.4 in 2022.

Key figures for Strømme Foundation’s percentage share of total costs for 2022 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MNOK</th>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Fundraising</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,3%</td>
<td>3,4%</td>
<td>9,6%</td>
<td>67,6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the Norwegian Control Committee for Fundraising has introduced a measure for the share of the private funds income that are utilised for the organisation’s purpose, and this amounts to 75.5 % (70.6 % in 2022).

WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND EMPLOYEES
2023 was a year characterized by a lot of work and processes for all employees. This mainly related to the new Strategic Plan, re-structuring of the organisation and the Norad application. The involvement has been wide, and the feedback is that the employees feel they have been included in the processes towards establishing our future priorities and structure.

To ensure the co-determination of employees in all change processes we have established employee representatives in all countries. This group has collaborated closely with the Leadership and Secretary General to safeguard the interest of all employees.

To reduce the insecurity around the future structure, there have been several global information meetings during the year.
and continuously information sharing in our global teams chat. We also established a channel for FAQs that was used by staff.

Capacity building:
The interest for individual development/capacity building has grown, and the competence committee approved 15 of 17 applications in 2023 two for relevant Master studies. We also arranged a digital training over 4 months for gaining a professional certification within Project Management. 20 employees fulfilled this training, and we see this will be very useful in the new set-up where we will be working more team-based with small and large projects.

Working environment:
Due to all the processes in 2023, we did not conduct a working environment survey for 2023. This will be done in 2024. Still, we have been working with our goals set in “Likestil arbeids- liv” (Equality in workplace) and “Måløyførtarm” (Internal and external environment) certificates with actions to measure and achieve a good working environment. We have also in 2023 run a tender to find a new healthcare service (Bedriftshelsetjeneste) that can help us strengthen the work with our working environment and surveys related to psychosocial challenges.

Gender equality, inclusion, and diversity:
In our Global HR Guidelines, we have included a section that deals with how our organisation shall encourage and tailor our workplace so people with disabilities can be included in a good way as our staff. We are also repeating our values in our policies, HR processes and procedures to uphold the focus on these and implement them in our culture and in the way we work.

Like other workplaces, SF is required by law to outline how gender equality, inclusion and diversity are addressed. Considering the reporting duty for employers on gender equality (ARP), the report can be found on SF’s website.

By the end of 2023, there were four men and three women on the Board. Among the employees in Kristiansand, there were 21 women and 14 men (compared to 18 and 17 in 2022).

Other information:
The number of full-time equivalent persons in Norway including the microfinance group went up from 31.5 in 2022 to 37 in 2023. Among the employees in Kristiansand and regional directors, consisted of four men and five women by the end of 2023. SF strives for gender equality at all levels and is conscious of this during recruitment of new staff.

In 2023, the Kristiansand office had a total absence rate due to sickness of 5.2 % (5.3 % in 2022).

The Kristiansand office has an agreement for occupational health services with Falck BHT (This has now been replaced by Medico din NHO). There were no serious work accidents at the Kristiansand office that have resulted in material destruction or personal injury during the year.

RISK ASSESSMENT:
The Board continuously monitors SF’s risks through quarterly reports. In 2023, the focus has been on monitoring the combined consequences of the pandemic and Russia’s war on Ukraine, which have resulted in higher inflation rates, civil unrest, and brought more uncertainty into our countries of operation. SF has established strong systems and controls to mitigate fraud and corruption and has maintained a good dialogue with donors upon suspicion of corruption. The digitalisation of reporting through new tools has facilitated the overview and management of the programme portfolio.

The security situation has remained challenging in Myanmar, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and South Sudan. In 2023, South Sudan is still the most dangerous country in the world for development aid workers, with the number of fatalities higher than for war affected countries like Syria and Afghanistan. Crime, murder, conflict between different groups of the population, and traffic accidents are some of the reasons that make South Sudan a dangerous country to work in. Political instability and insecurity also characterise the Sahel region. Niger suffered a military coup in 2023, and the UN-led Minusma peace-keeping force and the Norwegian embassy to Bamako withdrew from Mal by the end of 2023.

SF has implemented mitigation measures to improve the security situation for our employees and in our programmes. These measures include better planning of travels and sharing of vital information with other NGOs. The Regional Office in West Africa has a good overview of the security situation in all three countries and has comprehensive security plans in place.

Ten staff members from SF’s Kr have attended a three-day-long HEAT course in 2023. Most of SF’s costs are incurred in currencies linked to the US dollar or the Euro, while the largest share of the revenue is in Norwegian kroner. Therefore, exchange rate plays a significant role in what SF can deliver to its implementing partners in the South. However, the terms of SF’s contract agreements with its partners stipulate that the obligations are limited to the budget adopted in Norwegian kroner. SF is entering into forward exchange contracts to secure part of the exchange rate between the Norwegian kroner and the US dollar or Euro.

SF has no external loans, so there are no serious consequences for the organisation if interest rates increase significantly. Microfinance activities are undergoing liquidation but are still exposed to both financial and societal risks. Based on the follow-up systems in the company’s portfolio, the board believes that the risk has been reduced to an acceptable and controllable level.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE:
Strømme Foundation’s vision is a world without poverty. Our mission is to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goal 1 – To end poverty in all its forms everywhere, by 2030, eradicate extreme poverty. SF continues its efforts to strengthen marginalised communities so that they can escape poverty.

The global landscape has been profoundly shaped by the aftermath of the pandemic, conflicts like the war in Ukraine, exacerbated by international crises such as inflation spikes and the looming climate emergency. These challenges are particularly hitting hard the countries where SF operates. Compounding these issues, some nations, like Norway, have redirected aid funds from poverty alleviation to address the crisis in Ukraine and aid Ukrainian refugees, making it tougher to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In SF’s operational areas, political instability and worsening security are the norm, with non-state actors facing growing constraints on their work in certain regions. Against this backdrop, SF embarked on a journey to formulate a new strategic plan, a process necessitated by the evolving global landscape. Our aim is to champion social justice and eradicate poverty through a transition to a sustainable future. We envision contributing to a socially inclusive, low-carbon, and resource-efficient green economy.

SF remains committed to combating poverty through education and job creation, prioritising support for the most marginalised communities through decentralised operations and local partnerships. Recognising the blurred lines between humanitarian aid and long-term development efforts, SF is poised to navigate this dynamic space effectively.

Furthermore, 2023 was characterised by the planning of the transition to a new organisational model, with a decentralised headquarters and strengthened country offices. Looking ahead, SF intends to bolster strategic alliances, particularly with emerging private sector entities, both domestically and internationally. The imperative for more green jobs to tackle extreme poverty and mitigate climate change drives SF’s commitment to prioritise green job creation in its future endeavours.

The Board of Directors believes that SF has activities and international programmes that are suitable for further operations. The Board believes that SF is in a good position to respond to changes in global and national contexts, and to changes in the institutional and private donor market.

ALLOCATION OF THE YEAR’S RESULT:
From SF’s net surplus of MNOK 11.9, MNOK 4.8 has been allocated to purpose capital for programme activities and MNOK 7.1 to other purpose capital. Further, MNOK 6.0 has been transferred from purpose capital for microfinance to other purpose capital.

In addition to SF’s result, the SMF AS group had a consolidated deficit of MNOK 10.5, which is reducing the purpose capital for microfinance, and our share in other companies reduced the purpose capital for programme activities by MNOK 0.2.
Strømme Foundation Activity Account

Funds acquired

- Public sector grants - Norway: 127,446,034
- Public sector grants - Foreign: 20,564,324
- Grants from other organisations: 25,242,870
- Private donations: 15,185,572
- Other income: 189,941

Funds spent

- Cost of fund acquisition:
  - Fundraising cost: -20,740,845
  - Other acquisition cost: -1,898,512
- Total cost of fund acquisition: -22,639,357

- Purpose cost:
  - Support to development partners/projects: -164,918,871
  - Programme follow-up at regional offices: -43,729,026
  - Programme follow-up from Kristiansand: -14,807,673
  - Information activities in Norway: -9,310,271
- Total purpose cost: -232,765,840

- Administration cost: -8,801,950

VAT compensation: 3,264,099

The year's activity result: 11,881,663

Additions/reductions in purpose capital

- Change in purpose capital for programme activities: 4,835,646
- Change in purpose capital for microfinance: -8,000,000
- Transferred to / (from) other purpose capital: 15,046,017

Strømme Foundation Balance Sheet as of 31.12

Long-term assets

- Fixed assets:
  - Property: 291,394
  - Office furniture and equipment: 236,544
- Total fixed assets: 527,938

Financial assets

- Investments in subsidiaries: 37,329,847
- Investments in other companies: 200,000
- Loan to subsidiaries: 2,462,671
- Overfinanced pension schemes: 2,439,874
- Deferred project income: 29,998,957
- Total financial assets: 101,041,776

Inventory: 20,277

Receivables

- Trade Debtors: 1,685,631
- Inter-company receivables: 252,957
- Other short-term receivables: 24,144,598
- Total receivables: 28,083,128

Investments in current financial assets: 98,080,999

Bank and cash: 78,245,928

Purpose capital (PC)

- Founding capital: 3,326,092
- Acquired purpose capital:
  - Purpose capital for programme activities: 41,552,038
  - Purpose capital for microfinance: 37,329,847
  - Other purpose capital: 116,087,793
- Total acquired purpose capital: 194,969,678

Liability

- Long-term debt:
  - Staff gratuities in regional offices: 4,157,921
  - Legacy obligations: 150,000
- Total long-term debt: 4,307,921

- Short-term debt:
  - Credits: 4,443,009
  - Public duties and taxes: 2,439,874
  - Owed to employees: 2,546,031
  - Inter-company debt: 236,016
  - Deferred project income: 29,998,957
  - Other account payable: 693,666
- Total current liability: 40,357,154

Total purpose capital and liability: 242,960,845

Kristiansand 13. June 2024

Arvid Grundekjøn
Chairperson of the Board

Kristin Tofte Andresen
Board Member

Adelheid Firing Hvamsal
Board Member

Vidar Haukeland
Board Member

Arild Hestås
Board Member

Celeste de la Huerta
Board Member

Erik Lunde
Secretary General
Strømme Foundation
Board of Directors and
Advisory Board Members

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS; 31. DECEMBER 2023
Arvid Grundekjøn, Chairperson
Kristin Tofte Andresen, Deputy Chairperson
Dralega Caroline Azungi, Member
Vidar Haukeland, Member
Ole Morten Stavland, Member
Adelheid Firing Hvambsal, Member
Knut Arild Hareide, Member

SUBSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Arild Hestås, Substitute
Arnhild Leer-Helgesen, Substitute
Tørres Gilje, Substitute

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS; 31. DECEMBER 2023
Stein Hannevik (chairperson)
Steffen Syvertsen
Live Fanavoll (Re:act Leader)
Andreas Kolaas
Line Alice Ytrehus
Aud Sunde Smemo
Anne Helen Heyland Mork
Lars Erik Lyngdal
Dag Tynes
Vidar L. Haanes
Arne Bang
Synneve Bjarke
Jostein Sæth
Jørgen Reme
Vigdis Anita Gåskjenn
Per Kristian Lunden
Solveig Omland

ELECTION COMMITTEE; 1 JANUARY 2023
Stein Hannevik
Svein Haanes
Arne Bang

PricewaterhouseCoopers conducted the external financial audit for 2023.

For the Auditors’ report and the complete Strømme Foundation financial statements, including cash flow, accounting principles and notes, see: https://strommefoundation.org/en/about-us/publications

Cover image: A primary school girl from Tanzania sits attentively reading a book. Local partner organisation: OCODE.

Strømme Foundation is a member of the Norwegian Control Committee for Fundraising (Innsamlingskontrollen) and is certified by Eco Lighthouse (Miljøfyrtårn).

Strømme Foundation is also a signatory to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief.

The Annual Report has been confirmed for screen reader accessibility by Joseph Wakugamba, Disability Inclusion Specialist.

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Graphic design: Innoventi
Printed by Aksell
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From struggle to success: Umari’s journey to becoming a Model Village

In 2019, when SF started working in Umari village in the Kapilvastu region of Nepal, the village faced severe socio-economic challenges. Child marriage was practiced, alcohol and drug abuse widespread, gender-based violence common and many families faced economic hardship. After five years of implementation of the SEEDS programme focused on establishing sustainable community structures, providing access to quality education, empowering adolescents, and improving livelihoods, the socio-economic situation in the village has dramatically changed. The village is now known for eradicating child marriage, preventing school dropout, eliminating violence, and promoting a "one family, one business" approach.

"Parents are now reluctant to marry off their daughters without their consent. Recently, six marriage proposals were rejected by parents due to the age of their daughters." – Sagar Tharu, chairperson of the SAMVAD graduate network.

Awareness-raising and social campaigns have had a transformative effect on the village. Child marriage is no longer practiced, and each family in the village is now committed to their children’s well-being and aspirations for their future. All 134 families have declared their homes violence-free, reflecting a profound positive shift in the community’s social fabric. The economic transformation is also evident. 90% of families are now engaged in income-generating activities. The transition from wage labour to self-employment has increased by 40% and improved incomes. In 2023, Umari was declared the first Model Village in Shivaraj municipality.

The facts behind the figures

How we used the money in 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Cost Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose cost</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distribution of the purpose cost in 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Cost Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total support to development partners/projects</td>
<td>79.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project support/monitoring in Norway</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about development work in Norway</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>