

OUR SHARED STORY

KOMERA 2019
ANNUAL
REPORT



KOMERA

Self Confidence, One Girl at a Time

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Dear friends,

This report was created to highlight all we were able to accomplish last year despite it feeling like a lifetime ago. Currently, we are working alongside our communities in Rwanda to protect their health and safety during this precarious time. Our staff is in weekly contact with all of our scholars and families, providing support and services to help fill the gaps of our programming being temporarily suspended. I am so proud of the way our team has found creative ways to keep our Komera family close.

In writing this story, we had some time to reflect on where we started as an organization, where we are now in the midst of uncertainty, and all the incredible young women, families, and stories that make up the 12 years in between. As we transformed from a simple scholarship program to a dynamic network of programs for young women over those years, we listened and found ourselves surrounded by beautiful, triumphant stories.

The Komera community invited us into their lives, sharing their narratives with us, and helped us to better understand their needs and how we can be there for them. We've seen year after year how it truly takes a village of support to do our work well and we are so grateful for the honest collaboration within ours. This year, we were more aware of how our stories are interwoven – written together with deep compassion and care for one another.

That being said, the stories that fill this report are also written with your hands. As Komera's family, friends, and supporters, you've been a huge part of the overall history of Komera and the lives of each person our programs impact. As you read through a few of the amazing stories from this year, know that you have been a huge part of these accounts and hundreds of others like them.

Moving into our new year we collectively face some unsettling times. Over the past decade, I have witnessed how we as a global community celebrate one another. This new phase will require radical compassion and belief in our global community and I am certain we are up for the challenge. Turikumwe.



With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Butler'.

Margaret Butler
Founder and Executive Director

ABOUT KOMERA

In Rwanda, "Komera" means "be strong, have courage." We believe women are **strong, powerful, and full of promise!** With our community's support, we use a holistic approach composed of three pillars – education, community development, and sport – designed to provide opportunities for women to unleash their potential!

OUR MODEL



EDUCATION

Komera sponsors scholars with full tuition, including room & board, health insurance, and personal & academic materials to study at public boarding schools and universities in Rwanda. Komera also provides intensive leadership and social entrepreneurship training during school break periods. Komera then works with students to set them up for a successful future in university or job training.



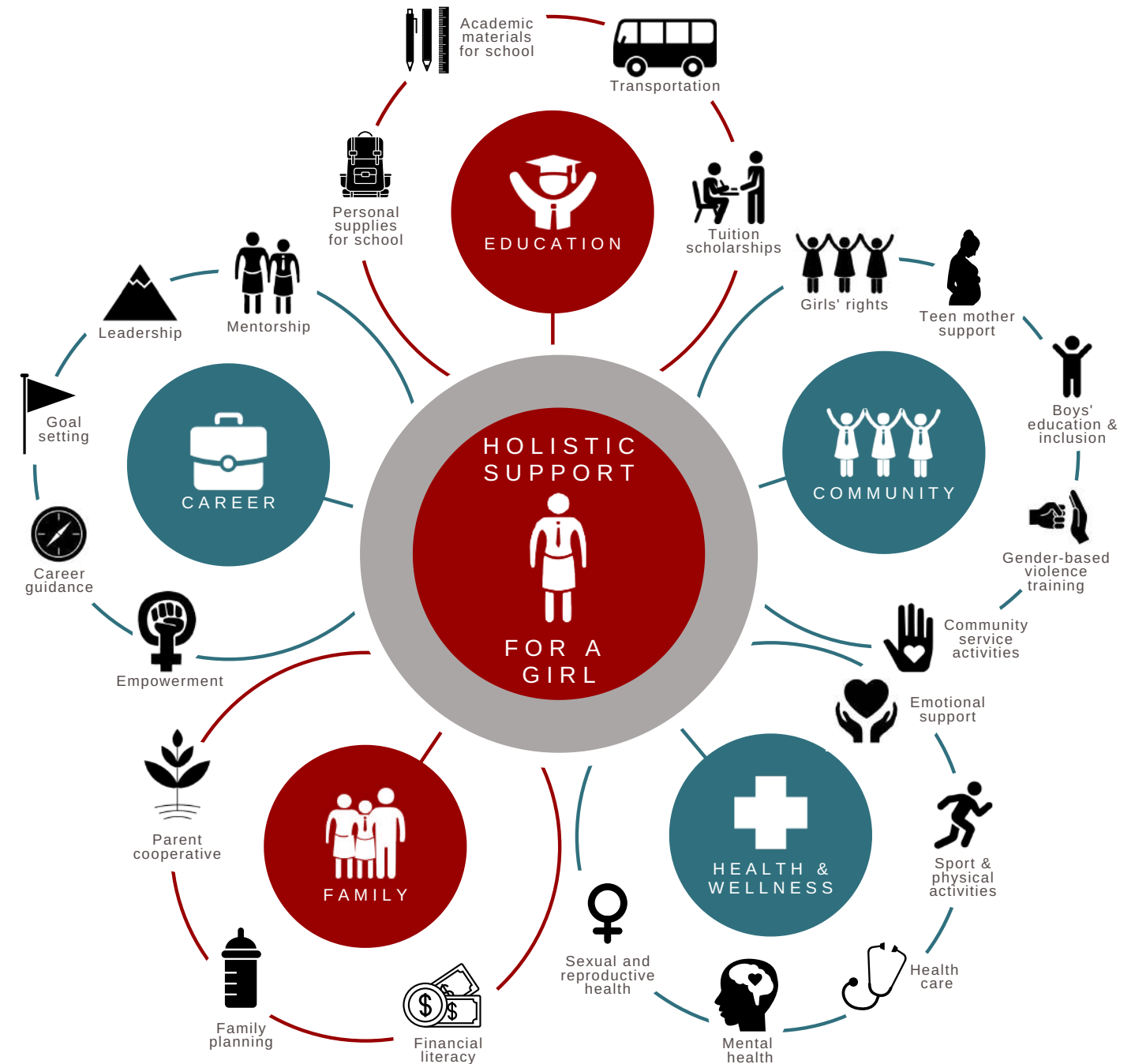
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Komera builds a community of support for our scholars. At school, a scholar meets with her Komera mentor and fellow scholars weekly. At home, her parents and family work with the Komera Parent and Guardian Cooperative. Additionally, Komera staff and parents host interactive advocacy events for community members to participate in and learn from.



SPORT

Sport is deeply ingrained in our work at Komera, not only to promote excellence but also to promote female participation and play. In addition to hosting global running events, Komera implements sport programs at primary and secondary schools for both boys and girls to come together on an equal playing field – learning gender norms and power dynamics, along with confidence and teamwork.



2019 IN REVIEW



1. SCHOOL STARTS



2. POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION PROGRAM BEGINS

1. JANUARY 14
2. FEBRUARY 1
3. FEBRUARY
4. MARCH 7
5. MARCH 8
6. MARCH 21-22



3. OPENING OF FAWE SCIENCE LAB DONATED BY PROJECT ABLE



4. KOMERA SOCIAL IN NEW YORK CITY



5. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION



6. PARENT CO-OP TRAINING



7. APRIL LEADERSHIP CAMP



8. KOMERA GLOBAL RUN IN RWANDA, BOSTON, AND SAN FRANCISCO



9. FIRST CLASS FROM PRIMARY SCHOOL SPORTS PROGRAM GRADUATES



10. JULY LEADERSHIP CAMP



11. KOMERA CANADA ROTARY RUN

7. APRIL 15
8. MAY AND JUNE
9. JULY 15
10. JULY 22
11. AUGUST 24
12. SEPTEMBER 20



12. COUNTRY DIRECTOR, DATIVAH VISITS NYC



13. KOMERA COCKTAIL IN SAN FRANCISCO

13. OCTOBER 23
14. OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER
15. NOVEMBER 3
16. NOVEMBER 25
17. DECEMBER 2
18. DECEMBER 10



14. 13 SCHOLARS GRADUATE UNIVERSITY – OUR BIGGEST CLASS YET



15. 2019 TCS NEW YORK CITY MARATHON



16. 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM BEGINS



17. DECEMBER LEADERSHIP CAMP



18. EAST AFRICAN GIRLS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

RASIA



“One’s life positively changes if she gets someone to support and listen to her.”

SCHOLAR

Rasia lived a life defined by her hard work and resilience. With eight kids in the family, her parents struggled to afford food, clothing, and medical care. The family of ten was surviving off their own domestic agriculture, but didn't earn enough income to provide everything their children needed. **Rasia remembers her siblings even having to share school uniforms, with one sibling studying in the morning hours and then swapping with another sibling to study in the evening class.**

Rasia persevered. She knew she needed to succeed in school if she wanted her family to have a brighter future. To help ease the financial burden, she attended a school two hours away that had the lowest school fees, a school that allowed her parents to pay in installments, and would even allow her parents to trade labor for fees if they couldn't make a payment. **As the youngest child, she knew the family couldn't afford to send her on to her final years of secondary school.** She'll never forget when the Komera team visited her sector looking for students who had passed their national exams, but were lacking the resources to continue their education. **She applied to our program, was selected, and was chosen to attend FAWE Girls School where everything she needed from tuition fees to school supplies would be provided.**

Rasia was supported with a Komera mentor, Solange, at FAWE. Solange helped Rasia through the transition of being in boarding school for the first time – teaching her how to be self-disciplined and how to take care of herself and her hygiene in this new environment. Solange's counseling helped Rasia feel confident. **“One's life positively changes if she gets someone to support and listen to her,” Rasia told us. “My favorite part of my Komera journey is having people who listen to you and guide you.”**

On school breaks, Rasia attended Komera Leadership Summits that helped her build her confidence through various lessons including goal setting, being a social change agent, and career guidance. She would then take these lessons back to other young women in her village. **They would meet during the holidays in a club she formed called “Together We Are One” and she would share her knowledge. She became a role model not only in her family, but throughout her village!**

With her undeniable leadership skills, in Rasia's final year of secondary school, **she was elected to the Komera Student Council and was chosen to represent Komera's scholars at the East African Girls Leadership Summit in Kenya.** Following the summit, she returned and passed her final exams with flying colors. She was awarded a scholarship to join university! Before starting her first year at the University of Rwanda, Rasia participated in Komera's 9-month Post-Secondary Transition Program where she learned computer skills, English, and business entrepreneurship, and she got to participate in her favorite lessons – culinary skills!

When we asked Rasia how she feels about her experience with Komera thus far, she took a deep breath and said, **“Komera is my family. Komera staff are my family members, my role models, and my fellow Komera scholars are my sisters! Komera shaped me to who I am today.”** Rasia is now in her second year, studying for her Bachelor's of Business Administration. She has big dreams to become a bank manager after she graduates!



SCHOLAR PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

76 scholars in partner secondary schools
25 students in the Post-Secondary Transition Program
66 scholars attending Rwandan universities
117 secondary school graduates since 2011
13 university graduates since 2015

Claudine and her two brothers always felt encouraged by their parents. Neither their mother nor father had the opportunity to complete school when they were younger, so they did all they could to ensure their children felt supported in their studies and had the opportunity to reach far. In July of 2018, Claudine was selected with her parents to be in our first Pathway to Power sports program at her primary school in Gihinga. While Claudine would be participating in the sessions with her peers, **her parents had the opportunity to participate in trainings on hygiene, conflict resolution, gender equality, and being involved in their children's education alongside other guardians.**

While the parent program was lecture and discussion based, the student program, on the other hand, revolved around sports to actively engage the young pupils like Claudine in each lesson. The initiative uses sport to deliver lessons in **reproductive health, goal setting, hygiene, gender-based violence, savings, children's rights, and gender equality.** Claudine was especially appreciative of these lessons.

"When Komera came, I liked to play with other children having fun with others, but what I liked most is what I learned from the program. I learned that being a girl or a boy doesn't mean being limited to some roles – people should not limit their children to do what they are able to do because they are male or female. I learned that I can choose to ride a bicycle, to play football, to study mathematics, or take strong leadership positions which people think are for men," Claudine reflected.

During her first year in the Komera program, Claudine was sexually assaulted outside of school. We were devastated. She felt such shame that she started being absent from classes and wanted to run away. However, on days when Komera held the after-school sport program, she would feel motivated to attend. **"[The lessons] were a place where I felt relaxed and happy. Komera helped me to get support when I was raped. There was a high chance I would drop out, but now I am still in school because I had information on what I could do. My mentors encouraged me to continue my studies. They helped me report the violence, talk to my parents, and get medication to prevent pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Disease."** Komera provided a safe space for Claudine to learn and feel accepted and protected.

16-year-old Claudine is now in her first year of secondary school and working hard. In addition to her studies, she's already becoming a young entrepreneur. She's been earning extra funds for school supplies by selling eggs from a hen she purchased with her savings from the program! **"Komera helps us love school. Pupils who attend Komera program are the ones who keep attending school and are the ones who helped me to stay in school when it was difficult."** Komera's students and mentors had such a lasting impact on Claudine that now, as she continues in school, she hopes to be a mentor for young women. **"Nothing can divert me. I am proud to be and do as Komera does."**

"I can choose to ride a bicycle, to play football, to study mathematics, or take strong leadership positions which people think are for men."

CLAUDINE

YOUTH SPORTS



YOUTH
SPORTS
PROGRAM
AT A
GLANCE

1,517 primary school students participating in sports programs
17 staff members and mentors trained to lead yoga sessions
1,675 participants in Komera Global Runs
77% of parents participated in sports programming

FRANCOISE



“Komera is like family. I belong and can be supportive.”

At age 43, Francoise and her four children weren't living the life she had dreamed of for her family. **They had no home, no land for agriculture, and were bouncing from rental to rental in their village.** They were outcast from others in their community and becoming desperate. To make matters worse, when their oldest daughter Oliviene was about to start her final years of secondary school, Francoise was afraid she wouldn't be able to afford it. Fortunately, Oliviene was selected to join the Komera scholar program which would ensure she had everything she needed to complete her education at the highest level at no cost to Francoise.

When Oliviene went to school, her mother was enrolled in our Parent and Guardian Cooperative and joined a savings group in her village, Rwinkwavu. It was Komera's parent trainings that taught Francoise about savings, key business skills, and how to work in a group. With her new knowledge and her daughter continuing in a great school, in a matter of weeks, their lives had changed completely. **“I was so happy after our daughter was supported by Komera. It was like a dream we had never imagined,” Francoise reflected.**

After her trainings, she managed to start a small business with her original savings, selling sweet potatoes, bananas, and cassava from a farm the Parent and Guardian Cooperative owned. With her new income, she was able to buy a small piece of land she could use for the cultivation of her own crops to sell.

With the combined savings from her group, Francoise was able to take out a loan from the Parent and Guardian Cooperative and expand her business. Her new profits allowed her to finally build a home for her family. **Without the looming stress of finances and rentals, Francoise finally felt peace.**

Francoise was so encouraged by the way her life had transformed that she now serves on the Parent and Guardian Cooperative Council as a leader and participates in community advocacy events with Komera! She also joins the community for the annual Komera Global Run each June, running alongside her daughter and other Komera parents and scholars. **“Komera is like family. I belong and can be supportive because it is where the idea of starting a business came from for me and even my starting capital was from my Cooperative group.”**

Now, she hopes to double her capital as her business grows so she can continue to provide for her family and support her younger children in school. Komera had a big impact on Francoise and her family, bringing them hope and security for the future.



PARENT AND
GUARDIAN
COOPERATIVE
AT A
GLANCE

12 Parent and Guardian Cooperative businesses
53 individual businesses
19 student businesses
10 leaders on the Parent and Guardian Council

In her second year of secondary school, Zainabu gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. She was only 15, living with her mother, older sister, and newborn in a poor home where they lacked even the basic needs. After her daughter's birth, Zainabu dropped out of school to lend a hand at home with her family, helping cultivate the small piece of land they owned for agriculture. **With a newborn on her back and no hope for their future, she felt lonely and stressed.** She began to consider herself and her home life as a failure.

Local leaders from her village had heard of Zainabu's hardship and brought her to Komera's staff to be considered for our teen mother program. By this point, her outlook had become grim and her mother was beginning to see the family as a failure due to the cultural stigma they faced from their neighbors. With Komera's support, her life at home began to transform.

Komera began by providing counseling for the family to help rebuild and reconcile their relationships. Zainabu started participating in training sessions on self-confidence, interpersonal skills, reproductive health, family planning, savings, business skills, and yoga. **"The sessions that were best for me were yoga, family planning, and business and savings. Yoga helped me gain self-confidence and accept myself. Now I am able to lead yoga sessions in our meetings," Zainabu explained excitedly.**

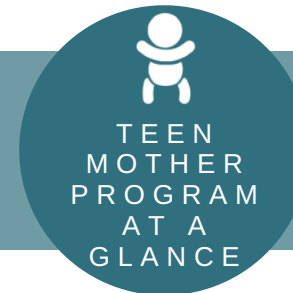
In addition to her lessons and family counseling, Zainabu's mother was also involved and participating in meetings with other parents where they were able to share ideas and testimonies. **The parent group provided a community for Zainabu's mother that helped her realize she hadn't failed as a mother.**

With the support of her family, Zainabu started to rebuild her hope for the future. **"I am so thankful for Komera because it helped me to come out of isolation, gain self-confidence, and brought back trust in my family."** She began to build community with the other teen mothers participating in Komera's program. She didn't miss a single class or opportunity to spend time with these other young moms who could truly empathize with her experience.

Today, Zainabu leads yoga for her sector, she's joined a savings group with the hopes of starting her own business, and she started family planning. After her goal-setting session, she found family planning to be a critical component to her future plans. **"I wanted to look after my baby and reach my goals and not get an unplanned pregnancy."** With her savings, she's bought two goats and hopes to continue growing her business skills, supporting her mother and sister, and bringing hope for the future to her baby girl.

"I am so thankful for Komera because it helped me to come out of isolation, gain self-confidence, and brought back trust in my family."

TEEN MOTHER



150 teen mothers participating in training sessions, counseling, reproductive health services, and yoga
92% of teen mothers are on family planning
5 teen mother mentors trained in leading yoga
26 teen mothers have started their own businesses

ZAINABU

KOMERA LEADERSHIP CENTER

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Komera Leadership Center will provide a home for our education, community development, and health initiatives in a space accessible to everyone in our community!

A HOME FOR



EDUCATION

Our goal is to help young Rwandans graduate from secondary school and university. We see a need to focus on quality education in response to crowded schools and the limited number of after school programs that are available to help young boys and girls excel.

The Komera Leadership Center is poised to fill this gap and will host after school programs and weekend classes, provide programs for early childhood development, include a modern computer resource center, and **will impact over 10,000 students.**

A HOME FOR



COMMUNITY

Over the past decade we have worked with over 5,000 community members in trainings, events, and one-on-one support. The Komera Guardian Cooperative now supports over 50 businesses across Kayonza District. We want to take this further by providing a space for communities to learn practical skills to invest in their lives and families.

The Komera Leadership Center will provide community classes **reaching 10,000 people**, also small business training and nutritional education, plus host local markets **serving 29,000 people.**

A HOME FOR



HEALTH

In Rwanda, teenage pregnancy rates increased from 7.3% in 2015 to over 12% in 2016. Komera has helped 75% of our teen mothers access contraceptives through an innovative community based mentorship program.

With the Komera Leadership Center, we will reach over **25,000 girls** over the next 10 years. Through the center, young women will be able to access peer counseling services, reproductive health education, and be connected with community advocates who will escort young women to referral services.



**GROUND BREAKING
PLANNED FOR
FALL 2020**

RAISING COMMUNITY VOICES



AMPLIFY was founded in 2017 by Komera and the Antelope Foundation to demonstrate the power and impact of community-driven organizations in serving adolescent girls. The idea of **AMPLIFY** was further developed and expanded upon in partnership with 18 organizations across Eastern Africa. **AMPLIFY** is a collective of 18 organizations located across Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya that implement a diverse set of programs to serve adolescent girls.



ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

To build an alternative model to scale – one that prioritizes 'localized' solutions, to give community-based organizations a seat at the policy and investment table, to document the impact of community-based organizations through rigorous M&E and research and to build the skills of community-based organizations to strengthen their work and communicate results

THE CHALLENGE

Girls face overwhelming challenges in communities worldwide and the organizations working directly with these communities are under-resourced and under-valued in the global discourse.

PURPOSE

Foster collaboration and learning opportunities that strengthen the work of community-driven organizations and shifts the traditional development paradigm.

MISSION

Our mission is to AMPLIFY the voices, work and impact of local partners, focused on the power and potential of adolescent girls.

VISION

Our vision is to create large-scale social impact through a community-based alternative to traditional development scale.

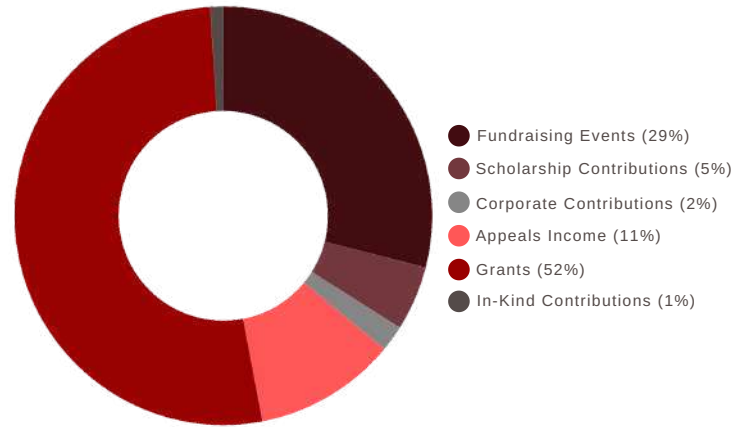
OUTCOME

Create a model for investment in local solutions to girls' education and shift traditional investment practice to one that is community-driven.

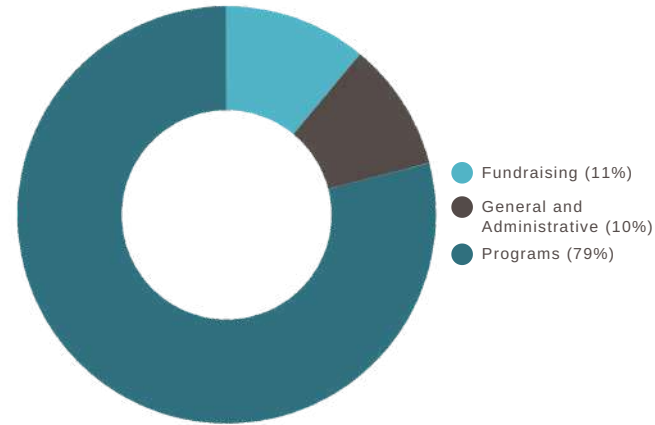
FINANCIALS

Financials from Fiscal Year 2019. Includes AMPLIFY revenue and expenses.

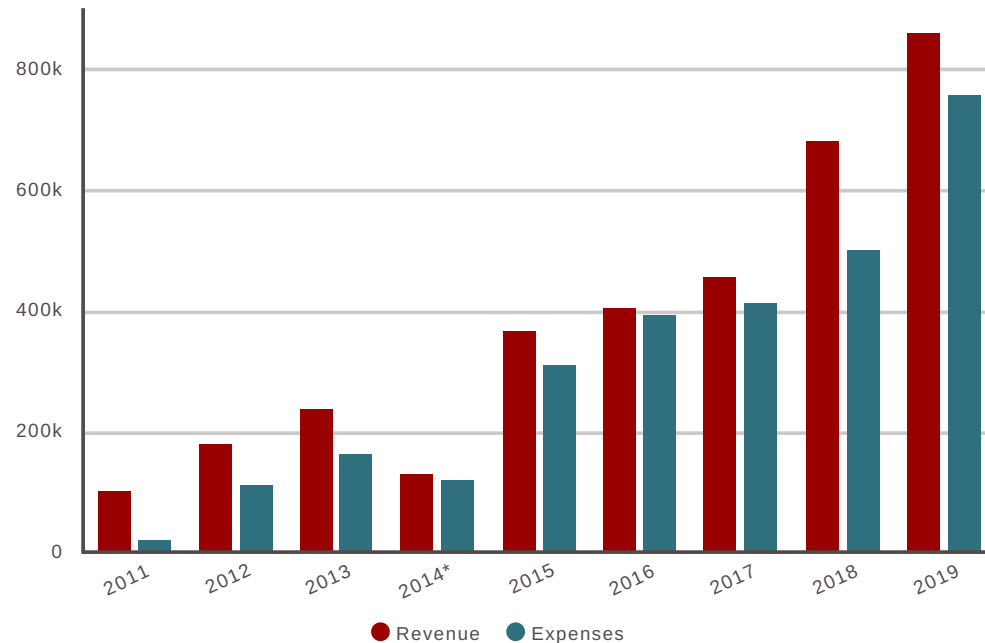
REVENUE



EXPENSES



PROGRAM AND FUNDRAISING GROWTH



*In 2014 we changed from calendar year to fiscal year.
Year 2014 represents financials for a partial year, from January-June 2014.

PARTNERS



2019
FINANCES
AT A
GLANCE

1,072 total donations
8 different countries represented by donors
\$804 average donation amount
744 new donors welcomed to the Komera family

THANK YOU

Everything we accomplished this year was possible due to the incredible generosity of the **1,072 donors** who supported us throughout the year. To each one of you, we want to extend a massive thank you and our deepest gratitude. We would also like to recognize our boards, partners, volunteers, and Komera staff for all their hard work and dedication throughout this year. We have such a phenomenal network of supporters who deserve endless appreciation!

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A special thanks to our 2019 KWIZERA AWARD WINNERS

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