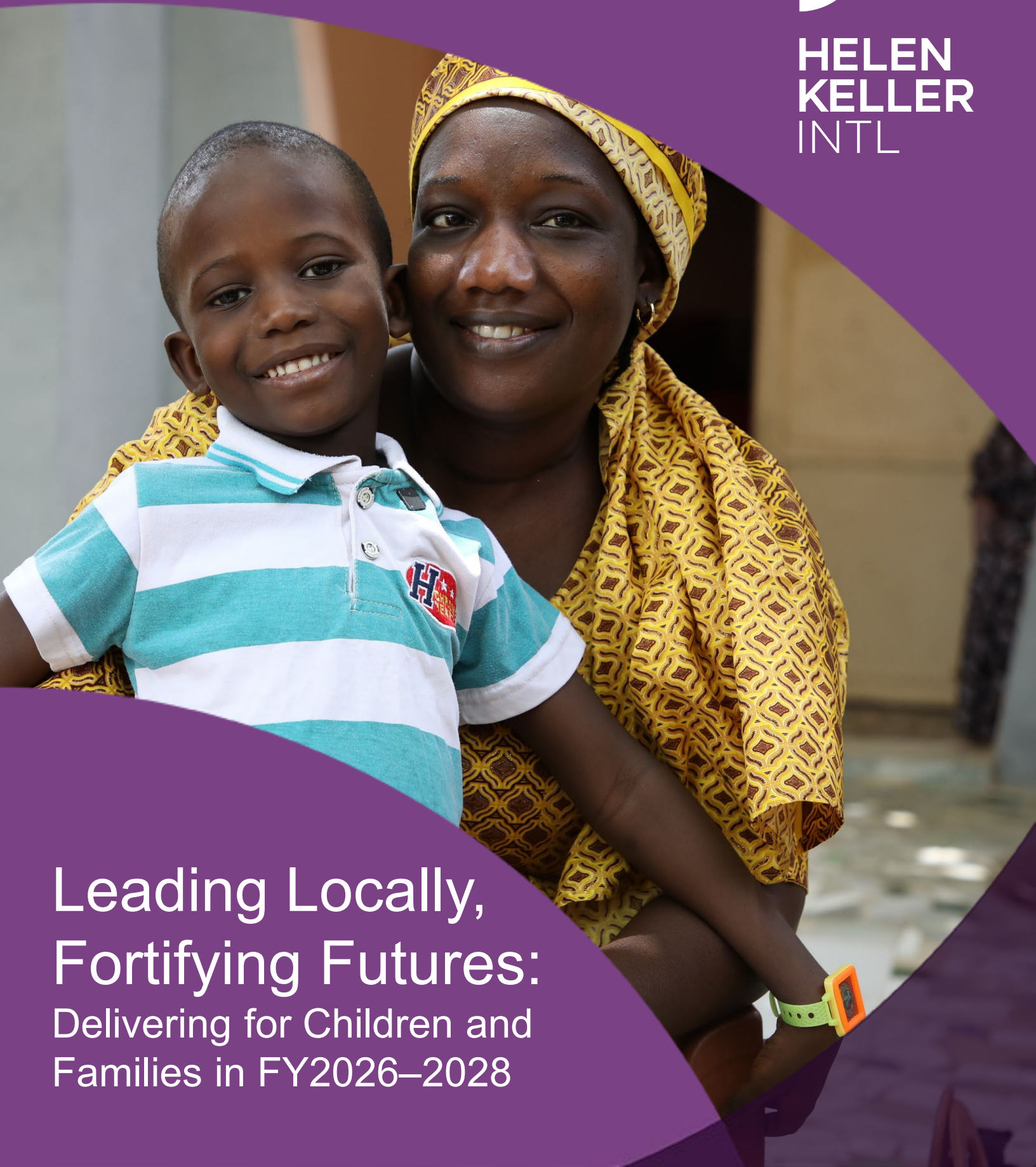




HELEN
KELLER
INTL



Leading Locally,
Fortifying Futures:
Delivering for Children and
Families in FY2026–2028

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Executive Summary

Helen Keller Intl's *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy launches in July 2025, a time of profound global disruption and shocking need as billions of people are affected by preventable or treatable conditions related to poor vision, undernutrition, and neglected tropical diseases. Those suffering are the world's most underserved children and families.

The *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy advances a different **vision** of the world: A world where every person can live a healthy life filled with potential.

The *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy affirms a **mission** built for these times: Guided by our founder's remarkable legacy, Helen Keller Intl works with global partners and communities to protect vision, improve nutrition, and fight disease.

The *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy aligns with our **values**: compassion, courage, integrity, and rigor.

Over the next three years, Helen Keller will sustain our **Core Program Areas** because they address some of the most persistent *yet solvable* public health challenges affecting those families and communities who are systemically left out of good health around the world. These Core Program Areas are:

1. **Sound Nutrition:** Malnutrition drives 45% of child deaths and compromises the futures of children who survive. Globally, more than 2.8 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet; 1.2 billion women of reproductive age and 372 million young children are deficient in at least one essential nutrient; and 150 million young children are stunted, and nearly 43 million are wasted. **We will focus on five life-saving nutrition actions delivered at scale through the health system and five food system domains that improve access to nutritious foods.**
2. **Clear Vision:** Globally, 1.1 billion people live with avoidable sight loss due to a lack of access to eye care. **We will focus on the two leading causes of blindness and low vision in today's world: cataracts and uncorrected refractive error.**
3. **Vibrant Health:** Globally, nearly 1.5 billion people require prevention or treatment services for a group of devastating illnesses labeled "neglected tropical diseases." **We will focus on controlling and eliminating five core neglected tropical diseases that are scientifically well-understood and treatable, while continually assessing others for potential large-scale public health impact.**

Delivering Impact

In three years, we will:

1) Improve the reach and quality of health services for underserved families in every country where Helen Keller works, with focus on nutrition, vision, and neglected tropical diseases.

We will move the needle on arguably the most important component of the health systems in nearly 20 countries: *health services*. Helen Keller will enhance the quality and coverage of health services, aiming to ensure that these services are more integrated, reliable, and responsive to the needs of the families and communities most likely to be left out.

2) Expand access to safe, nutritious, and fortified foods for underserved communities in nine countries.

The most cost-effective way to deliver vital nutrients at scale to families and communities living in poverty is through fortified foods. Helen Keller will put foods fortified with lifesaving, sight-saving nutrients into the hands of millions of people by strengthening regional and national leadership, supporting large-scale producers to comply with current standards, re-designing programs based on updated evidence, and expanding impact with new combinations of food vehicles and nutrients. We will drive national and regional standards for processed complementary foods and support small and medium enterprises to improve production scale and fortified food quality.



Helen Keller Intl works with global partners and communities to **protect vision, improve nutrition, and fight disease** for millions of children and families around the world.

In our **Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures Strategy**, we will:



Improve
the reach
and quality
of **health
services**.



Expand
access to
safe, nutritious,
and **fortified
foods**.

Strategic Choices

We will organize ourselves to stay on track through six Strategic Initiatives—multi-year packages of activities that drive impact:

- A. Health Services
- B. Food Fortification
- C. Fundraising and Visibility
- D. Operating Model and Organizational Design
- E. Systems and Applications
- F. Employee Experience

Operating Model and Footprint

Helen Keller's *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy will deliver results in the 20 countries where we work, while advancing a new operating model that enhances quality and anchors our work more deeply in local contexts. We will continue our trusted partnership with Helen Keller Europe, and the people and communities we serve will be ever more at the center of our work—their knowledge, priorities, leadership, and agency will shape every aspect of Helen Keller's model. We will purposefully elevate the roles of local people, organizations, networks, and systems. Our new *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy will not only embrace but powerfully lift local voices and prioritize their solutions.

You are welcome here. Building a healthier world for billions of children and family members will take all of us!

Introduction: Disruption and Transformation



Jaharoon, a mother in Nepal, received critical prenatal supplements that contain 15 essential nutrients to support a healthy pregnancy. Micronutrient deficiency affects 1.2 billion women and 372 million children worldwide, and pregnant women are especially at risk.

Helen Keller Intl enters FY2026 at a time of profound global disruption and need. Billions of people continue to suffer the consequences of preventable and treatable conditions—if only they had access to quality care. These include sight loss, neglected tropical diseases, and malnutrition. Together, these conditions are among the most urgent and solvable challenges of our time, affecting the daily lives, futures, and well-being of too many people.ⁱ

A Shifting Landscape

The world around us is shifting rapidly, and with it, so are the needs and expectations of the people and communities we partner with, compounded by conflict, extreme weather, economic volatility, and post-pandemic setbacks. At the same time, funding for international development is contracting, and many of our partner governments are facing incredibly constrained fiscal environments just as they are being called on to increase domestic investments in health and nutrition. Nonprofit organizations like Helen Keller are being asked

to do more with less, to operate differently, and to elevate national leadership and locally led solutions.

Humanitarian crises are increasingly protracted, driven by climate extremes, conflict, migration, and weak governance. Meanwhile, rapid urbanization, the rise of emerging economies, and the evolution of civil society are redrawing the landscape for public health impact. Inequities continue to widen, with the most underserved communities—and especially the women and children within them—facing the greatest risks and the least access to quality care.

The global development architecture is also changing. The traditional Geneva-centered model is giving way to a more multipolar world in which regional institutions and national governments increasingly set the agenda. This shift demands more agile, country-responsive strategies and deeper engagement with regional and national actors, particularly in Africa and Asia.

International expectations and global citizens' feelings are evolving, too. In the US, the source of most of the world's philanthropy, some citizens are asking their government to prioritize "America First," with many reportedly uncomfortable with the country's level of

spending on foreign aid. Meanwhile, some institutional donors and everyday philanthropists are encouraging localization, aspiring for governments, people, and organizations to drive change in their own countries and communities.

There is a growing global consensus around the importance of locally led development. For Helen Keller, this has long meant working closely with governments, and government partnerships remain essential to lasting change. At the same time, we recognize that governments do not always reach or represent the most excluded populations. That is why we are also committed to elevating local leadership more broadly, including community-based organizations, civil society, and individuals directly affected by systemic barriers. Locally led models hold the promise of engaging beyond government partners to bring communities themselves to the table, particularly those who often have the least access to services, resulting in more relevance, sustainability, and impact.

Technology and innovation are also opening new doors. Artificial intelligence, data systems, mobile health, and remote diagnostics are accelerating service delivery and organizational efficiency. However, they also require investment, capacity, and ethical consideration to ensure these tools work for, not against, those most often left out.

Internal shifts are changing Helen Keller's world as well. We are responding not only to the sudden loss of one-third of our funding, due to cuts by the US Government, but also to staff reflections that we could achieve even more with the resources, talent, and legacy we already have. With more than 100 years of impact to build upon, Helen Keller has powerful strengths—deep technical expertise, trusted partnerships, decades-long relationships in our partner countries, and a values-driven culture. We know that we must adapt. Across the organization, there is a shared appetite for change, not just because we must, but because we believe that Helen Keller can deliver an even greater impact in the world.

Our Board of Trustees, leaders, and staff across the organization share a remarkably consistent vision: to build on Helen Keller's achievements, unique approach, and deep ties to the countries we serve to deliver far greater impact, reach more children and families, and become a model that peer organizations emulate over the next decade. There is also a broad understanding that to serve today's world, we need to accelerate internal shifts: strengthening systems, leaders, our operating model, and our ways of working.

While this *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy begins with an enormous shift in bilateral aid and how some of our fellow humans see governments' role in providing that aid, it also begins with increased access to technology in almost every facet of our work, strengthened abilities to bring innovations to scale, strong evidence in what works, promising revolutions in agriculture and healthcare, increasing vibrancy in the health industry almost everywhere we work, and a move toward locally empowered decisions and programming. While the changes in government funding are significant, they do not signal the end of international development programs. Instead, it shifts the responsibility to governments, the private sector, and local institutions to set their own priorities, innovate, and explore new ways of funding arguably some of the most important work in the world—investing in the health and development of humanity. Core development principles—investing in human

capital, enacting policy reforms, and expanding markets—will continue, shifting from donor-dependent projects to, aspirationally, more sustainable, locally-led systems.

Helen Keller feels the pressure—and the catalytic nature—of these times. Helen Keller will shift with purpose toward harnessing technology, scaling innovations, and pushing our well-honed, evidence-based approaches to new limits. We will try new ways of delivering value and partnering with others to stay relevant in this changing context. We will put women at the center of our work, as they often disproportionately bear the burden of meeting health and nutrition needs for the whole family. Our path forward is grounded in programmatic excellence, fueled by trusted partnerships, and guided by those we serve.

Helen Keller was built to meet this moment. We step bravely into a world with rising and abiding health inequities, where inadequate health and food systems rob more than one billion people of clear vision, sound nutrition, and the ability to live free from disabling diseases.

With optimism, we also see the path forward. We boldly seek to change the systems that exclude rather than deliver. We embrace and modernize Helen's fierce optimism and clarity of purpose. Her DNA demands that we continue to show up wherever the needs are greatest.

Why Three Years?

We deliberately decided to chart a three-year path, rather than a traditional five- or ten-year strategy. Why?

The world is changing quickly. We decided to use the occasion of a new strategy to push ourselves to develop our agility and take advantage of a period of rapid global change to accelerate our own changes.

We are building from a place of resilience. This strategy begins at the close of four years of building internal resilience. Little did we know four years ago how much resilience we would need! But we are enjoying the fruits of resilience-building activities with diversified funding, a healthy reserve, strides in program quality, a deep bench of talent around the globe, and stronger capabilities in food and health systems. Having resilience in a deeply unstable world is a superpower. Helen Keller is poised to deliver, with resilience as our foundation.

We want to make meaningful progress now. These times call for strong action, as the world's children and families face extraordinary threats to their health and wellbeing. They are our *human* call to action. We must act swiftly; with Helen's fierce optimism, change is possible.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Helen Keller believed in the dignity of all, no matter their constraints and obstacles, be they disabilities, structural barriers to economic independence, race, or gender. We inherited

Helen's fierce optimism and believe a better future is possible, where opportunity, health, and dignity are meant for everyone. Like Helen, we act courageously to address some of the most entrenched injustices in the world.



Dhahabu Kazungu and her infant, Linda Neema, in their home in the Kilifi region of Kenya. A community health hero supports Dhahabu so she has the tools she needs to provide for her child's nutrition in the face of extreme weather and often hard-to-afford healthy foods.

Our Mission: Guided by our founder's remarkable legacy, Helen Keller Intl works with global partners and communities to protect vision, improve nutrition, and fight disease.

Our Vision: A world where every person can live a healthy life filled with potential.

Our updated mission and vision reflect both continuity and renewal: a reaffirmation of Helen Keller's enduring purpose and an aspiration to meet the challenges of a changing world with clarity and resolve. The statements were refined through broad consultation with staff and our Board of

Trustees to make them more accessible, memorable, and sharply aligned with our future.

We reaffirm our commitment to our **values**, which guide everything we do:

Rigor: Dedication to quality, best practices, accountability, and continuous learning. We combine research, evidence, and on-the-ground experience to improve lives on a large scale and for the long term.

Integrity: Consistency between our words and actions. We put our best foot forward every day by helping to build more equitable systems and manage relationships, resources, and partnerships with honesty, fairness, transparency, and professionalism.

Courage: Determination to overcome obstacles, just as our co-founder, Helen Keller, did. We bravely identify problems, positively offer solutions, and work toward shaping a more optimistic future.

Compassion: Demonstrated empathy for the people we serve—clients, partners, donors, and colleagues. We build on mutual respect and a deliberate focus on inclusiveness, responsiveness, and collaboration.

Core Program Areas

We also remain deeply committed to our **Core Program Areas**, the primary focus areas we intend to maintain, reinforce, and grow in the coming years:

1. **Sound Nutrition:** Malnutrition drives 45% of child deaths and compromises the futures of children who survive. Globally, more than 2.8 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet; 1.2 billion women of reproductive age and 372 million young children are deficient in at least one essential nutrient; and 150 million young children are stunted, and nearly 43 million are wasted. **We will focus on five life-saving nutrition actions delivered at scale through the health system and five food system domains that improve access to nutritious foods.**
2. **Clear Vision:** Globally, 1.1 billion people live with avoidable sight loss due to a lack of access to eye care. **We will focus on the two leading causes of blindness and low vision in today's world: cataracts and uncorrected refractive error.**
3. **Vibrant Health:** Globally, nearly 1.5 billion people require prevention or treatment services for a group of devastating illnesses labeled “neglected tropical diseases.” **We will focus on controlling and eliminating five core neglected tropical diseases that are scientifically well-understood and treatable, while continually assessing others for potential large-scale public health impact.**

These areas are not priorities simply because they are legacy programs, nor because the remaining unmet needs affect billions of people. We continue to focus on them because they address some of the most persistent *yet solvable* public health challenges affecting disadvantaged communities.



In Tanzania, Modesta beams after her vision was restored by cataract surgery. Helen Keller helps community members learn about the causes and to access surgical treatment.

These problems of enormous global burden have proven, scalable, evidence-based, and cost-effective solutions that Helen Keller is uniquely positioned to deliver. We bring decades of on-the-ground experience, trusted government and community partnerships, and globally recognized technical expertise.

In nutrition, we are one of the few organizations delivering the full suite of five lifesaving interventions, including vitamin A supplementation, essential vitamins for expectant mothers,

and early screening and treatment for malnutrition, while also tackling the root causes of malnutrition through food systems interventions like large-scale fortification. In eye health, we bring the technical expertise to address the world's two leading causes of vision loss: cataracts and refractive error. And in neglected tropical diseases, our longstanding leadership in integrated mass drug administration and systems strengthening puts us at the forefront of

elimination efforts. Across all three areas, our programs are data-driven, locally grounded, and designed to drive sustainable impact.

Delivering Impact

Delivering impact is where our *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy begins.

We will:

1) Improve the reach and quality of health services for underserved families in every country where Helen Keller works, with focus on nutrition, vision, and neglected tropical diseases.

Helen Keller is committed to creating lasting change, not only in individuals' lives, but also within the complex systems that serve their needs. Building on our FY2023–2025 strategy, we continue to deepen our engagement with health systems, recognizing that sustainable impact requires more than isolated interventions.



In Cambodia, a community health worker counsels pregnant woman about maternal nutrition, including the benefits of multiple micronutrient supplements.

In this strategic period, we are concentrating on a critical component of health systems: **health services**. Robust health services are essential for preventing and treating malnutrition, delivering eye care, and combating neglected tropical diseases. Underserved communities often face barriers to accessing quality care. Challenges include a lack of physical access to healthcare providers, inconsistent service quality, and a lack of integration of essential interventions into routine services, particularly for women and children.

By focusing on enhancing the quality and coverage of health services, we aim to ensure that these services are more integrated, reliable, and responsive to the needs of the most

marginalized populations. Our efforts, in close partnership with governments, will help health systems deliver comprehensive care that addresses multiple needs effectively.

Through this approach, we strive to transform health services into a foundation for stronger health systems, ultimately improving health outcomes for the communities we serve.

2) Expand access to safe, nutritious, and fortified foods for underserved communities in nine countries.

Families struggle to access safe, nutritious food, and markets are dominated by unhealthy, nutrient-poor options in urban and rural areas. People living in poverty are the hardest hit, especially women and children.

Over 1.2 billion women and 372 million children are deficient in at least one essential nutrient. Globally, fewer than 30% of infants and young children in the 6–23-month age range benefit from a minimum acceptable diet. Large-scale food fortification and fortified complementary foods are cost-effective and scalable approaches to address hidden hunger amid rising food prices, climate shocks, and changing food systems. Most companies producing foods for large-scale food fortification and processed complementary foods that reach underserved populations are national or regional actors, or small and medium enterprises.

We will shape the future of large-scale food fortification by strengthening regional and national leadership, supporting large-scale producers to comply with current standards, redesigning programs based on updated evidence, and expanding impact with new combinations of food vehicles and nutrients. We will drive national and regional standards for processed complementary foods and support small and medium enterprises to improve the scale and quality of food production.

We will begin with nine countries where we already have some momentum on which to build. We have done a landscape analysis in all four countries where we work in Asia: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, and the Philippines. We are supporting bouillon fortification in Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Senegal; have renewed other fortification work in Côte d'Ivoire; and started it in Madagascar. We significantly engaged on processed, fortified complementary foods in Cambodia, Nepal, and Senegal.



Fortified flour made by a women's group in Senegal is turned into baked goods and porridge, offering children and their families an extra boost of essential nutrients.

These goals promise to deliver dramatic change at scale for millions of children and family members. They clarify where we will focus our discretionary efforts, guiding the investments we make, the skills we prioritize, the partnerships we seek, and how we allocate staff time and attention. They also shape what we measure, what stories we tell, and how we define success over time. They will help us to improve and expand our skill sets as an organization and drive new innovations for our work.

The two goals reflect distinct but **complementary strategic engines**ⁱⁱ:

Optimize refers to improving and scaling up proven delivery systems: doing what we know works better, faster, and more equitably. It emphasizes efficiency, quality, integration, and systems change. **Our first impact goal, focused on health services, relies on optimization.**

Innovate involves developing and expanding new or underleveraged approaches, including product innovations, policy changes, market shaping, and public-private partnerships. **Our second impact goal, focused on food fortification, relies on innovation.**

We chose these as the two goals to focus our efforts on over the next three years because our positioning, reputation, funding, and aspirations are closely aligned. They allow us to leverage the bulk of our programming portfolio. Helen Keller is uniquely fit to deliver on them. They serve as both a foundation and a springboard—building capabilities, momentum, and systems to enable greater and more sustainable impact for the decade ahead. By concentrating our discretionary efforts on two high-leverage areas, we are pushing ourselves to deliver tangible results in the near term while laying the groundwork for even greater gains by 2035.

These are not the only areas where we will optimize our investments and seek new innovations, but they represent our whole-of-organization efforts for continual improvements over a sustained three-year period. All other elements of this strategy, including how we lead, fund, and organize our work, are designed to enable progress on these goals. They are our foundation for deeper, longer-term transformation.

Strategic Choices

Helen Keller's FY2026–2028 *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy centers on achieving our impact goals through programmatic excellence, supported by strong foundations and an **aligned organization**.

1. Programmatic Excellence

We are committed to delivering measurable, high-quality health and nutrition outcomes for communities most often left out. This commitment is realized through:

- Strengthening program models, quality standards, and our evidence base to ensure interventions are effective and scalable.
- Driving policy change at national, regional, and global levels to build environments where lasting transformation can take root.
- Advancing locally led development by empowering local stakeholders and integrating community insights into program design and implementation.

2. Strong Foundations

Our ability to deliver on our mission relies on:

- Increasing flexible funding to allow for responsive and adaptive programming.
- Diversifying our donor base to ensure financial sustainability and resilience.
- Improving operational efficiency to make the most of our resources in advancing our mission.

- Delivering an exceptional employee experience to attract, retain, and develop talented staff who are committed to our goals.

3. An Aligned Organization

To effectively implement our *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy, we will:

- Position our country programs as the operational center of the organization, ensuring that decision-making is informed by those closest to the communities we serve.
- Improve our evidence-based decision-making by leveraging data and insights to guide strategic choices and program adjustments.

This framework ensures that our efforts are cohesive, our resources are optimized, and our impact is maximized across all areas of our work.

Strategic Initiatives

We are investing in six Strategic Initiatives: multi-year packages of activities to address these three areas for investment. These initiatives are not abstract. They are practical, focused efforts that combine key activities and corral staff efforts to support the impact goals. Each initiative addresses a different part of what it takes to drive impact, from funding to staffing to systems. Each will have dedicated staff, leadership, and accountability mechanisms to ensure we deliver on their promise. The Financial Context and Investment Case section describes detailed investments and anticipated returns.

A) Health Services

Why this matters: If you are a parent bringing your child to the doctor or a clinic, you want to walk away knowing they have received everything they need, from vaccines to vitamins to medicines. But all too often, essential services like nutrition or treatment for neglected diseases are left out or not delivered at the quality a parent depends on for their child to live and thrive.

This initiative contributes directly to our first Strategic Choice: **Programmatic Excellence**. Health systems are complex, with multiple core components. This initiative focuses Helen Keller's efforts on one: health services deliveryⁱⁱⁱ. Our intention is to build health systems that deliver more complete, reliable care, especially for nutrition, eye health, and neglected tropical diseases. We will work across countries to define what "high-quality" service delivery looks like, integrate interventions more effectively into routine care, and support local and national systems—and the people who comprise those systems—to scale them.

B) Food Fortification

Why this matters: In many places where we work, people want to eat healthier but cannot afford or access the nutritious food they need. Moreover, markets are dominated by nutrient-poor products and highly processed options that are delicious and cheap. Most staple foods and commonly consumed condiments lack essential vitamins and minerals unless they are fortified.

This initiative contributes directly to our first Strategic Choice: **Programmatic Excellence**. It also advances locally led development by strengthening national leadership, improving program quality, and fostering inclusive public-private partnerships.

Fortifying foods people already eat is one of the most cost-effective and scalable ways to close nutrient gaps and improve families' health. In this initiative, Helen Keller will support countries to fortify widely consumed foods and condiments—such as flour, cooking oil, bouillon cubes, and processed complementary foods—with essential nutrients like iron, vitamin A, folate, and thiamine. In keeping with our approach, food fortification efforts will be grounded in science, responsive to local context, and designed for scale. We will work with governments, food producers (including small and medium enterprises), and civil society to shape national policies and standards, support innovation in food vehicles and nutrient combinations, and strengthen compliance and quality assurance systems. We will aim to build food systems that nourish, not harm, by ensuring fortified foods are accessible, affordable, and available to those who need them most.

C) Fundraising and Visibility

Why this matters: Driving impact requires resources—not just highly restricted project funds, but flexible funding that allows us to advocate, drive our own agenda, co-fund programs that deliver on our two impact goals, and invest in the leadership, systems, learning, and locally led approaches that underpin the work.

In the *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy, Helen Keller will continue to advance the three levers of growth: major gifts, legacy gifts, and top core donors' support. We will also expand digital outreach and engagement, raise our profile with supporters, and attract more donors through press and advertising. We will power up our retention efforts to retain a higher proportion of new and sustaining donors. In addition, this initiative will seek to test and learn which prospective donors might be a fit for Helen Keller and which methods might engage them.

This initiative directly contributes to our second Strategic Choice: **Strong Foundations**. It will strengthen how we tell our story so that donors will experience the lives changed thanks to their support and the value of giving through Helen Keller.

The goal is not just more money now, but the right kind of funding.

D) Operating Model and Organizational Design

Why this matters: A well-functioning organization helps everyone do their job better. When roles and responsibilities are unclear or when decision-making is siloed, even great teams can struggle.

This initiative directly contributes to both our second and third Strategic Choices: **Strong Foundations** and an **Aligned Organization**. We will finalize and energize our new operating

model by defining leadership teams, decision-making rights, and collaboration norms. We will align our structure and our processes, ensuring clear accountability and performance standards to achieve impact and efficiency. We will create a model that is lean, inclusive, and fit for purpose.

E) Systems and Applications

Why this matters: Helen Keller has unrealized potential for impact, and technology is a key lever to support faster and better services. More interoperability and efficient request processing would save significant time that would be better spent on high-value activities.

This initiative directly contributes to both our second and third Strategic Choices: **Strong Foundations** and an **Aligned Organization**. It will strengthen our ability to thrive as a more efficient, impactful, and data-driven organization. Stronger systems, integrated, streamlined processes, and more effective use of data and knowledge will create the foundation for more informed decision-making, operational efficiencies, enhanced staff productivity, and greater program impact.

F) Employee Experience

Why this matters: Our people are our greatest asset. We achieve more when they are supported, challenged, and able to grow. A positive employee experience fosters engagement, morale, and productivity, even in times of uncertainty or change. It contributes to a stronger organizational culture, employee well-being, and a sense of purpose and belonging.

To build our organization into the future, we are committed to cultivating leaders from within. This includes lifting diverse voices to our leadership table and providing opportunities for homegrown talent to thrive. By investing in leadership development and creating clear pathways for advancement, we ensure that our workforce reflects the communities we serve and is equipped to navigate a changing landscape.

This initiative directly contributes to our second and third Strategic Choices: **Strong Foundations** and an **Aligned Organization**. It will raise our commitment to fairness and belonging. It will strengthen how we support and retain talent, including through better performance management, clearer expectations, support for leadership and management, and thoughtful succession planning. Through this initiative, we aim to create an environment where every employee feels valued, empowered, and prepared to contribute to our mission at the highest level. We will create a Helen Keller where people thrive, not just contribute.

A Note on Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping how global health and development organizations operate, and we would be remiss not to mention it here. For Helen Keller, AI offers myriad possibilities, from analyzing program data and enhancing field operations (e.g., faster data reporting from remote areas) to supporting efficiencies in human resources, finance, fundraising, reporting, and so much more. However, the risks—bias in algorithms, data

privacy, and misinformation—are real and especially acute for underserved populations and organizations like ours that depend on the trust and goodwill of thousands of donors and partners.

We approach AI with a spirit of opportunity and responsibility. In our prior strategy, we focused on foundational learning for staff through our AI Hub and early exploration of practical use cases. We are open to harnessing AI's potential to enhance our efficiency, innovation, and impact, while remaining mindful of its ethical, privacy, and operational risks. We will remain alert to AI use cases in our programs and operations that represent wise, prudent investments aligned with our priorities. We will also work to build the AI capabilities of our staff, in keeping with our mission to advance the welfare and opportunities of the communities we serve.

Going forward, we will not be a first mover, but a thoughtful adopter, actively monitoring the landscape and selectively investing where there is a strong case for impact and feasibility. Doing this well will require thoughtful choices: we likely will not have the resources or capacity to become overnight experts or build full-scale capabilities internally, so we will have to rely on partnerships, shared learning, and strategic prioritization.

Footprint and Operating Model

Rather than pull back in response to financial pressures, our *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy will maintain and adapt Helen Keller's global footprint to keep delivering impactful results in the countries where we work—across Asia, Africa, and the United States, as well as in Europe through our partnership with Helen Keller Europe. After all, we are grounded in evidence-based practice and have tremendous experience achieving results at



Figure 1: Current Global Footprint

scale. Our long-term relationships, deep contextual knowledge, and trusted partnerships give

us a comparative advantage and help us secure funding, shape policy, and deliver sustainable results in complex environments. We are trusted and will do everything we can to fight for the people and countries we serve.

Our *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy also considers a hard truth: once an organization exits a country, re-entry is often extremely costly, slow, and difficult. We will do everything in our power to stay in the countries and communities where the need is great and resources are slim. It is also a solid decision to preserve our existing footprint, both strategically and financially.

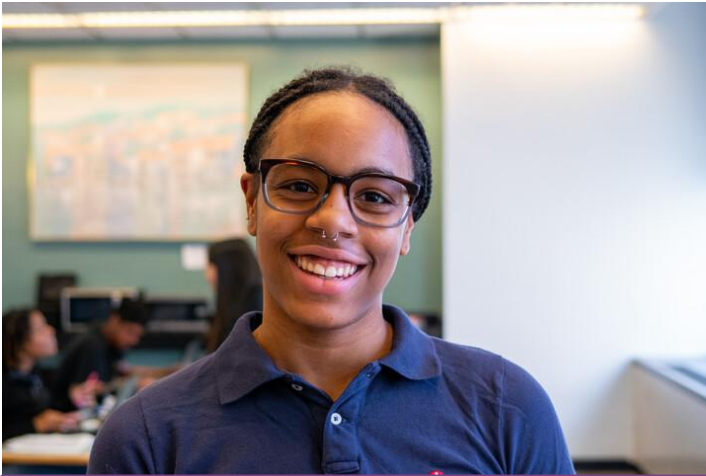
Thus, we will continue to deliver meaningful impact in 20 countries where Helen Keller is already at work and evolve into a new operating model that can go deep with quality as we pursue locally led hiring, decision-making, and program design. We can leverage strong relationships with regional institutions to flex into new countries and new environments within the countries where we already work.

The *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy will evolve our operating model from single-country models to both single- and multi-country models and allow us to flex into new countries through partnerships. The models will differ by the size and complexity of our program portfolio. Teams will actively consider how to develop a vibrant pipeline of programs. Evolving the model will allow us to direct more resources toward frontline delivery and expand our reach through strategic partnerships where we can work in countries near our centers of operation, across borders. We have developed preliminary criteria to guide decisions about geographic presence, clarifying when to consolidate, expand, or explore lighter-touch models in adjacent and nearby countries.

An additional element of our operating model is an increased focus on strategic partnerships. We are creating a strategic partnerships team to invest in growing all partnership types, including institutions, international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local civil society, and more. This new team recognizes the fast-changing nature of our sector—and indeed, the world—requires us to think differently about how we partner and share services, capabilities, and even staff with partners.

US Programs

Let us also address how the United States fits into the operating model. In the US, like in Cameroon, and aspirationally in other countries as well, Helen Keller provides thousands of school children with vision screenings, and, when needed, a simple pair of eyeglasses, which revolutionizes their learning, ability to make friends, gain confidence, strengthen self-esteem, and join conversations at a vital stage in life, rather than be left out. However, our vision screening programs in the US and elsewhere have had limited scale and interest from philanthropic donors.



Anisa Foreman had her vision screened at Stuyvesant High School in New York City. Now, with free-of-charge eyeglasses, she is better able to see her schoolwork and ready to take on the world.

Yet in the US today, as many as 4 million children and 12 million adults suffer from impaired vision due to an uncorrected refractive error. Combining refractive error with more serious eye disorders, vision loss is the single most prevalent disabling condition in the US.

The disparities among children are particularly stark: public school systems serving low-income communities often lack the resources for adequate vision services, and families may struggle to navigate the fragmented follow-up care needed. The National Institutes of Health notes that only 5% to 50% of children who fail screening tests receive follow-up care. These rates are especially alarming in neighborhoods with higher rates of

poverty, where vision problems are more than double the national average, and students face greater difficulties accessing care.ⁱ This study and our own experience show that students who receive glasses improve their academic performance.

We also have evidence from Bangladesh that adults who receive glasses improve their productivity. The evidence base for the cost effectiveness of correcting refractive error is robust, and the growing prevalence of myopia underscores the urgency to intervene.ⁱⁱ

Today, Helen Keller partners with schools to reach every child with a vision screening, and when needed, a pair of prescription eyeglasses. Currently working in California, Minnesota, New Jersey, and New York, Helen Keller's vision team helps eliminate the primary barriers to vision care for underserved children and adults: access and expense. We also strive to reach additional children and adults in need where they are: in community-based service programs, homeless shelters, and public housing.

We will take a fresh look at US geographies to ensure we are going where the needs are great and we can have a significant impact.

As part of the *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy, we will also imagine a new business model for our US Programs to expand and thrive. Recent analysis by InterAction showed that while the US public will support international causes, they are more likely to support organizations also working in the US. While some donors ask about and are motivated by our US vision work, it is not a motivating factor for the majority of our donors. Truthfully, we have not had a significant enough footprint to test the US donor environment. This poses a chicken-and-egg problem. We propose dialing up the visibility of our US Programs at this critical juncture and testing donor "stickiness."

We hypothesize that our US Programs could grow our brand and strengthen our relationship with new or existing donors. We will consider potential corporate and nonprofit partnerships and whether and how our US Programs might foster greater visibility for Helen Keller and attract more and different donors. We will imagine a sharper case for donor support. To enable a fresh look, US Programs will join a new department—Growth and Branding—and report to the Chief of Growth and Branding, sitting alongside individual and family donor fundraising in the US and marketing.

As a team, we will experiment with ideas that could lift our visibility and might complement our efforts to engage donors with Helen Keller. Beyond the financial and programmatic potential, increased visibility for our US Programs could enhance trust in us globally and honor Helen’s legacy.

As countries around the world increasingly scrutinize US involvement abroad, given persistent social and economic inequalities at home, our ability to say “yes, we work here in the US too” could make us increasingly credible. At a time when US citizens are scrutinizing international engagement, a meaningful domestic presence shows our commitment to serving those most often left behind, no matter where in the world they live.

Helen Keller was not only a global advocate but a distinctly American icon who challenged our nation to embrace and honor the ability in all of us, especially those who were systematically left out. We reflect that legacy by acting in the US, where health disparities and economic inequality remain among the highest in the world.

Locally Led Development

The *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy will deepen our local embeddedness. The people and communities we serve will be ever more at the center of our work. Their knowledge, priorities, leadership, and agency will shape every aspect of Helen Keller’s model.

We will elevate the role of local people, organizations, networks, and systems. Our new strategy will not only embrace but also lift local leaders and prioritize their solutions. These changes will deliver better outcomes and a more sustainable impact.

The change begins with how we listen to and engage communities, including children, women, and marginalized groups. We will bring them into our organization, learn from them, and work side-by-side to co-design solutions with the people most affected. We will continue to engage with regional institutions and structures established by member states to lead on issues. We will continue working in partnership with national governments and civil society organizations. We will seek to grow engagement with more local actors, such as with additional counties in Kenya and municipalities in Nepal. In all cases, we will actively support local leadership and priorities. Our own country teams will receive greater authority, representation, and resourcing to make strategic and operational decisions closer to the point of delivery.

Locally led development is measurable, too. We will consider:

- How participants' voices and lived experiences are driving program design and adaptation.
- How local partners are positioned as true co-creators and implementers, not just intermediaries.
- How our country teams are resourced and empowered to lead, including having a voice in executive decisions.
- How our hiring and leadership pipelines reflect the places and people we serve.

Ultimately, we will be successful if we not only have local actors holding leadership roles but also define *locally led* by who holds the power to shape what we do, how we do it, and what success looks like.

Financial Context and Fundraising

Helen Keller has historically received about 90–95% of our funding from institutional donors, specifically governments and foundations. This means most of our funding previously came from highly restricted program and project grants. We have also received about 5–9% of our funding from family and individual philanthropists, who give mostly unrestricted, flexible donations. The *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy will sustain these ratios for the most part because that is the reality of funding.

The global funding environment has significantly changed over the last five years. The reduction in US Government foreign assistance, which until recently accounted for about 30% of Helen Keller's revenue, has created challenges while signaling broader shifts. Key European donors have also adjusted their priorities—Sweden's SIDA, for example, is now focusing on humanitarian aid and migration at the expense of global health programming. At the same time, Germany's BMZ has prioritized climate and stabilization funding.

Philanthropic institutional actors, such as the Gates Foundation, have increased their contributions but remain far from compensating for the loss of government aid, as the US Government alone invested an estimated \$12–15 billion in global health annually. Competition for institutional support will be fiercer, funding cycles slower, and co-funding and matching requirements more common and likely steeper. We must increase unrestricted resources to invest in this more competitive market and meet co-funding and matching requirements.

Thanks to deliberate donor diversification efforts, Helen Keller has reduced its dependency on any single funding source. In recent years, no one donor contributed more than 30–40% of the organization's budget. This approach has cushioned the financial blow of reduced US Government funding. Helen Keller is poised to stabilize quickly after the US Government cuts and possibly even grow.

The organization has forged new partnerships with key donor groups, including GiveWell and the broader effective altruism community, as well as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints. However, this success introduces a new dependency risk: by FY2026, approximately 70% of our forecasted revenue will come from these two donor groups. GiveWell and the effective altruists are continually searching for even more cost-effective interventions. As the global health landscape changes, the costs associated with life-saving nutrition interventions might no longer compare as favorably to other interventions. In addition, the dominance of these two donors is driving a dramatic imbalance in funding across our three core programmatic areas, with nutrition now making up about 86% of our portfolio. Thus, while deepening these partnerships remains essential, further diversification is also critical.



OP Mok and Hean SreyNa, husband and wife farmers in Kampot Province, Cambodia, promote climate-smart agriculture to improve nutrition for their family and community.

Projected funding for FY2026 highlights a pivotal shift: philanthropic contributions, both restricted and flexible, are expected to account for 90% of total revenue, with governmental sources contributing less than 5%. These figures underscore the importance of building visibility and fundraising capacity to ensure financial resilience.

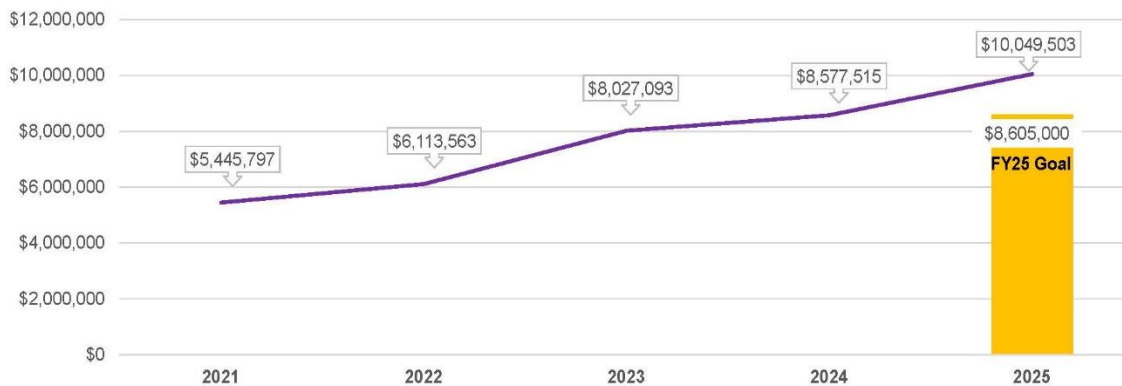
We are proud that we ended our last strategy period as a more diversified organization. However, with the significant changes to bilateral funding, we find ourselves in high-dependency donor relationships again. We are responding by shifting our operating model to give more responsibility and entrepreneurial energy to our portfolio managers at the country level. We are investing in major gift cultivation, digital marketing, donor analytics, expanded fundraising capacity, and visibility-raising with donors. These actions aim to diversify revenue streams while creating a resilient financial engine to improve the lives of millions of children and families worldwide.

We build from strength and are sobered by our changing funding landscape, yet we prepare to be viable even if fewer resources are available.

Fundraising results in recent years have given us powerful momentum. Since FY2021, unrestricted philanthropy has grown to about 8–9% of our annual budgets, up from 5–7%. This growth has been driven by increases in major gifts and continued loyalty from modest donors. While the US nonprofit sector has seen overall declines in the number of people giving, particularly among small-dollar donors, Helen Keller has consistently outperformed national benchmarks in donor retention, a key indicator of long-term sustainability and trust. As of FY2025, our retention rate for individual donors was more than 10 percentage points higher than the national average for nonprofits, placing us in the top quartile of performers in the sector.

HELEN KELLER INTL

Unrestricted Philanthropy, Comparing Current Fiscal Year Actuals vs. Target to Previous Full Fiscal Years
June 30, 2025



Helen Keller is positioned for continued growth in our unrestricted philanthropy. Our mission resonates with both value-driven philanthropists and impact-focused institutional donors, or put another way, with donors motivated by both heart and head. We are widely recognized and trusted for our impact, rigor, and cost-effectiveness: we are consistently rated a GiveWell Top Charity, frequently cited by leading media outlets including *The New York Times*, and known across the sector for delivering results at scale. This external validation strengthens donor confidence and reinforces our credibility.

We remain committed to efficiency, cost containment, and reduced management expenses, even as we aim for growth. One of our strategic goals is to increase our efficiency, and we aim to increase our program efficiency ratio from 81% to 85% despite decreased revenue. We have consistently demonstrated this capability to contain costs to maximize funding toward impactful programming.

This strategy will seek to advance fundraising through major gifts, planned gifts, and other higher-level gifts from individuals and families, and add more robust digital marketing and donor analytics. We are optimistic about the results, but realistic that we will still face challenges in this tumultuous funding environment. The good news is that our donors are standing with us, and we will do everything in our power to retain and engage them.

Measuring Impact

The *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy will measure impact on the people and communities we work with and serve. We owe it to them to ensure we are making progress.

We will use a Strategy Map and Balanced Scorecard to guide and track progress throughout FY2026–2028.

The Strategy Map is a visual tool articulating how our actions and investments lead to desired outcomes. The Balanced Scorecard translates this strategy into a set of clearly defined objectives and metrics across four perspectives:

- Programs and Stakeholders
- Financial Results
- Internal Processes
- Learning and Growth

Each objective in the Balanced Scorecard is paired with measurable indicators and targets. These allow us to:

- Align annual plans and budgets to strategy
- Cascade expectations to teams and individuals
- Monitor progress at least quarterly
- Adjust as needed to stay on track

For example, the FY2026 annual plans and budgets fully align with the Strategy Map and initiatives outlined here.

This approach is more than a reporting framework; it is a strategic tool. It ensures that every team understands how their work connects to the whole and that we continuously learn and adapt to improve performance and impact. It supports management conversations about where and how we make investments and the levers we can pull to create organizational and external change. See the full Strategy Map and Balanced Scorecard in the Annexes.

The Balanced Scorecard includes measures that act as strong proxies for success—those that are specific, meaningful, and feasible to track. Importantly, many of these indicators are externally validated. That is, they reflect not only our internal performance, but how others experience the value of our work: whether program participants and partners report satisfaction with service quality, whether country teams find global support responsive and helpful, and whether external audiences engage with our message. We are committed to ensuring our *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy is working not just because we believe it is, but because the people and communities we serve say it is.

Financial Objectives and Investments

Helen Keller's *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy will prioritize financial resilience and sustainability. Achieving our ambitions requires more than just good ideas. It depends on having the resources and financial agility to invest in what matters most, adapt to changing realities, and sustain our impact over time.

Our Strategic Financial Objectives will:

- Grow flexible funding to drive our agenda, not a donor's.

- Diversify our revenue streams and grow the number of active donors to reduce reliance on any single funder, thereby reducing risk.
- Engage new donors across philanthropic, multilateral, corporate, and regional spaces.
- Maintain or even slightly grow our unrestricted cash reserves.
- Increase efficiency across core operations so that a higher proportion of our funding goes directly to programming and the people and communities we serve.

Together, these objectives support a resilient financial foundation that enables programmatic reach, supports our people, and builds long-term organizational strength.

This strategy includes targeted investments in programs, systems, staffing, and innovation critical for delivering results and unlocking future growth. See our annexes for additional details, including:

- FY2026 operating budget
- Multi-year financial projections through FY2028
- Investments in strategic investments

Learning

We are committed to testing and learning through the *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy. Our change approach includes:

- Change management and internal communications
- Feedback loops with country and global teams
- Evaluation of initiatives and operating model shifts
- Transparent documentation of best practices and lessons learned (i.e., what is working and what is not)

We will learn to be more agile, data-informed, and adaptive. We are committed to continuous learning, regular review, and course correction without having to “start over” every three years.

Managing Risk

In an increasingly volatile global environment, Helen Keller will stay agile, responsive, and focused on results. Our *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy is not a static plan; it will evolve as the world changes, and we learn what works.

To ensure we stay on track, we will conduct quarterly strategy reviews to assess progress against our Balanced Scorecard, identify emerging risks and dependencies, and update priorities and reallocate resources. This approach allows for timely pivots and ensures our efforts remain aligned with the changing landscape. By becoming more deeply embedded at the local level, we can more quickly identify emerging changes and respond nimbly, thanks to strong management systems.

The *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy anticipates significant disruptions, many of which are already unfolding. The US Government's foreign policy shifts resulted in national governments redirecting resources toward case management over preventative programs, emphasizing drug and supply availability rather than continuous capacity building. We are already facing extreme weather that blocks us from delivering cataract surgeries, conflicts that prevent medicines from reaching community health centers, outbreaks of disease and illness, financial setbacks, and skyrocketing inflation and food prices in many of our countries of operation. The dual crises of climate and conflict pose a devastating risk in many countries we serve.

To respond to these constant, increasing, and emergent risks, we maintain clear escalation protocols, reforecast our budget at midyear, and continue to strengthen risk management practices across the organization.

If hard choices are required, leaders will prioritize the most feasible and high-impact goals, informed by the best available data and the voices of our country teams and partners, and let go of the rest.

Conclusion: Helen Keller is Ready

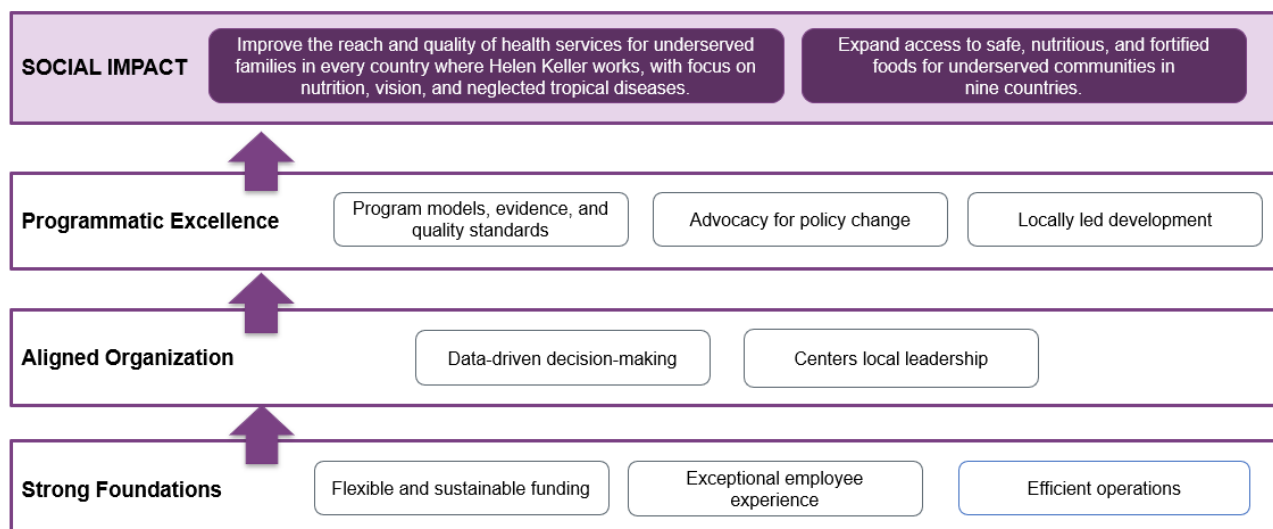
We stand at a pivotal moment. The *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy is not about adjusting to loss or reacting to crisis—it is about affirming our mission, moving forward with clarity in a changing environment, supporting local leaders in driving our ability to deliver, and the diverse funding that underpins our success.

Guided by Helen's fierce optimism and the voices of our staff, we are building a stronger, more focused, more impactful, and more inclusive organization. One that shows up where people are systematically being left out of good health. One that delivers services with integrity and purpose. And one that has proven itself trustworthy and capable of serving the children, families, and communities who count on us.

The Helen Keller Board of Trustees, staff, leaders, and donors have helped shape this *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy. Thousands more generous people, institutions, partners, research organizations, peer humanitarian actors, and governments have worked with us to deliver impact for millions of children and families. Helen's rallying cry is perhaps more potent than ever: **"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."** We are fortified and ready.

Annexes

Strategy Map



Balanced Scorecard

Strategy	Objectives	Measures	Baseline	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028
Programmatic Excellence	1) Strengthen program models, quality standards, and evidence base.	% of programs meeting defined quality benchmarks	n/a	Baseline established	20%	50%
		% participant satisfaction with program quality	n/a	Baseline established	20%	50%
		# of staff-authored publications in scientific journals	25 (FY24)	20	25	30
	2) Advocate to drive policy change at the national, regional, and global level.	# of relevant prestigious technical bodies on which Helen Keller staff serve	127 (FY24)	110	115	120
		# of new policy commitments secured from national/regional/global decision-makers due to Helen Keller's advocacy	n/a	4 (2 per region)	4 (2 per region)	4 (2 per region)
	3) Advance locally led development.	% projects for which a majority of partners feel Helen Keller has incorporated locally led approaches	n/a	Baseline established	+10%	+10%
Aligned Organization	6) Make program countries the operational center of the organization.	% budget sub-awarded to local partners (e.g. government, civil society and private sector partners)	Establish in Q1	Baseline maintained	35%	40%
	7) Improve evidence-based decision-making.	% local leadership satisfaction with global support / shared services	n/a	Baseline est. (Net Promoter Score)	+10%	40 NPS
Strong Foundations	4) Increase flexible funding.	# or % of projects using real-time dashboards or data tools for decision-making	n/a	Baseline established	60%	80%
		% increase in flexible funding year over year (unrestricted, loosely restricted, replacement restricted)	n/a	Baseline established	+10%	+15% baseline
	5) Diversify our donor base.	# of months of cash reserves without donor restrictions as of end of Fiscal Year	6 (FY25 est.)	6 months	7 months	8 months
		% increase in # of active donors Year-over-Year	48,910 (FY24)	+2% over baseline	+5%	+5%
		# of new donors + prospects identified and engaged (institutional, corporate, philanthropic, regional)	256 (FY24)	270 new \$1K+ donors	285	300
	8) Increase efficiency in service of our mission.	% program efficiency ratio	81% (FY24)	81%	83%	85%
	9) Deliver an exceptional employee experience.	% employee engagement	91% (FY24)	80%	85%	91%
		% managers rated as effective (per engagement and pulse survey)	85% (FY24)	80%	85%	85%

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

Revenue

Program Revenue		\$93,591,608
Direct Costs	\$81,504,168	
Indirect Costs	\$12,087,440	
Contributions - Unrestricted		\$9,815,000

Total Revenue	\$103,406,608
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Expenses

Program Expenses	\$81,504,168
Fundraising and Special Events	\$5,695,043
Management	\$14,893,447
Unrestricted	\$2,735,061

Total Expenses	\$104,827,719
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Operational Result	(\$1,421,111)	[A]
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Helen's Fund & UNR for Approval

Helen's Fund (already approved)

Helen Fund - Regular Programs	\$252,960
Helen Fund - Strategic Initiative A & B	\$472,475

Total Helen's Fund	\$725,435
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UNR for approval

Accruals for personnel costs	\$200,000
Strategic Initiative C	\$499,148

Total UNR for approval	\$699,148
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Total Helen's Fund & UNR for approval	\$1,424,583	[B]
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FY2026 Net Result	\$3,472	[A + B]
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FY2026–2028 Projections and Assumptions

		Scenario 1		Scenario 2		Scenario 3	
Financial Projections		Assumptions		Assumptions		Assumptions	
	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2027	FY2028	FY2027	FY2028
Revenue Programs (Direct Costs)	81,504,163	86,487,395	66,260,996	90,487,395	70,260,996	106,737,395	93,160,996
Committed	69,545,784	21,137,395	4,410,996	21,137,395	4,410,996	21,137,395	4,410,996
Projected Pipeline	6,958,379	21,000,000	21,000,000	21,000,000	21,000,000	21,000,000	21,000,000
Placeholder	5,000,000	44,350,000	40,850,000	48,350,000	44,850,000	64,600,000	67,750,000
Revenue Programs (Indirect Costs)	12,087,440	10,192,192	5,719,926	10,926,287	6,205,812	13,098,563	9,924,148
Unrestricted Income	\$9,815,000	10,502,050	11,237,194	10,796,500	12,415,975	10,992,800	12,971,504
Total Revenue	103,406,603	107,181,638	83,218,116	112,210,183	88,882,783	130,828,758	116,056,647
Expenses General Management	14,893,447	11,505,188	5,332,655	13,039,213	6,043,675	15,800,458	10,578,407
Regular General Management	13,921,825	10,305,188	4,132,655	11,839,213	4,843,675	14,600,458	9,378,407
Strategic Initiative D, E, F	971,622	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000
Expenses UNR	2,735,061	2,112,835	979,299	2,394,546	1,109,872	1,831,123	1,942,639
Regular UNR Expenses	1,981,355	1,312,835	179,299	1,594,546	309,872	1,031,123	1,142,639
Strategic Initiative A, B, C	753,706	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000
Expenses Fundraising	5,695,043	6,041,871	6,409,821	6,100,530	6,534,887	6,217,848	6,788,646
Expenses Programs	81,504,163	86,487,395	66,260,996	90,487,395	70,260,996	106,737,395	93,160,996
Total Expenses	104,827,713	106,147,288	78,982,770	112,021,684	83,949,430	130,586,824	112,470,687
Revenue less Expenses	(1,421,111)	1,034,349	4,235,346	188,499	4,933,353	241,934	3,585,961
Helen's Fund & UNR for Approval	1,424,583						
Net Result	3,472						
Strategic Initiatives	1,725,328	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Overhead	17.68%	12.99%	7.93%	14.04%	8.47%	14.55%	11.12%
Program Efficiency	80.36%	83.47%	85.13%	82.91%	85.02%	83.14%	84.56%

Definitions and Assumptions:

- **Revenue Projections:**

- **Committed:** Includes direct costs budgeted in signed contracts to be executed in FY2026, FY2027, and FY2028. The same amounts are considered in all scenarios.
- **Projected Pipeline:** Considers two, three-year initiatives under Transforming Lives Through Nutrition and GiveWell. The same amounts are considered in all scenarios.
- **Placeholder:** Projections for FY2027–2028 are centered around maintaining and deepening our relationships with current key donors (see additional details below). In terms of estimates, Scenario 1 presents funding from current key donors at their current annual level. Notably, this includes The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at \$20.7 million and GiveWell at \$31 million for FY2027 and \$21.7 million and \$31 million for FY2028, which is the bulk of our projected and placeholder totals. Scenario 2 projects funding from key donors at current levels but includes potential awards for Helen Keller Europe (\$1 million) and a general placeholder line for \$3 million. Finally, Scenario 3 projects growth figures from all key donors plus funding from new sources.
- **Indirect Cost Revenue:** Estimates are based on direct cost projections and donors' overhead rates or cost recovery agreements linked to annual actual rates.
- **Unrestricted Income:** Projections consider prior results, uncertainty in the donor environment, and possibilities for growth across all scenarios.

- **Expenses**

- **General Management:** Given the reduction in active projects, the need for significant placeholders, and attention to program efficiency ratio goals (FY2027= 83% and FY2028= 85%), management expenses must be reduced. While Scenarios 1 and 2 meet program efficiency targets, they also show important and difficult management reductions. Alternatively, Scenario 3 shows better projections for direct costs in FY2027, enabling a slight increase in management costs; however, decreases in program costs in FY2028 require reduced management expenses.
- **UNR Expenses:** Typically, UNR follows direct cost trends. Thus, in Scenarios 1 and 2, UNR expenses show the same reduction rates as program costs. In Scenario 3, UNR expenses are aggressively contained to ensure a positive bottom line in FY2027; a slight increase is projected in FY2028.
- **Fundraising Expenses:** To support targets in unrestricted revenue, fundraising expenses will increase 3%, 4%, and 6% in Scenarios 1, 2, and 3, respectively.
- **Program Expenses:** This cost category mirrors estimates for revenue for direct costs in all scenarios.
- **Inflation:** The consumer price index rates are estimated at 3% for FY2027 and FY2028. Inflation applies to all cost categories, including personnel, services, travel, supplies, etc.

Rationale for Revenue Assumptions:

Programs Revenue

Our projections for FY2027–2028 are centered around 1) maintaining and deepening our relationships with current key donors: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, GiveWell, New York City Department of Education, GIZ (German Society for International Cooperation), Global Affairs Canada, and the Light Foundation; and 2) on our efforts to target funding from new sources, such as GiveWell for non-vitamin-A supplementation activities, CIFF (Children’s Investment Fund Foundation), and KFW (the German Development Bank).

Within the worst-case scenario, we have presented funding from current key donors at their present annual level. In our conservative scenario, we have again projected funding from key donors at current levels but included potential awards for Helen Keller Europe (\$1 million) and a general placeholder line for \$3 million. Finally, in the growth scenario, we have projected growth figures from all key donors and funding from new sources.

Unrestricted Income (Philanthropy)

We project a healthy increase in unrestricted philanthropy. Here are four comparisons.

- **Scenario 0: Baseline of US Philanthropy**

This chart shows the 1.9% growth in the US among all nonprofits, as reported by 2023 Giving USA, Lilly School of Philanthropy, University of Indiana.

- **Scenario 1: Helen Keller Conservative Baseline**

We used our own unrestricted growth patterns as the basis. Through our *Accelerating Unrestricted Growth Strategy*, FY2021–2026, we achieved the following growth rates:

- FY2021–FY2022 = 11.94%
- FY2022–FY2023 = 30.56%
- FY2023–FY2024 = 6.94%
- FY2024–FY2025 = 9.14% (based on the likely projection of reaching \$9.5M by June 30, 2025).

The simple average growth rate for these years is 14.64%. However, in this economic climate, and in deference to the US nonprofit trends of slowing philanthropy growth rates, we removed the outlier year of 30.56%, which provides a growth rate of 9.34% in this modified average.

Then, we contemplated the winds in our environment. We have been tracking the trend of larger gifts and shrinking donor bases. We also see a recession cloud hovering and projections of consumer confidence waning. Philanthropy often reflects consumer confidence indices. Thus, we take an even more conservative look, projecting a baseline to reflect our lowest increase during the *Accelerating Growth Strategy*: FY2023–FY2024 of 7%. This establishes our new baseline growth rate used in Scenario 1.

The following scenarios are based on Helen Keller's results. They start with the formal projection for FY2026, which has been submitted for budget approval: \$9.8 million, a gentle approximately 3% increase over likely FY2025 actuals.

- **Scenario 2: Sustained Growth**

Scenario 2 assumes that growth continues apace with the three drivers of unrestricted growth that we have demonstrated during the *Accelerating Unrestricted Growth Strategy*: major gifts, legacy gifts, and top core donors' gifts. We start gently in FY2026 with 3% growth, and as we shift gears, reshape the team, hire new staff capabilities and roles, and launch our investment case to retain more new donors and old friends alike, we project increased growth rates.

The new *Leading Locally, Fortifying Futures* strategy adds a strategic initiative for Fundraising and Visibility and two investment cases for 1) a new donor retention strategy and 2) a new prospecting and acquisition strategy, which is targeted to start properly in January 2026.

The donor retention efforts will launch as soon as our recruitment legs can carry us. We have been tracking the rising trend of new donors. About a third of our active donors have been new in recent years. We will put staff and concerted activities in place to retain more new donors and old friends. Our strategy also will "upgrade" a nice proportion of donors, meaning more of our donors will give 10% more year over year.

In the second half of FY2026, assuming investment case #2 is approved, we will launch a new strand of work: to motivate a higher proportion of identified major donor prospects within our own database to give at the major gifts level and to acquire promising new, diversified donors at all levels.

We assume the prospecting and acquisition efforts will reach their stride by FY2027. Therefore, by FY2027, we will start to see a lift, again driven by more major donors, and we will project an increase of 10%. Then, by FY2028, both our donor retention and prospecting and acquisition strategies are humming along, and we anticipate a healthy 15% growth rate. This is ambitious and achievable, given the results we have seen in the last four years of the *Accelerating Unrestricted Growth Strategy*.

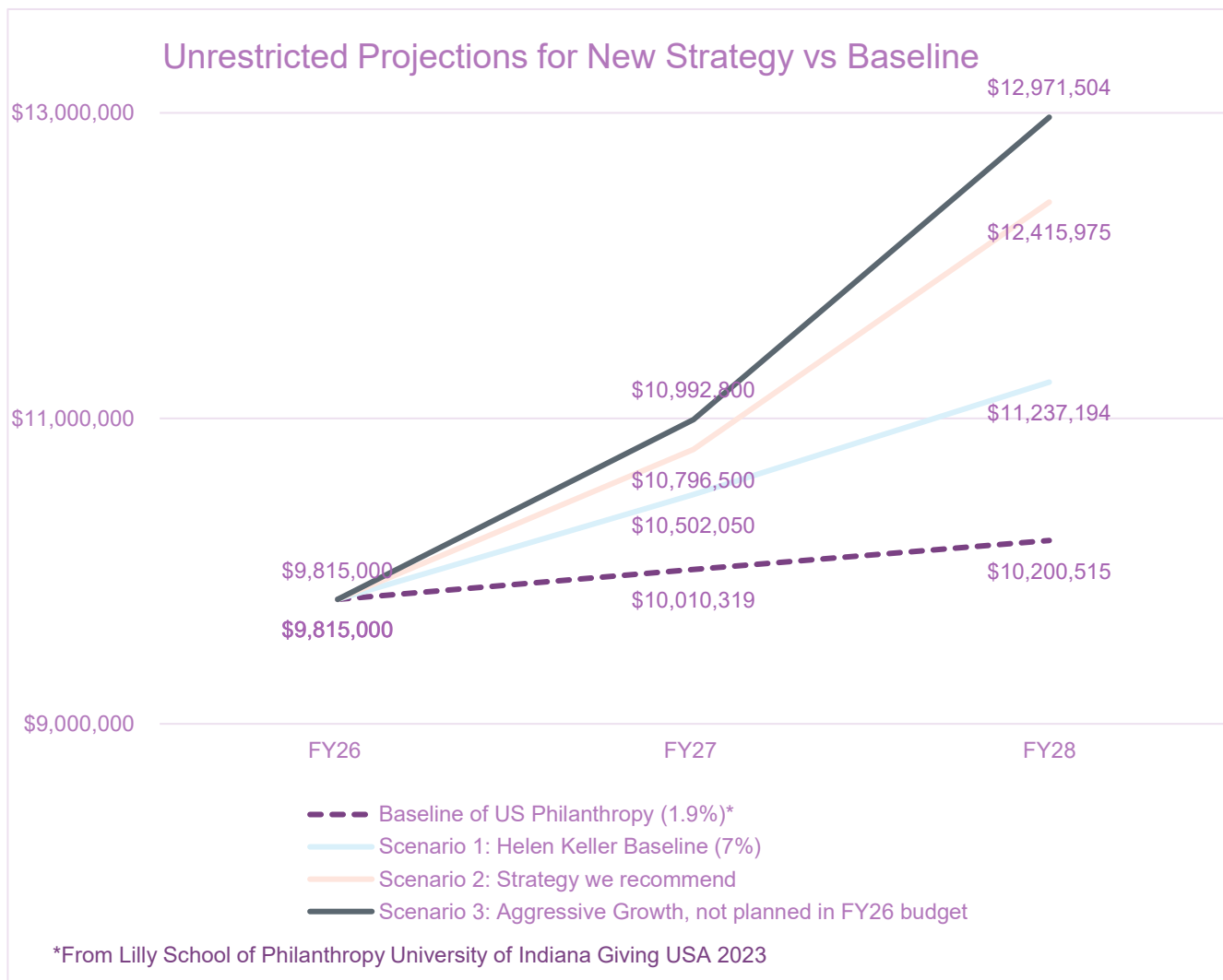
- **Scenario 3: Aggressive Growth**

We did not budget for this scenario, as it would take greater resources than our current budget allows. However, we would love to launch such an ambitious growth strategy.

The main change in this scenario would be a far more robust investment case #2 for prospecting and acquisition. In Scenario 2, our investment case #2 proposes a single Prospecting Manager and investments in a consultant, marketing, and advertising, all of which will focus on two elements: 1) engaging the most promising major donor prospects identified within our own database; and 2) identifying promising donor prospects and testing messages and methods to acquire new, younger, more diverse

donors. In Scenario 3, we would vastly increase this investment and have a team working on the most promising prospective donors, especially those identified within our database. They would need a team of three prospecting officers and potentially additional events, press, and travel.

This scenario could propel us to 15% growth or more for FY2027 and FY2028, assuming we launch in January 2026. If we launched later, the numbers would go down, as prospecting takes at a minimum of 15 months to start yielding results. For Helen Keller, 15% percent growth or better is not out of the question. We have done as well and better in our *Accelerating Growth Strategy*, but this would take investments beyond the appetite and capability we have today.



Strategic Initiative Investments and Funding Sources in FY2026

Strategic Initiative A: Health Services Delivery	Strategic Initiative B: Food Fortification	Strategic Initiative C: Fundraising and Visibility	Strategic Initiative D: Operating Model and Organization Design	Strategic Initiative E: Systems and Applications	Strategic Initiative F: Employee Experience	
10000-09 - (A) Helen's Fund - Strategic Initiative	10000-19 - (B) Helen's Fund - Strategic Initiative	10000-15 - (C) Unrestricted - Strategic Initiative	X0002-02 - (D) General Management - Strategic Initiative	X0002-03 - (E) General Management - Strategic Initiative	X0002-04 - (F) General Management - Strategic Initiative	
\$ 170,938	\$ 301,537	\$ 499,148	\$ 275,684	\$ 268,383	\$ 209,639	TOTAL \$1,725,328

In FY2026, Helen Keller will invest approximately \$1.7 million across our six Strategic Initiatives designed to strengthen programs, fundraising capabilities, infrastructure, and employee experience. These investments represent our commitment to building the internal capabilities and external partnerships needed to drive progress on our two organizational impact goals. Each initiative has a clear Year 1 work plan, focused on foundational efforts such as:

- Developing our updated, integrated approach to program quality, including program standards and models, evidence, and policy agenda (Health Services Delivery).
- Designing our innovative approach to large-scale food fortification and fortified processed complementary foods with priority countries (Food Fortification).
- Defining and prioritizing 5–10 target donor and prospect audiences, with personas, methodologies to reach them, and related publication and conference targets (Fundraising and Visibility).
- Streamlining core processes and strengthening the design and delivery of global support functions to improve effectiveness and efficiency (Operating Model and Organization Design).
- Creating a prioritized roadmap of software application needs and launching work to improve data systems, platforms, and information technology architecture to increase efficiency and integration (Systems).
- Enhancing the employee experience through a new global compensation philosophy, standardized onboarding, aligned performance management, and foundational policy updates (Employee Experience).

While these efforts are designed to yield returns over the three-year strategy period, we anticipate early signs of progress by the end of FY2026. We will review each initiative's progress and outcomes annually, with updated investment decisions made each year based on performance, learning, and evolving priorities. Currently, we project dedicating approximately \$2 million annually to strategic initiative work over the three-year period. This has been incorporated into our FY2026–2028 financial model and reflects our intention to balance ambition with affordability and impact.

References

i Estimated Global Burden Across Helen Keller Program Areas

Domain	Indicator	Population Affected	Source
Vision	People living with avoidable sight loss due to a lack of access to eye care	1.1 billion	IAPB & WHO. World Report on Vision . 2019.
Neglected Tropical Diseases	People requiring preventive or treatment services	1.495 billion	WHO. NTD Road Map 2021–2030 . 2024 update.
Nutrition – Affordability	People unable to afford a healthy diet	2.826 billion	FAO et al. State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World . 2024.
Nutrition – Micronutrient Deficiency	Women of reproductive age and children under 5 with ≥ 1 nutrient deficiency	1.572 billion (1.2 billion women and 372 million children)	Stevens et al. Lancet Global Health . 2022.
Nutrition – Growth Failure	Children under 5 affected by stunting or wasting	150.2 million stunted and 42.8 million wasted	UNICEF/WHO/World Bank. Joint Malnutrition Estimates . 2024.

Important Notes on Overlap

- Totals are not meant to be summed. This is a composite view of intersecting vulnerabilities, not a master headcount.
- There is a high likelihood of double-counting across nutrition figures (e.g., a stunted child is probably also micronutrient deficient and food-insecure).
- Women of reproductive age with deficiencies may also fall into the affordability statistics.
- Neglected tropical disease and nutrition burdens intersect heavily in the same geographies and households.

ii [How Nonprofits Can Power Innovation Beyond Their Core Programs | Bridgespan](#)

iii See the World Health Organization's 2010 handbook on Health Systems and indicators, which includes a section on Health Services Delivery: [9789241564052-eng.pdf](#)