



# *Resilience*

DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

**2020** ANNUAL REPORT





## our mission

to promote health and disease prevention in underserved and impoverished areas through holistic community empowerment and by working predominantly with local women and youth.

## LETTER FROM THE TEAM

As the whole world was shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 truly turned out to be a year like no other we had seen in several generations – both in terms of the death toll and the restrictions that were put in place to protect us all and save lives. Like every person and institution around the world, Maji Safi Group's work was deeply affected by COVID-19, and we faced situations we had never experienced before. On the other hand, the pandemic put MSG in a unique position because disease prevention and hygiene education suddenly became the talk of the world, and we became one of the most important players in the public health response to the virus in the Rorya District of Tanzania. Suddenly, hand washing and public health received the attention we have been recommending for years, and everyone was trying to figure out how to adapt to the new normal and keep each other safe.

If we learned anything in 2020, it is that Maji Safi Group is a resilient organization with a loyal and dedicated group of supporters who stood by us through all the personal challenges they experienced due to the pandemic. Despite difficult circumstances in Tanzania and for the first time not having any foreign directors there, we still thrived as our management team stepped up to the plate and provided their neighbors and fellow citizens with the life-saving education Maji Safi Group is known for. Government health authorities also turned to MSG for collaboration to help boost their prevention messaging and to make sure Tanzanians were knowledgeable about the disease.

After several months of rapid changes within the organization, MSG was able to steady our ship and inarguably have our best year yet! We reached more participants in the Mara Region than ever before, and we expanded our social media reach to tens of millions of people in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. Additionally, our board of directors and leadership team laid the foundation for a new strategic plan that we will be implementing between 2021 and 2025. We are now very excited to look for new ways to get our health education to the masses and find more sustainable ways to put Community Health Educators in as many villages as possible through income-generating activities.

We hope you will take the time to read about all the extraordinary things our team accomplished on the front lines in 2020 and run with us as we continue to move onwards and upwards along the path guided by MSG's new strategic plan. Together, we can change the health of millions of people and be more prepared for public health emergencies for generations to come. Even another pandemic!

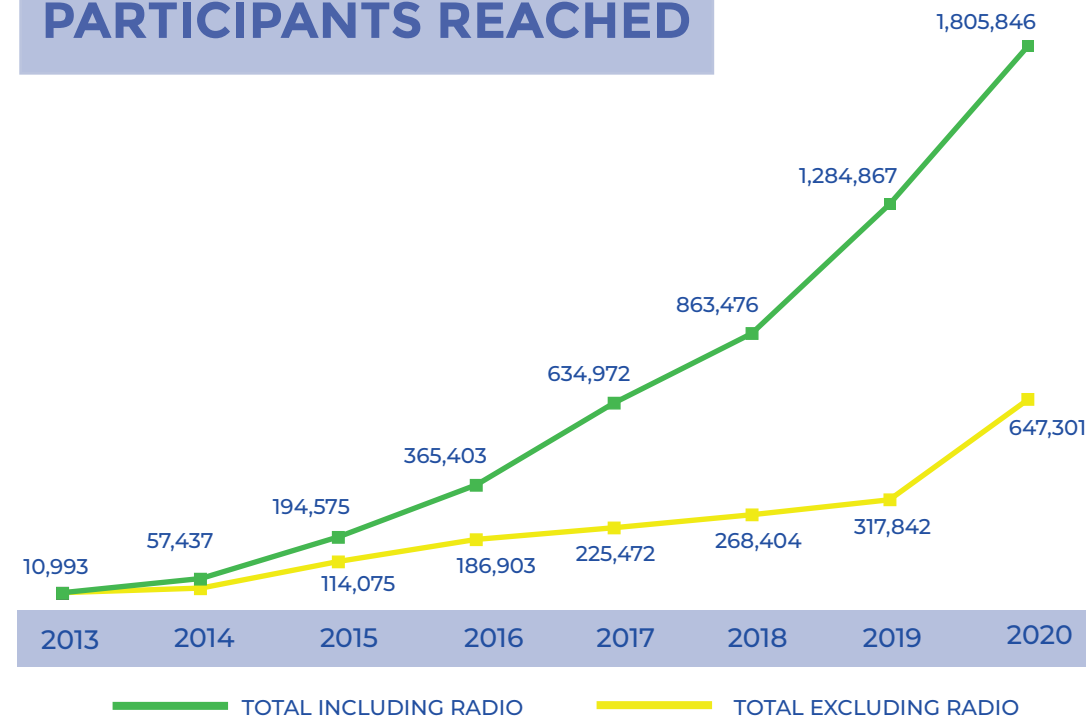
*maji safi group*



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Despite 2020 being a devastating and traumatic year, Maji Safi Group was able to reach more people than ever before due to our dedicated and resilient staff and the organization's ability to pivot the design and delivery of our programs. The graph below and on the following page show this trend and highlight that the organization is close to having reached two million direct program participants. We are especially proud of our role in disseminating information about COVID-19, thereby helping to slow down the spread of the virus in rural areas of the Mara Region of Tanzania and beyond.

### TOTAL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS REACHED



## 2020 highlights

# 30+

MARKETS  
VISITED BY  
COMMUNITY  
HEALTH  
EDUCATORS  
OVER **71** DAYS  
AVERAGING **56**  
PEOPLE PER DAY



# 686

WASH-  
RELATED  
LESSONS IN  
THE FORM OF  
A PHONE CALL  
OR A TEXT  
MESSAGE





# 2020 highlights

## 1,737

GIRLS REACHED WITH  
MENSTRUAL HYGIENE  
MANAGEMENT  
EDUCATION THROUGH  
FEMALE HYGIENE HEALTH  
CLUBS IN SCHOOLS

## 130

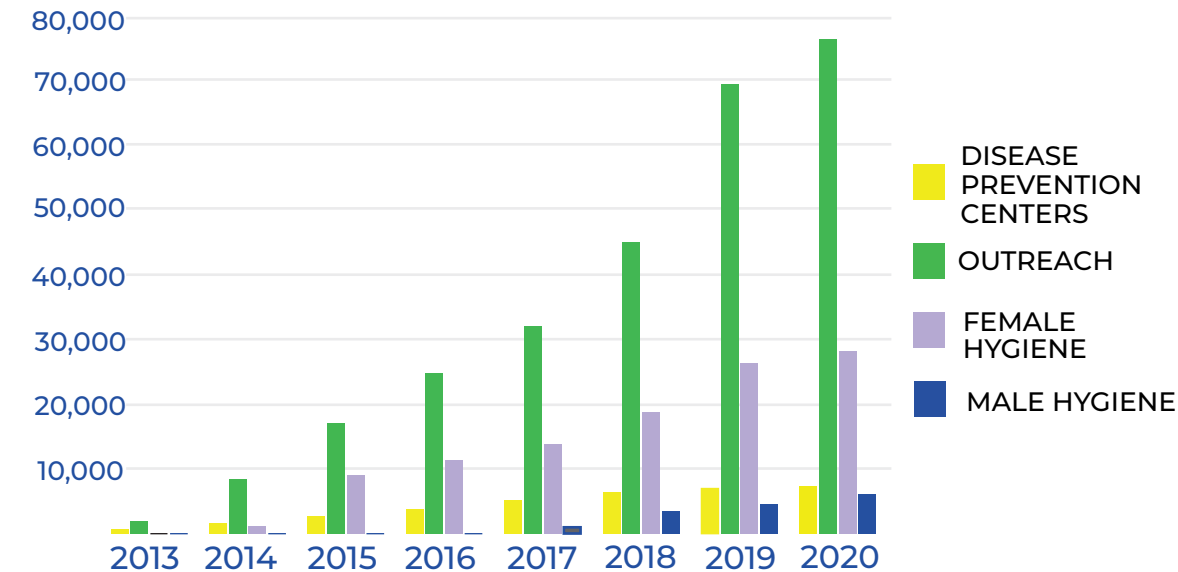
WERE NEW MEMBERS

## 41+ MILLION

REACHED THROUGH OUR  
EAST AFRICA COVID-19  
RESPONSE



## PROGRAM GROWTH



## COVID-19 SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSE

During 2020, MSG conducted its largest Social Media Campaign ever, providing Tanzanians and other East Africans with quality and factual education about COVID-19. This campaign proved to us what a powerful tool social media can be. While spending under \$10,000, we reached 41,876,915 viewers through our posts and saw great engagement!

@majisafigroup



**3,619,461**  
TOTAL CONSUMERS

**15,401,932**  
TOTAL VIDEO VIEWS

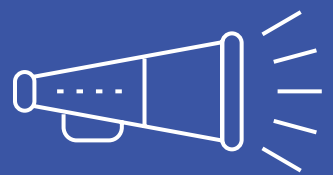
**125,000**  
TOTAL GROWTH  
IN SOCIAL MEDIA  
FOLLOWING



## LOCAL COVID-19 RESPONSE

As COVID-19 spread across the world in early 2020, MSG responded immediately. With eight years of experience in disease prevention, behavioral change, and rapid response to local disease outbreaks, we knew we could play a crucial role in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in rural areas of Tanzania. To adapt to teaching about a novel respiratory disease, we followed guidance from the World Health Organization and Tanzanian Ministry of Health when educating our Community Health Educators. We quickly developed an educational pamphlet on COVID-19 with strong consideration given to local context and languages. This tool was in high demand as we distributed the pamphlets to homes, schools, health care facilities, and markets.

In collaboration with the District Medical Office, MSG then co-hosted a two-day workshop for all 123 front line health workers in the Rorya District to inform them about government protocol during the pandemic. Front line workers learned about the disease and the proper ways to protect themselves and others when receiving a suspected COVID-19 patient. Due to safety concerns for staff and participants, MSG was unable to provide our normal face-to-face health education, so we recorded a five-minute public health announcement, hooked loudspeakers on top of our Land Cruiser, and hit the road. We reached over 100 village centers in the Rorya District and gave out over 5,400 educational handouts after playing the PSA in multiple languages.



**100+**

VILLAGE CENTERS REACHED

**5,400+**

HANDOUTS DISTRIBUTED







**2 STATIONS**  
**38 DISTRICTS**  
**5 REGIONS**  
**508,800 PEOPLE**

reached with  
**life-saving**  
education

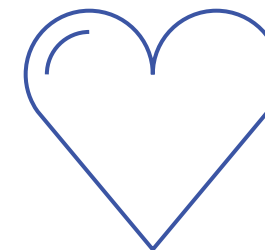
## REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

### COVID-19 RESPONSE

Our efforts did not stop there! Given the scale of the global pandemic and to help public health stakeholders come together in Tanzania, MSG also brought our life-saving education about disease prevention and proper hygiene to social media. In collaboration with the Tanzanian Ministry of Health's Hygiene Promotion Section and the National Sanitation Campaign, MSG ran a six-week social media campaign that reached more than 41,000,000 viewers, received 3,500,000 engagements (likes, comments, and shares), and had over 15,400,000 people view our videos. These fun, factual, and engaging posts truly brought disease prevention education to large numbers of people and helped vulnerable people protect themselves.

In addition to our efforts on social media, MSG broadcast radio shows at two regional radio stations, Sachita FM and Bunda FM. These two stations cover five regions and 38 districts in Tanzania with an estimated population of approximately seven million people. In collaboration with the Mara Regional Medical Office, our shows offered information about the virus and how to prevent its spread, along with what to do if a household member was suspected of having COVID-19. Our shows also gave listeners the opportunity to ask questions during Q&A sessions.

MSG's versatile model was very well suited to responding to the pandemic, and our close relationship with the government helped us be impactful on a local, national, and international level as our information reached Swahili speakers throughout East Africa. Even though the face-to-face education our Community Health Educators usually capitalize on was shut down for a while, we responded with force and impacted millions of lives.



Our thoughts and condolences go out to those who have been severely affected by COVID-19 or lost loved ones.



PERIODS DO NOT STOP

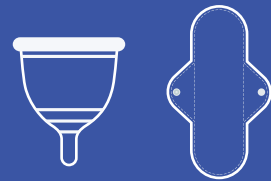
DURING A PANDEMIC

MSG's Female Hygiene Program remained our largest program despite the pandemic disrupting it at different times of the year. By spreading awareness and knowledge in the community, especially among girls and their guardians, teachers, and school officials, MSG empowers girls to proudly and safely manage their menstruation, creates access to pads (disposable and reusable) and menstrual cups, and encourages schools to improve toilet facilities that afford girls privacy and access to water. Empowering girls to manage their menstruation – physically and mentally – allows them to reach their academic and professional goals.

With schools closed due to the pandemic, many girls were separated from their support networks and the supplies they normally rely on to safely manage their menstruation. In response, MSG expanded the reach of our Female Hygiene Program, both in person and via social media. Through our existing network of menstrual hygiene ambassadors, our health clubs at primary and secondary schools, and the power of Information Communication Technology (ICT), we provided material, emotional, and educational support.

We continued to expand our reach across the Rorya District, while focusing on opening new Female Hygiene Health Clubs at one primary and three secondary schools. We also implemented the second year of our grant from Dining for Women (now Together Women Rise), focusing on providing reusable menstrual products, including menstrual cups. This intervention proved to be especially timely as women did not have their normal access to buying disposable pads during the pandemic.

2,100



MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTED





## BREAKING THE SILENCE

## SURROUNDING MENSTRUATION

### SCHOOL PROGRAMS FEMALE & MALE HEALTH CLUBS

Once MSG Community Health Educators (CHEs) have taught our Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) curriculum at a school, we support students, teachers, and parents in taking charge of the effort to improve school WASH through establishing a Female Hygiene Health Club. The club takes the lead in improving MHM conditions and continuing the MSG education through peer-to-peer teaching.

Including boys and men in the conversation about MHM and reproductive health remained a priority, so we also partnered with our Male Hygiene Health Clubs to teach about puberty, female and male hygiene, MHM, respecting women, etc. Painting murals at school walls to make information a lasting resource for students and the general community was also a priority in 2020.

### COMMUNITY EVENTS

Often, the taboos that surround menstruation come from a lack of information and open community discussion. From experience, MSG has found that bringing people together at large community events to learn about and discuss female health is one of the most effective ways to break the silence surrounding menstruation. MSG's community events often involve song, dance, and dramas that entertain and teach participants to be proud of menstruating, rather than letting it be a barrier to girls and women reaching their dreams. Through the power of art, young women who participate in MSG's programs become community leaders who tell the story of why they will not let cultural taboos around menstruation hold them back.

## MHM-FOCUSED RADIO SHOWS

Menstrual Hygiene Management is not just a women's issue, so it is important to involve the whole community to create a supportive environment for women. Radio shows is one of the best ways MSG promotes MHM and continues to break the silence around menstruation. Using the radio to bring awareness and knowledge around menstruation and the important role it plays in the development of healthy and productive women is ideal because the information reaches people in private settings. This allows the listeners to digest the content without social pressure and to hear their peers' thoughts during the Q&A section of the program.

## THE TANZANIAN MHM COALITION

Maji Safi Group is a founding member of the Tanzanian Menstrual Hygiene Management Task Force, a coalition of a wide variety of Tanzanian governmental, non-governmental, and civil society organizations working to improve MHM in Tanzania. Together, we help influence public policy to facilitate systemic change. In 2020, MSG partnered with other members of the coalition to ensure that women's support networks continued during the pandemic and menstruation remained a community talking point through the first nation-wide research study of MHM on school-aged girls in Tanzania.







## HOTLINE & RADIO SHOWS

Radio shows are still a very important mode of communication in Tanzania, especially in rural areas like the Mara Region. MSG's radio shows offer lessons focused on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), and gender issues, followed by a Q&A session.

During the pandemic, our radio shows and hotline communication became key to our response and continued to prove a highly effective and economical way to disseminate information about health and disease prevention. These two programs enabled us to educate a large number of people without the risk of exposure to the virus.

Our radio shows continued to expand in 2020. We entered into a new partnership with Bunda FM, the largest radio station in the Mara Region, and continued to work with Sachita FM. MSG reached approximately 508,000 listeners through 29 shows conducted at Sachita FM and Bunda FM. Each show was recorded and subsequently repeated later during the week. In 2020, MSG aired eight WASH-related shows, 17 shows about female hygiene, and four shows to promote COVID-19 prevention measures in the Mara Region.

Our hotline proved to be equally valuable for spreading health education in general and for spreading information about COVID-19 in particular. In 2020, we reached 686 people through our hotline, with 254 receiving three lessons and 205 receiving four or more lessons from one of our Community Health Educators.

**29** RADIO  
SHOWS

8 WASH SHOWS  
17 FEMALE HYGIENE SHOWS  
4 COVID-19 PREVENTION SHOWS

**508,000** LISTENERS



## DISEASE PREVENTION CENTERS

Too often, Tanzanians get sick, go to a health care facility, and get treated, but they never learn what caused their illness. This leads to a vicious cycle of devastating infections and high medical bills. Our Disease Prevention Centers (DPCs) are pop-up information booths that collaborate with seven health care facilities in the Rorya District and offer disease prevention education and resources to staff, patients, and visitors. The most frequently taught lessons are about amoebas, fecal-oral transmission routes, proper hand washing, typhoid, UTIs, water storage and treatment, and food safety.

COVID-19 at times challenged our ability to run our DPCs in-person, but Maji Safi Group diligently continued to make education accessible to health care facilities during the pandemic. When our CHEs could not be there to teach face to face, we instead distributed thousands of educational handouts to help people protect themselves at home. We truly realized that health care facilities are essential to disseminating life-saving education during disease outbreaks.



HEALTH CARE  
FACILITIES ARE  
ESSENTIAL TO  
DISSEMINATING  
LIFE-SAVING  
EDUCATION  
DURING DISEASE  
OUTBREAKS.

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In February, MSG partnered with Mama Project to conduct a health brigade with their 15 health professionals and students from Pennsylvania. Together, we screened and treated 1,200 people in four villages!

NO ONE HAS  
EVER BECOME  
POOR BY GIVING.

- ANNE FRANK



## US ENGAGEMENT

In the US, 2020 was a difficult year for Maji Safi Group's programming and fundraising as COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings and school closures prevented the organization from running read-a-thons, water walks, art workshops, our annual event at eTown Hall, etc. We especially missed working with our Young Global Citizens. For the first time in our organization's history, we were unable to host any practicum students in Tanzania. We did host a virtual practicum student from Washington University in St. Louis who helped with a more in-depth analysis of our five years of health screening data. Our data have proven year after year that MSG program participants have much lower disease rates for amoebiasis, intestinal bilharzia, urogenital bilharzia, and helminthiasis (worms) than community members who have not received our education. Through the in-depth analysis, we also learned that those who were related to MSG's participants or staff had significantly lower odds of testing positive for these four common WASH diseases.

Fortunately, we managed to have our annual Maji Safi Golf-a-thon despite COVID-19. The women from the 18-hole league at Lake Valley Golf Club in Colorado came out in force to play – smiling under their masks. Under sunny skies, 23 women and the MSG President played 698 holes, had 12 birdies, and scored 1,334 Stapleford points! These enthusiastic and tough ladies love golf, and they love helping Maji Safi Group make a difference for the people in rural Tanzania. Our loyal and generous donors came out in force as well, helping us raise over \$50,000!

Despite COVID-19 and the economic uncertainty it entailed, our supporters stood by us! We had over 400 individual donors, received grant funding, and secured a PPP loan. Once again, we entered the new year on solid financial footing.



THANKS TO ALL OF OUR  
DONORS FROM **6** DIFFERENT  
CONTINENTS!



## STEPPING UP TO THE CHALLENGE

### STAFF RESILIENCE

During a time of uncertainty and great need in their communities, our management team members dedicated themselves to providing health education to hundreds of thousands of people. Our 13 wonderful Community Health Educators worked diligently to educate rural communities about protecting themselves and their families from COVID-19. We cannot thank our staff enough for their hard work during the pandemic and for being on the front lines of fighting this deadly virus.

### TANZANIAN LEADERSHIP

Maji Safi Group has always worked hard to recruit talented people who are interested in furthering MSG's nationally recognized work in disease prevention, WASH, and MHM. In 2020, we reached the goal of being led by an all Tanzanian management team.

### NEW TALENT

During the second half of 2020, we were delighted to bring new Tanzanian talent into our organization by hiring Rachel Stephen as our new Director of Operations. Rachel came from Plan International with MHM as her main focus. She takes a system-based approach to leadership and is excited to work with the MSG management team long-term to create programmatic impact and streamline our administrative work. In addition, we brought George Kwilasa on board as our new Development and Evaluation Manager. George has advanced IT skills that he is applying to the organization's process evaluation and impact assessments, as well as data analysis skills for reporting, grant applications, and strategic planning.



Left to Right: Shemaya Okong'o (Assistant Accountant), Pendo Messanga (Accountant), Rachel Stephen (Director of Operations), Anuciata Benasius (Program Manager), Rebeca Oyugi (Female Hygiene Program Manager), George Kwilasa (Development and Evaluation Manager).





## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In 2020, Maji Safi Group continued to focus on empowering individuals and communities to take charge of their personal and public health. Through innovative, interactive, and community-driven programs, we have taught people how to improve their water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) situation to prevent waterborne and other common diseases. Through five years of mass health screening campaigns, we have proven that hygiene education and behavioral change alone can drastically reduce disease rates; we have proven that access to information about Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) and affordable feminine hygiene products empowers girls to feel confident about their bodies and budding sexuality and enables them to stay in school; and we have proven the power of using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to spread good and factual health education to the masses.

Building on our successes, we have created a new five-year strategic plan with four focus areas.



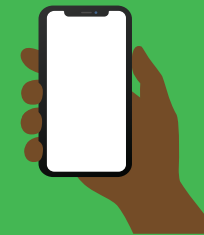
### WASH IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Throughout the developing world, poor WASH conditions in Health Care Facilities (HCFs) is a serious problem, and Tanzania is no exception. Many patients contract new diseases when seeking medical treatment where clean water, good sanitation, proper hygienic practices, adequate environmental cleaning, and proper waste management are sorely missing. Women giving birth and newborn babies are especially at risk of infections. Maji Safi Group will perform a baseline survey of HCFs in the Rorya District and subsequently select 2-3 where we, in cooperation with government and health authorities, will model and fund infrastructural improvements and provide in-depth hygiene education.



### MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT

Through our Female and Male Hygiene Programs, we will continue to empower youths with knowledge about menstruation and reproductive health and access to female hygiene products. It is our goal to work closely with schools as well as government and health authorities to eventually cover all of the Mara Region, and we hope to continue to facilitate systemic change through our prominent role and strong influence in the Tanzanian MHM Coalition.



### INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

We now have many years of experience with spreading health education and fighting disease outbreaks via radio shows, hotlines, social media, public service announcement, etc. Our success with using ICT to teach the masses in East Africa about preventing COVID-19 from spreading encouraged us to further explore this approach. In 2020, we received a generous grant to expand our social media marketing. In the future, MSG also wants to move into interactive games and using apps to teach disease prevention and health education.



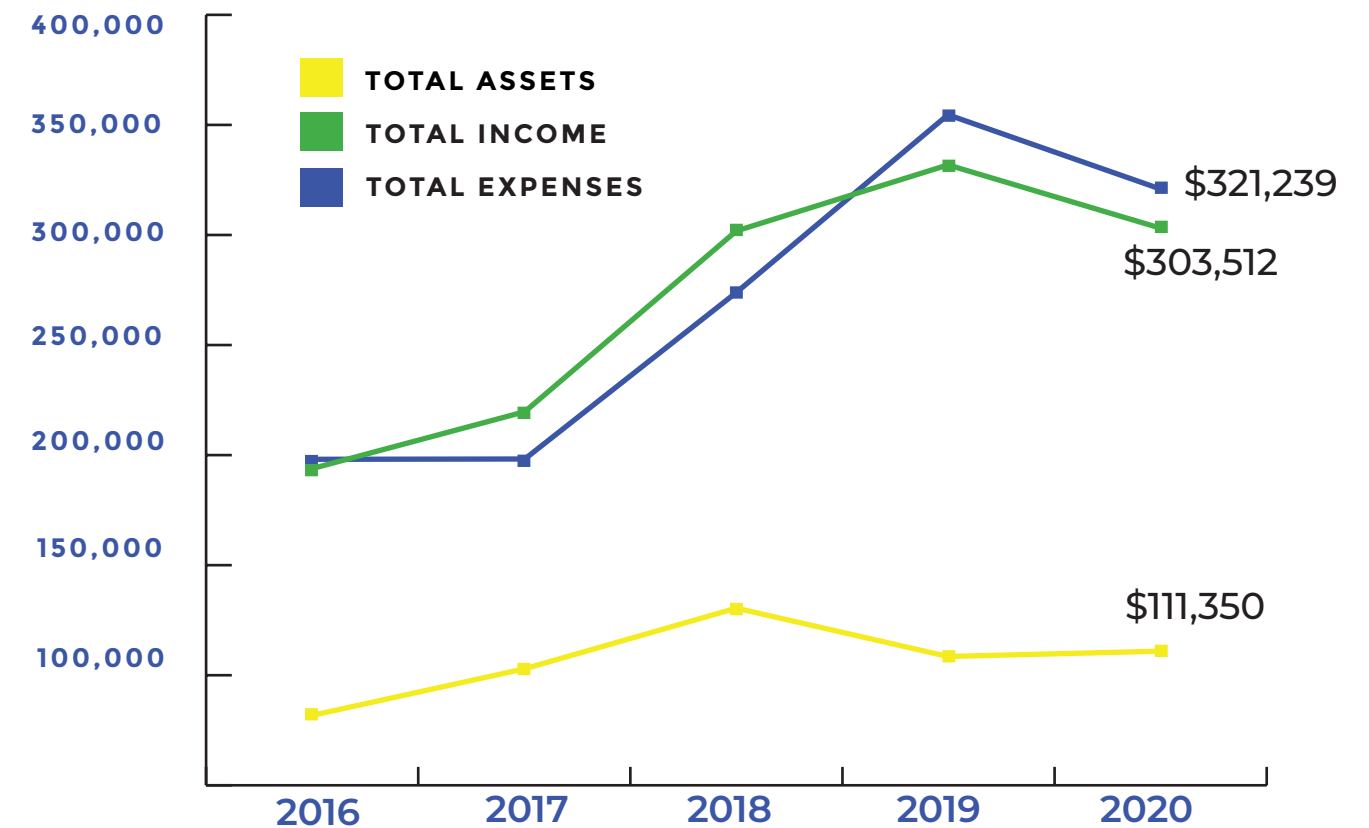
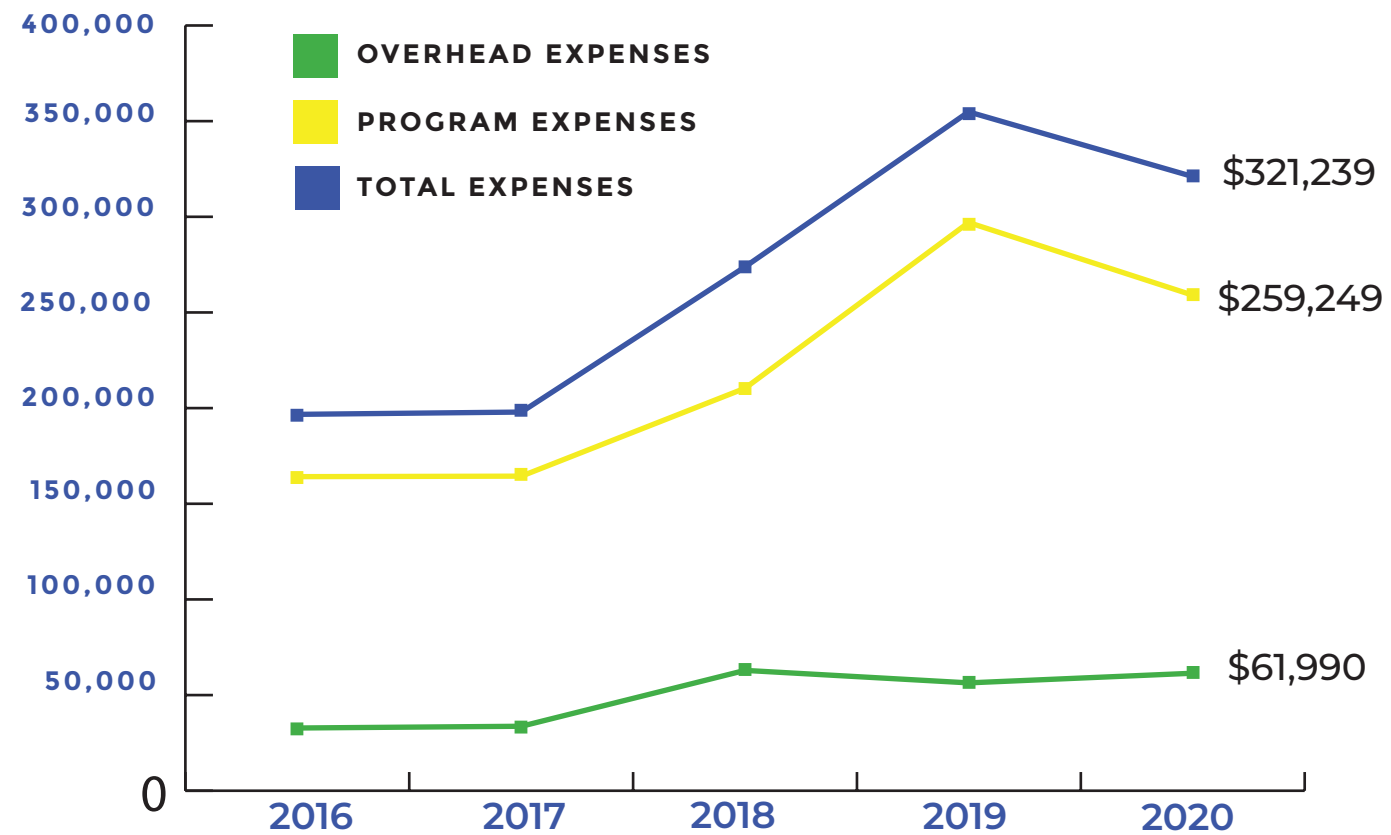
### WASH HUBS

In cooperation with a group of architects, building contractors, and donors based in Colorado, we will build our first WASH Hub to put multiple programs and services under one roof. Our WASH Hubs will serve as community centers that can model boreholes, latrines, good hygiene practices, agricultural training programs, access to modern technology, microfinance loans, etc. We will also focus on creating social enterprise projects to foster systemic solutions and sustainability.



# FINANCIALS

In a year that rocked the financial worlds of individuals, families, and global markets, we are so grateful for all the support that led to a solid fiscal year for MSG. Despite the hardships we all experienced, our dedication to continuing to invest in the health of Tanzanians never wavered. The COVID-19 pandemic showed us in the clearest of light that global public health is key to all of our futures and that it deserves a larger investment than we have seen in the past!





# Thank You

Maji Safi Group sincerely thanks our donors for continuing to support us very generously despite the global pandemic and all the uncertainty and economic pressures it brought to families, businesses, and grant makers – locally and around the world.



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