



**Servants in Faith and Technology /  
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## ***Graduates in Action Around the Globe***

***By Marie Lanier***

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SIFAT has been training community leaders in development for 41 years. As community needs change, our graduates' ministries often shift their focus. A global pandemic? That is definitely a call for adaptation to meet immediate needs. Around the world, governments are enacting strict lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, which has led to economic hardships and job loss, inflation and food shortage. We reached out to a few of our graduates for updates, so we can better understand the challenges they face, but also to see the ways they are thriving, despite unexpected circumstances.

### ***Awon in India***

Awon, a 2007 practicum graduate, leads a college ministry. During the lockdown, many students traveled home, and all of their church services moved online, which brought challenges of learning new technology and ways to maintain relationships. Some stayed at the campus ministry house, and Awon realized her students were mainly asking questions about two things: suicide related deaths reported on news broadcasts and how to remain connected as a church family. These questions led her to begin group studies on understanding depression and on church history.



*Awon (center) leads a Bible study with a group of college students quarantining together in India.*

Awon is from a rural village and is still involved in ministry there, as well. Four quarantine centers were set up when more than 400 people began returning from mainland cities after they lost jobs or their schools were closed. A local pastor saw the need of Bibles for these centers, and Awon used her network of supporters to provide 120 new Bibles with reading guides in the local language.

When the pandemic subsides, Awon plans to resume her weekly Project Light classes and mentoring with special needs students. She learned about Project Light while at SIFAT, and it is an integral part of her ministry.

In her update, Awon shared, "Yes, we are in the midst of the COVID-19 stormy sea. Our only hope

is in our Lord Jesus Christ, our Captain, who enables us to navigate the boats of our lives to 'the other side' of this situation. He is the greatest assurance. Praise God for He will never leave us alone!"

### ***Tinashe in Zimbabwe***

A 2008 practicum graduate, Tinashe leads A Cry of Africa Ministries. Tinashe shares that his country was already facing political and economic challenges before the pandemic, and their inflation is the worst in the world. During the lockdown period, his ministry has continued to care, educate, entertain and support children under its

care in learning centers, while also providing food through rural feeding centers. He was glad that a strict lockdown and limitation of outsiders has kept the children in the learning centers free of the virus. However, both the learning centers and the rural feeding centers are facing food shortages because of rising costs.

But, Tinashe has hope! At SIFAT, he learned agricultural techniques that he has already implemented in gardens at the rural feeding centers. He also attributes his “train the trainer” training to establishing effective leadership. During the lockdown, he could not travel as usual to oversee the programs. Because he has been training his team, they are prepared to make tough choices.

Tinashe said that when he came to SIFAT, he felt unprepared to be a missionary to his people. Through community development and community needs assessment classes, he is now ready to serve in any context. “Once again, I would like to thank SIFAT, which was used by God to shape and prepare me for His works.”

### **Cynthia and Marian in the Philippines**

In the Philippines, SIFAT alumni, including Cynthia (2010) and Marian (2009), remain in close contact and come together to regularly hold seminars and conferences. Since 2017, they have trained 200 struggling single mothers. A training for 20 people was postponed when coronavirus hit the islands. Participants in these trainings use their new knowledge in their homes, and some begin selling items through internet sales (on social media) or even in small storefronts. Our SIFAT graduates invite six government agencies to participate to help the mothers promote and sell their products, as well as learn about available government programs and trainings to help them in the future.

Cynthia sent a report that included many pictures from past training events including fuel-efficient cookstoves to combat indoor air pollution, sustainable agriculture, food preservation, Leaf for Life and SODIS and water sanitation.

### **Rahab in Kenya**

Rahab, a 2009 practicum graduate, and her husband Silas are part of One Mission Society. In early March, they traveled to Indiana to speak to supporters and visit



*Tinashe’s gardens at rural feeding centers are providing food for the hungry in Zimbabwe.*

friends, never expecting to be stranded here for months. Meanwhile in Kenya and around eastern Africa, locusts are destroying crops, which adds to a lack of food caused by job loss and rising food costs.

Rahab and Silas have been trying to encourage the leaders in their ministry from afar, while they face uncertainty and unexpected challenges, such as replenishing their daily medicines when they have no health insurance. They are leaning on their faith and shared Psalm 11:3, “What can an honest person do when everything crumbles?” Rahab and Silas have jumped into action.

They continue to visit and raise funds for their ministry through phone calls and Zoom meetings. Rahab makes chapatis, a Kenyan flatbread, to share with friends and neighbors. They also volunteer weekly to pack food in a local food bank. This unexpected travel extension has also forced them to take time to rest, pray and study.

Rahab and Silas hope to return home in August when flights to Kenya resume. They are ready to lead senior adult Bible studies, help widows with their goat project, hold children’s and youth events and lead conferences for pastors.

**Thank you for supporting SIFAT this month! Because of donors like you, we will continue training community leaders, who are on the frontlines *Sharing God’s Love in Practical Ways.***