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SIFAT Graduates Overcome Obstacles

By Sarah Corson

SIFAT Co-founder

In Nigeria, our SIFAT graduates Pastor Blossom and Aina are building a fence around their mission school, an action required by the government for all schools because of the terrorists who are kidnapping schoolchildren. Through our approved graduates' projects program, SIFAT sent a grant to help with the fence to enable this Christian school to continue operating. But an anti-Christian group did not want a Christian school in their village. They invented a false story that the land the fence was on was not the school's property. They sued Pastor Blossom, which stopped the fence building for several weeks until the court ruled it was a falsehood. The attackers got what they wanted—construction was delayed and materials ruined. Without extra funds, Pastor Blossom and Aina could not continue

We believe in self-sufficiency, in working and making a living by doing so. But, there are so many different problems our graduates face before they can succeed. We are constantly amazed that these graduates, who have many obstacles to overcome, have so much determination and perseverance. They often say, "With man it is not possible, but with God all things are possible!" Though it may take longer than originally planned, still it happens! Our graduates keep trying, and with God's help, they overcome!

Pastor Blossom and Aina
SIFAT graduates from Nigeria



Pastor Blossom wrote us:

By stopping our project, our materials, especially the cement, were caking, prices were going up and we were worried sick. The water supply from the Water Project had also been disrupted because the pipes were broken by the children of these same men. Our worries were multiplied as we watched helplessly innocent people suffer because of lack of water and lack of schooling for their children until we could make the school safe for them to come. The repairs now depended on the continuation of the fence. For three months, these people kept us from working on the fence with their false accusations. Meanwhile, my birthday was approaching. The day before my birthday, the legal authority brought the conflict to a close by ruling that the accusations were false. I woke up on my birthday feeling very, very happy because we were free to continue our work. God had answered our prayers. To be able to start our project up again was the greatest birthday gift!

Unfair legal opposition to Christian work is just one of the many obstacles SIFAT graduates over the world have to face. In Pakistan, our graduate has narrowly escaped death on a number of occasions

when anti-Christian terrorists have attacked him or his children to try to stop their work. Once, he was purposely run over by a motorcycle while walking on the sidewalk. Another time, his son was beaten in the face and was being kidnapped when police suddenly appeared and rescued him.

In some countries, lack of efficient infrastructure slows projects. Pastor Anice serves in an isolated rural village in Haiti. His people were hungry, drinking polluted water and sick—consequences of an earthquake. SIFAT sent him funds for a relief project during this emergency. He happily traveled eight hours on a bus over rutted, muddy roads to get to his bank to receive it. But the bank said he did not have the right papers to receive the money transferred to his bank account. “Tell this SIFAT to write us a letter declaring it is for you,” they told him, even though we had followed the correct protocol for wiring international money. So he traveled eight hours back to his village to tell the hungry people that they would have to wait for another letter to get food.

We sent the letter, and Pastor Anice traveled back with it. The bank accepted it, but told him to return in eight days after they processed the funds. It was another long trip home empty handed to face everyone. After he bought yet another bus ticket, the bank told him they had decided he might not be the person his identification cards said he was, and our letter might be invalid. The bank returned the money to SIFAT, after taking out \$85 for their services. Finally, Pastor Anice received the money. Pastor Anice persevered. He had to wait more than two months after the funds initially arrived in his account, watching children in his village grow listless and weak from lack of nutrition. His hands were tied because of a lack of operating efficiency.

Other graduates have different obstacles. In Bolivia and in Nigeria, two chicken projects are languishing because of extreme inflation. Chicken feed prices have gone up significantly, so they barely broke even after tending the chickens for weeks. When our graduates sold their

chickens, they barely paid for the feed, making their labor in vain. Our Bolivian graduates began to look for ways to overcome the problem. They decided to buy the components of the balanced ration and borrow funds to buy a machine to grind and mix their own feed. If they did that labor themselves, the cost of feed would be cheaper.

They stopped production of more chickens while they investigate the grinding machine to buy. Will it lower the price enough to make the project successful?

Our Nigerian graduates had no way to obtain a loan, so they were forced to plead for donations to cover the food for their pullets, which are on the verge of laying eggs. They could sell the eggs and put the profits back into the feed. But, they would lose their investment if they quit feeding the chickens! SIFAT sent them money to help feed the chickens for another month. In late April, we received an email bursting with joy! “Our

chickens laid the first egg today,” they wrote us. “Please thank all the SIFAT supporters who help you to help us!



The first egg brings hope!

protein to their starchy diet because of those who supported this self-help project.

When I read our graduates’ e-mails, I sometimes feel paralyzed and am tempted to give up. But those with whom we work are strong, and their faith is mature. If there is just a glimmer of hope, they will hang on to it. Our graduates are dedicated to God and to helping people in need. Their patience amazes me. We have much to learn from them. We could not continue without prayers and support from our SIFAT family. Thank you for bringing hope for our graduates and for graciously giving to our ministry!



Pastor Blossom and Aina led a community project to provide safe drinking water for their community.