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SIFAT Grad Peter Impacts Lives in Kenya

By Sarah Corson

SIFAT Co-founder

SIFAT works with our network of graduates helping them raise seed money to start their community projects. They expect these projects to become sustainable in the future with community resources. During the past six years, we have partnered with 29 of our graduates living in 16 different countries. Many of them have led more than one project successfully. An example of a graduate who has reached hundreds of needy people for Christ and with new hope for body, mind and soul is Peter Kirui in Kenya.

Peter works with In Touch Ministries around the Rift Valley. In 2016, he submitted a proposal to our Graduate Projects' Committee (GPC) to strengthen economic empowerment among the vulnerable women and youth. Recently, Peter's organization evaluated how well this project is working today.

They created a tree nursery as a microenterprise to help reforest their land, which has sold 7,000 trees, as well as supplied seedlings for planting on their own properties. This generated income has enabled the microenterprise to become self-supporting.

The women learned to make fuel-efficient stoves, which use much less fuel. This has saved them time gathering firewood. Also, they have not had as many cases of respiratory diseases from breathing as much smoke daily. The women took classes on improving family relationships to prevent conflict, and though Peter could not measure exactly how much this has improved, it appears that there has been a behavioral change throughout the community to improve family life.

As for the 20 youth who received training to produce honey and a beehive, all of the hives are still producing, enabling these former unemployed youth to make a livelihood and to help others in need.

This was the first project in which Peter and SIFAT partnered in ministry. During the following six years, SIFAT has worked with Peter in four more successful projects. Just as the COVID pandemic began, Peter helped 110 people with disabilities who could not get work to support themselves by training them to raise chickens. This provided protein for their own diets, as well as eggs and chickens to sell. Recent monitoring showed that each person who received the initial chickens had increased

their flock on the average of 20 hens per person. This group began to work together and formed a savings and loan association to lend members start up funds to start other microenterprises to diversify their income.

That same year, SIFAT partnered with Peter to help 60 vulnerable widows find a means of livelihood by raising goats to sell milk and the

goats' offspring. Despite a few casualties because of drought and lack of water, most of the goats survived. Each household originally received one goat, and now, the average household has four.

Peter has also helped another group of widows lease five acres of farmland. They are not only making a living off of this land, but also are helping save the land from degradation. Another of Peter's projects has helped 100 families start low-cost farming systems for kitchen gardens with viable technologies. They have greatly improved the health of children and elderly who now understand which nutritionally dense foods grow better in their semi-arid climate and how to grow them.



Peter is just one example of how we can reach hungry and suffering people in many places where we have not been able to go ourselves. While SIFAT graduates teach seminars and help people physically, they also include spiritual training to minister to the whole person—spiritually, socially and physically.

Our GPC, led by SIFAT board member Art Stephenson, is a very special operation. Not only do they evaluate submitted proposals to ensure the projects have a good chance of succeeding, but they help look for possible scenarios that might cause the project to fail, call it to the attention of the graduate and help create a plan on how to overcome an obstacle before it appears. The GPC members stay in touch by email with each graduate, who is required to send regular reports. A committee member responds appropriately with congratulations on a step forward or with encouragement when problems appear. Each project has a champion to lead raise funds for that project and a manager that gives advice when they feel stuck. Graduates directing the projects are not just numbers on a project, but they become close friends with their champion. They do not feel alone in their often isolated and desperately poor areas, but they know this committee is praying for them, as well as writing them regularly. We are thankful for the members of our GPC and the time they devote to working with our graduates.

We are also thankful for our network of dedicated graduates in Africa, Asia and Latin America and for our supporters like you, who answer the call to contribute to SIFAT each month and often go above and beyond to support additional projects like Peter's ministry and our other graduates' projects. God calls us all to work together to reconcile the world to Him. Thank you for answering His call!



First 2023 Mission Team Serves in Quito



St. James UMC (Spartanburg, SC), our first team in 2023, visited the Middle of the World while in Ecuador in January. Thank you for serving with SIFAT in Machachi—we loved working alongside you! For more information about leading or joining a mission team to Ecuador, visit www.sifat.org/international-missions.

Learn & Serve Visits Costa Rica— Ready for Spring Break Now!



Our Learn & Serve staff and interns traveled to SIFAT's Central American Training Center in Costa Rica to receive training, volunteer on campus there and help with some of the community outreach programs. They came back excited and ready to welcome groups for Spring Break. It's not too late to register at www.sifat.org/learn-serve.