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May Field Study Returns to SIFAT Campus

**By Kathy Bryson, International Training Director
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We recently completed our May Field Study, “World Hunger and Malnutrition: Practical Skills to Make a Difference.” This training equips participants to serve in their communities and empower citizens through public health and community development. Students from the University of Alabama at Birmingham earned college credit when they joined us for 10 days of training. Prior to the UAB students’ arrival, international community leaders finished a week of training. Many UAB participants commented that the May Field Study was not only a valuable experience, but it was enlightening about the issues that so many people face around the world and the ways we can help.

Participants learned skills and techniques to help people in their communities. They learned about appropriate technologies, such how to make water pumps and fuel-efficient cookstoves. These stoves use less wood than traditional cooking fires and do not produce smoke, which helps reduce the risk of smoke inhalation related illnesses. Students also learned about public health related topics, such as oral rehydration techniques and promoting nutrition through Leaf for Life. They learned how to promote community ownership of projects and how to start microenterprises and savings and loans groups. Besides helping people save money, these groups promote self confidence,



Our May Field Study included women from Bolivia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Myanmar, Mexico, Pakistan, Uganda and the USA.



Louino Robillard grew up in a notorious Haitian slum and later returned to his home to help start Future Generations Haiti, which focuses on community strengths and development from within instead of dependency on handouts. Louino shared life experiences during a simulation in SIFAT’s urban slum. His life is a testimony to hope for a better future and impacted everyone.

strengthen community bonds and create community empowerment. With these skills, our field study participants will now be better equipped to help people around the world have stronger communities and better qualities of life.

Perhaps the most important lessons learned were the cross-cultural interactions and relationships that were made. The 48 participants represented 14 countries: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda and the United States. Each country represented had its own customs, perspectives and opinions, which were valuable to hear and to understand cultures throughout the world. Lively and impactful discussions were had about subjects, such as community, poverty and women’s issues. During these talks, students built empathy with one another, created friendships and were challenged to see the world through the others’ eyes. These strong relationships, built at SIFAT, will be beneficial to the participants for years to come.

Your support of SIFAT helps to make programs like our May Field Study possible. We train community leaders and university students to be better servant leaders in their communities and teach them skills to empower those with whom they serve to have better quality lives. Thank you for helping SIFAT keep *Sharing God’s Love in Practical Ways!*