



Servants in Faith and Technology /
Southern Institute for Appropriate Technology
2944 County Road 113, Lineville, Alabama 36266
Phone: (256) 396-2015 Fax: (256) 396-2501 www.sifat.org

Raphael Returns to SIFAT

By Tom Corson
Executive Director

SIFAT Graduate Raphael has returned to SIFAT various times since first participating in our 10-week training practicum. He has taught in our trainings after using what he learned and implementing appropriate technology in his ministry in Nigeria. In his heart and mind, he believes what SIFAT believes is the *Heart of the Gospel*: sharing God's love in practical ways—love for God, for everyone, even for our enemies. And wherever Raphael lives, a little part of the Kingdom of God develops around him. He came to SIFAT this September to visit and to serve us by repairing the Nigerian houses he helped Learn & Serve youth build in our Global Village during a previous visits. When he leaves SIFAT, he plans to visit friends and supporters.



Raphael (on the roof) leads our campus staff in rethatching the roof on one of the Nigeria houses in the Global Village that he led Learn & Serve youth in building on a visit years ago.

Years ago when Raphael returned from SIFAT to Nigeria, he was moved to see migrants escaping from the part of the country where terrorists were taking over farms and killing people. These people had lost everything and were fleeing for their lives, hungry and destitute. SIFAT's Graduates' Project Committee partnered with him to raise money to buy 24 acres of land, which he divided into mini plots on which 30 migrant families could grow enough food to eat and have extra to sell for profit. In three years, the average migrant family worked these tiny farms, harvested their own food and sold enough to provide for their needs. Additionally, most were able to save enough to buy their own farms, which freed the land Raphael was loaning them for others to begin this process. This plan is still working today! The migrants believe in Raphael's testimony, because he not only told them about Jesus, he lived out the Gospel with them every day.

Many cultures are represented by these migrants. Raphael says that we must live in the culture of the Kingdom of God. He constantly goes out to the villages around him, giving seminars of appropriate technologies for their needs, developing relationships with the people. He recalls the first village he taught how to purify their polluted water with the bio-sand filter. He said before he came to SIFAT, he would visit them and started by preaching to them. He learned from experience that not many wanted to hear a sermon from a stranger. This time, he offered the seminar on clean water. Most of the villages were infected with parasites that came from their one water source, which was used by both animals and people. His seminar lasted three days. The local people began to come, and they began making their bio-sand filter, the ingredients for which were readily available. During the day, the villagers worked together on their filters, and at night, Raphael showed the Jesus film and preached a Gospel message. All the people came—from all religions and cultures. He remembers the great celebration at the end when they poured their dirty water into the filter. As it came out, Raphael tested the water, and it was pure! Not only had the community worked together with Raphael to get clean water, but now they continued working together and living out Jesus' teachings of loving each other. That is the result, Raphael says, of *Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways*. He has worked under that belief, and he has seen it work.

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Once when he and his family lived in a suburb on the edge of Jos, radical Muslims planned an attack on Christian communities. A large group rushed into the Christian communities during the night to set fire to their businesses and homes. It was an intense and widespread attack on the places where Christians lived. After the police caught the perpetrators, they asked them one question, “Why did you burn all the Christian urbanizations, except one? You left this one in the middle untouched?” They answered, “Because Raphael lives there, and he loves us.”

“These people are God’s children,” Raphael says. “A group of Muslims stopped to help me when my car was stuck in the mud. When I offered to pay them, they refused. They just wanted to help. Many Muslims love God. Unfortunately, some of them are radical and want to destroy those different from them. But I have always offered my seminars to everyone. As a Christian I teach everyone—and they have responded with friendship and kindness. If a radical wants to do me harm, it is my duty to pray for him and love him. Jesus was clear in His teachings on loving our enemies. I have found that when we treat them with love, it almost always turns their anger away. And even if it doesn’t, we are Christians! We follow what Jesus told us to do!”

SIFAT is so blessed to have Raphael with us this September. I John 3:18 says, “Let us not love just in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” SIFAT has a network of graduates in many countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America who are living out the Gospel in word, in deed and in truth. Thank you, Raphael, for being a dynamic leader in this network for the Kingdom of God! And for taking time from your busy schedule to come back to SIFAT to repair our Nigerian houses in the Global Village. You help teach us true evangelism, helping people in need.

In his own words ...

This September, we launched Season 2 of *Glimpses: A SIFAT Podcast*, hosted by Josiah Corson. In episode two, you can listen to the full conversation with Raphael to learn even more of his story and how he is making a difference in Nigeria.

You can find our podcast on most podcast apps, or you can listen on our website at www.sifat.org/about/our-podcast.



Above: While at SIFAT, Raphael had the opportunity to train friends of SIFAT on biosand water filters, which he learned in SIFAT training and has been using in Nigeria.

Below: Raphael implemented fuel-efficient cookstoves and water filtration trainings into his ministry. He builds relationships with people, regardless of their political or religious beliefs, to help improve their lives and meet them where they are. Raphael has returned to SIFAT multiple times during the past 15 years to work with our Learn & Serve programs and to lead classes in our trainings with his expertise and first-hand experience using these appropriate technologies in daily life.

