

## Sowers Update

It has been a busy year for Sowers Fund. We had 33 new businesses funded in the past 12 months. Funded purchases range from seeds & fertilizer, to chickens, plumbing materials, secretary courses and a freezer. These are just some examples of items that Sowers Fund donors have helped to provide.

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This year we also started re-funding some of our past recipients who were looking to expand their current business. In Togo we re-funded Afiwa Attisso who was diligently working in her retail store over the past three years selling sewing material and school supplies. She requested Sowers Fund help in purchasing a sewing machine to allow her to hem clothes for her customers. She hopes to attract more customers with the additional service she will provide in her shop. Chancelvie Ngoma from Congo was funded a

sewing machine as well in 2011 to enable her to start a tailoring business - which she has been

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Recently it was announced that the Malawi government is granting its citizens free land for maize cultivation. Although an important first step, most Malawians still have no money for seed and fertilizer, and thus have not been able to take advantage of this offer. However, in the summer of 2013, Sowers Fund was able to help eight individuals from the Dedza region of Malawi to benefit from this initiative by funding seeds, fertilizer & tools. They started tilling the land last fall and were able to harvest 25 bags of maize (each at 50kgs). Healing has begun.



Seed and fertilization recipients and harvest

*Healing has begun...*

# HARVEST *together*

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor..."  
Psalm 41:1

## Field Visit: Dominican Republic

*In 2014, Sowers Fund had the opportunity to travel to the Dominican Republic. They met with some of the Sowers Fund applicants in La Romana & Dajabon. The purpose of these visits was to follow up on current recipients and see if further help is needed, provide program training, receive feedback from field representatives, and finally to find ways to improve the program. The following is a brief report of the visit.*

## Healing In Their Land

The headlines from Malawi never seem to be good. Already one of the poorest nations in the world, this country located in southeast Africa is often plagued with extreme weather on both ends of the rainfall spectrum: long enduring droughts as well as dangerous land flooding. For instance, the drought in 2012, which reduced the maize harvest (the country's key staple crop) by 7%, was soon replaced only by severe flooding which displaced an estimated 10,000 households across ten districts.

*"I...will heal their land."*

- 2 Chronicles 2:14

Yet, despite these calamities, Malawians choose not to dwell on the past. They continue to press forward: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 2:14).

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Many people might not think of the words, "poverty", "discrimination" and "unemployment" when they think of the Dominican Republic. Rather, the more common images are those featuring white sandy beaches, picturesque mountain ranges and an ideal place to go on vacation. But when looked at a little closer, you discover very quickly that its scenic tourist destinations conceal a large income gap dividing the rich from poor - with the poorest half of the population receiving less than one-fifth the national income. Although the economy has experienced growth in recent years, unemployment remains a major challenge. According to the latest official data, more than a third of the country's total population lives in poverty and almost 20 per cent live in extreme poverty.

The reality of these statistics became very evident on the field visit to La Romana. Many of the families are really struggling to make ends meet, yet they are looking to God for provision. Leyda Mercedes is one such individual who is working hard to provide for her family. She is widowed with 3 children. She worked as a housekeeper but physical ailments prevented her from continuing with that job. She is now being helped by the Sowers Fund to sell men & women's clothes from her home. For now, she is able to make a living with the income earned, and hopes to add more inventory to her business. Iriberto Dishmey is also another such individual who is

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## Request Prayer for

- **Grace and wisdom for the mission field ministers to choose the correct recipients for the program.**
- **Improvements to the program that allow more individuals to be assisted.**
- **Recipients be good stewards of the funds that are given to them.**
- **Blessings for the donors for their generosity.**

For more information, please email us at:  
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Leyda selling clothes from her home.



Eriberto Dishmey and his landscaping business



Angela Baldayac & her old fridge.

hoping to turn things around for his family of four. Landscaping has always been his passion and so in 2013, Sowers Fund donors assisted in purchasing a lawnmower to aid his landscaping business. While this purchase is one step in the right direction, Iriberto is looking for ways to transport his landscaping equipment to the various jobs as well as make some strides in advertising his business.

The highest incidences of poverty and extreme poverty occur in the Dominican-Haitian border regions where there is a high concentration of slums, called bateys. These bateys are often settled by extremely poor Dominicans of Haitian origin and migrant seasonal workers from Haiti working on local sugar cane plantations. Because many are without proper documentation (such as birth certificates and identity papers) about 20 per cent of the poorest Dominican families do not benefit from most types of social assistance programs. Yet

despite these dire circumstances, the Lord continues to shine His face upon them.

In the city of Dajabon, 57 year-old grandmother, Angela Baldayac, works hard to provide for her 3 granddaughters who were abandoned by their parents after they split. She was given an old fridge by the church and she has used it to sell bags of ice every few days to Haitians who do not have electricity in Haiti. In 2014, Sowers Fund board approved funding for a larger, better freezer, so Angela could sell ice and other cold items everyday to those who pass by her home. She will be able to bring in a more steady income and help support her household. In spite of the inequalities being faced by Dominicans, the Lord continues to fight their battles: "...the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy" (Psalm 140:12, NIV). Please keep the Dominican Republic in your prayers.

**"...the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy."**

*Psalm 140:12 (NIV)*

very successful in. She used some of the profits to invest in plastic household items and she was hoping to increase her income by selling cakes in her shop to her customers. She was re-funded to purchase an oven and other baking items to help expand her business.

Our title verse says, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor" (Psalm 41:1). Without the support of the Sowers Fund donors we would have been unable to fund the 136 business in 14 countries which have been started to-date by Sowers Fund program recipients. May the Lord bless you for your generosity!



Recipient: Adwoa Asamoah  
Location: Afari-Kumasi, Ghana  
Item Purchased: Yam Crop (Farming)

## Meet Our Recipients



Recipient: Yecencia Villalobos & Francisca Leyva Ruiz  
Location: Ensenada, Mexico  
Item Purchased: Food catering (taco stand)

### Tacos Anyone?

Despite all its recent improvements, Mexico is still an underdeveloped country. Seventy-five percent of all manufacturing companies in the country are foreign companies who take advantage of the low cost of Mexican labor. But even with the advancement of industry in the region of Baja California, its cities such as Ensenada, still have people working in the fields, earning poverty-level wages. It is not uncommon to see people living in cardboard boxes, burned out trailers, or literally in the streets and sewers. For Francisca Leyva Ruiz and Yecencia Villalobos, life hasn't been easy. Both are struggling financially to support their families. Francisca is a single mother of two sons who has been unable to find work. Her daily struggles with polio prevent her from working regularly. Yecencia's husband works seasonally as a construction worker and they are having a hard time providing for their five children. In 2013 both women were funded by Sowers Fund donors to start a catering business and together they set up a taco stand. So far things have been going really well with a good amount of customers who come to eat at their stand. If you are ever in Ensenada, you should try out their famous "tacos de birria" (beef!)

### Coal Powered

Life in Ghana has always been tough for Attaa Abena's family. Cramped in her father's home with nine others, she and her siblings try and make ends meet to support the family. This is a common scene in Ghana; many families still struggle daily to meet their basic needs. In Atta's family, charcoal trading has been one means of bringing in an income. Over 90% of Ghanians use firewood or charcoal for cooking. As oil prices increase so does the demand for charcoal. Atta learned this trade from her mother and wanted to start her own business to help support her family - especially the orphaned children left in her care after her younger sister passed away. Since being helped by Sowers Fund in late 2013, the report from the field representative is that Atta is one of the success stories amongst those helped in Ghana. She has been working tirelessly in her business, making a profit and also giving back to her church community. In a recent progress report she writes: "Now I am self-employed and I can feed the family and pay all of my bills".



Attaa Abena's coal trading business