

HARVEST *Together*

"The LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy."
Psalm 140:12

Rich Country, Poor People

Many Nigerians struggle to put food on their table, clothe their children, and provide adequate shelter for their families. This is the definition of absolute poverty.



Imeh at his food stall in Abuja

Given the country's high unemployment, entrepreneurship is key to reducing poverty. This is the case for 48-year-old Imeh Bassey Utoh who runs a small stall selling food in Abuja.

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In 2010, a poverty profile of Nigeria concluded that 61% of the population lived in absolute poverty (up from 55% in 2004). In contrast, the country's economy is growing at a rate of 7% a year. If Nigeria as a country is getting richer, how can the Nigerian people be getting poorer? The poverty of the average Nigerian is fostered in part by corrupt civil servants and politicians.

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However, as time went on she provided Sowers Fund with feedback on how the scarcity of these items was preventing her from bringing an income. Yet, she was determined not to let her businesses fail, so she found a plot of land and decided to start growing items to sell in her shop. Given her business acumen, Sowers Fund donors aided in purchasing some farming tools to assist her change of direction for her business.



Noelle Malanda and her garden

Our title verse says, "The LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy" (Psalm 140:12, NIV). God is indeed helping to fight for many who are battling so many forces outside of their control. If you have aided in this fight as a Sowers Fund donor, may the Lord bless you for your generosity!

Recent recipients who have received support:
Lismen Rolaine (Dajabon, DR), Charles Mashirima (Nairobi, Kenya)



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:
info@sowersfund.org



Sowers News

Now entering its fourth year, Sowers Fund has funded over 165 businesses. In 2015 we expanded to Tanzania and Haiti, making our footprint now into 16 countries. We had 38 new businesses funded in the past 12 months. Funded purchases range from a motorbike for a taxi service, coal and cooking utensils for a catering business, farming equipment, sewing machines, and even an electrician's certificate. These are just some examples of items that Sowers Fund donors have provided.

"The LORD secures justice for the poor..."

- Psalm 149:12 (NIV)

This year we also renewed support for some of our past recipients who were looking to expand their current business. Noelle Malanda from Dolisie, Congo was a returning applicant, who found success selling fufu, onion & peanuts.

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Field Visit: Togo

In June 2015, a Sowers Fund volunteer had the opportunity to travel to Togo and meet some of the Sowers Fund recipients. She came back with invaluable insight on how the Sowers Fund program has impacted businesses and families. The following is a brief report of the visit.

One of the smallest countries in Africa, Togo is bordered by Ghana to its West and Benin to its East. With a population of over 6 million people, poverty still remains widespread, affecting about 60% of its citizens. Its capital city, Lomé, is relatively developed with brick buildings and paved main roads. The surrounding villages and rural areas, where residents have predominantly lived in mud houses, are only now starting to show signs of improvement.

The overall economy in Togo is stagnant and employment rates are low. The most well-paying jobs are those in the Government or public sector, but these are not easily obtainable. The people are simple, humble and hard-working. In general, women run small businesses, selling various goods on the streets or in the market, while men work to gain employment primarily through manual labor. Given that the average family has five to seven children, saving money is difficult after daily expenses are met. Many people desire to own a home; most people cannot afford one. As a result, families resort to renting small rooms.

I had the privilege of meeting several Sowers Fund recipients in the city and in surrounding areas. They shared their stories and the challenges they often face as they strive to earn a living.

Kossi Dossou and his family are faithful members of the church in Lomé. With four girls and a boy, he works tirelessly driving his motorbike as a taxi to provide for his family. A couple of years ago, he couldn't drive his bike anymore due to a serious mechanical failure, and this left him without the ability to earn an income. During this time, he held on to the promise in Isaiah 35:6, "...for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." His answer came when Sowers Fund



Kossi with his wife, son and motorbike

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With prices on the rise in Nigeria, he has been finding it difficult to buy more goods to sell.

Thanks to the generous help of Sowers Fund donors, he was able to put more capital into his business and start again. His appreciation letter says it all: he is made "speechless" by the generosity of donors. He is now able to provide for his wife and six children.

"I am speechless..."

LETTER OF APPRECIATION.

I Count myself as a lucky person to have the opportunity to benefit from this organization, and I owe gratitude to God for giving me another opportunity to say thank you to all those who are in support and who also sponsor this great organization.

Thank God Almighty cause He put this organization into plan even before creation just as "THE SOUL OF MAN" was, so had God set this organization to help the needy in the society.

Today! God's plan for my life is coming to fulfillment. Through Sower fund I can start my life again and my way of living has improved for the better.

I am speechless, don't know the word to use to appreciate the sponsors of sower fund. Only God will reward you richly and bountifully. Thank You! Thank You! And Thank You! God bless You all. Thank You ALL!

PRAISE THE LORD!!!
Brother Imeh Bassey

Imeh Bassey Utoh's letter of appreciation

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sent funds to replace his engine which enabled him to resume his taxi service. Since "motortaxi" services are common, Raymond faces competition but works hard to gain customers.

Mary Oyewale owns a bustling cleaning supplies store at the local market. As she was looking to expand her product line, Sowers Fund provided funds so that she could purchase additional items such as paper towels. She is grateful for the support as her life is now improved and she is able to pay all of her expenses.

Thierry Adakanou sells used car batteries from Monday to Saturday at the Lomé port. His challenge is a lack of batteries! He has many customers but in order to meet their demand, he is forced to buy from other suppliers. He is currently looking to establish a connection

with a supplier in Italy who is able to send a shipment of batteries every two months. He thanks the Sowers Fund donors for helping him build his stock of batteries, grow his business, and achieve things he didn't even dare to dream about.

Afiwa Attisso (also called Anastasie), a widow with one daughter, has always been a businesswoman, selling sewing material and school supplies to make a living. However when she and her daughter fell ill, most of the earnings went towards paying for their medical expenses. After she recovered she struggled to keep her business going. Sowers Fund was able to put some more capital into



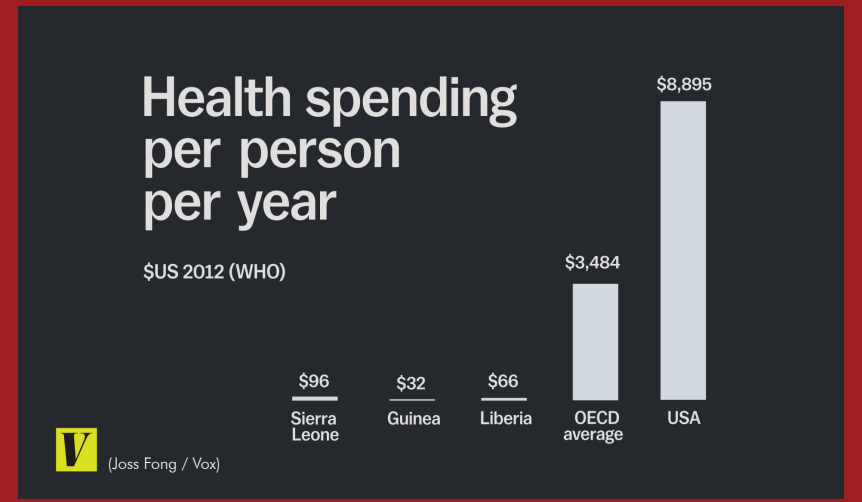
From top to bottom: Mary Oyewale at her cleaning supply store; Thierry Adakanou; Afiwa Attisso

her business so that she was able to purchase more inventory and bring in a steady income. She was refunded again to purchase a sewing machine so that she could hem clothes for her customers.

One common characteristic I found among all the recipients, regardless of how their business has fared, is gratefulness. The little or much given to them evoked a thankful heart - a heart reassured that they are loved by their brothers and sisters across the globe, and more importantly, by their Heavenly Father.

Battling Ebola & Poverty

Ebola has caused unimaginable devastation for many poor communities in Africa. However, according to Lawrence Gostin, a public health law professor at Georgetown University, "Ebola is a very preventable disease; we've had over 20 previous outbreaks, and we managed to contain all of them." So why is Ebola spreading like wildfire in countries such as Sierra Leone, Guinea & Liberia? Poverty is a key factor in the spread of the disease. In many of these countries very little money is available to spend on health care; this has constrained efforts to stop the spread of the virus. In most of West Africa, healthcare spending amounts to less than \$100 per person per year (in the United States, it's about \$8,000).



Hannah Komba with her oven

Local economies came to a standstill during the outbreak, which was further threat to a vulnerable population's survival. For widow Hannah Komba, living in Freetown, Sierra Leone, the reality of the disease hit close to home. Hannah was one of the first applicants to be funded by Sowers Fund and was desperate to keep her business afloat during the crisis. With the oven that was purchased for her in 2011, she was able to start a small catering business selling baked goods and providing for her two sons. Sowers Fund donors wanted to help her small business survive, and were able to purchase a much-needed freezer for Hannah. The Lord continues to "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy" (Psalms 82:3). Please keep Sierra Leone in your prayers.

Seeds of Hope

The alleviation of poverty has been a goal for many governments in Africa. Uganda has made great strides in economic and social reforms. In urban areas poverty has been reduced from 52% in 1992 to 24% in 2009. For 32 year-old Geoffrey Tigabwa and his 5 year-old son, Wamani Bright, increased opportunity couldn't have come at a better time. Living in Kampala as a single father, Geoffrey had been struggling to provide for his son. He initially owned a small shoe store; however, fierce competition and steep business expenses made it impossible to turn a profit. Recognizing the shoe store would not support him and his son, Geoffrey saw opportunity in charcoal trading. Charcoal is a widely used cooking fuel in Ugandan households and demand is on the rise. With help from Sowers Fund donors, Geoffrey was able to transition into the charcoal trading business this year. Today Geoffrey sells coal from his shop. Now he can hope for a brighter future for his son.



Geoffrey Tigabwa at his charcoal shop