

HARVEST *together*

"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done."
- Proverbs 19:17 (NIV)

Licensed to Hope

Need a taxi in Togo? Climb aboard a Zemidjan, which means, "Take Me Quickly". These small motorbikes, which take a single passenger on the pillion, are all the rage. They also provide a regular source of income to thousands of people who would otherwise be jobless. This was where we found Kossi Dissou in 2015. Sowers Fund donors helped Kossi with the purchase of a motorbike to start his own taxi business. As a father of five children and a wife to support, this assistance proved to be an answer to prayer as he was the only breadwinner in his household.

As time went on Kossi's health issues prevented him from regularly continuing with this business. For his health, he desired to switch to becoming a car taxi driver for a taxi company. However, he lacked funds to enroll in the license training course.

Sowers Fund not only provides funding to purchase income generating goods but also vocational training assistance to its recipients. Donors were able to provide funds which allowed Kossi to enroll in a class to get his driver's license. He can now diversify his income stream and continue to provide for his family.



Kossi at his License Class

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These are just some examples of items that Sowers Fund donors have helped to provide. As you will have read in this newsletter, we also participated in another larger scale project where two young men were able to start a small business center in the heart of Abuja, Nigeria, which is becoming a thriving business in that part of Africa.

As demonstrated in the Parable of the Sower, sowing the "seed" represents sowing the Word of God. By giving our time, talents, resources and financial support, we are fulfilling Christ's commandment to help those less fortunate than ourselves. The Sowers Fund seeks to sow the seeds of enterprise in industrious, hardworking people. We pray that it may produce much fruit and blessings later for both the recipient and donor. Proverbs 11:25 says, "Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered".

Prayer requests for

- **Qualified applicants who have a desire to make better lives for themselves.**
- **New ways to improve the program that will allow more individuals to be assisted.**
- **Recipients to be good stewards of the funds that are given to them.**
- **Abundance of blessings for the generosity of our donors.**

For more information, please email us at:
info@sowersfund.org



Simeon & Priscilla Abalo - camera renting business (Togo)



Vivienne Millers - hen house (Jamaica)



Hannah Mbayaye - used shoe business (Uganda)



Josephine Fletcher - hen house (Jamaica)

Sowers Fund Update 2017

When we live in a land of plenty and of general economic stability, it can be hard to comprehend that people are living without basic necessities such as food, clean water and clothing. As a follower of Christ, our primary aim is to win souls to Christ. However, Christ also required that our actions should express our Christianity. In Matthew 25:45, He states, "...inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." In 2011, the Sowers Fund was launched to help families in poorer countries who were struggling to earn a daily wage. We provide much-needed funding to purchase income-generating equipment, tools, and vocational training to aid in starting small business ventures. As of July 2017, Sowers Fund has now funded over 236 businesses in 18 countries. The overwhelming support of this program by our donors has been such a blessing to witness.

In 2016 through 2017, we expanded our footprint into two new countries, Costa Rica and the Ivory Coast, and revisited areas we had not funded for a few years, such as Westmoreland, Jamaica. Funded purchases ranged from chickens for a chicken farm, camera for a photography business, a motorbike for a taxi business, equipment for a welding shop, a driving license, fishing nets and petty trading items such as used shoes, food items, and clothing.

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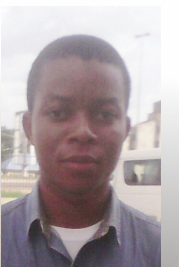
Poverty in the Midst of Plenty

Despite having the 3rd largest economy in Africa due to its rich menu of natural resources, Nigeria has a serious problem with poverty with over 50% of the population under the poverty line. Given the country's high unemployment rate, entrepreneurship and creation of jobs is key to reducing poverty in Nigeria. It's hard for people to have access to large credits or loans and thus making services such as micro-finance a new trend that attracts people to start off on a smaller scale. Knowing the impact of corruption and unemployment levels in Nigeria, Sowers Fund saw an opportunity to make an impact in Abuja, Nigeria. Through one of our church partners, we were about to help 2 young men start a business centre in the heart of Abuja. Here is their story:

Peter Godwin is 27 years old and lives in Abuja. His father passed away when Peter was young and his mother re-married and left him alone and destitute. As a young boy, he would often walk miles to attend church by himself. The local church noticed his situation and decided to allow him to live at the church house. While living there, he did some small jobs around the house and put through school with the help of Missions Education Fund. He completed a computer training course at a local university in the beginning of 2016 and did some internship-type work in several business centers. After completing his studies, he looked for a job, but was not able to find one. He also had an interest in starting his own business center but without access to capital, this idea wouldn't go anywhere. He started to talk about his business ideas to another young man, Ime Abilty, who was also living in the church house with him.



Ime is 22 years old and he came from a very poor family with many children. His parents were unable to care for him and was left without any proper education. Ime used his own means and completed a computer training course. He also gained some experience working in various business centers. Both Peter and Ime decided it would be a good idea if they could open up a business center together. During this time, Sowers Fund was able to intervene and help them through this process. After evaluating their business plan, we came to know that Business Centers are in high demand in Abuja, especially among university students and office workers who were willing to pay for these types of services.

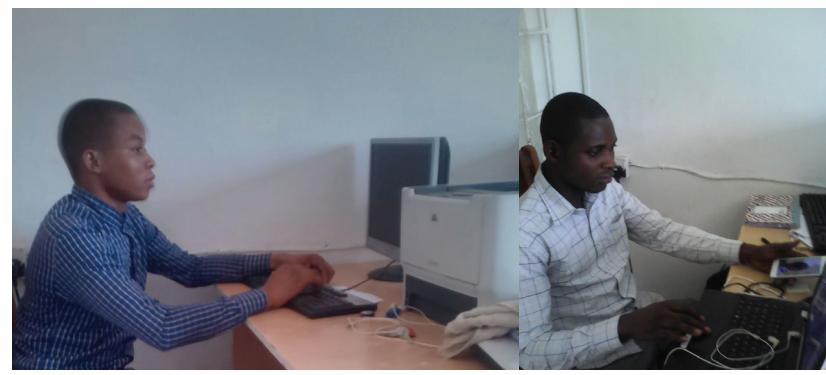


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Opening a Business Center meant it required a lot of work, especially finding a location that was feasible and would generate a steady income. Prime locations were costly, but they were able to secure a location in a high-traffic area. With the help of Sowers Fund, they were able to pay rent for 1 year, purchase several computers, printer, scanner, photo copier, tables, chairs, ceiling fan and a generator. The center provides business services such as printing, photo copying, scanning and allows people to have access to the internet. Peter and Ime also teach basic computer skills to new computer users. Becoming entrepreneurs has allowed them to be self-sufficient and be more confident while earning a daily wage.

As any good business owner, they have goals to take their business further. In the future, they want to be able to secure a location in a mall and have a bigger facility with more equipment to cater to a larger crowd. But without the generous help from Sowers Fund donors this dream of starting up their own business center would not have been realized.



Ime and Peter at work



Inside the Business Center with purchased items

“Your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need.”

- 2 Corinthians 8:14 (NIV)

Business Drive

Do you have the blues? According to the Happy Planet Index, which aims to measure human well-being and environmental impact, Costa Rica is the cure for the despondent. Its commitment to the environment and its generous public aid programs, has positioned the country into the top rankings for the past three years. Yet despite all these positive headlines, a stark reality is that 1.1 million Costa Ricans live in poverty. For Ivan Darce and his family, earning enough money to meet their growing family needs has been a struggle. Yet God has been their provider.

After taking various jobs over the years, most recently Ivan found himself employed in a struggling car battery revision and sales company. The owners, swamped in debt and needing to abandon the business, Ivan received the opportunity to step in: and his lifelong dream of owning his own business became a reality. Ivan remained optimistic and pledged to turn the business around. When the former owners handed the business assets into Ivan’s leadership and possession, God also enabled donors of the Sowers Fund to help Ivan with some much-needed start-up capital to purchase new merchandise from wholesalers. With God’s help, Ivan is now able to drive his business towards a path of success.



Ivan in the office of his new business

Good Catch - A Fishing Co-operative

In 2015 the Sowers Fund was able to start a fishing cooperative with 10 people in Mogbailmikor, Sierre Leone – a small fishing village near Shenge, one of the largest fish producers in the country. Funding was provided to purchase materials to build a large fishing boat, a motor, and fishing nets. The business has been a success, however the weight of the catches proved to be too great for some of the nets initially purchased.

In 2017 additional funding was provided to purchase new and better quality nets for effective fishing. Now they are able to support the large catches and use the profits for improving their business. A recent progress report revealed that the cooperative used some of their earnings to build a smokehouse for fish (a smokehouse enables the catch to be stored for a longer period). After the fish are smoked, they are transported to inland cities and sold for a better profit. Blessings to all the generous donors for supporting this project!



New fishing nets (top), the smoke house (bottom)

Women of Courage

Does poverty have a female face? That was the headline for an article written by the European Parliament. This seems to be the case in the Republic of Congo where poverty has worsened since the 1980s and women are among the hardest hit. In most rural areas, they earn a livelihood by becoming small-scale farmers or fishers. But when only 11% of the people in rural areas can get access to water compared to 75% in the urban areas, it makes farming that much more difficult.



Francoise selling produce in her garden

This was where we found 47-year old Francoise Mpika of Dolisie, Congo, who is a self-employed gardener. Francoise lives in a small house with her 80-year-old mother and 61-year-old sister. Gardening is their only source of income. When you look at her handiwork you can tell she has a green thumb! Francoise had worked hard to create an efficient and competitive business given the conditions in Congo. As water is scarce, growing crops is an arduous task. She sought for financial help through Sowers fund to purchase a water pump along with seeds, in order to grow her business. As you can see from the picture, her garden is well on its way to producing a bountiful harvest and income for her household.

Jeanne Kinouimba is a 48-year-old from Point-Noire, which is Congo’s 2nd largest city situated along its coast. She lives in a small rented house with no access to water or electricity. As the sole breadwinner in the house, Jeanne was struggling to provide for herself and her eight dependants. Jeanne wanted to start a business selling salted fish – a very marketable product in the Congolese region. Thanks to funding by Sowers Fund donors, she was able to purchase the necessary goods to start her entrepreneurial career.



Jeanne with a sale of salted fish

Elbriche Ngoma is 29-years- old and from Dolisie. Her husband, Fabrice, does not have a stable job, so it has been a struggle to provide for their three daughters. To help contribute to the family income, Elbriche desired to pursue a business in selling food items such as bananas and plantains. Majority of the businesses supported by Sowers Fund are retail in nature. In order to make a profit, Elbriche would need to travel to the farming villages to purchase goods at a lower rate and sell them in the cities to yield a greater wage.



Elbriche with bags of dried cassava

For these women, life is not easy, but with God’s help and your generous giving, they are gaining the strength and courage to fight the stereotypes of poverty.