



**Spirit
In
Action**

Micro Grants
Major Change

Spring & Summer Newsletter 2023

Spirit in Action

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A Perfect Fit

SIA Partners in Kenya and Uganda lead tailoring classes

Brenda (pictured right) is a student in Transformers Mathare's advanced sewing classes. This year, with the SIA grant, Transformers purchased a walking-foot industrial sewing machine and fabric for their sewing training center.

Brenda and her fellow students are learning to make housemaid uniforms, canvas travel bags, aprons, and bow ties, which they are able to sell for a good price in Nairobi, Kenya.



Last November, SIA Board President Kathleen King, and Executive Director, Tanya Cothran visited the Home of Hope, run by SIA Partner CAP-AIDS in Northern Uganda.

Home of Hope is a vocational school and home for vulnerable girls. While there, they learn tailoring, baking, gardening, and poultry-rearing skills.

Stella (pictured above) received a sewing machine when she graduated from the program and now can rent porch space and run her own tailoring business. She said she cannot compare her life to before CAP-AIDS and graduating from the program. Today, life is easy. She can tailor her clothes, make her own money and afford necessities.

Read our blog for success stories, photos, and inspiration!

<http://spiritinaction.org/news>

Supporting Grassroots Solutions

Aiming for equity, not just equality

“Imagine! When I saw a presentation on what the US Agency for International Development (USAID) hopes to do in Kenya, I realized that **Spirit in Action is already doing it.**” Always a cheerleader for SIA, African Advisory Board Member Naomi Ayot Oyaro was able to share about SIA’s localization efforts at a USAID conference on centering community-led development.

While big international organizations are still only talking about trying to center local knowledge, “**SIA is already adapting to community priority needs** rather than usual, generic organizational project designs,” says Naomi.

SIA’s Board Meetings - with North American and African



Board Members - are our opportunity to deepen our commitment to building true partnerships.

Danny Thomas, Board Member and Executive Director of The Peace Center, shared in March about the importance of equity to SIA’s model.

USAID is still stuck on **equality**, “giving everyone one product, making communities have to figure out what to do with it, whether they need it or not.”

SIA instead looks to promote **equity**. “I so admire that the work we do with communities allows community members to decide what their needs are, and then we help them meet those needs,” says Danny.

The power of equity boosts community priorities and solutions, which ultimately is a better way to move towards justice and transformation in communities.



Together in person! North American Board Member Danny, Executive Director Tanya, and African Advisory Board Member Naomi in NYC this Spring.

“Receiving God’s Gifts”

By Del Anderson, SIA Founder

I am learning, “**the great power of prayer is not in asking, but in learning how to receive.**” Receiving requires acceptance and willing openness.

Cooperating with God requires us to know ourselves, to appreciate and respect ourselves and to be true to ourselves. **We learn to be aware of God’s All-Presence** (‘Lo, I am with you always’), to give God our attention, to see things as God sees them.

God takes the dimness from our eyes and we hold fast to our oneness in God. **We look through the false evidence of separation**

and our false beliefs and attitude of “them and us.” We learn to perceive something of Christ’s potential in everyone. Then the unifying power of Spirit breaks down the barriers of self-centeredness, and Spirit heals the breaches and divisions between us.

God’s presence is constant, continuous activity of Spirit. As God’s co-creators, our cooperation is needed to be aware, to make conscious decisions, and then act.

Then the Kingdom of God is not dimmed and far off, but **the Kingdom of God is actively alive within us.**

SIA Partners in Action

Community Impact



1. “Enjoy the sweetness!” It’s time for the tangerine harvest in Kerio Valley, Kenya at Samuel Teimuge’s farm. They have added solar panels for light in the training center and for processing fruit juice.



2. Vertical Gardening. Faith Kathure plants greens and tomato seedlings in her sack garden during a training with TAI Community-Based Organization in Kenya. TAI taught 40 young mothers about gardening as part of a maternal health workshop.

3. Congratulations, Tiba! Tiba Zimba, Director of Reach Girls in Malawi, got married in May. We wish her and her husband much happiness and partnership.



4. Be a Pineapple! Musa Semakula of Kakuuto Development Initiative (KADI) in central Uganda posted this meme in our SIA Partners group chat, as encouragement and also to highlight their pineapple farm. KADI Members have planted over 400 pineapple suckers as a revenue stream for their community work. They’ve also shared some suckers and provided training for another SIA Partner in Uganda, Great Lakes Peace Center.



5. “Let’s Have Confidence in Ourselves” This is the name of the new SIA-funded training project run by Charité Sans Frontières in Burundi. 20 people attended to learn pig breeding and to become technical advisors for CSF’s savings and loan circles.

6. Making Samosas with Kiserem Epilepsy Foundation!

“Thank you for organizing the online samosa-making workshop,” wrote Molly Shaw. “This sharing of kindness and skills, bringing together people who are looking out for each other, shines so strongly in your work with SIA.” These cooking workshops are a nice way to learn about Kenyan culture and connect with SIA Partners. We hope you’ll join next time!



See a full list of our grants and amazing partners:

www.spiritinaction.org/current-grant-partners

Protecting Human Rights for All Ugandans

Universal Love Alliances's motto, "Love me just as I am"

In May, the Ugandan legislature passed a strong anti-LGBTQ bill, criminalizing gay relations. Even though President Museveni has yet to sign the bill into law, the fervor created by politicians and church leaders discussing the issue has **already led to increased violence and discrimination** toward the LGBTQ population in Uganda.

For SIA Partner Universal Love Alliance (ULA), which advocates for LGBTQ rights, the crisis is close to home. Families and landlords, nervous about helping LGBTQ people, are kicking people out, and ULA is getting many requests for food and temporary shelter. SIA has used some of our emergency funds to help them respond to needs in the community. **"There is a lot of fear,"** say Samson, ULA leader. "LGBTQ people don't know what will happen or if they'll be targeted. We hope that in six months, we'll be able to see where things land and chart a new path ahead."

While trying to help with immediate needs in the community, Samson and ULA also work within the system to **create a safer Uganda for everyone**. ULA has friends within the police force and in one of the government ministries who are on call to help out in a crisis. When I was in Uganda in November 2022, I met with some of the brave faith leaders who are sharing messages about unconditional love and acceptance of all of God's children in their sermons.

Spirit in Action honors the worth and dignity of each person. We value being a space where each person can bring their unique self to the group, and **we celebrate when people with many beliefs, life expressions, and cultures can work together peacefully**. We believe that all people have the right to safety, including LGBTQ Ugandans. Please pray for justice and safety, and do all you can to advocate for everyone's human rights.



The Progress Flag is an update of the Rainbow pride flag . It includes a chevron representing LGBTQ communities of color, the Transgender Pride Flag, and the intersex community.

In the news...



Heavy rainfall in April led to **flooding and landslides in western Uganda**. SIA Grant Partner Great Lakes Peace Center (GLPC) reports that 17 people have died and many families have lost homes in their area. GLPC is rallying for an **emergency response**, and SIA will contribute to help with those efforts! They appreciate your prayers for the recovery and healing.

Left: SIA Board President Kathleen King with GLPC leaders in November 2022, crossing the now-flooded river in Kasese Uganda.

Read an opinion piece by Samson and see a video of him discussing the issue here: bit.ly/lgbt-uganda

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The Gathering Place

Flaming Chalice Burundi's Community Center



Above: Women's groups meet at the community center. **Below:** Six university students in Bujumbura, Burundi, use a computer for the first time during a Flaming Chalice training session.

Afternoons and weekends, the Ryansoro Community Center is buzzing with activity. Women's savings groups meet on the shaded patio, teens watch soccer games and news about the war in Ukraine on the only tv in the community, and men gather for conversation and to drink soda. The center, built by Flaming Chalice Burundi, is the first of its kind in this remote village.

Flaming Chalice secured multiple donors for the construction costs but still needed support for the salaries for their dedicated local employees. SIA knows that to be impactful, grassroots organizations need to retain good staff, so we have committed to funding Flaming Chalice's

administration costs for another three years. They've already reported that our admin support has helped them attract other donors for their programs.

Flaming Chalice's next big project is to build a guesthouse beside the Community Center. The village is very isolated, and when people come for work with the community, whether from the government or other organizations, there is no place to stay. The guesthouse will fill that need, and provide accommodation to Tanya when she visits in July! The guesthouse will also be a source of income for the community work.

In addition to the community center, Flaming Chalice runs youth entrepreneurship mentoring, poultry rearing, computer skills, and refugee support programs.



SIA Visits Malawi, Burundi, and Rwanda this July!

Join Tanya on a Zoom from Burundi on July 8th.

On July 1st, Tanya Cothran, will head to East Africa for a three-week trip. African Advisory Board Members Naomi Ayot Oyaro and Mwibutsa Fulgence Ndagijimanayiburundi will join her as they **meet with nine of SIA's grant partners** to see the impact of their work in the community. These visits are mutually beneficial, deepening the understanding and trust between grant-giver and program implementor.

Tanya will host a Zoom conversation from Bujumbura, Burundi on Saturday, July 8th at 9:30am PDT (12:30pm EDT). Sign on to hear stories from the trip up to that point! **Check your email** in early July or visit www.spiritinaction.org/zoom-july for more information!

This graph compares the size of the U.S. and East Africa. Burundi and Rwanda are some of the smallest countries in Africa.



Thank you to our generous supporters!

We gratefully acknowledge those who have contributed to SIA September 1, 2022 - May 12, 2023.

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Teaching Alternatives to Violence

Empowering communities to build peace in Kenya



Above: Romano Iluku (left), leads one of the team-building exercises with workshop participants.

Below: e-CATS shares encouraging messages to build communication skills.

Women in the informal settlements of Nairobi, Kenya, face daily threats to their safety. Domestic violence is common, and recent political demonstrations have brought destruction close to home. Empowering Communities as Actors for Transforming Societies (e-CATS), a long-time SIA Partner, is hosting Listening Circles and Alternative to Violence workshops for 32 women who play a significant role in solving home and community conflict.

During the day-long workshop, participants learned about and practiced conflict prevention, creative conflict resolution, trust-building, clear communication, and cooperation. “Everyone is learning from everyone,” says workshop coordinator Romano Iluku. “We thought people might get bored. But people were so interested and looked forward to each new activity.”

At the end of the training, each participant was given a piece of paper to write something encouraging to fellow participants. “Woow, they loved the exercise,” says workshop co-host Jack Owuor, “I was thrilled too. This is a very positive change in collaboration.”

Originally, e-CATS was going to host ten workshops with different groups but seeing the excitement and interest, they decided instead to do several workshops with the same group of people, giving them in-depth and advanced training so they can be true leaders of non-violence in their community.

SIA supports several grassroots organizations in Nairobi, and we’re so pleased to see the ways they are collaborating to combine efforts on their shared goals of empowerment and peace building.

LEARN TO LISTEN

Effective communication starts with listening. Let's learn to listen to others and understand their perspectives. It's important to create a safe space for everyone to express themselves

E-CATS.ORG

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Business Success for Lucy Supreme Ice Pop Shop in Nairobi, Kenya

Lucy Njeri, age 25, is the proud owner and manager of Supreme Ice Pop shop in the informal settlement of Korogocho in Nairobi, Kenya. Before she owned her shop, Lucy and her two children would eat only one meal per day unless she could pick up work washing someone's clothes in the nearby wealthy neighborhood.

Lucy was selected to join the SIA Small Business Fund, and during the business training workshop, she decided to **use her \$250 grant to sell ice cream** to people walking along the roadside. She bought a stock of different ice cream flavors, a cooler, and hired a freezer from a friend.

A year later, Lucy is a **local success story!** She can pay rent and school fees for her son



and niece, and they can always eat two meals per day. **Looking toward the future, Lucy joined a savings "chama"** – a local savings club with other entrepreneurs – with the hope of one day buying a freezer and expanding the business.

When local SIA coordinator Dorcas Okoti visited Lucy last month, she found her looking happy and the children looking healthy.

"I am thankful for this grant," Lucy told Dorcas. "Before, I had to work for other people to provide for my family, and what I earned wasn't enough. **Now I**

am self-employed and can provide for my family and save for the future."



SPRING & SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Tanya Cothran, Executive Director

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Support entrepreneurs in eastern Africa with a donation to SIA today: www.spiritinaction.org/donate