



In Our Own Words

Super Shoe Shop

In Our Own Words
is a series of reports written by people in Africa who have received assistance from
Tools for Self Reliance and Partners.

The Super Shoe Shop ~ Tamale Ghana

In a small side street in Tamale, along side a busy primary school, lies the Super Shoe Shop.

This thriving small business belongs to John Iddi Neindoo and was established in 1977.




John learnt his trade back in 1962 to help support his family. In 1977 he took the plunge and opened his own shop.

Now his popular business involves the making and repairing of a range of footwear. All shoes are made to fit and to ensure this, customers are asked to stand on a piece of paper to have their feet drawn around! John and the apprentices also turn their hands to the repair of any leather goods.

Supporting young people with disabilities

In his first two years John established an apprentice scheme, which provides training for young people with disabilities. Since 1995 he has trained 38 apprentices.

The Aims of Super Shoe

-  To supplement the limited training opportunities being provided for young disabled people in Northern Ghana.
-  To encourage the community to provide assistance in terms of resources, facilities and services for the rehabilitation of people with disabilities.
-  To help educate the public about what people with disabilities can do to earn their own living.



John shows his young apprentice the tricks of the trade

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Highs and Lows at Super Shoe

Keeping his business going has not always been easy for John as he tells us :

On 8th February 1982 the shop was destroyed by a fire in the Tamale central market fire and I was totally out of equipment to work with.

In 1984 friends and sympathizers supported me with a finishing and patching machine and also with sewing machines and tools so I could start again.



↓↑ Apprentices hard at work in the Super Shoe Shop

Support from Tools for Self Reliance

In 1993 a friend from Britain gave me the TFSR address. In the following year I had visitors from TFSR and then in 1995 my first kit of tools arrived.

The tools were a great help as I was able to train a lot of young boys who went on to find jobs and to earn their own living.

Since then I have received more tools which I have been able to pass on to my apprentices to help them set up their own businesses. I have also received a leather sewing machine which is very useful.

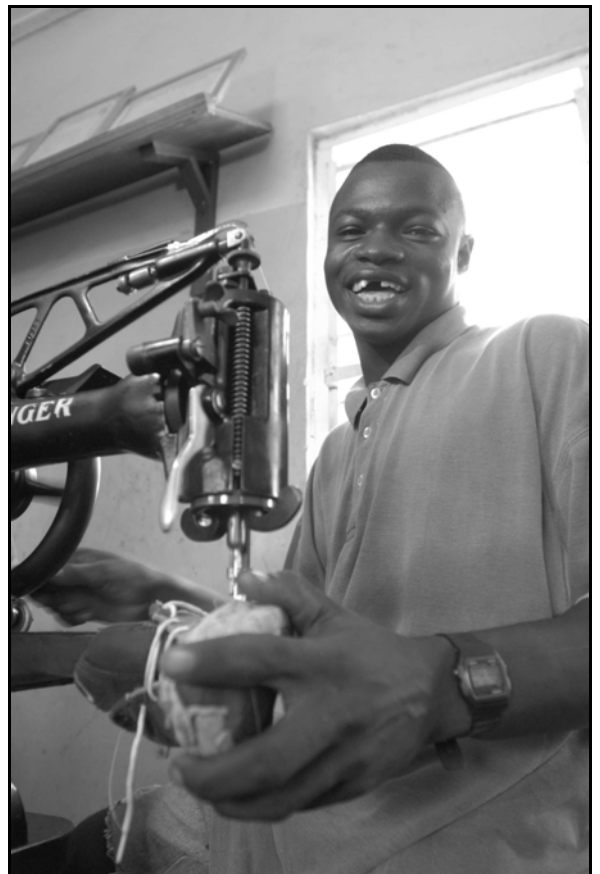
The skills and experience I have acquired over the years continue to encourage many young boys to come to my shop for training.

I wish I could train more, but a the lack of funds to purchase enough materials does make this difficult.

There is no doubt that lots and lots of people in Ghana have benefited from TFSR.

It is the tools that made it possible for me to train all these people and they are in turn training others and many more will follows as the years go by.

**Long live Super Shoe
Long live TFSR!**





Senior Apprentice at Supershoe ~ Kofi Osman

In 1996 I was in my home town Bopeiy West Gonja in the northern region.

One day I said to myself that I would need to learn a trade to help the family and myself in the future.

I saw many disabled people begging but I was never interested in begging and there was nothing for me to learn in my village so I had to look for my lorry fare to Tamale the Northern Regional Capital, to look for work.

In June 1996 I arrived in Tamale to stay with a friend.

One day I was talking with someone and he told me about his uncle who helps the disabled, but he did not know what type of help he gave. So I decided to visit this man, and it was Mr Neindoo. He explained what he does and offered to train me.

Now I have almost finished my training and hope that I will soon be able to set up my own shop and then start to train other people like me.

Tools for Self Reliance ~ Seeing Artisans in Action

During a visit to Ghana in 2004 to meet with our partner ADD I was able to go and visit John and his apprentices at Super Shoe. After a short drive from the ADD office we turned off the main road onto a bumpy side road down to the front of the workshop.

Super Shoe is a very unassuming place from the outside, but once inside you see apprentices surrounded by shoes and bags for repairs. There is also a repetitious clicking of the sewing machines being used to stitch up shoes. The display cabinet at the front of the workshop holds an impressive array of well made sandals and shoes.

John was charming to talk to and clearly felt very passionate about the work he was doing and the training he offered. He told us about the problems he faces, and how TFSR could help by sending small start up kits for his graduating apprentices and extra equipment for his workshop. Since returning to TFSR we have been able to respond to his requests for this help.

Before leaving I placed an order for a pair of sandals ~ and yes I did stand on a piece of paper to have my feet drawn round! The sandals were a perfect fit.

Sarah Ingleby ~ Partnership Development Officer

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Action on Disability and Development

ADD works for positive change, with a vision of a world where all disabled people are able to participate as fully as they choose at every level of society.

In Ghana areas in the north are the poorest and least developed. Like TFSR, ADD has prioritised these regions in their work.

ADD Ghana works via its partner organisations which are, Ghana Association of the Blind (GAB), Ghana Society of the Physically Disabled (GSPD), Ghana National Association of the Deaf (GNAD), Women with Disabilities, and Parents and Guardians of Children with Disabilities.

Via ADD Ghana, TFSR supplies the tools needed to give disabled artisans in Northern Ghana their pride and allow them to assume a recognised place in society.



Tools for Self Reliance aims to empower artisans working in developing countries so that they can better participate in the development of themselves and their communities.

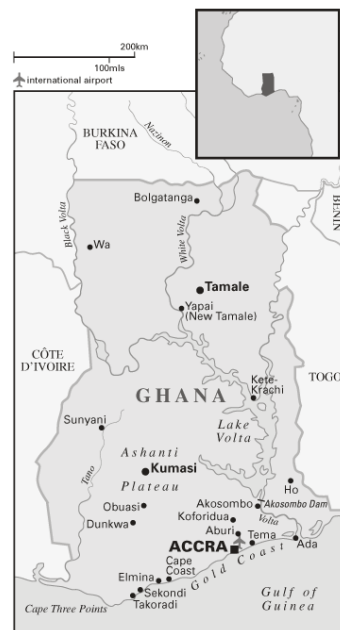
To achieve this we work with local partner organisations to provide hand tools and skills training, and by raising awareness in the UK of the causes of poverty.

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