



Blacksmith training: A step in the right direction

Blacksmiths of all ages in Rukwa region, Tanzania, have been showing that it really is true that you are never too old to learn new ideas. They have been attending a week-long blacksmithing training course

organised by the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO). This is part of an integrated programme of skills development, tool provision and marketing for artisans in the region, which is being run by SIDO Rukwa in collaboration with Tools For Self Reliance.

"Blacksmith training is the right step towards rural industrialisation."

Mr Ngakoka, District Executive Director, Nkasi District

Over the past year 96 blacksmiths, ranging in age from 19 to 69, have undergone intensive training in areas such as ferrous metal identity, fine finishing of products, heat treatment and rust prevention. They have made their own products with an

emphasis on quality and, to ensure that lessons learnt aren't forgotten, each blacksmith has been provided with a manual on product finishing and marketing.

These skills were in use when 40 representatives attended the Southern Highlands trade exhibition in Sumbawanga. Products on display were mainly agricultural and household goods but there was also a tricycle, nails and a blacksmith's fan. Blacksmiths from Mbeya and Iringa regions also exhibited, offering an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences.

The project has included teaching basic business skills such as record keeping, costing and pricing, and quality control and marketing. It has also provided tools to certain groups and a regional artisan network association has been formed. The process of getting the association registered is underway.

Sarah Ingleby (Partnership Development Officer) and Jon Dunkley (Workshop & Volunteer Manager) will be visiting Tanzania in March to review the project and bring back more stories.

Networking gives positive results say Tanzanian blacksmiths

Over half of Tanzania's blacksmiths see networking as an important add-on to formal training as a method of acquiring new skills. This is according to a survey carried out by our partner the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO).

The benefits of networking aren't limited to training. It allows collective marketing of products and services, so generating more work. In addition it makes it easier for organisations such as SIDO to address the needs of individual artisans. It can also assist artisans to access micro-credit facilities.

The evaluation exercise was undertaken in October 2005 and targeted blacksmiths in four regions: Dodoma, Singida, Kigoma and Kagera.



Tanzanian president pledges economic reform

Following his landslide election victory in December, new Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete has promised to continue the economic reforms set in motion by his predecessor. He will also make creating jobs and tackling poverty a priority.

Training workshops in Tanzania

In Tanzania Tools For Self Reliance will be shortly conducting a series of technical and entrepreneurial training workshops for artisans in the Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Tabora regions.

"We welcome this decision to conduct training for artisans since the skills that they accrue will enable them to make efficient use of the tools donated", says Isidori Kiyenze, Tools For Self Reliance's Desk Officer in Tanzania.

Networking in Uganda

Staff and trustees from the Network of Local Artisans (NOLA) will be able to run NOLA's artisan network more effectively in the future. This is the principal outcome of a recent capacity-building programme held in Kasese.

The training was wide ranging and topics included networking, advocacy, leadership, fundraising, book-keeping, reporting, project management and strategic planning. The training was the result of a needs assessment carried out in 2005, as reported previously in *Forging Links*.

Following the training NOLA has come up with a number of proposals, one of which is to make capacity building training available to all of its members.



New refurbishing centre for Kibaale, Uganda

We are working with our partner Uganda Rural Development Training (URDT) to set up a tool refurbishing centre in Kibaale District. The aim is to empower the local artisan sector with refurbishing skills which will give them an additional source of income. It will also enable us to send shipments of unrefurbished tools to the country, hence saving on refurbishing costs in the UK.

In order to help fine tune the project, and to ensure that implementation mechanisms are in place, programme staff from the UK will be visiting the country.



Artisans receive tools in Wa, Ghana

Artisans in Wa in northern Ghana have received their toolkits at a presentation ceremony organised by our partner organisation, the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP).

The handing over of tools is the final piece in the tool sending jigsaw, and usually takes place during a special ceremony. According to Sarah Ingleby, Partner Development Officer:

"The formality of the occasion helps in making the whole process accountable for those involved, but is also a time of joy and celebration."

At Wa there were speeches as the tools were handed over, and the local press and dignitaries were in attendance.



"It is laudable that the ultimate objective of TFSR is to help beneficiaries of the scheme to see it as an empowerment for self employment."

Director of Social Welfare, Upper West Region

New projects in Ghana

As a first step towards the fulfilment of our long-term vision, Tools For Self Reliance is piloting three new projects in Ghana.

“These projects are a result of our visit to Ghana last year, which gave us the opportunity to assess the situation on the ground and design some new projects with several new partner organisations.”

Adnan Laeeq, Programme Development Officer

TRAX Ghana

In the Northern and Upper East regions, we are conducting a project in collaboration with TRAX Ghana to empower community blacksmiths to produce, repair and maintain agricultural tools that are suited to local needs and conditions. The project includes the establishment of four community-owned blacksmith workshops, training of blacksmiths and the formation of a regional blacksmiths' network to facilitate information and skills exchange.

According to Raymond Darku, Director of TRAX Ghana, these projects “will go a long way in enhancing the agricultural productivity of small-scale farmers and will make positive contributions towards the development of this region”.

Pro-Link

In the Greater Accra region, we have joined hands with Pro-Link to establish a vocational training centre for street youth. The project aims to provide employable skills to 100 young people annually in order to encourage positive life choices and reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour and promiscuity. The project also has a component of HIV/AIDS education.

“This is somewhat uncharted territory for us since previously we have had no experience of working with young people but the elders of the area were extremely keen for us to undertake this project and given Pro-Link’s vast experience of youth development work we think they are ideal partners for such a venture”, says Sarah Ingleby, Partnership Development Officer.



Development Alternative Services Foundation

We have teamed up with the Development Alternative Services Foundation (DASF), a local consultancy firm based in Tamale, to conduct a comprehensive research study on the artisan sector in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions of the country.

The project will be followed by a capacity-building workshop for informal sector worker co-operatives and trade associations, enhancing their ability to safeguard the interests of their members. Francis Sanyare, Executive Secretary of DASF, expects that the project will enable Tools For Self Reliance to improve its monitoring and evaluation systems in Ghana.

We hope to apply the lessons learnt to other countries.

“We will be closely monitoring the progress and impact of these new projects in Ghana, and if all goes well we plan to replicate the best practices in Tanzania and Uganda.”

Jan Kidd, Chief Executive Officer.

AGM

The 2006 AGM will be held at the Pennine Camphill Community in Wakefield on Saturday 17 June. There will be a full day of activities for the special "celebrate 25" year, with a guest from one of our partner organisations in Africa. The day will conclude with a barn dance shared with a group from World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF). Contact Polly at info@tfsr.org for more information.

Regional days

We will be running some regional activity days for groups again this year. A sewing machine day is being held at Manchester Didsbury on Saturday 24 June. Watch this space for news of others.

Group visits

In January Group Support Workers Bob White and Rob Westcott took to the road on the first of this year's UK group visits. The initial stop was at Southwell TFSR who were celebrating their 5th birthday on the day of the visit.

The Southwell group, which meets in the town's methodist church and which according to group co-ordinator Bill Basford boasts the only church workbench in town, hosted a special birthday open evening for existing and potential new members. As well as 5 years, the group is also celebrating a number of other milestones including 35 kits to Africa, £1000 from sales and 2 van loads of unrefurbished tools dispatched to Netley Marsh. Other groups visited were Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham University, which counts university students among its active members.

"The group visits are an opportunity for us to meet volunteers around the UK, to pass on information and to listen to their ideas and concerns", says Rob Westcott.

"Although some groups have formed informal associations with each other, there is scope for strengthening ties between neighbouring groups for those that want to work together more closely. There are plenty of practical reasons why this is a good idea, for example collaborating on kits and sharing information. We would like to support groups to do this more effectively in the future and we will be looking into ways of achieving this."



Southwell TFSR group members with the remains of their birthday cake!



Coventry TFSR group



Leicester TFSR group



Nottingham University TFSR group

Netley Marsh Training Group

Jo Palmer manages the Netley Marsh Training Group workshop. This venture, which is supported by Southampton Social Services and the city council, helps adults with learning difficulties find voluntary work and paid employment. Group members refurbish tools for the main Tools For Self Reliance workshop.

When we interviewed Jo, she was keen to explain more about the group and why it is such a hit with the volunteers.

What service do you provide?

We provide work experience for adults with a range of disabilities who live in or around Southampton. It is a full five-day service using different groups of 7 or 8 volunteers each day.

When did the group start?

The group started working at Tools For Self Reliance some 13–14 years ago.

Back in 2001, when I first started, City Limits Employment (where I work) only provided volunteers at Netley Marsh one day a week. We built it up to three days over time, but still had a waiting list. The five day service came about when we moved into our own workshop – the former sewing machine workshop – in August 2004.

How is it funded?

City Limits Employment secured European Social Fund backing to support adults attending Southampton Day Services to help them find employment and/or voluntary work.

What is your role?

From Monday to Friday I work with adults from the Day Service, including a group of young people with learning difficulties who are in the last year of school. They also get support from another staff member from City Limits

Employment who is looking at other employment/voluntary work options with them.

What do you like best about the role?

The clients benefit because the training group is a place where they can come and feel like they're part of a team. It's ideal for those who wish to do manual voluntary work and be with other people, and it helps to build their self-confidence.

What type of refurbishing work do the groups do?

The groups refurbish a wide variety of tools. This involves cleaning by hand. Some individuals are able to work on the machines independently under my general supervision. We are responsible for our own kit lists and the packing of the tools. We also do quality assurance checks on a regular basis. This involves checking kits from TFSR's refurbishing groups all over the country.



What do the volunteers get out of the work?

Our volunteers get a lot out of working for Tools For Self Reliance. Here are just some of the things they have said about working here:

"I like the work – especially the gritblasting." (Gary)

"We clean tools and make them look nice for people in Africa. ... The tools help people to build houses and schools ... they help people to move on in life and make communities." (Thursday group)

"It's about doing something for other people – it's about respect." (Lee Murray)

New look for website



The Tools For Self Reliance website is being revamped. The new website, which we intend to launch in March, is being completely redesigned to make it easier to use. It will also provide more comprehensive information and resources about the work we do.

On the new website you will be able to access latest news, a range of TFSR publications and other resources, and extended UK volunteering pages and information on our partner organisations. You will also be able to donate and shop online. The website address will remain the same, so if you haven't already, we suggest you bookmark www.tfsr.org now. We hope you like it and we welcome any comments you might have.

Workshop visit by Mayor

Councillor Edwina Cooke, the Mayor of Southampton, paid Netley Marsh a visit in January when she was given a guided tour of the workshop. She met staff and volunteers, and was clearly impressed by the work done and the effort of everyone involved.

"Thank you so much for inviting me to visit your interesting premises. I could not believe the organisation, the number of wonderful machines that people have learnt to use and the kindness to those who so need to be with people who obviously work hard to be part of the 'family'. I found the visit an eye opener having passed the premises many times and wondered what went on. It is a caring project but essentially a vital business well thought out and helping people to support themselves."

Councillor Edwina Cooke
The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Southampton



Stuart in the workshop at Netley Marsh

Last year the Mayor presented Stuart Hookey, one of the regular Netley Marsh volunteers, with a certificate under the Volunteer Certificate Scheme, a joint initiative by Southampton Voluntary Service and the city council. Stuart received his certificate after completing 100 hours of voluntary work with Tools For Self Reliance.

Campaign news

In 2006 Tools For Self Reliance will continue to campaign for trade justice, debt cancellation, more and better aid, and for more resources in the global battle against HIV/AIDS. Last year, the UK held the presidency of the G8 and the EU yet despite this, and a year of mass protest and lobbying under the Make Poverty History campaign, only limited gains were made.

Aid

In 2005 thanks to campaigns by ActionAid and others, the EU agreed to double overseas aid by 2010, with existing member states committing to the long-standing UN target of 0.7 GNP by 2015.

In 2006 ActionAid will be asking more donor governments to set a timetable for reaching 0.7%. Further details can be found at www.actionaid.org.uk

Trade

The hoped-for breakthrough at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks in Hong Kong in December 2005 failed to materialise.

In 2006 the world's poorest countries are also facing the threat of bilateral free trade agreements with the EU, the so-called Economic Partnership Agreements. These are designed to open up the markets of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to EU exports.

The Trade Justice Movement is pressing for fair trade in 2006 with a series of campaigns and will urge the UK Government to act to deliver trade justice. For further information go to www.tjm.org.uk

Debt

In 2005 the G8 recognised for the first time the principle of the cancellation of 100% of debt owed by the world's poorest countries. Campaigners have been urging politicians to adopt this principle for years.



There are many more countries still heavily in debt. In 2006 you can add your voice to the Jubilee Debt Campaign, which is pushing for extra debt relief under its Cut the Strings campaign, by visiting its website at www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS affects millions of people across Africa and yet even after the modest gains in 2005 less than 1% of those infected have access to the anti-retroviral treatment drugs they need to sustain and prolong their lives. This problem has yet to be adequately tackled at governmental level and at grass roots.

UNICEF is campaigning to increase children's access to education, healthcare and affordable drugs. Without these the AIDS pandemic is undermining poor countries' development. Further details can be found at www.unicef.org.uk/aids

The Stop Aids campaign is calling for treatment for all by 2010. To see how you can add your voice visit www.stopaidscampaign.org.uk

Dates for your Diary

March

6-19 March Fairtrade Fortnight

April

23 April London Marathon: come and support Dedj from singing group Segalula, who is running for Tools For Self Reliance

May

16 May Debt Day: A day of action on international debt across the UK

June

17 June AGM, Pennine Camphill Community, Wakefield
24 June Sewing machine day, Manchester

July

2 July British 10K London Run: support Carmen and the others. Contact info@tfsr.org

15-17 July G8 summit, St Petersburg

August

19 August TFSR Open Day at Netley Marsh



Run for fun in London

We are looking for five people to join our long-term volunteer Carmen Hoeping to run for Tools

For Self Reliance in London in July. Carmen is busy training for the British 10K London Run, which takes place on Sunday 2 July 2006.

The 10 kilometre course, situated in the heart of the capital, starts in Piccadilly outside the legendary Hard Rock Café on Hyde Park Corner. En route it takes in some famous views including those of the London Eye and the Tate Modern across the River Thames. The race finishes close to Downing Street, the official residence of British Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

Each entrant must raise a minimum of £35 in sponsorship, but we will help you to do this by giving you advice and a sponsorship pack. The race starts at 9.35 am and all runners must be able to finish the race within 2 hours. You have to be 15 years old or over to take part.

The organisers tell us that there will be a party atmosphere and it should be lots of fun.

If you would like to help us out by taking part please get in touch and we will send you further details.

Tel: 023 8086 9697

Email: info@tfsr.org

FORGING LINKS

The newsletter of Tools For Self Reliance

Netley Marsh, Southampton S040 7GY

Tel: 023 8086 9697

Fax: 023 8086 8544

Email: info@tfsr.org

Website: www.tfsr.org

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