

Tools

**FOR SELF  
RELIANCE**  
practical help for  
practical people

# Forging Links



## Refurbishing centre gets go ahead



*GIGDEV's Rahama Mohammed*

A sewing machine refurbishing centre is the centrepiece of a new Tools for Self Reliance project in northern Ghana. The centre will provide vital income for local training partner Girls Growth in Development (GIGDEV) as it pushes to become self-sufficient.

The refurbishing workshop, a conversion of an existing building, will enable local seamstresses and tailors to get their machines repaired and to keep them in good working order.

Rahama Mohammed, a GIGDEV trainer who did a sewing machine refurbishment training course at Netley Marsh in 2007, said:

“We welcome the idea of a refurbishing centre as there is a clear need on the local market.”

The sewing machines leave the UK in full working order, and with regular basic maintenance can last for years. However, a periodic full service is also necessary to keep them in good health and avoid problems developing, particularly with bobbin winders, cases, tension springs and handles. This is where the new refurbishing centre will help.

The centre will also offer skills training and jobs to the local people who help run it, as well as enlisting the help of past-students as part-time volunteers. The centre promises other benefits too. For example, it will provide a space for trainers, trainees and artisans to meet and exchange ideas.

GIGDEV hopes to make a return on the refurbishing centre by charging people to use the facilities. The centre will be run alongside other income generating activities on site, which include a shop, cold store and nursery school.

### What's inside

Find out what we're doing to celebrate our 30th birthday and how you can get involved.

# Bee keeping offers new opportunity

**A small group of furniture makers in Mpanda, Tanzania is applying its business skills to tap into a lucrative new market.**

Salezi Kanyuka and his colleagues are branching out into making beehives. They are making a real go of it and have recently received an order for 100 beehives from their local development council. But it is the group's ingenuity that most impressed Jon Dunkley, Tools for Self Reliance's Operations Manager, on a recent visit.

Salezi realised that for such a large number of beehives he would need to make a lot of frames very quickly. He could have cut the wood by hand and made the slots using the plough plane that he received as part of the furniture making kit we gave him, but this would have been too slow. Although he didn't have any machinery, he did have access to an electricity supply. So he made himself a table saw and used this to cut and slot the wood for the frames instead.

Bee keeping is a fast increasing business in Tanzania, as it is in most of the other countries we work in. It is profitable, finds a ready market and is relatively low cost to start and operate. It also helps to maintain the environment, which is important since it is in the bee keepers' interests to ensure trees and foraging areas are kept intact.



Our partner in Tanzania the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) is training local people in bee keeping, honey production and marketing, plus giving work to local tailoring groups to manufacture the protective clothing.

Kanyuka Furniture Group has grown so fast since receiving the tools, training and new orders that Salezi has moved to larger premises. The effect on the carpenters' personal lives is even greater: one member has been able to buy some farming land and is growing rice. As a man of property, and now renting his own home, he is hoping to marry shortly. Salezi is also looking further afield: he has opened a pharmacy shop in the village.

Another member, Charles John, is now able to afford rent on his own home. He said: "We would like to send our thanks and blessings to everyone who supported the project."

## Auction of promises

**Tools for Self Reliance is holding a 30th birthday Auction of Promises at Kuti's Royal Thai Pier Restaurant on Thursday 28 October to help small businesses in Africa.**

It will be a stunning evening with an indulgent three-course Thai buffet for 100 guests at one of the most attractive and unusual venues in Southampton. This will be followed by an auction of promises of items that money can't buy. Tickets cost £35.

All the money raised will go to support the provision of tools and vocational and life skills training on one or more projects in Africa. Just £1,200 will train six young people for a year in tailoring, carpentry or blacksmithing and provide them with essential tools to set up their own businesses.

If you would like to buy tickets, donate a 'promise' or sponsor one of the twelve dinner tables we would love to hear from you.



## Project Malawi on the BBC



Lydia, the proud owner of a restored Singer sewing machine



BBC TV cameras tracked the progress of a donated Singer sewing machine on its epic 8,000 km journey by sea from the UK to Malawi to celebrate our 30th birthday. The resulting two short films were screened on BBC's *South Today* in March.

The recipient of the sewing machine was Lydia Kamba (18), a trainee at Samalani Orphan Care Centre on the outskirts of the capital city, Lilongwe. The machine, a precious family heirloom, was donated by Lindy Bradley from Winchester. "I am thrilled that Lydia has the machine and is so happy to have it," said Lindy.

From Winchester the sewing machine travelled to our workshops at Netley Marsh where it was restored to full working order before being dispatched to Lilongwe along with a container of other sewing machines and tools.

For Lydia, the sewing machine, together with the skills and business training she received, is a turning point. She now has the skills to earn a living by making and selling clothes in the local market. "I would like to thank the person who gave me this sewing machine."

You can see the films again on our website at [www.tfsr.org](http://www.tfsr.org)



## Join our celebration

What do you get if you mix some cooks from Dorset, 200 sausages, a very large bag of potatoes and several metres of red and white bunting? Answer: a St George's Day feast with a difference. Elizabeth Judd and her friends from the Inner Wheel Club of Wareham did just that to support small businesses in Africa.

Serving up a delicious first course of bangers 'n' mash followed by apple pie, Liz transformed her sitting room, lounge, dining room and hall into a restaurant for the day, bedecked with red and white bunting and flags. She said, "The idea came about following a talk by Tools for Self Reliance last year."

Wareham's St George's Day banquet is one of a whole series of events being organised this year to celebrate our 30th birthday.

'Join Our Celebration' was launched in January. Please help us raise money to pay for our projects in Africa. You can raise anything from £30 to £3,000 by throwing a party and asking your guests to make a small donation. Your 'party' can be anything you like – a picnic, a barbecue, a beach party, garden party or anniversary bash. To find out more visit our website at [www.tfsr.org](http://www.tfsr.org) or call us on 023 8086 9697.



# Tools for Self Reliance 1980–2010

In 30 years Tools for Self Reliance and its partners have helped change tens of thousands of lives. Not only has this helped thousands of small businesses in Africa grow, but it has also turned people's lives around in other ways too. Here are the stories of some of those who have experienced big changes.

## Tarzan Nasara, Ghana

Sewing machine repair specialist Tarzan Nasara has worked with Tools for Self Reliance's partners in Ghana on and off for the best part of 20 years. Since retiring he has also become a sort of unofficial Tools for Self Reliance volunteer in Ghana. He retrained and now dispenses his sewing machine expertise at a small workshop where he teaches refurbishing skills. Tarzan's story shows how, with a just a little help, someone living with disability in Africa can overcome the odds.

We first encountered Tarzan, a skilled leatherworker, in 1991. He went on to work as a trainer for former partner, the Centre for the Development of People, in Wa. Years later, he teamed up with another partner Action on Disability and Development to teach sewing machine repair and maintenance, and more recently with current partner Girls Growth and Development (GIGDEV) in Bolgatanga, where he still teaches today.

Living with a physical disability in Ghana is tough. Apart from the obvious practical difficulties, there is also the stigma associated with having a disability. Confined to a wheelchair since being struck down by polio as a child, Tarzan earned the respect of his local community through his achievements as both a trainer and a campaigner for people living with disability in Ghana.

*"I would ask people to support Tools for Self Reliance because they really are helping poor people."*

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## Kwatampora workshop, Uganda

We revisited the Kwatampora carpentry workshop in Kasese, Uganda in 2009 and reflected on the remarkable progress it had made in the 10 years since receiving tools and training from Tools for Self Reliance. With money in the bank, the group is turning its attention to the next 10 years, and how it can invest in the long-term future of the business. Luke Caley reports.

Over-felling of local trees for firewood and charcoal is decreasing the availability of timber, and this is a real threat to businesses that are dependent on timber as a raw material. Kwatampora's solution has been to

use some of its profits to invest in land and to plant trees on it – in this case fast growing eucalyptus.

The group's manager Francis Tinka Abwooli is also aware of market trends and has noticed an increasing demand for metal products, especially doors and gates. He has retrained some of his carpenters so they can also do metalwork fabrication. He would also like to relocate to a larger space to accommodate this diversification.



Artisans in Africa face tremendous challenges in the form of poor infrastructure, especially roads and defunct railways, arcane bureaucracy, and small and intensively competitive markets for their products. On top of this, family health and other domestic concerns can divert attention and resources away from a business, leaving no money to reinvest. However, Kwatampora's story demonstrates what can be achieved with the right business training and mindset.

## Vijana Moto Moto, Tanzania

Furniture maker Vijana Moto Moto (VMM) is a really good example of how a struggling business has flourished as a result of the right package of support. VMM received a joinery kit from Tools for Self Reliance in 2004 and business training from Tanzanian partner the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO). Tools for Self Reliance's partnership development officer Sarah Ingleby met chairman Ramadhani Bwanga in 2007 during an evaluation visit.

"Since Tools for Self Reliance helped us with tools we have expanded our product range and we now export to neighbouring countries. We have also decided to move to bigger premises. The plan is to use our current workshop to display our goods. We are getting support with our business. For example, we have received a low-interest loan and advice from SIDO to help with building up our product range and market our goods. Oh, and we won first prize at the Central Zone Trade Show."

VMM is using its position to lobby for a better deal on things like access to raw materials for small businesses in Tabora and the surrounding area.

"We sell to individuals and businesses. We even export to customers in Kenya, Burundi and Tanzania," said Ramadhani.



Despite these successes, 'Moto Moto' (which means "youth" in Swahili) still faces big challenges. Getting its products seen and getting its goods to its customers for example. The next town on from Tabora is a two-hour bone shaking ride along a dirt road.

Here is Ramadhani again: "When there is a tarmac road between Tabora and Nzega it will make a big difference to our business as we will be able to transport our products much more easily."

All in all, this is a great success story and we were impressed by the enthusiasm and confidence of the people we met.

## Nottingham students build bridges



The students (Corrine and Sian 3rd and 4th from left, seated) and some of the joinery tools they have restored.

Thursday 12 August 2010 is the UN's International Youth Day which kicks off a year-long celebration of young people. This aims to foster understanding, engage participation and build bridges between young people around the world.

The Nottingham group of Tools for Self Reliance is helping to do just that. Many of its volunteers are studying for full-time degrees. Corrine Kirk (22) and Sian Griffiths (21) split their time between the lecture hall and a tool refurbishing workshop on Nottingham University campus. They laid down their tools to tell us what drives them to refurbish chisels in their spare time.

Corrine says, "I've been volunteering with Tools for Self Reliance for about a year now. I'm doing a Masters in philosophy and wanted to do something different in my spare time, but didn't know what. I found out about this opportunity to volunteer through our Student Community Action office."

"It's really enjoyable. It's so satisfying doing something this practical. There are short term gains too. You get the satisfaction of making something. It's a totally new experience for me. It's good to know you're doing something really, really rewarding."

Sian, a 3rd year biology student, started tool refurbishing last October. She says, "The work is flexible. I like woodwork and design so I enjoy doing something that is practical and 'hands on'. Sending toolkits to where they're wanted in Africa gives people the means to support themselves."

Ex group coordinator Alex Baxter is one of three 'older hands' who oversee the student volunteers. Working alongside Stephen Barton of the Student Community Action office they help ensure there's a steady stream of new recruits. As Alex says, "We have to recruit new volunteers each year, who all have to be introduced to the joys of rust removal."

The formula seems to be a winning one. The Nottingham University group has been in operation since 1981, making it one of the oldest volunteer groups we have.



INTERNATIONAL  
**YEAR OF  
YOUTH**  
AUGUST 2010-2011  
OUR YEAR OUR VOICE



## Please help us now

For every £1 we receive we are able to put tools and training worth £3 into the hands of artisans in Africa, so we represent great value for money. But we are facing some tough times and we need your help. One of the most effective ways of giving is by regular donation but there are many other ways you can help us too, such as holding a fundraising event or raising money by selling off unwanted tools.

# Aid fit for the 21st century

The need for good quality 21st century aid is more important now than ever given the spread of the global economic crisis to developing countries. So says a report from Oxfam entitled *21st Century Aid: Recognizing Success and Tackling Failure*. How is this relevant to Tools for Self Reliance and our supporters?

Tools for Self Reliance helps its partner organisations in Africa make the most of the resources they have at their disposal. For example, through our partner networks in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Zambia we encourage our partners to collaborate with each other so that they can achieve more, such as being able to share training skills and access cheaper raw materials for the artisans they work with.

Critics, says the report, argue that some aid is siphoned off through corruption and so never actually reaches its target. Tools for Self Reliance works with reliable partner organisations to minimise the chance of this happening. The money you donate is used for its intended purposes – to enable hard-working people in Africa to earn an income. In addition

we constantly monitor and evaluate our projects to ensure that the quality of the training remains high, and that the tools reach their intended recipients and are used appropriately.

While Tools for Self Reliance cannot do anything on its own about the structural causes of inequality and poverty which the report highlights, there are other things we can do. For example, we raise awareness among our supporters of the causes of poverty and take part in campaigns that are relevant to our partners in Africa, such as Stand Up and Take Action Against Poverty. There is another argument too. The possibility exists that as more people get into work, which is clearly something Tools for Self Reliance supports, more tax revenue will be generated. With reforms in the tax system and a more equitable relationship between citizen and state, this should have the effect of reducing poverty.

*All of Oxfam's policy papers and reports can be downloaded from [www.oxfam.org/en/policy](http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy)*

## Stay cool this summer, wear the flag

Now the warmer weather is here, now is the perfect time to don one of our super cool Tools for Self Reliance T-shirts. If you don't have one you'll have to hurry, as stocks are running out fast.

**Unisex cotton in choice of white, navy, classic red or sky blue: £8.50**

**Women's cotton in choice of white, black or light gold: £11**

**Unisex polo shirt with pocket and embroidered logo in choice of white or navy blue: £13.50.**

All shirts come in a range of sizes. Please phone us for availability (023 8086 9697). All prices include postage and packaging within the UK and will normally be dispatched within seven days of receiving your order.





## Can you help us make a difference?

### Yes, I would like to make a regular gift

I would like to make a regular gift to Tools for Self Reliance of £..... monthly / quarterly / annually until further notice and debit my account.

My account No.

Bank sort code

Starting on ..... /..... /..... Please allow at least one month between our receiving this form and the date of the first payment.

To: Bank manager (my branch name and address):

.....  
 .....  
 .....

Bank manager: Please pay to HSBC, 45 Commercial Road, Totton SO40 3AH, sort code 40-44-25, for the credit of Tools for Self Reliance a/c 01120808.

### Yes, I would like to make a gift today

I would like to make a donation of £ .....

I enclose a:  cheque  postal order  charity gift voucher. Please make cheques payable to **Tools for Self Reliance**.

Please charge my debit/credit card. Card type: Mastercard / Visa / Delta / Switch / Maestro / CAF Charity Card (delete as appropriate).

Or call us on 023 8086 9697 to make a debit or credit card donation. You can also donate online at [www.tfsr.org](http://www.tfsr.org)

#### Card details

Card holder's name: .....

Card No.

3 digit security code ..... Issue No. (Switch/Maestro) .....

(We will not keep this information)

Valid from ..... /..... /..... Expiry date ..... /..... /.....

#### My contact details

Title..... First name.....

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Please tick here if you **do not** wish to receive further information about our work.

I am a UK taxpayer. Please claim Gift Aid\* on my donations.

Signature ..... Date ..... /..... /.....

Return to: Tools for Self Reliance, FREEPOST SCE6012, Southampton SO40 7BF.

\*For every £1 donated with Gift Aid, Tools for Self Reliance receives 28p extra from the taxman – tax you have already paid. If you have paid income or capital gains tax equal to your gift, please tick the Gift Aid box to make your donation go even further.



## Palace concert treat

Visitors to Wells in Somerset were given a rare treat in March. The Bishop's Palace, home of the Bishops of Bath and Wells for the last 800 years, opened its doors to the public for a special charity concert organised by the Inner Wheel Club of Wells. The event raised over £1,000 for Tools for Self Reliance and generated a huge amount of publicity locally.

The idea for the concert followed a talk given by Tools for Self Reliance's Weston-Super-Mare & District group in 2009. Peter Hughes, the group's coordinator said, "After hearing about the work we do for Tools for Self Reliance the Inner Wheel Club of Wells adopted us as their charity."

Retired head teacher Peter and fellow volunteer Peter Wright regularly give talks to a wide range of groups and clubs, including Rotary Clubs, Women's Institutes, church groups, the University of the Third Age, Poppy Club, Probus Club and local primary schools. When they're not doing that, they're busy putting up posters at their local community



café and elsewhere. This was the first time their efforts paid off in this way.

Reproduced with permission of the Palace Trust

## Forging Links

You may have noticed some small differences in this edition of *Forging Links*. We have a new giving form to make it easier to make a regular donation to Tools for Self Reliance. We have also introduced a new colour scheme which will rotate during the year.

### Forging Links

#### The newsletter of Tools for Self Reliance

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Charity Number 280437

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