



**TOOLS FOR
SELF RELIANCE**
Practical help for practical people since 1980



This year marks the 40th anniversary of Tools for Self Reliance. Your special edition of Forging Links delves into the history and shares stories of change from the people you are supporting today and how you can continue to change people's lives in the future.

FORGING LINKS NEWSLETTER SPRING 2020

THE GIFT THAT LASTS A LIFETIME

They don't make tools like they used to

A Stanley plane passed down between generations is a quality tool which equips a carpenter for decades. Those who kindly donate their tools to our projects know that they will continue to be well used when they are placed in the hands of newly trained and ambitious carpenters, like Idrissu, Fuseni, Suleman and Alhassan pictured above.

Vulnerable to climate change

Idrissu, Alhassan, Fuseni and Suleman, before their training in 2018 had never picked up a carpenter tool before. They all grew up with farming families who relied on growing the only food they had to eat. None of the families, except Suleman whose mother earned a small income from selling clothes, had a cash income to support their household. This placed them in a vulnerable position when crops failed due to the erratic weather that climate change has created. None of the young men went to school because their families couldn't afford to send them, and their futures seemed destined to continue in the same cycle of poverty that their parents and grandparents had endured before them.

Breaking free from the poverty trap

When staff from WUDEP – Tools for Self Reliance's Ghanaian partner - visited their local communities, Alhassan said that he grabbed the opportunity to train as a carpenter as there wasn't the skill within their community and training would not just serve his family but would provide for everyone.

"I was interested to learn a trade so... when there is no farming and it will bring money which is more secure than farming."

Suleman explained that establishing their own carpentry business would provide financial security and a buffer to the uncertainty of farming.

Because farming is seasonal, they all saw the opportunity that learning carpentry skills would give them.



Suleman with his donated carpentry toolkit

Picking up tools for the first time

They began the first six months of their training at WUDEP's centre, attending five days a week and all walking 30 minutes each day to get there. Having no previous experience, they began learning all about the tools, health and safety and how to use them. Next, they learnt the variety of woods and their qualities. They began making stools and were then introduced to doors. But they enjoyed making tables the most, as they are quick and gave their business an injection of cash. They also learnt how to make windows, doors, lazy chairs, beds and savings boxes.

For the next six months they worked with a local carpenter which gave them vital on the job training experience. Fuseni explained that their placement was where they learnt roofing techniques, and also provided them with their first income of 10-20 cedis (£1.40-£2.80) a week.



Idrissu's family used to solely rely on the food they grew to eat

Business skills

Idrissu, Alhassan, Fuseni and Suleman attended weekly business workshops to help them establish and run a profitable business. They had never experienced anything like this before and the importance of discipline resonated with them, understanding that this is a quality which will help them to enhance their business.

"To avoid having financial issues you need to know whether you are receiving profit or making a loss." Idrissu.

Life skills

They have all witnessed first-hand people suffering due to drug abuse and were inspired during their weekly life skills workshops to share what they had learnt with their friends and family. The workshops explored the negative effects that drug abuse can have, the importance of maintaining good personal hygiene and preventing cholera and sickness by keeping your workshop clean.

Chipping away at poverty

Motivated from their training, Idrissu, Fuseni, Suleman and Alhassan started their business within a month of completing their training. The first challenge they faced was finding themselves a suitable location to set up a shop, and after asking about, they found a space under a tree in the centre of the community. Receiving their carpentry start up kit packed by Clun voluntary group, meant they overcame the huge hurdle of having to find the 1,000 cedis (equivalent of £144) to buy the tools they needed. Being equipped with tools from day one ensured they could start their business straight away.

Now established as a local carpentry business they share all the jobs and support each other to complete them, splitting the profits, making between 50-200 (£7-£27) cedis a month. All four men are saving their income and investing it back into their business.

At the time we met them they had saved 1,200 cedi (£164) to put towards buying land to expand their business and build a shelter. Still supporting their families during the farming season, they make the most of their time in the off season and work hard seven days a week running their carpentry business.

"I'm happy to be independent and working for myself so I can get enough money to survive, and also for business savings to progress." Idrissu.

The money they have saved will be a safety net for emergencies, for crop failure and if they or their families need medical services.

"Our lives have changed through training programme, before it was hard to get clothing for myself but now I am earning money to do what I want" Alhassan



Dreaming big

In the next five years they dream of all getting married and owning their own houses. They want to expand their business so that they can train other young local people - passing the skills on to the next generation and enriching their community through local trade.

INNOVATION TO PROTECT THE FUTURE

Climate change is having a devastating impact on the rural farming communities in Zambia who rely on the crops they grow to feed their families.

An innovative new project was launched last year to train young people in such communities to make charcoal briquettes from agricultural waste instead of the wood charcoal which is contributing to damaging deforestation practises.

Not only will this provide a sustainable energy source for rural communities, but 30 young people will finish their training with the skills and tools they need to support themselves and their wider community.

The project is a joint initiative between Tools for Self Reliance and Kafue Innovation Centre (KIC) in Zambia. KIC was established by two young entrepreneurs, Stephen Mvula and Robert Shimaingo who wanted to lead young people to develop innovative products that improve the lives of people in rural communities.



Young people in rural Zambia turning waste into energy

HOW TO MAKE A BRIQUETTE



Briquettes are not only free to make, but burn three times more slowly than charcoal.

It's a perfect solution to provide the local community with a sustainable and affordable source of energy.

1. Use tin-smithing techniques to make maize shellers and the charcoal briquette moulds.
2. Using agricultural waste such as maize husks and carbonise them in a kiln.
3. Mix the carbonised waste and pound with molasses - provided free by the local brewery, as it is a by-product of the brewing process - into a paste.
4. Pack the paste into the mould and leave to dry in the sun.

EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER UPDATE

2019 was another fantastic year for the European Solidarity Corps programme, which offers young people across Europe the chance to live and volunteer in another country. We said farewell to Lilian from Germany, Erik and Yvonne from Austria, and welcomed Anna from Austria and Johannes from Germany.



Lilian and Yvonne flew home and are now both enjoying their studies at university. 20 year old Erik opted for a less conventional journey home, and set off from Netley Marsh on his bicycle (which he named Clare after a member of staff!) to cycle the 1000 miles, through six European countries, to his beloved hometown of Linz. Raising over £3,000 to support Tools for Self Reliance, Erik had a brilliant experience and pedalled over 600 miles before a

knee injury meant he had to take a train for the final leg. Well done Erik! We are so proud of you and really enjoyed following your adventure on the European Volunteer blog, Facebook and Instagram.

Read all about their project on our website at http://bit.ly/European_vol
Later this year we look forward to Elena from Russia and Max from Germany joining the workshop team.

Read their fortnightly blog at www.tfsr.org/european-volunteers-blog



LOOKING BACK TO HOW IT BEGAN

In this extended edition of Forging Links we look back forty years, to why, how and when Tools for Self Reliance first began supporting people in rural Africa with practical ways to end a life of poverty.



GLYN ROBERTS (1937- 2016) FOUNDER

While travelling and volunteering across Africa and Asia in the late 60s and early 70s, Glyn was greatly moved by witnessing extreme poverty and ineffective aid programmes. Back in the UK, Glyn published several short books for volunteers, exploring what development meant, and how volunteer organisations could act to empower those in need. During a visit to Uganda, he saw people trying to learn skills such as carpentry and bricklaying without the appropriate equipment, and working tradespeople struggling to earn a living with poor quality, worn out tools. His idea – to collect and refurbish tools in the UK and send them to communities in Africa – was the beginning of Tools for Self Reliance. His tool collection began in his mother's shed utilising his late father's tools. Soon neighbours and friends were donating theirs. He rallied the students at Portsmouth polytechnic where he then worked – and with their first 300 donated tools they gained the keys to the derelict church St Andrews. Glyn was invited on a research trip



to Tanzania, and here is where the first in-country partnership began. You can read more about the early days of the charity in the book 'Keeping Something Alive' (Brill Books, 2008) written by Glyn Roberts and Mark Smith.

1979 – In its first year – the organisation was known as 'Tools for Tanzania'. The first 2,021 tools were refurbished and sent to SIDO in Tanzania on 10 June 1979. The first workshop space was a derelict church in Portsmouth, Hampshire, and their first workshop bench from timber they found in a skip.

1980 – The charity was officially registered under the name it is known by today 'Tools for Self Reliance' and a further 4,708 tools refurbished. Small refurbishing groups started forming around the UK.

First annual gathering at Minstead in 1980



Netley Marsh workshops were bought in 1981

1981 – The Portsmouth church was demolished and the workshop was moved to Gosport. 6,758 tools refurbished.

This was also the year that the Netley Marsh workshop site was bought, although it looked very different then to how it does today.

1982 - 83 A huge amount of work went into renovating the site, which had most recently been used to house dog kennels. Rotten wood and rubble were removed, and replaced with new floors and reconstructed buildings. 9,564 tools refurbished.



Ann Moorshead's mural, 1984



The Netley Marsh workshop was a former dog kennels used to store tools

1984 – Ann Moorshead began painting the iconic mural you can still see today, that spans the length of the main workshop building. Rain, shine and snow – she persevered and completed this incredible artwork after two years.

1985 – The 50,000th tool is refurbished!

Blacksmith kits, 1984



1987 – Lenny Henry and Richard Briers join our celebration of the 100,000th tool at an event in Covent Garden

1988 – The third container to Tanzania goes – 17 tonnes loaded in one day! 33,286 tools refurbished.

1989 – Princess Anne visited Netley Marsh workshops.

1994 – Half millionth tool refurbished!

1995 – 'After sixteen years full of interest, friendship and satisfaction'. Glyn decided to step away from the organisation and handed in his resignation to the Trustees. Mark Smith was invited to move into the role of coordinator.

1998 – National Lottery awarded a grant of £93,00 to support the sending of tools to Zimbabwe over the next three years.

1999 – Worked with partners to send tools to Uganda, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Ghana and Sierra Leone.

Desmond Tutu became our patron in 1995



The next edition of Forging Links, published in Autumn will share events from 2000 to this year.

TEA FOR TOOLS

Fundraising Tea Party Week 29 June – 5 July

Last year your kindness raised over £9,000 to support people to receive tools and learn the skills so they are best equipped to use them.

Can you bake this summer and send more tools to young bright entrepreneurs?

Hosting your own Tea for Tools is easy!

- **Cake sale at work**
- **Bake for your school fete, summer event**
- **Host a garden party to catch up with friends and neighbours.**



ForTEA years

You could say that Joan Russell was the first to host a Tea for Tools tea party in 1981! She lent the cellar space to her then neighbour Glyn Roberts, the founder of Tools for Self Reliance, for the first collection of tools before they moved to Netley Marsh. She made and sold cream teas to support their fundraising! (You can read more in Glyn Roberts' book see page 5).



You are all warmly invited to...

Join our Tea for Tools tea party and tool sale at Netley Marsh workshops on Tuesday 30 June. Rain or shine, enjoy a cuppa and cake in our garden marquee after browsing our haberdashery and tools for sale. Free entry and free parking.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

A gift of just 1% of your legacy left to Tools for Self Reliance could make the biggest impact to transforming so many young people's lives, empowering them with the skills and tools to earn and income and break the cycle of poverty.



It only takes three minutes of your time to leave a legacy that will last their lifetime.

All you need to amend your existing will is to give your solicitor our charity number; 280437 and registered address; Tools for Self Reliance, Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh, Southampton, SO40 7GY.

To have a confidential conversation, and an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about leaving a legacy, with no commitment, please contact Jemma Chambers, Head of Fundraising, on **023 80869697** or email **Jemma@tfsr.org**

Ziblim and Seidu, tailoring graduates from Ghana



THANK YOU ROTARY AND INNER WHEEL

Our 40th anniversary is a perfect time to thank so many Rotarians and members of Inner Wheel who over the decades have been a passionate force of support.

Over the years Jo Shannon has had the privilege to meet so many dedicated people who have kindly given their time and energy to supporting people in Africa access tools and skills to empower them out of poverty.

From the first Rotary Garden party held at our Netley Marsh workshops in June 2009 with many local clubs joining us and supporting our refit of the Netley Marsh workshop floor and roof in 2014. A real highlight was when she received the Paul Harris fellowship award in December 2014.

From tool collections, hundreds of club talks, generous donations, garden parties and conferences, we simply wouldn't be able to continue supporting people to build sustainable livelihoods without you.

Thank you for your continued generous support.



No matter where you are in the world if you have access to the internet, a webcam and laptop we can give a talk to your church, Rotary Club, or community group about Tools for Self Reliance's projects and the people you are supporting using Zoom video conferencing.

If you would like to hear more about the history of Tools for Self Reliance, Jo is giving a new talk looking back at 40 years of the charity's work.

If you would be interested, please contact Jo@tfsr.org for more information.



GARDEN PARTY CELEBRATION

We are having a Rotary and Inner Wheel Garden Party this summer!

If your club would like to come please contact Jo Shannon, Jo@tfsr.org for details.



ANNIVERSARY BALL



Join us on Saturday 10 October at Leonardo Royal Southampton Grand Harbour for a fabulous evening as we mark our 40th anniversary with our fundraising ball.
Tickets on sale soon.

Email Jemma, Jemma@tfsr.org to register your interest for tickets before they all sell out!

Visit www.tfsr.org/tools-for-self-reliance-anniversary-ball

EVENTS IN 2020

CRAFT 2 CRAFT WORKSHOPS

- 📅 **16 APRIL - Spring Rabbits**
- 📅 **21 MAY - Beginner's Crochet**

Join the friendly Craft 2 Craft group for their monthly workshops at our Netley Marsh workshops, 2-4pm, only £10 per person, includes all tuition, materials, tea and cake! Booking is essential, please call 02380 869697 or email info@tfsr.org to confirm your place.

SALES

- 📅 **21 MARCH - Haberdashery Sale**, 10am-12 at Netley Marsh workshops
- 📅 **4 APRIL - Tool Sale**, 10am-12 at Netley Marsh workshops



EVENTS WE WILL BE SELLING TOOLS AT

- 📅 **8 - 10 MAY - Bodger's Ball at Eyarth House, North Wales**
- 📅 **16 MAY - Milford on Sea plant fair**
- 📅 **31 MAY - Solent Gardeners Fayre**
- 📅 **2 - 5 JULY - New Forest Folk Festival**
- 📅 **28 - 30 JULY - New Forest and Hampshire County Show**
- 📅 **29 - 30 AUGUST - Oak Fair at Stock Gaylard**
- 📅 **12 SEPTEMBER - Romsey Show**



- 📅 **29 JUNE - 5 JULY - Tea for Tools week**
- 📅 **30 JUNE - Tea for Tools Summer sale**

- 📅 **10 OCTOBER - 40th Anniversary Ball at Leonardo Royal Southampton Grand Harbour**

Visit our website for a full list of events: www.tfsr.org/support/events

Please note: some events may be subject to change – please do contact us with any questions.

GIFTS FOR CHANGE



Three chickens, seeds and soil, learning to read and write, 'Give a dad a day off'

Choose from six life changing virtual gifts for your loved ones birthday, anniversary, wedding or just because.

Buy your gift today at www.tfsr.org/shop

Just £12 will give a family three chickens and invest in their livelihood

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