



FORGING LINKS NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in so many changes for us all, in the way we live and work. Just like you, Tools for Self Reliance is adapting to ensure everyone is kept safe as we emerge from the lockdown. As are our partners, who are adapting the way that they work to ensure they deliver training to those who need it most whilst also raising awareness of COVID-19 prevention.

Families with greater resilience

Never before have the skills taught in our projects, including how to save income regularly and maintaining good personal hygiene, been so important.

Families have a greater resilience when they are able to save some of their income every month. Especially in circumstances where lockdown means that they weren't able to go out to work but could use their savings to buy food and soap for their families.

Adapting to the change

Our vocational training projects throughout Ghana, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Uganda and Malawi paused as local restrictions came into effect. But as lockdowns are lifted, our partners are implementing practical measures to ensure trainees can learn the life changing skills they need whilst keeping themselves safe and preventing the spread of COVID-19.



Ghanaian partner CIWED donated 2 chamber canopies and gloves to Tamale West Hospital

WUDEP have been delivering hand sanitiser to their communities and have provided all trainees with face masks.

Schools are now open in Ghana and our project to end child marriage with partner NORSAAC is slowly beginning activity again. This one year project with partner NORSAAC was generously funded by Kennington Overseas Aid to support 40 people learn bee-keeping, welding, fashion design and electrical skills whilst reaching hundreds of Northern Ghanaian community members through its critical outreach work. Working in schools and local communities the project is educating young boys and girls about sexual reproductive health, and the negative effects [...]



This is Jahman, who rode his bespoke bike around Kafue town in Zambia during lockdown to remind residents to stay indoors!



Future Focus Foundation in Sierra Leone have set up extra hand washing facilities for trainees'

that child marriage has upon young girls and families. One in four girls are married before their 18th birthday in Northern Ghana.



Ending child marriage posters displayed in communities in Northern Ghana

Poverty means that for some families, early marriage is a survival strategy – ensuring the future of a daughter they are struggling to feed. This is why opportunities for women to learn vocational skills are important – they offer an alternative, one in which women are empowered to earn a living and support themselves. These powerful posters have been displayed amongst the community to support the outreach sessions.



Veronica bucket stations distributed to local schools in Northern Ghana

RUPAD in Uganda were due to start their project just before the pandemic began and are currently adapting their activity. As part of their Water and Sanitation activities, they have bought 15 hand washing tanks for schools and communities and are going to make 2,000 face masks to distribute to their communities as it is currently compulsory to wear them.

This has required them to reduce the number of schools they planned to work with on the construction of toilets, but they will still do this with three schools. The production of sanitary pads, which was part of the Water and Sanitation activities, will still be taught as part of the tailoring training and be made available to the female pupils.

In Sierra Leone, our tailoring project delivered by BWU to support 200 women over two years was on hold but has now slowly begun activity with precautions taken to support social distancing. Tailoring trainees have been busy making masks for their community. Funding for the project from the Turing Foundation has bought Veronica buckets for hand washing.



Face masks made by BWU tailoring trainees

Eliashib Women's Centre in Zambia have paused their tailoring project but have also been making and distributing face masks to the local community. It will not be long before the latest trainee group (pictured here at the start of their training!) will be back at their sewing machines.



Eliashib trainees

What's next?

Coming up is a new two-year project with NORSAAC providing vocational training opportunities for people in Northern Ghana to learn 'off farm' income generating activities such a bee-keeping and welding skills to support their income when crops fail. The project will also will establish cooperatives for women who work in agriculture to form 'Village Savings and Loan Association' (VSLA's). Women working in agriculture struggle to access finance services and farming support initiatives which would enable them to farm more productively. VSLAs are self managed community groups, vital in empowering women to access affordable loans and take control of their finances.

Don't miss a thing!

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www.tfsr.org/mailling-list

SUPPORTER SUPERSTARS

We always knew our volunteers and supporters were incredible people. But in the most challenging times - the most brilliant people shine.

When lockdown closed the doors of volunteer refurbishing workshops across the UK, supporters quickly adapted, bringing the same enthusiasm and passion to fundraising and, refurbishing tools – but from home. Below are just some, but by no means all, of the incredible people supporting practical help for practical people .

To each and every one of you who has shown your support - thank you so very much. Thank you for going above and beyond to ensure tools can continue to reach people who need them most.



Thank you to all the volunteers around the UK; Carmen Martin from Cambridge, John Davidson from Didsbury, and members from South Birmingham, and Carlisle groups that have been selling items on Ebay to raise funds.



Janet and David Farthing 2.6 challenge!

David walked 2.6 km for 26 days, Janet exercised her new knee with 26 steps/stairs for 26 days and they had no arguments for 26 days! (light-hearted banter allowed!) Well done and thank you so much to David and Janet, and to everyone who has generously donated raising £890.



Marian from the resident Craft 2 Craft club at Netley Marsh hasn't let lockdown stop her sewing – she's been busy at home making beautiful craft items to sell at future events.



Bodger's Ball event went virtual.

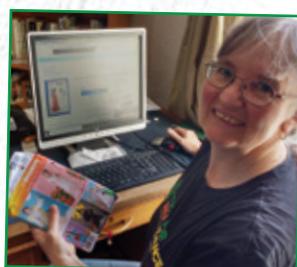
Normally the second weekend of May is the annual Bodgers' Ball, a festival style event to mark the AGM of the Association of Pole-lathe Turners and Green Woodworkers. This year the event was held on Facebook and raised an incredible £800. Special thank you to Amy Leake who raised £120 by auctioning a beautiful quaiiche on our behalf.



Long term volunteer **Bob White** who heads up the Wednesday evening group at Netley Marsh is seen here with his glorious shed he built 20 years ago in his garden, re-handling tools using ash from a local supplier.



Allan Vincent the Sutton voluntary group organiser has been busy refurbishing many tools including 100 year old tailoring shears!



Tracey and Shelley have raised thousands of pounds during lockdown from selling items on Ebay. Thank you for making over 100 trips to the post office and all the time and hard work that goes into listing, selling, packing and sending!

John Wetherby and the Coventry and Warwickshire voluntary group have been really active and raised over £2500 through selling and sharpening tools from home.

BBC RADIO 4 APPEAL UPDATE

Did you hear it?
On Sunday 14 June at 07:54am,
long-term volunteer Janet Moody's
voice broadcast across your (digital)
airwaves presenting our BBC
Radio 4 appeal.

Listen again here:

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000k1b8

Janet shared the inspiring story of Kadiatu Sessay. Kadiatu trained as a tailor, and now has the skills and tools to provide for her family.

Our BBC Radio 4 Appeal was a wonderful chance to ask the public to help us make these opportunities available to more women like Kadiatu.

The income to afford food for her children. The power to not rely on asking others for hand-outs and the confidence to make decisions which will change her life.

We were completely overwhelmed that so many people listened and sent such generous donations and warm messages of support.

We cannot thank you enough for giving a total of £31,335 (at the time of print) to support women in Sierra Leone.

We look forward to updating you on how the BBC Radio 4 Appeal is making a difference in Sierra Leone.



DIRECT DEBIT

Setting up a monthly Direct Debit is now quick and simple on our website.



Visit www.tfsr.org/donate to take 3 minutes of your time
- making an impact which will last for generations.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOYAL SUPPORT IN SUCH
A DIFFICULT TIME. WE SIMPLY COULDN'T DO IT
WITHOUT YOU.**

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