

# Forging Links Newsletter Spring 2022



## Africa Projects Update

During an extremely turbulent period, and whilst ensuring compliance with national and international Covid restrictions and lock downs, our partners have shown amazing perseverance to implement a range of vocational projects designed to meet the specific needs of their trainees and local communities. In 2022 we plan to focus on projects which increase training opportunities for women and people living with disabilities, and address the barriers they face in accessing training.

### Uganda - Green Ribbon Foundation

Green Ribbon Foundation completed their 12-month training project in Uganda in November 2021. Of the original 60 trainees in carpentry, motor mechanics and tailoring, **48 successfully completed all their training** and passed their final exams. Unfortunately, interruptions due to Covid lockdowns and the economic impact of this on families meant that 12 of the trainees were not able to complete their training.



Some exciting developments from the project included beekeeping, with carpentry graduates crafting 45 beehives in their local communities. 40 hives are already colonised and under ongoing management.

All project graduates had the opportunity to pitch their business plan to a panel of local industry experts. 14 of the 18 tailoring trainees – all women – won their bids and are receiving mentoring support in equipment and supplies as they start up their new enterprises. **Congratulations to all.**

### Malawi - Foundation for Education and Social Development (FESODEV)

Many of our partners deliver training in traditionally male orientated trades, this often discourages women applying for training or reduces their chance for success once they graduate. We want to open the door wider to women applicants and ensure their businesses can thrive, so we are actively working with our partners to see how we can redress this balance. We are extending the scope of trades for training and planning more adaptable training schedules which will factor in the other demands on women's time. Our partner FESODEV in Malawi will start a pilot project this spring which focuses on catering and food processing and hairdressing. We will be following their progress closely.



## **Zambia - Kabushi Entrepreneurship and Vocational Training Centre (KEVTC)**

Our partner KEVTC is empowering trainees to use their newly learned plumbing and construction skills to benefit the local community by building new sanitation facilities through their Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) project. Many local community sanitation facilities are in a state of disrepair or non-existent; through our partnership with KEVTC, local communities are being served with newly built toilet facilities to reduce the spread of water borne diseases such as dysentery, typhoid, and cholera. Not only does this benefit the local community but also gives trainees vital hands-on work experience.



### **Village Savings and Loans groups: The Zambia pilot**

Many of our trainees are excluded from the formal banking sector, so when they graduate from training the lack of critical resources needed to start up their own businesses can be an insurmountable barrier.



A successful VSL group provides a chance for its members to build savings and take an affordable loan with low risk, so we are running a pilot project in Zambia to see how our partners can support trainees to set up savings groups alongside the vocational training.

All our Zambian partners completed their Village Savings and Loans Associations training in mid-January and they are ready to start planning the roll out of new groups. Each partner will work with one or two groups to understand how best this new activity can complement our proven package of technical, business and life skills.

We will accompany them as they embark on this journey, providing structured support to troubleshoot any problems arising and learning together as we go.



### **Ghana - Street Girls Aid**

SGA works with members of the street community particularly informal leaders such as gang leaders, market women, and other marginalised women. Through these relationships SGA can contact the most vulnerable girls living on the streets of Accra and offer vocational training courses in tailoring and sewing. SGA are a somewhat unique partner as together we are able to offer a very holistic package to some of Ghana's most at risk communities.

In 2021, the Ghanian government bulldozed hundreds of living situations in Accra to make room for a large commercial building; this left many of the already marginalised and vulnerable young girls with nowhere to sleep. This is where SGA makes a difference. Through their provision of accommodation and meals 26 young women and girls who had been living and trading on the streets of Accra

were able to begin their tailoring training. Through our partnership, they were able to offer accommodation, meals, job guidance, sexual health education, literacy and numeracy training, and business skills. Without these additional aspects of project design many of the young girls would not be able to attend the training and learn.



## **Sierra Leone - Education Centre for Blind and Visually Impaired (ECBVI)**

Through our partner ECBVI we are working to expand our inclusive training model by providing vocational training in carpentry, welding, and tailoring to people living with disabilities. ECVBI is reaching 25 vulnerable people within the community of Grafton, including 13 who have some form of disability and need support to access training and education.

ECBVI are also working to reach 4 communities to deliver disability awareness education sessions. Often people living with disabilities are extremely marginalised due to a lack of understanding and locally held beliefs linking disability with witchcraft practices.

Through these sessions it is hoped that communities will become more aware of the challenges faced by people living with disabilities and the adaptations that could be made to address these. This session will also be used to ensure participants and community members living with disabilities understand their rights under the Disability Act of Sierra Leone.

A conservative UN estimate suggests that 10% of the Sierra Leone population have a recognised disability making this type of adaptive vocational training and awareness raising vitally important.

## **Other updates**

### **Upping the power on electrical tools**

Kevin Fletcher has been volunteering with Tools for Self Reliance for five years. His expertise and experience in refurbishing electrical tools is invaluable. Over the coming months, Kevin will help to develop a management and training programme for refurbishment of electrical tools, both here and in conjunctions with our regional groups. This will increase the number of electrical tools that can be sent to Africa where we hope to expand our projects to encompass trades such as hairdressing and catering. Unsuitable or excess electrical tools will also be sold to raise funds for our work.



Kevin in the workshops at Netley Marsh

### **The end of an era**

In November we were joined by Valerie Felhofer, our very last volunteer from the European Solidarity Corps. Britain's departure from the EU means an end to the funding which has enabled young people to take up placements with Tools for Self Reliance for over 20 years. The contribution that our long term volunteers have made to the charity is both invaluable and incalculable. We will be very sorry to wave our final goodbyes to Valerie in May 2022. Read the ESC volunteer blog while you still can at [www.tfsr.org/european-volunteers-blog](http://www.tfsr.org/european-volunteers-blog)



**Calling all Long Term Volunteer alumni:** Were you a long term volunteer with Tools for Self Reliance? We would really love to hear from you. Please get in touch and let us know where life has taken you! Email to [vicky@tfsr.org](mailto:vicky@tfsr.org)

### **Thank you Draper Tools**

A huge thank you to our friends at Draper Tools who presented us with a cheque for £7,500 in December. They raised funds for us from sales of their 2021 advent calendar and in lieu of sending corporate Christmas cards. Every penny will help us continue our vocational training projects in Africa.



## Archbishop Desmond Tutu

We were saddened by the news of Archbishop Tutu passing away. Archbishop Tutu first got involved with Tools for Self Reliance through his friend and mentor, and our founding patron, Trevor Huddleston. We were honoured when he became a patron himself in 1995. He was a truly remarkable man who will dearly be missed by all. His visit to the Netley Marsh workshops on 10th February 2009 remains at the forefront of our memories and he made this such a special day for our volunteers and staff team. We all appreciated his positivity and encouragement for the work being done by the charity. All at Tools for Self Reliance would like to extend our condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.



## Call for workshop donations

Do you have any timber going spare?

We build our own packing boxes to ship refurbished tools to Africa and we are in particular need of ply and OSB, 6mm upwards, full or part sheets, or offcut strips wider than 330mm. We can't use shuttering ply as the concrete residue will damage our saw table, but ply packaging crates can be repurposed. We're also happy to take any relatively nail free timber which we can cut down to form 25mm x 30mm battens, such as CLS 'studwork' timber (of lengths 900mm and over), roofing batten, fence posts and gravel boards, old or new decking timber (some rot is ok, we can cut round rotten areas), planks/boards/carcass timbers, etc and roof/floor joists & rafters. No pallets, heavily nailed timber or anything containing woodworm please!

**If you think you have any timber that might be suitable, please get in touch on 02380 869697 and we can put you in touch with a collector in your area.**



### Bailey's Big Walk

Workshop Manager, Stuart Bailey, will be walking the South West Coast Path to raise funds for Tools for Self Reliance. Setting off from Minehead on **Sunday 1st May**, Stuart will take up to 8 weeks to complete the 630 mile route along the Somerset, Cornwall, Devon and Dorset coast. Funds raised will help fund our next tool shipment to Uganda in October.



**Sponsor  
Stuart here**

### Who's for a cuppa?



Pop the kettle on between **30th May and 5th June 2022** as part of our Tea for Tools event. Gather your friends, tea cups, cakes and cookies and help us raise funds for our projects abroad. For further details and a fundraising pack, contact [lauren@tfsr.org](mailto:lauren@tfsr.org) #TeaForTools

### Help us plan for the future

Can you give a little on a regular basis? A monthly donation set up by Direct Debit helps us to plan our project funding over the long term. Visit our website at [tfsr.org/donate](https://tfsr.org/donate) to set up your gift today.



→ [www.tfsr.org](http://www.tfsr.org) ✉ [info@tfsr.org](mailto:info@tfsr.org) [f /toolsforselfreliance](https://facebook.com/toolsforselfreliance) [@tfsr](https://twitter.com/@tfsr) [y /toolsforselfreliance](https://youtube.com/toolsforselfreliance)

Tools for Self Reliance, Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh, SO40 7GY | Tel: 023 8086 9697