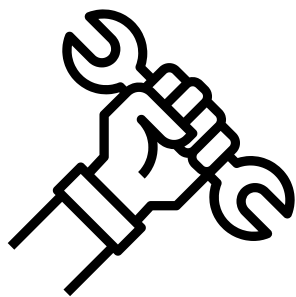


ANNUAL REPORT 24/25



**Tools
For
Solidarity**



TABLE OF CONTENT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PRINCIPLES

Underlying all the activities of Tools for Solidarity are the principles and values of self-help and empowerment, individual and global equality, environmental awareness, inclusiveness, voluntarism, and the right to challenge/oppose activities/actions that contradict these values.

MISSION STATEMENT

TFS supports self-reliance by providing high quality refurbished tools to working people overseas, promoting international solidarity, and challenging global inequalities through a critical examination of development issues, environmental sustainability and ethical working practices.

OUR AIM

- ENCOURAGE

Promote self-reliance by furnishing overseas projects with high quality Recycled hand tools and sewing machines.

- ENGAGE

Involve individuals, organisations and the public in the development and environmental issues. Utilise working methods that develop and Support a sense of international solidarity and promote volunteering And ethical working practices.

- ENSURE

Tools For Solidarity will have appropriate premises, personnel and funding to meet the agreed outputs and objectives of the organisation.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Solidarity in practice is the heart of TFS's work. You can contribute in a very practical way by donating hand tools or sewing machines, by making a donation towards essential shipping and running costs, by providing materials or by volunteering.

*WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT
IN OUR EFFORTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE TFS.*

CONTACT

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CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

A big milestone for TFS and everyone involved in the organisation, 40 years since a very humble beginning in 1984. While TFS has transformed the way it delivers its support to artisans the core principle of working to make it a fairer society still remains at the heart of the organisation.

Every year brings new challenges and problems that the organisation has to overcome and the last year has been no different. There was a visit to Tanzania at the start of the year to discuss the progress of the existing projects as well as investigate the next stage of TFS overseas programme a larger project to act as hub for TFS to provide more resources that could be distributed to other projects. The visit was both rewarding to see the progress and also challenging in addressing some difficult issues, these are discussed within the partnership section. It was decided that TFS would pursue the development of a new centre in Dodoma and funding is currently being sought.

On the volunteer front we had a very successful group of international volunteers but still face the challenge of working with a smaller crew. We have had more support from local people both in volunteering in the workshop and generally within the organisation, which has been much appreciated.

The ESD programme has really taken off and Sue has done a great job over the last year. There have been some big events with sustainable fashion week one of the highlights. The schools programme was also successfully completed and we are all looking forward to next years events with more craft workshops planned.

The workshop has continued to receive many tools and sewing machines from the general public, council recycling centres, Lions clubs and people who organise collections within their local community. This has created some storage problems which TFS is trying to find solutions.

The supported volunteer programme has been very active with Hamish and Stephen running a 2 day programme to provide supported work placements for people, with some financial support from the health board. The last year has seen hundreds of tools refurbished for the projects in Tanzania and these should be on their way later in the year.

A big thank you to Geoff who has been doing the accounts for TFS for many years. He will be stepping down next year but he will still be involved within the TFS partnership group. Also a big thank you to Ken who has been more or less single handed being our fundraiser bringing in the money to enable all TFS activities to operate.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

During April 2024 and March 2025 the year has been very busy for the projects! This includes one container sent for IASTC and NASTC projects that arrived in December 2024, with a smaller load for MSTC. A field trip was conducted by TFS staff in February 2025 to the current projects: IASTC, NASTC, and MSTC. A special visit was made to Tanzania's capital, Dodoma, in hopes of opening another project there: an artisans center and storage facilities.



PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

MSTC

From April 2024 to March 2025 MSTC delivered a total of 24 sewing machines to artisans, generating an income of just over 6 million Tanzanian Shillings (equivalent to 1800 British Pounds). Unfortunately no training sessions were conducted during the year and no people with disabilities (PWDs) were supported. The main reason for this was the lack of straight stitch machines in stock, which are the most requested type of sewing machines by artisans. The project expenditures remained low throughout the year mainly due to the absence of training and promotional events.

The project received 2 shipments during this period. The first shipment with 49 sewing machines, came from Tools For Solidarity (TFS) and the second was from a sister organisation TWAM (Tools With A Mission) which included 52 machines such as straight stitch, shuttle, and zigzag electrical types.

A field trip was conducted in February 2025 by 2 people from TFS. TFS was transparent and explained the situation regarding the low stock of machines. TFS no longer has the capacity to support the project with the number of straight stitch and electric sewing machines required to run 1 training session every month. A few groups of artisans were visited to gather feedback on the machines and training they had received from MSTC. At the end of the trip it was agreed that TFS would receive regular updates from the project (reports every six months) and quarterly financial statements, mainly related to the machines provided. TFS is also exploring the possibility of supporting the project with shuttle machines in the future and is willing to help MSTC find other suppliers through sister organisations in the UK.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

NASTC

NASTC had a very busy year. From April 2024 to March 2025 NASTC delivered a total of 98 sewing machines including 4 knitting machines and 69 treadles. Just over 700 hand tools were delivered along with 10 toolkits and 8 pieces of machinery. A total of 48 artisans were trained over 2 training sessions in women dress design (in April 2024 and March 2025). 1 person with a disability has received a machine and training free of charge. Early in 2024, 2 people with disabilities were enrolled in a VTC (Vocational Training College) to follow a one year course in tailoring entirely financed by the project. They both successfully graduated. They received a free sewing machine, 1 week training and a start up capital from the project. NASTC managed to enroll 5 more people with disabilities in early 2025: 4 in tailoring and 1 in carpentry.

The total income for the year was around 40 million Tanzanian Shillings (just over 1220 British Pounds). NASTC also conducted 2 promotional visits in the neighboring regions of Makambako and Makete.

In late 2024 TFS sent a container containing 1892 individual tools, 92 sewing machines, 24 electrical tools, 9 pieces of machinery and some materials. TFS also sent 2 bikes for the staff to use. The shipment arrived successfully in mid December 2024. TFS also visited NASTC and had the chance to see a very well organised workshop. The staff take good care of the tools and their stock. We had discussions with the partner, SIDO, to review the current situation of the project, what has been achieved and the future plans. TFS also had the opportunity to visit a group of artisans to gather their feedback.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

FEEDBACK FROM ARTISANS:



Emilia Muvinka

In May 2024 Aneth received a Singer SS with a treadle. During her training she was using a Butterfly SM but she finds the Singer to be much better. She completed a one day training in maintenance and repair at NASTC. She was interested in the Singer SM when she saw another tailor in town using one. When she has a problem she contacts Michael and asks for help. Since she started using the SM from the centre she noticed a huge improvement in the quality of her clothes. Emilia has managed to save money and gather capital to open her own shop, where she makes clothes for women and children. Her parents gave her money to pay for the SM from the centre.

Janeth (NASTC Workshop Coordinator) and Emilia

Aneth Mbilinyi

Aneth is a tailor who is training 10 students a year. Her fees are based on the financial situation of the students - she can offer free training to young girls that don't have the possibility to pay. Currently her students include 5 from Njombe town and 5 from more rural areas. She encourages her students to go to the NASTC centre after their training with her. Aneth owns 2 SM while the other 3 SM in her classroom belong to some of her students. She noticed that the quality of the machines from the centre is much better than that of the Butterfly.

Since buying the machines she does not have any issues. Aneth is thinking of getting a ZZ next as the price is very low for her - though she acknowledges that it may still be high for some students. Once the students finished their training and they can stay in Aneth's shop, work for her and save money. At the moment she is looking for some patterns, big scissors, irons, etc. She said that she is very thankful for the project and the services it provides. She wishes the project would support her to get a bigger place to train her students.



Aneth (on the left) and her students

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT



Rebeca and Ushindi at their graduation day organised by NASTC (PWD that graduated from VTC)

Promotional event in Makambako (Njombe Region)



PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

IASTC

IASTC had a quieter year as they only started a couple of years ago but it was nonetheless a successful one, especially on the sewing machine side of the project. From April 2024 to March 2025 IASTC delivered a total of 63 sewing machines and 49 treadles. Tool sales have been relatively slow with just over 420 hand tools and 3 pieces of machinery delivered during the year.

In March 2025, 21 artisans were trained during 1 training session. 2 people with disabilities were enrolled in the tailoring VTC in early 2024; they have now graduated. Like with NASTC they received a free machine, full training and capital to help them start their own business. While the goal for 2025 was to enroll 4 people with disabilities the project successfully enrolled 2 in tailoring. The total income for the year was just over 24.3 million Tanzanian shillings (around 700 British pounds).

IASTC also received a container from TFS in December 2024 which included 89 sewing machines, lots of materials, 1544 individual tools and 10 pieces of machinery. TFS visited IASTC in February 2025 but unfortunately couldn't visit any group of artisans due to the short time of the field trip and the number of issues that needed to be addressed with the partner, SIDO. During the visit TFS had to discuss the low tool sales and emphasised the importance of fully delivering the PWD programme. TFS and SIDO also took the opportunity to review the entire MoU, agree on a new one, and sign new contracts that had run out for the staff. Overall TFS left in positive spirits and is hopeful to see improvements on the tools side of the project in the near future.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT



TFS staff and IASTC staff, Catherine and Mohamed (in the middle)



Training at IASTC in March 2025

VOLUNTEERS REPORT

What could be better than working towards a better, kinder, fairer, more sustainable world.

Volunteering is fundamental a radical act - something you choose or want to do, something that is great for your mental health and great for others and the planet - a way to transform the world. That is why it is one of the key aims of TFS.

We have our regular team of local and supported volunteers attending each week. They are the backbone of our work force, some with many years experience of volunteering with Tools.

They bring a sense of continuity to the workshop and their skills and expertise are a real asset in supporting and training our international volunteers and in ensuring high quality outputs.

We have a small number of highly skilled volunteers who take responsibility for some aspects of our work - they help us increase the quantity and range of items we can send to artisans in Tanzania.

International volunteer remain the mainstay of our volunteer team. Each year we host 5 long term volunteers from France , through VISA AD and the French Service Civique and from Germany through our long standing partnership with Eirene.

Unlike in the past when volunteers came to us throughout the year through the European Solidarity Corps the switchover from one team to another happen in August/September. This is a real challenge as there are no experienced volunteers to help guide, support and train the new arrivals and this puts additional demands on our workshop manager. We have a real need for more skilled, local volunteers who can take on training roles.

Many thanks to all our volunteers - local, core, international and supported for their dedication and hard work.

SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERS REPORT

We provide sheltered supported placements for local people with extra support needs, lessening their social isolation and bringing them the opportunity to learn new skills in a social environment and to help others. This has a real benefit to their mental well-being.

Since April 2024 we have continued to have a very full programme with most of our slots full. We provide a total of 17 places each week to people with support needs. We have 4 slots each on monday and thursday mornings and afternoons and one person who comes every tuesday. Our volunteers have a mix of support needs and abilities , Some have had a brain injury, some have a learning disability, some are on the autism spectrum, some have chronic fatigue and some have mental health needs.

We have in the last year had 2 new referrals from Cedar Foundation, one person with a spinal injury and also ADHD, another person who had experienced a physical injury. The Belfast Trust also referred a man with learning disabilities to our programme.

We are thankful to the Belfast Trust who continue to fund 6 slots for 6 individuals with a learning disability. This enables us to employ 2 of our volunteers on a part-time basis to coordinate this programme.

In addition to the 3 new volunteers mentioned above, we have older volunteers referred to us by Leonard Cheshire which supports people with an alcohol related brain injury (now called Threshold Services). We also have volunteers who have been referred to us by L'Arche, Orchardville, Sense, Triangle and Bryson Care.

The fact that most of our current supported volunteers have stayed with us for many years shows that they get a lot out of the programme. They have all played a valuable contribution in our workshop, repairing hand tools & sewing machines, preparing tools for shipment to our overseas partners and or sorting out scrap metals for recycling locally.

SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERS REPORT

This is what some of our supported volunteers recently said about the project, when asked what they thought about coming to the workshop every week.

"I always look forward to coming to Tools every week. I feel able to take on any task given to me as I know I am always able to seek support when needed. I feel my abilities are respected and valued and that I am making a positive impact through my work." Thomas A

"I like the variety of tools and especially seeing a tool being refurbished from start to finish. I also appreciate the fact that we are supporting workers within African countries and not sending workers out there. There is nothing I don't like about coming to Tools." Ariel

"I like it very much, especially the varied work. I come 2 days a week. I'd like to do more. I learn a lot every week. It's a very friendly place. I think it is important that we are supporting people in Africa with tools." Paul

"I love doing all the work and getting on with all the other guys. There is always a good atmosphere in the workshop. Helping people in Africa with tools is also good" Ryan McF

"I have learnt so much. I thoroughly enjoy it. There is a relaxed friendly atmosphere. Everyone who attends here feels they are contributing towards the goals of getting tools to people in Africa. You also get to appreciate your own tools at home more and learn to look after them and give them more respect." Aid

FUNDRAISING GROUP

Despite a difficult financial climate, Tools continues to attract funds from a wide variety of sources. The fund-raising group continues to meet regularly to review approaches to traditional funders and consider new avenues for income. We are particularly grateful to those funders that have stayed with us over many years, despite constraints on their own resources.

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust support for some aspects for our Supported Volunteer Programme is now recurrent i.e. running from year to year, subject to satisfactory monitoring of outputs. We appreciate the stability this brings, with the ability to plan ahead with increased confidence. The Supported Volunteer Programme also benefitted from a generous donation from St. James Place, a financial management company.

The ESD programme relies on continued support from Irish Aid to fund our schools' work. However our Education Officer has been very active in also looking at other ways to fund our work in areas such as Sustainable Fashion.

We are very grateful for the on-going support from NIPSA and Unicorn for the workshops in Njombe and Iringa, between them covering all the costs of these projects. Planning commenced during 2024-25 for a new Tools Centre in Dodoma, the capital of Tanzania, and the fund-raising group have put together a long-list of potential funders for this initiative. We visualise approaching these funders in a phased appeal over the coming months.

In the same way, we have been casting the net wide in looking for funds for a new electric van to replace the current aging diesel vehicle. These efforts will come to fruition during 2025-26.

The on-going contribution of the Halifax Building Society (for our Training Coordinator) is also gratefully acknowledged.

FUNDRAISING GROUP

During 2024-25, we received funding from the following organisations:

Funder	Project
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	Supported Volunteer Programme
Halifax Foundation	Training Coordinator
Irish Aid	ESD Coordinator
NIPSA	Tanzania Centres
St. James Place	Supported Volunteer Programme
Unicorn Coop	Tanzania Centres

The Fundraising committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all the organisations listed above, and the many individuals and donors who have so generously supported the work of Tools for Solidarity during the year. We rely entirely on your support to be able to continue our life changing work.

FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-2025

The Financial Year 2024-25 saw a small loss after the small profit of the previous year.

Regarding Income Grants received rose significantly, ESD generated additional income. On the negative side rental income for the Antrim Road property ceased and Donations fell significantly. This was masked in part by a one off donation of £10,000. Additionally whilst Grants have increased the number of different sources of Grants decreased meaning the charity is very dependant on a few key organisations - Irish Government, BHSCT, NIPSA, Halifax and Unicorn.

With respect to Expenditure there was a significant rise in Salaries and a notable Shipping expenditure. On the positive side the Loan Repayment has only one outstanding to go at the end of the Financial Year.

During the last quarter there was a significant reduction in the amount of money held in the Building Society.

The overall assessment would be that we need to looking at new Income streams and reducing Expenditure where we can. There is a requirement to purchase a new Van which without Grants, or Crowd Funding will further decrease the capital held in reserve.

We are projected to make a significant loss in 25-26 without making some changes.

FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-2025

We should break even in 24-25 due to a projected increase in Donations and the Income streams from

FINANCIAL REPORT

Current Account	£4,875
Building Society	£99,779
Petty Cash	£143
Paypal	£199

Net Financial Assets £104,996

INCOME 2024-25

Building Society/Bank Interest	£2,888
Donations	£16,900
Grants Other	£59,002
Rent Income	£2,780
Scrap Metal Sales	£1,857
VAT Refunds	£1,282
Sewing Machine/Tools sales	£4,368
Other	£ 410
Yarn	£1,290
Gift Aid	£808
Fund Raising	£890
Energy Savings	£2,906
TOTAL INCOME	£102,006

FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-2025

EXPENDITURE 2023-24

Direct Expenses

Purchase of Parts, Materials	£4,031
Fixed Assets	£ 199
Repairs	£ 199
Total Direct Expenses	£4,429

Overheads

Financial Fees	£ 74
Field Trip Costs	£2,447
Insurance	£5,814
Legal & Professional Costs	£ 454
Loan Repayment	£5,000
Light & Heat	£6,313
Rent, Rates & Water Charges	£4,959
Salary	£45,498
Stationary & Postage	£ 317
Other Expenditure	£ 333
Telephone	£1,213
Travel & Subsistence	£5,328
Vehicle Fuel/Motor Expenses	£2,876
Volunteer Expenses	£4,373

Total Overhead Expenses £100,108

SPECIAL THANKS