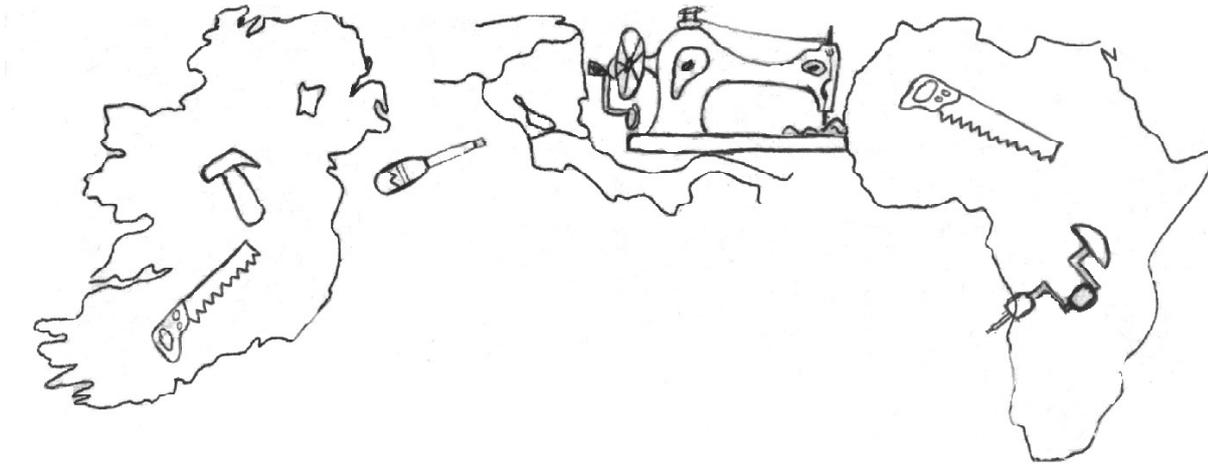




NEWSLETTER

of Tools For Solidarity

Give a new life to your old tools!



April 2010 **SOLIDARITY** NO. 25
THE NEWSLETTER OF TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY

The Shipment

On Tuesday 2 March 2010, a big container arrived for the new shipment to Tanzania.

Final step, moment of effervescence, the loading is also one of the most tiring parts of the process, because of the intensity of work we provide.

For two days, you could see everybody running everywhere like in an anthill, lifting, moving, carrying, painting, drilling, organizing the inside of the container, ...

Eventually, we filled up this 30 cubic meters' container with 231 sewing machines, 40 treadles, boxes of materials, zips, threads, ribbon, 6 kits of tools, a computer, 26 bikes and much more.



Thanks to a close knit team, everything went smoothly. Indeed, in addition to European and

Belfast's volunteers, we received help from TFS Downpatrick's and Mourne Grange's volunteers.

Finally on Thursday morning, 4 March 2010, the container was ready to go. And what a container! Beautifully painted by the team of painters led by Daniela, an Italian artist.

This container is going by boat to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and then by truck to Mwanza Sewing and Training Centre. It will arrive within 3 Months.

Thanks a lot to all the volunteers who made this possible!
Hopefully, we will see you again for the next adventure!



25 years Tools for solidarity Birthday



In September 2009, Tools for Solidarity was happy to celebrate his 25 years birthday ! For this occasion, all the formers and currents volunteers were invited for 3 days of festivities from the Thursday 24th September 2009 to the Saturday 26th of September 2009.

Our programme :

Thursday :

Quiz Night at St Malachy's Old Boys!

Time for everybody to meet each other again! Ex-volunteers from all over Europe came back and met at the St Malachy's Old Boys for a Quiz night!

Friday :

The workshop was open all day long to show what is going on for the moment, look back at the last 25 years of TFS, plans for the future - photos, displays, news of our partners and the Mwanza project.

After lunch – and the birthday cake – currents volunteers organised original and funny games !
Mouse trap – crazy golf – Go kart race! Lots of laughs and entertainment !

For the evening, the Errigle Inn was booked to let us dance and have a bit of craic thanks to the top performers and supporters of TFS : Comedian and star Tim McGarry MC - Top bands : Talking Drum - DJ Darren Malone.

Saturday :

The folks were invited to participate to a scavenger hunt! We had to walk all over Belfast to solve the questionnaire. Afterwards, the hunt finished at The Old Boys where soup and sandwiches were served for everybody !

Private room booked with late license let us party into the night...

TFS's staff thank all people who came to celebrate the birthday. We are really proud to be able to bring around a hundred people from the “Tools community” for a week-end!

Thanks a lot to all of you ! And...

Hope to see yours for our next birthday !

The Downpatrick Workshop

Ice Station Downpatrick

Our volunteers have gone blue! With temperatures at zero or below inside the workshop if you didn't keep moving you were likely to freeze in place. Working on the grinder was even worse with icicles flying from the wire wheel. And yet our volunteers were not deterred. They are a stoic, hardy bunch and didn't give me a chance to sneak off to the library to warm up. If it hadn't been for the delicious soups rustled up by our master chief David we would have stuck to the tools. Plans are now afoot to put heating in just in time for the summer, so we can have saunas to make up for the cold.

Downpatrick continues to buzz with volunteers coming far and wide to get stuck in. We have been working on kits of tools for Vocational Training Colleges in Uganda – to be sent in the summer. It has been great for us to have a specific focus to our work. We have also begun refurbishing sewing machines for the Mwanza. Many thanks to Lorette for coming down and showing us how to do it.

In September we started our own fundraising initiative by doing car boot sales in Dundrum. It is an early start but has been well worthwhile raising nearly £1000 before the end of the year. The only problem is it is getting difficult to get into the office with all the stuff in the way.

Another change has been the opening of the workshop on Thursday due to popular demand and the willingness of Chris to manage the place. Many thanks to him for all his support (without which I would be struggling), to the volunteers from Belfast would come down each week to help and to our volunteers for their commitment and hard work.

Sadly I have to report that the Down District Volunteer Centre's future is uncertain, with talk that some of their services may be moved to Belfast. This would be a great loss to Downpatrick and to us. From the very beginning they have been fantastic in their support for our work and we wish them all the best.

Stephen

Mwanza Sewing Training and Centre Report

If the previous year proved difficult, this year was an even bigger challenge. A new manager was appointed in April, the sad death of Jema (junior mechanic) and the problem of securing a treadle supply were the key points of the year. The project continues to demonstrate the huge potential to make a significant difference and allow the MSTC to generate its own funds.



The picture shows the workshop with machines that have been refurbished by the mechanics. They are stored until shipment to the districts when up to 100 at a time will be delivered and training provided.

In December 2009 we visited the project for 2 weeks visiting a new region, Shinyanga, and travelling with the manager to Ukwere to meet some people with disabilities, PWD

We visited several tailors in Ukwere as the manager carried out an assessment of their activities and needs. Later in Mwanza, a selection process was carried out with Chawata (organisation working to improve the lives for PWD's) before the machines were sent .

The support provided by the MSTC was possible due to the finances given by DAA (Disability Action Abroad).



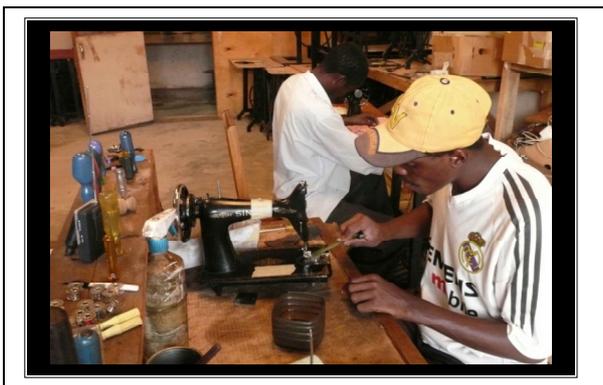
Moving into Shinyanga has highlighted new problems for the project. The coordination of assessment of the artisans and the logistics of transporting large numbers of machines to 4 districts has been challenging. In February over 80 machines were delivered and the manager

has learnt a lot from the experience which can only help her for other areas.

The centre has also targeted and worked on the development of a treadle base for the project. TFS can provide 400 sewing machines and other resources each year. However, we cannot provide all the treadle bases that the artisans require. The options were to either buy from China, expensive and poor quality, or get them made within the country. During the visit we went to 3 small metal manufacturing groups who were making treadle bases. The quality is reasonable but improvements are needed and we have requested that our partner, SIDO, give technical assistance and that some machinery be purchased to assist in the manufacturing process.

The finances of the project are very healthy considering all the difficulties and changes that the centre has had to deal with this year. For 2009 (Jan – Dec) income was around £22,000 and expenditure was around £24,000.

At the same time of TFS's visit a new training programme had been started. An intensive 1 months training was being given to 2 people from the districts where MSTC was supplying sewing machines. The intention is to increase the service to the artisans by providing skilled people who can fix the machines within their own areas.



The mechanics receiving training are from Magu district. They are service and repair several models and are tested at the end of the training on identifying and solving various problems. The feedback has been very good and the intention is to carry out this training several times a year.

Strategic Meeting

In the middle of last year we started a process to review the areas within the organisation that needed to be prioritised. It has been at least 3 years since we held a full development plan and a strategic overview was considered the most appropriate option at this stage.

Fercho facilitated the initial meeting, before he had to leave us. He helped plan the process and methodology we would use over the last 6 months and we are extremely grateful for his inputs.

The process that was used involved the formation of small sub groups that would discuss and put forward proposals on how TFS should develop each key area. The 5 key areas that we had to consider were:

1. Supported Volunteer Programmed (SVP)
2. Project in Tanzania (Mwanza Sewing and Training Centre, MSTC).
3. Storage and new premises.
4. New tools project.
5. Funding.

Outcomes

To date we have been able to cover 3 of the key areas, the SVP, tools centre and funding. A meeting has been organised to cover the remaining areas.

The process has been very helpful to identify the issues and problems surrounding each of the areas and looking for possible solutions to help the organisation overcome them. Some of the issues that were addressed were: -

- ~ The future programme for working with SVP - several options were put to the meeting and it was decided to try and integrate ideas from some of these options. The organisation is looking at increasing its programme and the work that will be undertaken by volunteers. A more comprehensive structure has already been implemented and the benefits of this are being felt within TFS. TFS have taken on a new volunteer whose work will focus more on the SVP.
- ~ The formation of a sub group to work full time on the development of the tool centre.
- ~ The development of a funding strategy that would see the overall funding target divided into 4 smaller target areas. This coupled with a planned increase in the number of people involved in funding would greatly assist the existing funding group.

Say hello, wave goodbye!

Once more, TFS got a new wave of volunteers, so many like rarely before. That's why Emanuele and Fabian moved in 19 Brookvale Avenue last autumn and filled the house for the first time in the last years.

Both came over to Belfast nearly at the same time. It was in July 2009.

We are glad to have Emanuele, the shinnny guy from Italy, here for one year. He is doing EVS and in the last months he has not only improved his English but also learned how do fix a sewing machine asleep. One of his strengths is to motivate others and to raise our spirits with his shinnny, smiling attitude. He also likes to play the guitarre and he can make very 'beautiful' risotto.

Then we have Fabian, the new Eirene volunteer from Germany and the follower of Philipp. Before the last shipment went out, he was in charge of treadles and to look after the supported volunteers. What he likes is to do a lot of sport... Rugby, Football, Athletic sport just to give a few examples.

But both, Emanuele and Fabian didn't stay alone in this big house for a long time.

In the middle of October, Emilie came over from France. Under the EVS program she will

volunteer with TFS for 12 months. We are very happy to have Emilie here because she always take care of the rudy boys as well as that we keep the house clean. Her work up to now has concentrated on the refurbishment of tools and on the supported volunteers. If there is somebody who deserve the title to be called "Master of hammer refurbishing" then it would be nobody else than Emilie.

The next EVS volunteer who moved in and supports Emilie with women power was Jessica. She arrived in the beginning of January to stay until July and is the second short term volunteer. Before the shipment went out she worked in the material room which includes at first, tidying up this room (which was more than necessary) and to get all the material boxed ready. She also helped Stephen out with some administration work concerning the new EVS applications and also this newsletter.

For all those, who read the last newsletter, they will probably remember Germaine from Belgium. He was last year an European Volunteer for six months, said "Goodbye" to TFS and "Hello" again. Since January GG is back to give all his power and energy to save the world with fixed sewing machines.

Recently the Tools Family became bigger again. In the beginning of March Elodie from France arrived and brought a lot of life into the Volunteer community. She does her long term EVS and will stay with us for 12 months. During this time she will learn how to fix tools and she will take care and supervise the supported volunteers.

Also still with us is Lorette. Coming from France and worked in a regional park, finally in Tools she found her real passion. After her long term EVS she decided to stay for another two years as project co-coordinator. We are really glad to have her here because she put all her energy in organising the workshop and keeps it running.

Last but not least, not to forget all the local volunteers who are coming in and spend their energy for Tools. We would not be able to carry out our work without them. We want to say Thank you to Liam, Gary, Henry, Peter and Peter, Paul and Paul, Brandon, Sheldon, Roger, Conor and Brian. Also many Thanks to Michael, Patrick and Stella, who left us recently. Thank you Sam for fixing bikes and Thank you Clement for helping us with some publicity work.

Goodbye! Auf Wiedersehn! Gao bie! Hasta Luego! Alividercie! Salut! To all of yous who left!!! And a warm welcome! Willkommen! Benvenuto! Huanyíng! Bienvenue! Bienvenidos! To all who came!!!

Two Articles about Tanzania's albinos

Living in fear

Twenty-five people with albinism have been murdered in Tanzania since March, a BBC investigation has found.

Albinos are targeted for body parts that are used in witchcraft, and killings continue despite government efforts to stamp out the grisly practice, the BBC's Karen Allen says.

Once, albinos used to seek shelter from the sun. Now they have gone into hiding simply to survive, after a series of killings linked to witchcraft.

In Tanzania, 25 albinos have been killed in the past year.

The latest victim was a seven-month-old baby. He was mutilated on the orders of a witchdoctor peddling the belief that potions made from an albino's legs, hair, hands, and blood can make a person rich.

Sorcery and the occult maintain a strong foothold in this part of the world, especially in the remote rural areas around the fishing and mining regions of Mwanza, on the shores of Lake Victoria.

Nobody seems to know why the killings are happening now, but Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete is now putting pressure on the police to identify where albinos live and offer them protection.

This is not an easy task when BBC investigations suggest that some police are being "bought off" in order to look away when such appalling crimes are committed.

'We want your legs'

The last adult albino to be murdered - just a few weeks ago - was Nyerere Rutahiro.

He was eating dinner outside in his modest rural compound, when a gang of four strangers burst in, and threatened to arrest him. As his wife Susannah looked on helplessly, the men began to hack at Nyerere's arms and legs with machetes.

"We want your legs," they shouted, "We want your legs," his wife recalls, still deeply traumatised by what she saw.

Nyerere was clearly being targeted for being albino - but in every other respect he was an accepted part of his community. A father of two in his 50s, farming cassava - just like everybody else.

His body was laid to rest in a cement-sealed grave to protect against grave robbers who often steal body parts of the dead to give to witchdoctors. A builder had been hired to do the job. Looking on as the funeral came to a close, is Nyerere's sister Winifrida. She too is albino. Terrified, she pulls her six year-old-son closer to her. Though he is black (the gene that causes albinism is a recessive gene), he too is vulnerable.

It is all too clear what is going through Winifrida's mind. Will they come for her next? Squinting her pale eyes against the midday sun, Winifrida whispers in a barely audible voice: "Please, ask the government to take me away from here, I dare not come out of the house since my brother was killed."

This is the work of organised gangs, according to Tanzanian police in the commercial capital Dar es Salaam.

"When Amina was born my husband and the older two children moved away. They were so ashamed and thought Amina would bring us bad luck... but I am not leaving her" Ashura, mother of nine-year-old albino Amina.

Witchdoctors, middlemen and the clients who pay for albino body parts are among the 173 people in custody so far for these macabre killings. None has been prosecuted.

The BBC sought to investigate how sorcerers' tales of albinos are being channelled into

gruesome crimes.

An intermediary posing as a "client" with mining and fishing interests seeking to get rich quick, visited a prominent witchdoctor on our behalf at dusk. They were told that albino body parts could be obtained without difficulty, for a price.

The police are now investigating these claims. Since then, a seven-month-old albino baby was killed nearby.

The sad reality is that albinos who can afford it, are now flocking to urban centres where they feel a little more safe.

And nowhere is it considered more safe than at the Ocean Cancer Institute in Dar es Salaam - where so many of them come to get treatment for the skin and eye conditions that albinos often fall prey to.

Away from the wards, under the shade of a mango tree, a black woman sits with her albino daughter. Ashura and Amina, her angelic looking nine-year-old.

They may seem an odd couple at first, but the firm eyes of the mother reveals a woman deeply protective of her child. She is a woman who looks older than her years.

Ashura and Amina now live on their own, ostracised by the rest of their family.

"When Amina was born my husband and the older two children moved away," recounts Ashura.

"They were so ashamed and thought Amina would bring us bad luck... but I am not leaving her... she's my daughter."

Every parent nurturing an albino child has good reason to be frightened in today's Tanzania. The stories of youngsters being snatched from their parents' arms or attacked on the way to school are - quite frankly - horrific.

Albinism affects one in 20,000 people worldwide, but in Tanzania the prevalence appears to be much higher.

The Albino Association of Tanzania says that although just 4,000 albinos are officially registered in the country, they believe the actual number could be as high as 173,000. A census is now under way to try to verify the figures.

Demonised by the ignorant, prized by the superstitious, albinos are now getting organised in urban centres - putting their trust in Tanzania's first albino MP.

Al-Shymaa Kway-Geer is an impressive woman, who was nominated by the Tanzanian president to give the albino community a voice. MSTC

Not only is she trying to lobby for subsidies to assist her community for the medical treatment they invariably need as a result of their albinism, but she aims to lead by example.

"When I used to go out, people called me zeru zeru (the derogatory term for albino). They used to chase me, follow me, but now I am someone, they call me honourable, the term we use for politicians," Mrs Kway-Geer says.

Understandably, she is distressed and baffled by the recent spate of albino killings which do not appear to be replicated among Tanzania's neighbours.

But she hopes that by standing up and being counted as possibly the world's first albino lawmaker, the rest of Tanzanian society will start to care.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/7518049.stm>

Published: 2008/07/21 18:15:29 GMT



New York Times

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania — Samuel Mluge steps outside his office and scans the sidewalk. His pale blue eyes dart back and forth, back and forth, trying to focus. The sun used to be his main enemy, but now he has others.

Mluge is an albino, and in Tanzania now there is a price for his pinkish skin. "I feel like I am being hunted," he said.

Discrimination against albinos is a serious problem throughout sub-Saharan Africa, but recently in Tanzania it has taken a wicked twist: At least 19 albinos, including children, have been killed and mutilated in the past year, victims of what Tanzanian officials say is a growing criminal trade in albino body parts.

Many people in Tanzania - and across Africa, for that matter - believe albinos have magical powers. They stand out, often the lone white face in a black crowd, a result of a genetic condition that impairs normal skin pigmentation and affects about 1 in 3,000 people here. Tanzanian officials say witch doctors are now marketing albino skin, bones and hair as ingredients in potions that are promised to make people rich.

As the threats have increased, the Tanzanian government has mobilized to protect its albino population, an already beleaguered group whose members are often shunned as outcasts and die of skin cancer before they reach 30.

Police officers are drawing up lists of albinos in every corner of the country to better look after them. Officers are escorting albino children to school. Tanzania's president even sponsored an albino woman for a seat in Parliament to show that "we are with them in this," said Salvator Rweyemamu, a Tanzanian government spokesman.

Rweyemamu said the rash of killings was anathema to what Tanzania had been striving toward; after years of failed socialist economic policies, the country is finally getting development, investment and change.

"This is serious because it continues some of the perceptions of Africa we're trying to run away from," he said.

But the killings go on. They have even spread to neighboring Kenya, where an albino woman was hacked to death in late May, with her eyes, tongue and breasts gouged out. Advocates for albinos have also said that witch doctors are selling albino skin in Congo.

The young are often the targets. In early May, Vumilia Makoye, 17, was eating dinner with

her family in their hut in western Tanzania when two men showed up with long knives. Vumilia was like many other Africans with albinism. She had dropped out of school because of severe near-sightedness, a common problem for albinos, whose eyes develop abnormally and who often have to hold books or cellphones just inches away to see them. She could not find a job because no one would hire her. She sold peanuts in the market, making \$2 a week while her delicate skin was seared by the sun.

When Vumilia's mother, Jeme, saw the men with knives, she tried to barricade the door of their hut. But the men overpowered her and burst in.

"They cut my daughter quickly," she said, making hacking motions with her hands.

The men sawed off Vumilia's legs above the knee and ran away with the stumps. Vumilia died.

Yusuph Malogo, who lives nearby, fears he may be next. He is also an albino and works by himself on a rice farm. He now carries a silver whistle, to blow for help.

"I'm on the run," he said.

Many albinos in Tanzania are turning to the Tanzanian Albino Society for help. But the nonprofit advocacy group operates on less than \$15,000 a year. That's not enough for the sunscreen, hats and protective clothing that could save lives.

Mluge, 49, is the society's general secretary. He grew up with children pelting him with chalk in class. He said he had learned to live with being constantly teased, pinched and laughed at.

"But we have never feared like we do today," he said.

Al-Shaymaa Kwegyir, Tanzania's new albino member of Parliament, said, "People think we're lucky. That's why they're killing us. But we're not lucky."

She said it was a curse to be born in equatorial Africa, where the sun is unsparing, with little or no protective skin pigment. Albinism rates vary throughout the world; about 1 person in 20,000 is an albino in the United States.

It is no accident that the Tanzania Albino Society's office is on the grounds of a cancer hospital. Many of its members are sick.

The smell of the wards is overpowering, a nose-stinging mix of burn salves and rotting flesh. Many of the albino patients are covered with scabs, sores, welts and burns.

"People say we can't die," said one cancer patient, Nasolo Kambi, referring to a superstition that albinos simply vanish when they get older. "But we can."

Police officials said the albino killings were worst in rural areas, where people tend to be less educated and more superstitious. They said that some fishermen even wove albino hairs in their nets because they believed they would catch more fish.

On the shores of Lake Victoria, in northern Tanzania, albinos are a touchy subject. When asked whether they used albino hairs in their nets, a group of fishermen just stared at the sand. One traditional healer, a young man in a striped shirt who looked more like a college student than a witch doctor, said: "Yeah, I've heard of it. But that's not real witchcraft. It's the work of con men."

Police officials are at a loss to explain precisely why there is a wave of albino killings now. Commissioner Paul Chagonja said an influx of Nigerian movies, which play up witchcraft, might have something to do with it, along with rising food prices that were making people more desperate.

"These witch doctors have many strange beliefs," he said. "There was a rumor not so long ago that if you use a bald head when fishing, you'll get rich. There was another one that said if you spread blood on the ground in a mine, you'll find gold. These rumors come and go.

"The problem is, the people who follow witch doctors don't question them."

Mluge said whispers swirled around him whenever he walked down the sidewalk.

"I hear people saying, 'It's a deal, it's a deal. Let's get him and make some money,'" he said.

At home, at least, he is not an oddity. His wife is an albino. So are all five of his children.

Some have already had skin cancer, in their teens.

The night used to be theirs, a time when Mluge and his fair-skinned sons and daughters could

stroll outside together without worrying about the sun.

Now they bolt themselves in, peering through bars.

Just two weeks ago, while Mluge's children were sleeping, a car pulled up to their house, and four men got out to look around.

"I'm worried," he said. "They know we are here."

What's happening?

- Open Sundays
- Party in Balleyhornan

TFS Belfast
May

Tools for Solidarity is a charity which collects old, unwanted hand tools, repairs and ships them out to skilled tradespeople in Africa and Latin America. Address: Unit 1B1, Edenderry Industrial Estate, 326 Crumlin Road, Belfast BT14 7EE. Tel 028 90 747473

visit TFS website:- toolsforsolidarity.org.uk

Disclaimer: Some of the views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Tools for Solidarity. This newsletter is anti-copyright but it is nice to be acknowledged!



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