

PARTNER'S INFORMATION PACK

The TOOL CENTER PROJECT

April 2009
Tools For Solidarity

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TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY

WHO IS TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY?

Tools For Solidarity (TFS) is a voluntary charitable organization based in Belfast (Northern Ireland, United Kingdom), which supports artisans and communities in some of the poorest countries in the world by providing high quality refurbished hand tools and sewing machines.

TFS has more than 20 years of experience in this field.

TFS has three basic aims:

- To provide people, communities and projects in sub Sahara Africa with basic hand tools and machines so that they may practice their skills and improve the quality of their own and their community's life. The tools enable the people who receive them to establish small co-operative and community businesses as well as provide training in vocational schools and opportunities for employment for disabled and women's groups.
- To raise awareness throughout Northern Ireland (NI) about the issues of sustainable development within our own society as well as in the so called Third World or Majority world. These issues include the environment, waste and recycling, appropriate technology, self-reliance, sustainability and community development. We seek to improve and question what we do and work with others to challenge the wasteful, destructive and unequal growth pattern of our society and globe.
- To provide opportunities for people in NI to participate in worthwhile and valuable work. TFS is particularly committed to working with all sections of the community and to focus on providing sheltered placements for people with special needs and those normally excluded from being able to contribute to society in a positive way.

How was Tools For Solidarity working from 1984 to 2007?

Until 2007, the way of supporting artisans in Africa was as described below.

Which process?

All the tools collected throughout N. Ireland were sent to our workshop in Belfast where they were refurbished. This involved de-rusting, cleaning, sharpening, grinding and putting on new handles. The quality of work achieved had to be extremely high.

The Kit System

The idea was to provide the tools necessary to practise a particular skill or trade for a group of 4-6 people working full time. TFS provided ten different kits to artisans in Africa. These were: Blacksmithing, Black and Tinsmithing, Building, Carpentry, Horticulture, Mechanics, Plumbing, Sewing, Shoemaking, and Tinsmithing.

But, for these groups it was not always appropriate to send out a complete kit. The new project described further will consider this point.

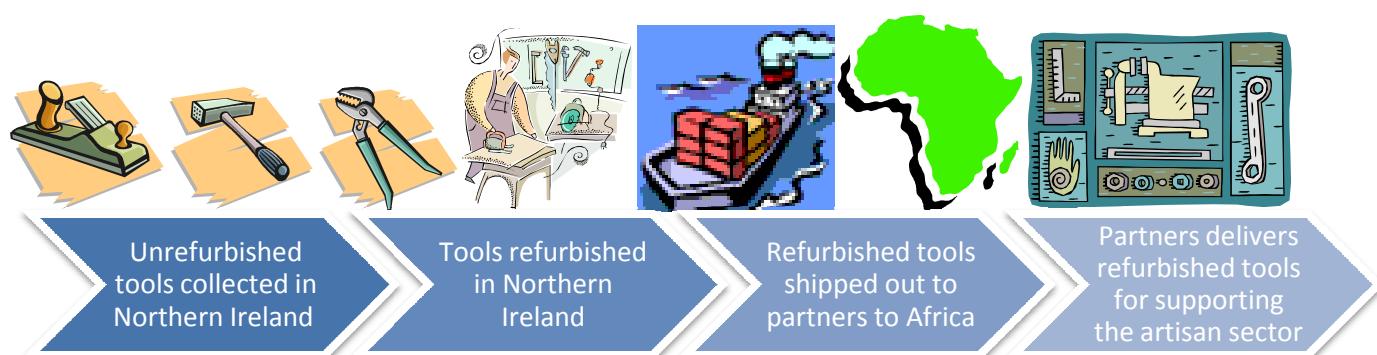
Where?

Over the years TFS has supplied tools to numerous countries in the southern hemisphere. These include Ghana, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi. Most of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region in the world.

What kind of partnership was established?

TFS worked with indigenous locally run partner organizations in these countries. They evaluated and assessed groups of craftspeople in need of tools on behalf of TFS. They also arranged that customs and shipping handling charges were paid and that the tools were transported inland to the groups. TFS paid for the shipping costs to these countries but the costs inside the country were passed on to the groups. These costs had been described as tiny in comparison to their value for the groups.

System from 1984 to 2007



THE MWANZA SEWING AND TRAINING CENTRE

Last year TFS established a project in Mwanza, Tanzania, in which sewing machines would be refurbished and distributed directly. There are several advantages in this approach: skill transfer to the country where the sewing machines will be used; facilitates the integration of maintenance, operational and design skill training; allows people to choose the type of machine they want at a price that suits them; the possibility of developing other goods and services from the centre, such as technical training, local treadle production, etc.

After 1 year of a 4 year project the centre has provided over 220 sewing machines and has shown the enormous potential of such a project. It has also highlighted the main areas of difficulty in running it, primarily internal management.





Artisans purchase machines at the Centre. A subsidy is supplied within the cost of the machine.

The subsidy allows the group to start producing right away in order to reimburse the money often lent for the machine.



The subsidy supplied with each machine provides :

- High quality material.
- Buttons, zips, sewing machines attachments.
- A member of each group receives a week of training on a particular technical skill



When receiving a machine, a full training on maintenance and operation is given to a member of each group to ensure that each will be able to operate and maintain the machine.

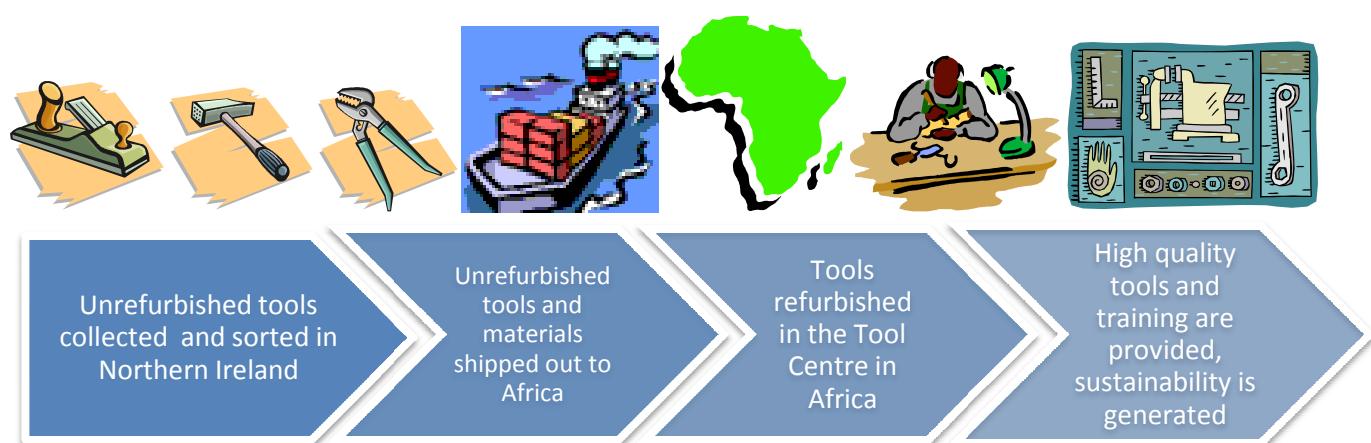


Once training was provided the group takes the machine back to their workshop.

THE TOOL CENTRE PROJECT

What is The Tool Centre project?

TFS is now in a position to consider options for the other tools we have within our workshop in Belfast. This comprises of thousands of hand tools that would normally be refurbished at our workshop and sent to small artisan groups. If we continue to refurbish the tools only in N.Ireland then the artisans we support will lose out on the additional benefits of skill transfer and training. The number of tools we can provide increases greatly if refurbishment can be done in-country.



WHO DOES TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY AIM TO SUPPORT THROUGH THIS PROJECT?

- 1st target : The final recipients are the artisan sector.

Artisans sector: Groups or individuals who work at skilled jobs producing the goods and services required by their community. (blacksmiths, carpenters, shoe repairers, tailors, builders, auto-mechanics, and people who work in many other trades)

Target groups include:

- Women
- People with disabilities
- People living with/affected by HIV/AIDs
- Vulnerable youths

- 2nd target : Link up the Tool Centre with a social organization, e.g. NGO working with PWDs. The Tool Centre could create employment for this or similar groups.

TOOL CENTRE OBJECTIVES

Overall objective: Support artisans and communities in some of the poorest countries in the world by providing high quality refurbished hand tools and sewing machines.

3 central elements in the new project: **TRAINING-QUALITY-SUSTAINABILITY.**

Specific objectives

- **TRAINING**

Tools for Solidarity wants to transfer the knowledge/skills concerning the refurbishment of tools from the UK to the developing countries.

- **QUALITY**

Tools for Solidarity wants to increase the quality of the tools used by artisans in the developing countries.

- **SUSTAINABILITY**

Through its action, Tools for Solidarity wants to generate sustainable projects.

Expected results

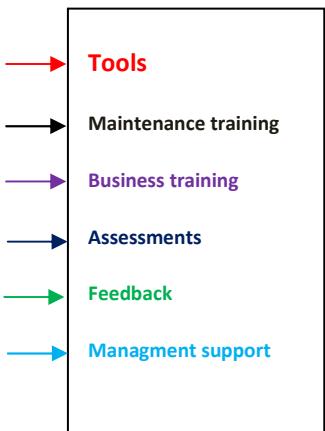
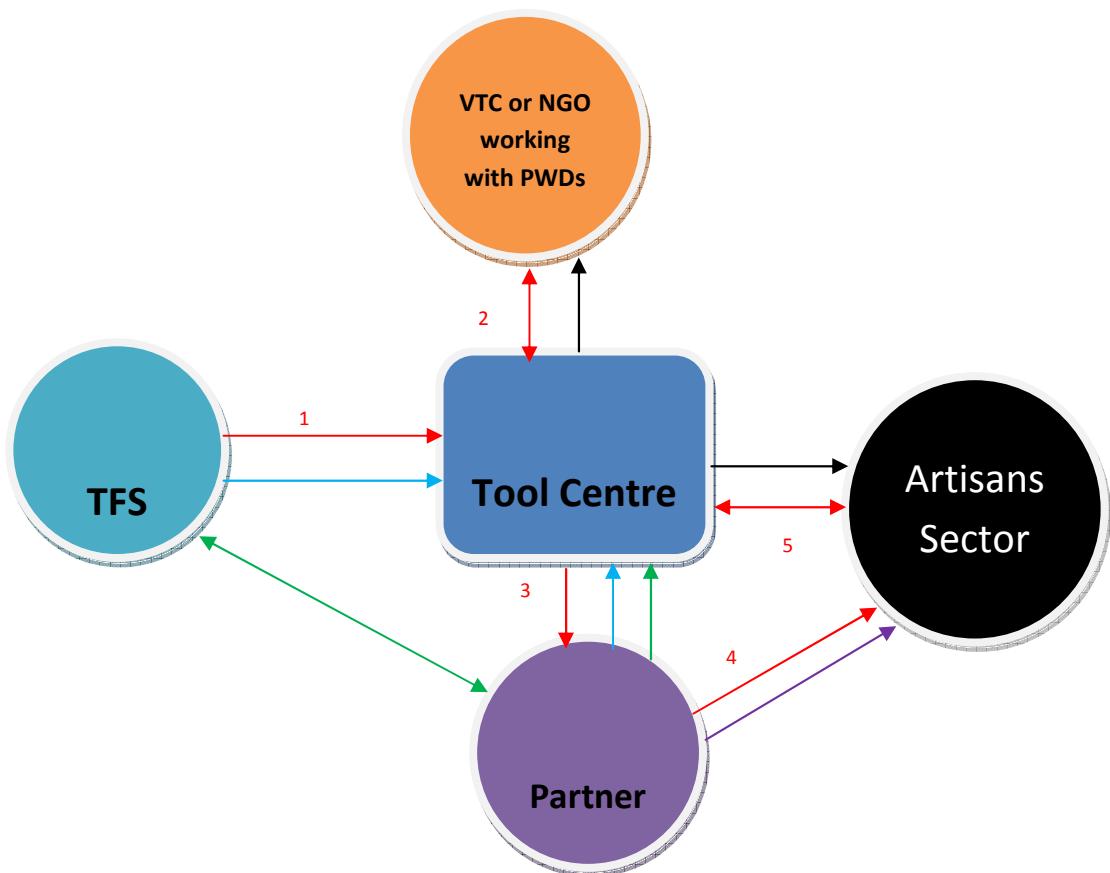
- Train professionals about tool refurbishment, and how to maintain the tools.
- These professionals will then deliver maintenance and technical training to trainees, artisans...

- Provision of high quality tools/sewing machines.
- Deliveries of high quality trainings.

- Offer services to help artisans to maintain their tools.

TOOL CENTRE ORGANISATION

At this stage of the project the detailed figure below is **an example** of what could be the "Tool Centre» process. It's not the definitive process of what will be the Tool Centre at all. It's just a figure which enable you to visualize the different factors to consider, what can be change; added or deducted .There are many other issues which need to be addressed but for now we do need other views and ideas on the project process and areas that we have undoubtedly not considered.



ESTABLISH A PARTNERSHIP

WHO CAN BE A TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY PARTNER?

Working in partnership underpins our work at Tools for Solidarity and much of our energy and resources are spent creating and maintaining our partnerships, so we need to ensure that they are effective and that we are able to develop good working relationships which enable us to fulfil mutual goals.

Partners should:

- be non-discriminating organisations committed to working with people of different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds
- have experience of working with the artisan sector.
- be in support of Tools for Solidarity's core values
- be reputable and representative (honest, reliable, represent local communities and of good standing in their own country and in their working relationships with other organisations)

Partners can be:

- A coalition of community based organisations or a single organisation who already have programmes working at grassroots level with less advantaged people in the artisan sector or in training to join this sector

Partner programmes may include:

- community development
- vocational training and graduate support
- business skills and entrepreneurial skills
- advocacy and lobby

To engage effectively partners should have:

- the organizational capacity to manage the artisan support programme, including:
 - resources (i.e. access to staff / funding / computer / internet / vehicles)
 - project management skills and expertise,
 - ready access to beneficiaries and other organisations who may be able to supplement projects of support to artisans,
 - the capacity to communicate with beneficiaries to identify needs and provide follow up support
 - the capacity to conduct effective monitoring and evaluation of project activities
 - the capacity to share information, communicate effectively and provide

Working on project

At the start of our partnership we would look to work on small scale with focused activities and where appropriate funding would be offered to support this.

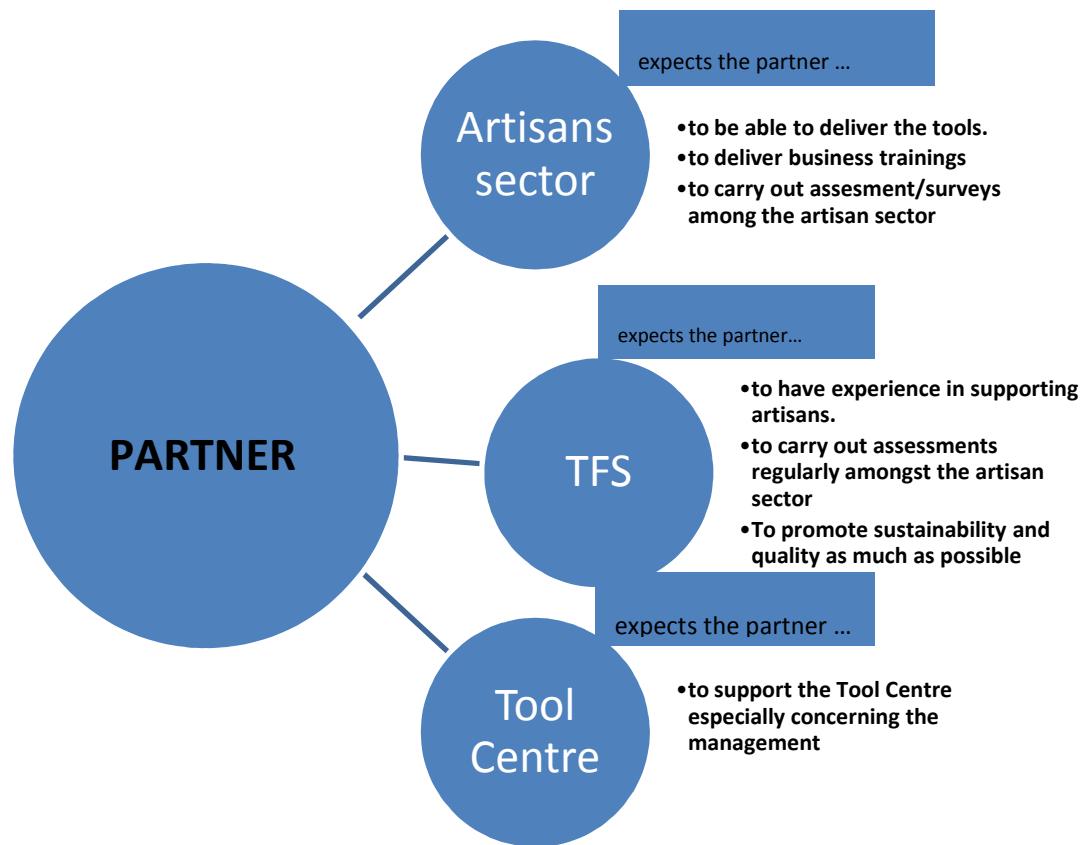
WHY WORK IN PARTNERSHIP?

Our organisation wants to be sure that our work is effective and useful at the local level. For this reason, Tools for Solidarity looks to contribute to holistic, integrated support programmes run by local partner organisations. In order to be effective we look to add value to on-going processes or to establish joint initiatives. We recognize that partner agencies are better placed through their local knowledge and experience to assess the needs of artisans and to co-ordinate a programme of support and sustainable development in their own region.

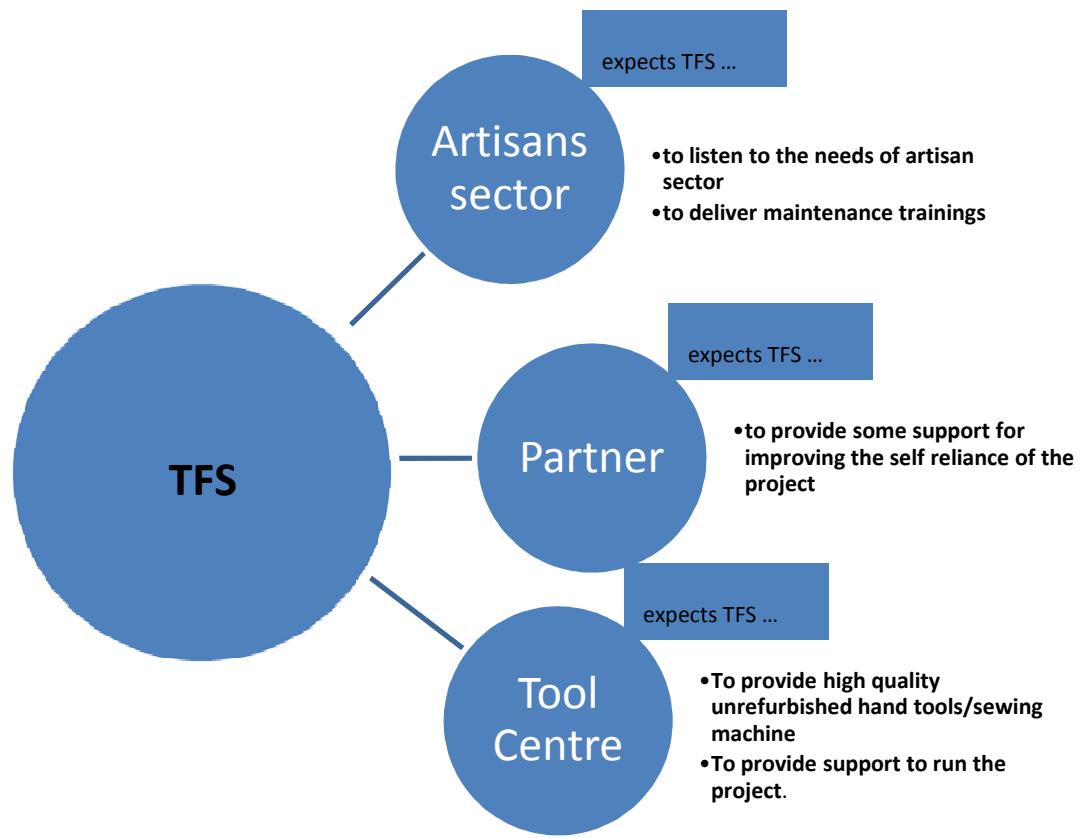
Tools for Solidarity offers partner the chance to:

- Source tools and equipment which enable rural artisans to earn a living
- Exchange ideas and ways of working amongst rural artisans
- Access and share information within and between the networks of partners in Africa

What are the partner's responsibilities?



What are TFS's responsibilities?



DEVELOPING PROJECT BUDGETS

When developing project budgets you should be aware that we will not be able to fund activities such as construction of offices / workshops and purchase of capital items such as computers. All items required for the project should be listed and costed rather than adding a contingency amount at the end of the budget. Your budget should show what your organisation is able to contribute to the cost of the project and any aspects of the project that other organisations are seeking to fund for you.

TFS can provide a capital to start up the project but it will become self financing by itself.

Tools for Solidarity is not a funding organisation in itself, we have to seek funding from other organisations – this process does take time so you should take this into account when considering the timeframe for your project.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Tools for Solidarity requires ongoing monitoring and evaluation of project activities so it is possible to assess the impact of an intervention and whether it has been successful in achieving anticipated outcomes.

Defining monitoring and evaluation

There is no consensus about terminology in Monitoring and Evaluation. There is no absolute distinction between "monitoring" and "evaluation" because, in practice, the two processes overlap and are part of a systematic participatory learning process.

For example, if regular monitoring reveals that things are not going as expected, you might find it necessary to undertake a more thorough, thematic evaluation to understand why and know what changes can be made. As a rough guide the following indicates what is meant by monitoring and evaluation.

Evaluation, in its broadest sense, simply means "to assess or judge the value or worth of something". In practice, this means that implementers need a questioning attitude for continual assessment.

Evaluation events are often more periodic, and ask more fundamental questions about the overall progress and direction of a project.

Self-evaluation processes combine well with external evaluations.

Monitoring helps continual self-evaluation by providing data to generate insights through formal and informal processes.

Formal monitoring involves gathering data about chosen indicators and performance questions. Informal monitoring is about valuing and sharing impressions from chats with stakeholders and from observations in the field.

Monitoring focuses on regular information-gathering and the frequent checking of short-term progress, with analysis about implications for the project.

HOW TO BECOME A TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY PARTNER

If after reading the information in this document you feel you would like to partner with Tools for Solidarity please contact us and we will follow the steps below to develop the partnership:

Step One – Partnership Review

We will review an application for partnership and determine if the organisation fits the criteria outlined in the *Who Can be a Tools for Self Reliance Partner* section.

If we feel that you are carrying out a role compatible with what Tools for Self Reliance is trying to achieve we will ask to exchange information – so for example we would send you copies of our Organisational Strategy and Annual Report and would ask for the same kind of information from you.

Step Two – Partnership Agreement

If, after reading this information, both organisations are satisfied that working together would be beneficial we would ask that a ***Partnership Agreement*** is signed.

Step Three – Proposal Submission

On completion of the Partnership Agreement we would ask that you submit your first project. We will send you a pro-forma ***Application Form*** for this and would ask that you fill in as much detail as you can. We will communicate with you to clarify any matters arising and will ensure the final proposal meets the intended project objectives.

Step Four – Project Implementation

Once the project is funded the following activities need to be done:

_ Signing of a ***Memorandum of Understanding***

This will lay out what is expected of Tools for Solidarity and yourselves in terms of implementation of the project.

_ Complete an ***Implementation Programme***

This will provide an overview of when the different project activities are to take place during the course of the project and indicates when reports / feedback will be submitted.

Step Five

Assuming a project is successfully completed and all reporting requirements are met we would then mutually decide whether to continue with the partnership and to possibly work on larger projects. The partnership would continue as long as it was felt to be useful by both parties.

APPENDIX 1 : THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Partnership

Tools for Solidarity believes that by working in partnership we are able to achieve more than if both organisations work alone. However this is only true if we have common aims and values. The Tools for Self Reliance mission and values are outlined below. If you feel that these are in accord with your own mission and values then we could enter into partnership.

Mission Statement

Tools for Solidarity aims to empower artisans working in developing countries so that they can better participate in the development of themselves and their communities. To achieve this we work with local partner organisations to provide tools and skills training, and by raising awareness in the UK of the causes of poverty.

Shared Values

Tools for Solidarity has always emphasised certain themes and values that underlie the work we are doing. These are:

Equality and Justice.

All people are created equal, but the world is not an equal place and we seek to be part of the process in making it so. A more just society includes equal opportunities, where gender, religion, sexual orientation, and disability are not barriers to inclusion; or access to resources; or opportunities to work and to education. It involves valuing people and fighting injustice to secure a fairer world.

'Ubuntu'

This is an African term, difficult to translate into English but it refers to the essence of being human. You know when it is there and when it is absent. It speaks about humanness, gentleness, hospitality, putting yourself out on behalf of others, being vulnerable. It recognises that my humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.

Self determination

We should recognise that individuals need to be masters of their own self determination. That each and everyone of us has the ability to be someone in life, and that whilst there may be obstacles to overcome, it is the role of those in the 'North' to help those in the 'South' remove the things which those in the 'South' see as obstacles. Both in the UK and in Africa we are working in an enabling way, building up self-confidence, and helping people be empowered.

Partnership

Tools for Solidarity is all about working in partnership:

- with and between African organisations,
- with and between UK organisations.
- between paid staff and volunteers

Partnership involves trusting each other, empathising with each other and above all, respecting each other for our differences and our strengths.

Countering Waste

The main aim of Tools for Self Reliance's work is to empower artisans so that they may make full use of their skills and talents, and so that those yet to be trained can fulfil their potential. We also work towards reusing tools that are no longer used in the UK but which can be of benefit in Africa. Equally important we reuse local expertise. Many of our UK volunteers have a life times skill which is put to productive use in refurbishing, and teaching younger people skills which are no longer taught.

Professionalism

We work in a professional way. This means we listen to what others have to tell us, analyse information before we act, and constantly re-examine what we are doing. We strive for quality and efficiency in all we do, whilst remaining cost effective. Above all we care about our work and the people we affect.

These themes draw attention to the issues, which give our work meaning. Sending tools is part of a complex process to fight poverty. Thinking behind the tools is extremely important – the thoughts of those who gave them, the refurbishers and the new users. Why are we in the UK able to give away these tools and why are they needed by people in Africa? It is the thinking, and more precisely a gradual change in thinking and action of people in the 'North', which will be of greatest permanent benefit to people in the 'South'.

People in the North can play a part in creating a public and political climate in which poverty and under-development are considered unacceptable.

APPENDIX 2 : PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Tools for Self Reliance has two documents

- Partnership Agreement
- Memorandum of understanding

The Partnership Agreement is not a legal document but is intended to be used as a framework for working together, to ensure a clear understanding of what each organisation is expected to do, and to facilitate accountability between the two organisations.

The Memorandum of Understanding is used if Tools for Self Reliance secures external funding for a project it is collaborating on with a partner, or is funding part or all of the salary of a person employed by the partner. It outlines in much more detail specific reporting, accountability and financial accounting needs. It is drawn up to fit the needs of each situation as and when it is funded, and in accordance with the donor's guidelines.

As a result it is possible that a partner will have one Partnership Agreement and a number of Memoranda of Understanding.

General Working

One of the reasons that Tools for Self Reliance likes to work in partnership is that with its partner it can offer a more comprehensive package of support to the artisans they both aim to help. With this in mind Tools for Self Reliance likes to work with its partners on a project basis. Working on this basis we expect there will be clearly defined objectives and that it will be

possible to monitor progress against these to ensure that we are successfully meeting our mutual aims. The project should be regularly monitored and at the end of a project a full evaluation is essential to provide the feedback that will help to shape future projects with partners.

A simple example of a project might be the following:

To empower 50 artisan groups, of whom at least 20 are women's groups, to increase their income by 5% within 1 year of receiving tools, which will facilitate greater family welfare in the long term.

Terminating this Agreement

- This agreement can be terminated at any time by mutual consent if it is felt that it is no longer appropriate to work together. We would give, and expect that our partner would give, at least six months notice of this intention. If we feel that the partnership is no longer appropriate we will set out our reasons fully. We would expect our partner to do likewise.

Tools for Solidarity also reserve the right to terminate the agreement if:

- We decide we no longer wish to remain in partnership because of non compliance, by the partner, with expectations set out in this agreement. We will inform the partner of these reasons and will allow a six month period for the partner to respond. If we do not hear from our partner within this time limit we will consider the partnership has ceased.
- The partnership can also be terminated immediately without consent if any incident of gross misconduct occurs. This would include embezzlement, theft of money or materials or gross slandering of Tools for Solidarity.

Partnership Agreement between Tools for Solidarity and (*partner name*)

We agree to comply with the working practices set out in this agreement.

This partnership will be reviewed annually.

A signed copy of this document will be sent back to you for your records

Signed

Name:

Position:

Organisation: Tools for Solidarity

Signed

Name:

Position:

Organisation:

Please sign and return one copy of this agreement to: TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY Unit 1B1 Edenderry Industrial Estate 326 Crumlin Road Belfast BT147EE