



NEWSLETTER

of Tools For Solidarity

Give a new life to your old tools!

TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY NEWSLETTER

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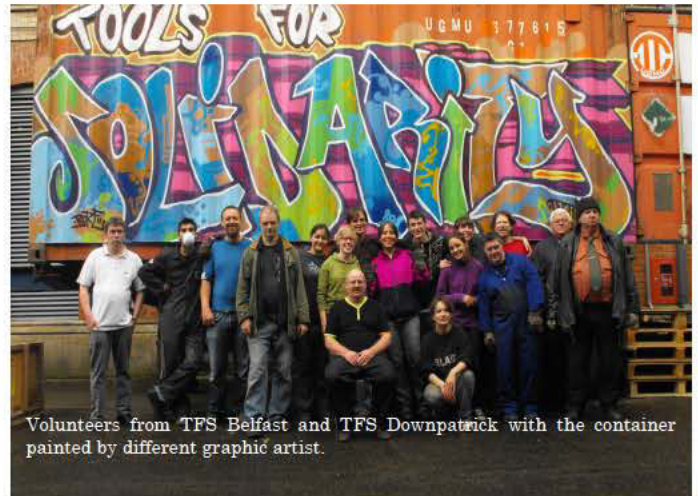
OUR LAST SHIPMENT

By Marta

The big container for our shipment arrived on 19th September. During the following four days we loaded it, one of the most tiring parts but also one of the most important.

Eventually, we filled up the container with 400 sewing machines, 15 treadles, 9 industrial sewing machines, boxes of material, one computer, one large mechanic kit, 6 knitting machines 10 tools kits for mechanics, 5 bikes and much more. This time the final destination of this container is not only Mwanza, but also Kigoma and Congo. Is the first time that TFS support these groups and we hope to go on in the future.

Not only Belfast's volunteers helped out during the shipment. We were joined by volunteers from TFS Downpatrick



Volunteers from TFS Belfast and TFS Downpatrick with the container painted by different graphic artist.

and Mourne Grange. Without them this important work could not have been carried out.

Finally, on Friday, 23rd September, the container, that was painted with vivid and amazing colours by different graphic artists was ready to go. Thus beginning a new adventure to get to Tanzania.

Thanks a lot to all the volunteers who made this great job possible and to NIPSA (Northern Ireland Public Sector Alliance) who supported the shipment and will finance MSTC for the next three years.

TFS outside the workshop

Since last time we wrote, we have been very busy at TFS (surprise, surprise!), here is an account of our latest adventures!

CADA event at Stormont, by Flo

The 15th of September, we took part in a CADA networking event at Stormont Parliament. The main objective was to address the issues of Development Education (DE)

with Ministers, Alan Ducan (UK Aid) and Jan O'Sullivan (Irish Aid). We also wished to have had the opportunity to know more about Northern Ireland Aid Strategy in Uganda, a country where TFS is currently involved. Finally, we were a little bit disappointed with the results of the event,

which was shorter than planned.

Even so, a good point of this event was the meeting between the CADA members. More than ever, maintaining a solid civil society relationships to support Development Education is crucial. Indeed this sector has currently to cope with financial cuts. With the international crisis, the importance of DE is pushed to the background, discredited or minimized. Thus, according to the UK Department for International Development (DiFD), "The link between development awareness in the UK and poverty reduction overseas is at best unproven". However, opposing overseas aid and Development Education doesn't make sense. The role of DE is to challenge the root causes and the structures of poverty and inequalities. Without an active support towards DE, devel-

opment aid cannot be decisive.

Jumble Sale in Downpatrick - How Bazaar!

By Stephen

Rumoured to be extinct - not having been seen for several years - a rare event took place in Downpatrick in late September - a Tools Jumble Sale.

Volunteers travelled from near and far to join the local Downpatrick volunteers in holding a fund-raising sale at New Horizons at the Ballyduggan Estate. Many thanks to Action Mental Health for the use of the building and especially Stephanie for giving up her Saturday for the cause.

Despite the remoteness of the location and the failure of the local rag and church to publicise the event -

we know who you are - a good crowd attended the event and more importantly raised some money for the workshop in Downpatrick.

There were the traditional stalls selling books, clothes, toys, bric-a-brac, household items, furniture and tools.

This was not just a jumble sale however but was also a drumming workshop! Aidan, an old friend and supporter of Tools brought his Djembe collection along and invited one and all to have a go. He gave tuition and encouragement to both punters and TFS volunteers.

He was ably supported by John Martin, his protégée.

Many people contributed to make this a grand day out and I want to thank them all for their hard work and dedication. The event raised over £370 - by far and away the most successful jumble sale we have ever had in Downpatrick.

John Alibankoha and Louis at our tool stall



Volunteers learning how to play the Djembe

TFS at the Mental Health Event

By Coco

Monday the 10th of October was the first day of the World Mental Health Week. An event was organised at Belfast City Hall.

Many different associations had a stall there and so did TFS. The idea was to give the possibility to people and associations to network and give information about the different programmes and projects.

Two volunteers from TFS and a beautiful stall did their part.

The main reason for taking part in this event was to promote our Supported Volunteer Programme. During the whole week in Downpatrick and two days per week at the workshop in Belfast, people with mental disabilities come and volunteer with TFS.

So for us the aim of this day was to let people and associations know about our Programme. The two volunteers provided visitors all day

long with brilliant information and flyers on TFS and our activities.

This day was also sometimes strange and funny because most of the people who stopped by our stall us did not understand why an association as TFS was even present at the Mental Health Day event. However, after a few explanations people were really happy to get to know more about us.

This day was a good opportunity to

Finally, I should say that the half of the people who came to us were interested in the Supported Volunteer Programme, and the other half simply took our flyer and said that they were going to contact us to donate sewing machines or tools.

This day was a good opportunity to make new contacts with new people interested in our work.



Claudia and Coco at the TFS stall

EVS event at St. George's Market

By Jasmin

On 18th and 19th of October, the "Opportunity Europe and beyond" fair took place in St. George's Market in Belfast. This annual fair offers over 30 exhibition stands, events and workshops to inform about the diversity of cultures and languages in Northern Ireland, Europe and beyond and about the opportunities to study, work or volunteer in this areas. Of course such a fair cannot be done without representatives of the Youth in Action program, including the European Volunteer Service, which some of our international volunteers take part in. Two of them, together with EVS representatives of the Bryson Charitable Group, ran an information stand with a European quiz and (of course) loads of information

quiz and (of course) loads of information (which was, after seeing the performance in the quiz, obviously quite necessary to some of our visitors...) and held a workshop on European diversity, Youth in Action, EVS. We can look back to a successful event, as our volunteers not only enjoyed the free salsa sessions, but also were able to address many young people, pupils and students about the issue of international volunteering and surely convinced all (or at least most) of them to go for an European Volunteer Service in future.

“Everything has changed, absolutely nothing’s changed...”

By Claudia

Think what you want, but there’s always a good reason to quote Pearl Jam...

TFS is an ever-changing ecosystem: one goes on holidays for a couple of days and upon coming back to the workshop one always finds some new and puzzled looking faces!

Since we last reported there has

been a dramatic turnover of international volunteers and TFS is, for the first time in ages, officially – and literally – full house.

Our German, workaholic, heavy-lifter, party promoter fairy Maike ended her extended Eirene period, flew back to Germany

for, like, two seconds and then took a plane to Cairo. She now pretends to work as an au-pair while pursuing

her real aim: a career as a professional golfer training on the Egyptian greens between a limousine trip and a cocktail...

We all miss her

GUESS WHAT?

Jim can talk non-stop for 40 minutes!

a cocktail...

We all miss her chatting, her absolute astonishing gift to make the right present for everybody and her ever good spirits!

She had an interesting relationship with the English language that kept everybody amused.

Maike, we can finally brake the news to you: the verb “to do” does not have to be used in every sentence! And yes, “does we...?” it’s wrong.

There, we clarified that!

With us for an intense month of chisels cleaning and dinners at the volunteer house, Françoise from Belgium. Very passionate about Rwanda, he taught us a lot about the country and we might hear from him again!

Galician tool master Hector finished his EVS in September and he’s now... back in Belfast! Luckily because we did miss him a lot already!

The-man-with-the-mobile-in-his-hand totally revolutionized the

tools section, boxing up more tools than we knew existed, creating obscure codes for them (BB 1.1 anyone?), making a record-breaking amount of boxes and becoming an expert on levels, braces and the nail gun! We may have thought that he was texting throughout all tea breaks, Hector was actually learning new words! And yes, checking the odd football result... He’s the only person who could use an online dictionary at the right moment and be funny with it. (“schizo-phrenic!” Ua-huahuah! Sorry, you had to be

there...).

We also enjoyed the help and company of Santiago, a landscape architect from Spain who came to help out with boxing and shelving for a month. He's now back in Madrid, and we couldn't thank him enough for his work at TFS.

Chronologically last but not least, Scottish-Irish Louis left TFS at the beginning of October, after being with us for almost a year. Since then, no-one has attempted to touch his blow lamps.

No, we weren't exactly jealous of your task, Louis!

The only volunteer who questioned pretty much everything, also had an amazing sense of humour, outstanding cooking skills and a unique walk. All of this is very much missed! Fortunately he's still around as well, we never know...

So many departures, but we like to

keep airlines (and ferry companies, apparently...) busy therefore... lots of new arrivals to compensate!

Jasmin started her EVS in August: the only German we can think of who has a conflicting relationship with her alarm clock (and you thought we wouldn't mention it???), this footballer, skilled, very young guitar player (uaaaaahhh!!!) has already shelved half of the workshop and can rarely be seen without a plane in her hand.

Ana from Palma de Mallorca joined TFS in September. Her ever-present smile hides a disturbing feature: she's the only non-Irish non-UK person who hates every kind of cheese but... ready for this? Cheddar!! Yes, ladies and gentlemen, apparently it's possible. Apart from this shocking piece of information, we like her very much and she's already fixed a good number of sewing machines!

The last volunteer to start her EVS this year is Claudia, from Italy. A very skilled, rugby player, tailor, she's already won us over with her cooking ability, taking workshop lunches to a totally different level!

She also has a very peculiar way of translating Italian idioms into English...

Two other international volunteers navigated their way to Switzerland: Miro and Martina. With their arrival, TFS has become an English/Italian speaking organisation. There's still some work to do, but by the end of the year not a single word of English will be heard in the workshop!

Methodical, precise, tidy, efficient, hard working... we love their humour and they seem just too good to be true!

Moving on to the oldies: (TFSically speaking!), Coco and Marta are almost half way through their EVS and whenever they laugh, they can be heard from outer space! If you're sitting in the office, you kind of wonder what are you missing...

The former is officially a Tool Master! He's in charge of pretty much everything that should disappear into a box. Most of the time, a box he just made... Even wood has no more secrets for this avid French climber and he's also a record breaker: Coco has a visitor every week! It does make one wonder if

he holds shares of Easy Jet or something...

Marta is our new sewing machine section guardian angel and does an impressive other amount of stuff in the workshop! From writing proposals for new projects in Uganda (a task she shares with Florence)

to editing the annual report and she's also to blame for this newsletter! This Spanish woman can say with a look what the aver-

age person would struggle to express in a half an hour long speech...

Our French Florence is so diplomatic and kind that not even the sewing machines can be angry at her! She works long hours writing proposals and reading TFS documents and can be seen at pretty much every meeting!

GUESS WHAT?

Update from the last newsletter: John can eat his lunch in less than 4 minutes! (Coco and Marta timed him...)

Michael likes to disguise using different materials and styles (we have photographic proof!!) but never loses his German touch for mechanics! Apparently is a sort of sewing machine genius...

Claudia is still trying to figure out how many chisels can the workshop hold (and hide...) and is determined to keep the "chisel table" rubbish (and with "rubbish" is meant anything that's not chisel-shaped) free for a whole half a day,

will she succeed? Always amazed by how rapidly EVS guidelines can change, she still helps out with the admin and keeps working on the website.

What about Clement? Whenever he's in, his sarcasm is to be felt from a distance! We do wish he could sort out treadles and wood more often... oh yes, we also like his company!

Let's go local!

It might seem a given, but John and Stephen keep going strong. In the workshop almost 24/7, the Wood brothers don't stop amazing us!

Uhm... what about a break? I mean, not a proper long holiday or something, maybe just a Sunday

We have a new addition to our group! Patrick has been coming in for a few weeks and ever since the number of boxes has increased dramatically!

Jim... well, what can we say? Jim likes numbers and words... now, how is that even possible?? Our accountant/sewing machine-section-apprentice is able to talk about pretty much any topic. For ages!

Known for his typical Belfastian sense of humour, sometimes we can't help but wonder what he's talking about and to kindly nod and smile...

Cork-Stephen can now be seen more often in the workshop, usually he carries by himself something incredibly heavy that would have taken three of us only to lift up! He's often accompanied by: his two children, his two dogs and

some of our bikes that he magically fixed.

When you hear "what do you think this is for?", you know that Peter is going to present you with the weirdest looking tool that turns out to be the last thing you would have figured it to be...

He keeps sorting out huge amount of stuff and cheers us up with his sense of humour.

Our supported volunteers team has changed slightly: Thomas has now joined us for a couple of hours a week, we don't really see him that much, but we're grateful for his help.

Unfortunately Brandon decided to take a break from TFS. We do miss him and hope to see him back very soon!

Liam keeps gracing our workshop twice a week. Treadles have no

secret for him and he has to be the only one who never calls the other volunteers by our real name. Plus he always brings biscuits. And when he burst into laughter you can't help but joining in, even if you have no idea what's going on!

His antithesis, Henry, takes care of the wood section/box making every Tuesday afternoon and provides for good entertainment whenever he starts a words battle with Liam!

We have a breaking news: Green vegetables-enemy Peter lived a new experience at TFS, he had lentil soup and he loved it! Hopefully that's the first of many new, exciting discoveries that this hard working, friendly and easy going fellow volunteer!

Richard would never admit it, but he's secretly developing a passion for braces and planes that drives him to their shelves the minute he enters the workshop. And usually he's the one who keeps



Belfast volunteers enjoying tea. And biscuits. And lollipops.

working when everybody else's having lunch!

Gary likes turkey. With the festivities approaching that we know for sure! Another plane-

lover, he joins us every Tuesday and is always in for a chat.

Paul and his amazing collection of hats volunteer with TFS on Thursday, he's been in the kitchen more often lately and... we've enjoyed it!

That's it for now! Be ready to read something very different next time!

As our most affectionate readers know, in each number of our splendid newsletter, we deal with a non-TFS related topic about issues which are part of our ethos such as development education, environmentalism, human rights and so on. This time, given the ever current relevance of the subject, we decided to dedicate our "current affairs" space to Palestine and Israel.

The Forgotten Palestinian Prisoners By Gary Spadding*

It is an easy thing for many people today to forget about the individual human being when looking at the situation in the State of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, especially when talking about the topic of prisoners.

In recent days within the State of Israel mass celebrations can be seen in the streets and public spaces marking the release of Israeli Defence Forces sergeant Gilad Shalit a man whose face is known all over the world thanks to the media publicity of the one cap-

tive that was held by the Palestinian militant group Hamas in the Gaza strip. The release of Sgt. Shalit is a positive step forward in terms of his Human Rights indeed B'tselem and various other typically pro-Palestinian organizations in Israel and even Palestinian organizations

in the Gaza strip. The release of Sgt. Shalit is a positive step forward in terms of his Human Rights indeed B'tselem and various other typically pro-Palestinian organizations in Israel and even Palestinian organizations themselves such as [PCHR](#) in Gaza called for an end to the [inhumane and illegal treatment](#) of Gilad Shalit.

The question to be asked is why so many people know about Gilad Shalit and his story whilst over [5554](#) Palestinian prisoners are being forgotten with their images not shown, their stories not told and their humanity not even recognized. We must always remember never to compare the number of prisoners or even try to trivialize the suffering of Gilad Shalit in some callous comparison that is cruel and undermining not just to Shalit but also to Palestinian prisoners who suffer horrifically in Israeli Prisons. What we indeed

must look at is the treatment of Prisoners and whether they are being held illegally without charge or trial. It is important to mention however that while the world pretty much know and would probably recognize Gilad Shalit if they bumped into him now he is free it leaves us wondering whether anyone would recognize [Moatasem Raed Younis Muzher](#) or [Hamdi Tamri](#) just two of Israel's 211 child prisoners whom are no older than Gilad Shalit when he was taken in 2006.

What is most shocking about the forgotten prisoners of Palestine is that unlike in the media which inaccurately claims the Palestinian prisoners are terrorists including in shocking reports staking claim to the idea that the Gilad Shalit prisoner swap was a wrong move because it would release 1000 "Terrorists" the reality is that most prisoners held by Israel

are done so without any crime ever being committed with at least a thousand prisoners being held without judgement, trial or accusation. These detentions come as a result mainly from the discriminatory and frighteningly discretionary (left up to the commander in charge to decide upon) military laws Palestinians are subject to which results in them being put under administrative detention as was the case with [Abdullah Abu-Rahmah](#) from Bil'in.

Amnesty international reporting on the case of Abdullah states that "Many Palestinian participants in demonstrations are arrested and held briefly before being released, but a few are convicted or held in administrative detention and therefore without charge." in their press release in [January 2010](#).

With this information in mind we must realize that it is cause for serious concern when hearing reports from Israel and Palestine regarding the conditions of the prisons in which these Palestinians are subject to harsh internment. To name just one such facility built illegally in the West Bank, Ofer prison is one of the most notorious for human rights abuses with legalized torture, food deprivation and sleep deprivation being just some of the methods used against Prisoners.

Recently the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine called for a hunger strike in demand for better conditions in Israeli jails for Palestinian prisoners including Political prisoners. This provided a difficult challenge to the Israeli authorities who have thus far attempted to sway public opinion by using carefully placed propaganda claiming to give Palestinian prisoners better meals¹² upping their chicken portions at meal times which is hardly a substantial improvement to general conditions inside the prisons.

To turn back to the topic of Palestinian Child prisoners usually arrested or kidnapped during or just after nonviolent demonstrations even occasionally during midnight IDF raids on Palestinian Villages we can see a pattern forming with a large amount of prisoners held in Israeli Jails – Many of them are participants, leaders, associates or relatives of people involved in non-violent resistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

There have been several families in the An-Nabi Saleh village alone who participate in non-

There have been several families in the An-Nabi Saleh village alone who participate in non-violence that have had members of their family including children arrested and detained during night raids that have disappeared for days and even weeks. This displays a clearly defined policy by the IDF that is presently denied by the IDF spokes person of concentrated and planned collective punishment to deter people from participating in what is known as the most effective principled method of resisting



Gary Spadding in the Occupied Territories

the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

We see this intimidation occurring all over the occupied Palestinian territories and within the State of Israel itself with protesters and left-wing activists being targeted by laws, regulations and policies that the Knesset spits out in a desperate attempt to control Israeli citizens and continue the occupation at large subjecting Palestinians to Military rule rather than civil law.

We there for must not forget about those people, those human beings who deserve to be re-humanized currently rotting in Israeli Jails. While it is important to recognize that Israel does legitimately hold genuine terrorists (some of whom they have released recently in the Gilad Shalit Deal) we must never lose sight of the bigger political picture nor fall into the trap of forgetting about prisoners who as human beings have the same rights to life and liberty as all of us around the world.

*Gary Spedding is the Founder and current President of the QUB Palestine Solidarity Society, Non-violence trainer and dedicated long term activist in Israel/Palestine. You can contact him at gspedding01@qub.ac.uk

GOOD NEWS IN A NUTSHELL

Congratulation to the Berlin Tools Group: Felix and Philipp, two former TFS volunteers, sent out their first tool box to Sierra Leone in October!

Michael, a TFS long-time friend and helper (whoever saw his work in "the back" knows how *much* he has helped us!), is currently managing the site clearance of illegal dumping at Kilkeel. During his work there, he and his co-workers kept all the scrap metal they found and sold it. The result is a stunning £ 770 that they decided to donate to TFS.

Thank you so much!



Special thanks

Almost everything happening in Tools for Solidarity is a group work, this newsletter is no exception.

Therefore... thank you very much to all those who put their writing skills to practice and produced wonderful articles!

A huge thanks also to our "external supporters", who make our work so much easier and without whom it wouldn't have been possible to, just an example, fill in the container on time!

Last but not least, thanks to our fellow volunteer in Downpatrick, Mourne Grange, the Isle of Man and Garvald, with whom we share joy and sorrows of the magical word of "refurbishment"...





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