



NEWSLETTER

of Tools For Solidarity

Give a new life to your old tools!



TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY

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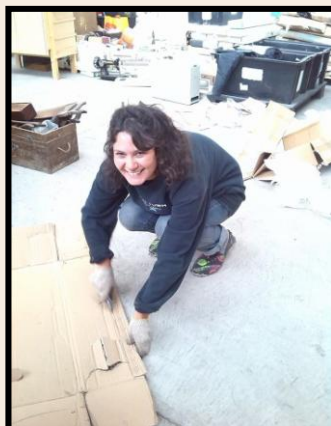
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WELCOME AND GOODBYE

Since the last newsletter we had a lot of changes. We gave a very big welcome to Brenda (Argentina), Betta (Italy), Anton (Russia), Moritz (Germany), Ángel (Spain), Lisa (Italy), Saara (Finland) and Simon, our WORI volunteer (Uganda).



Lisa (Italy), Saara (Finland) and Ángel (Spain)



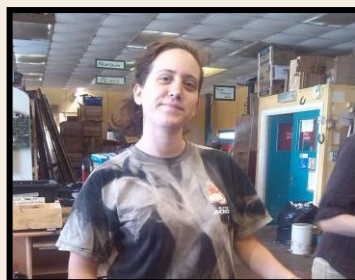
Brenda (Argentina)



Moritz (Germany)



Anton (Russia)



Betta (Italy)



Simon (Uganda)

Also we sadly said goodbye to Sarah (France), Oliver (Germany), Giulia (Italy), Rubén and Anna (Spain) and Heinrich (Germany). We had to say goodbye to Boglárka but fortunately she's back!



Rubén and Anna (Spain)



Giulia (Italy) and Boglárka



Oliver (Germany)

The current volunteers of TFS in Belfast are: Francesca (Italy), Sofia (Portugal), Moritz (Germany), Ángel (Spain), Lisa (Italy), Saara (Finland), Boglárka (Hungary), Betta (Italy), Laura (Galicia), Anton (Russia), Brenda (Argentina), Simon (Uganda), Christie, Conor, Stephen, John, Peter, Thierry, Liam, David, Conor, Daniel, Larry, Peter, Jim, Sam, William, Anthony and Nancy. Thanks also to the volunteers in Downpatrick, Mourne Grange and Isle of Man. Thanks!



WORL PROJECT UPDATE

After securing funding to run a 3 year project with the Women's Rights Initiative (WORI) work towards the establishment of a tools centre has started and since then we have had quite a busy

In the meanwhile we have all been busy preparing the shipment to WORL. Alongside 5,000 tools and 60 sewing machines, the container will be fitted with the equipment to set up a workshop and



The WORL team in the workshop: Stephen, Simon, John and Francesca

time.

In September TFS welcomed Mr Simon Koma to Belfast. Simon is the mechanic responsible for running the workshop in the new centre in Jinja, Uganda. From Uganda himself, Simon is spending four months in Belfast to get training in tools refurbishment and maintenance.

all the materials to deliver training to artisans and tailors.

In January, two personnel from TFS will then travel to Uganda for three months. There they will help establish the centre and they will assist Simon and the sewing machine mechanic with additional training.

The WORI project represents a new challenge for Tools for Solidarity. Despite having already established a sewing centre in Mwanza, Tanzania, providing sewing machines and training, this project it is the first devoted to the delivery of tools kits and to the support of artisans such as carpenters, mechanics and metalworkers.

Like the centre in Tanzania, the centres TFS and WORI are aiming to establish will provide not only sewing machines and tools but also training to the various artisan groups. Although TFS can rely on its experience, a lot of thoughts and new inputs are needed to design an effective training programme. And that's not all.

Together with Simon, we came up with a layout for the new workshop that will be built in the next months. The workshop and storage will be located in two containers in the WORI compound and it will include also a small building connecting the two containers and acting as the main working area.

A lot of work has already been done but there's still more to come. The container is due to leave Belfast in just a couple of weeks and Simon will receive training till Christmas.

The excitement for this new adventure is a booster for all TFS volunteers to keep working preparing and checking all the tools and sewing machines. We all can't wait to see the new centre next year.

FRANCESCA ROSADA

ABOUT UGANDA AND TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY

Uganda is the least developed country amongst the countries found in the west of Africa. This is partly due to the political instabilities and change of the governments between 1971 and 1986. It has a fast growing population against the economic base to support it. Education in Uganda is very expensive that few can afford it and therefore the biggest proportion of the population is unskilled and the minority is skilled but still without jobs.



The Busoga region is in the middle-west of Uganda

WORI stands for women rights initiative. It was formed to advocate for rights of women and also the economic empowerment of women in the Busoga region of the country. Through self help means WORI therefore went into partnership to address the challenge of unemployment particularly amongst the women of Busoga region. The pilot project was delivered to local women in 2013 where sewing machines were sent and provided with training to the women of this

region and it was a success. However, it was observed by the project that by only helping women it will not solve the problem of unemployment in this region. WORI then co-opted the youths who constitute about 60% of the population into the program. The women who received these sewing machines have been able to create employment for themselves, and are able to earn the living for their families.



Views of Lake Victoria from Jinja

And soon WORI and Tools For Solidarity will provide more sewing machines to the women and carpentry, masonry, mechanic, blacksmith and shoe making kits to the youths. If these tools are put to the right use, then this shall bring about the well being of the beneficiaries and then of course a positive impact on the economy of this region and the country at large.

SIMON KOMA

ESD PROGRAMME

A new school year has started and with it new challenges for the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) group. Volunteers have left over the past few months and new members have joined the group: Lisa (Italy), Betta (Italy) and Selina (Northern Ireland) are the new ESD members and Laura (coordinator) is very happy with the new ideas that each of them brings to the programme.



Lisa at St Patrick's School

But we have more surprises for this school year; we have increased the number of sessions from 3 to 4 with a new topic based on Fair Trade activities. Meanwhile we are very excited to say that we are going to work with the Foot Print Women's Centre. It is the first time that a woman's association will take part in the programme and we are sure that is going to be as successful as the previous groups.

At the beginning of the year we already have more than 10 schools interested in the programme and we are very glad that most of the schools where we worked last year have already expressed their interest in taking part once again. We also are very excited to see how the new schools are interested in the pro-

gramme and we are looking forward working with them.

Currently we are working with:

- *Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain Irish Primary School*
- *Cliftonville Integrated Primary School*
- *St Patricks Catholic Primary School*
- *Loughshore Resource Centre*

We will add more schools soon and have an almost full calendar until Christmas and planning for January and February 2015 has begun. If your school is interested we recommended you to contact Laura as soon as you can - she is always happy to explain the programme and schedule a time to come to meet with

you to discuss the programme in more detail.

New members, new activities, new schools and new groups are the current ESD challenges but we are going to keep working with the same passion and energy to ensure the success of the programme. We know that total awareness creation is a long way off, but we also know that the longest journeys start with the first step.

LAURA RÍO



Laura at Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain Irish Primary School

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY

The last year was a very special and emotional year for Tools for Solidarity as we not just moved from our old workshop and set up a new project in Uganda but we also celebrated the 30th birthday



Some volunteers in Cavehill during TFS 30th anniversary celebration of the organisation.

During the 5 Days of celebration, which took place at the end of august, a whole lot of friends, supporters and former volunteers came along to join us.

We had 3 fantastic development events including interactive workshops and discussions, a highly amusing pub quiz prepared by our own well-known entertainer Conor Cleland, a treasure hunt through Belfast and a brilliant concert night with local bands and comedians, including Tim McGarry and Terri Hoo-ley.

The heart of the celebration was the opening day, where people could visit our new workshop for the first time and listen to some inspiring speeches of John, Stephen and other former volunteers. Later on, we enjoyed a tasty buffet and

played the usual self-made games of Tools.

I just arrived two weeks before the celebration took place and I spent those two weeks preparing the games for the open day together with Francesca and Martin. New as I was, I couldn't really understand how we could spend so much time on this, being aware of all the work that needed to be done on the building and the following shipment.

But seeing all the people reunited and all the joy let me realize two things. The importance and enrichment Tools and the Tools family has in the life, not just of those supported in Africa, but as well of those participating and engaging themselves here in the Belfast.

It also let me realize the need to stand back for a moment, to reflect and to



At the workshop of sustainable development

celebrate all the great work that has

been done in order to get the energy and inspiration for the next years.

So thanks to you all for those 30 years of Tools For Solidarity! All that has been achieved is your success as well.

MORITZ RÜGER



MSTC

The last 16 months for everyone involved in MSTC has been both difficult and challenging. After the fire in June 2013, which was a real disaster for the project, it was surprising how quickly the project started operating again. It was 4 months after the fire that MSTC started supplying sewing machines and TFS sent out a container to help the project with replacements machines.

In that period Disability Action Abroad

is that the MSTC manager will leave to work in the new DAA project and we all at TFS take this opportunity to thank her for all her good work and wish her all the best in her future job. This has left MSTC with the position to consider how the organisation should be structured and operated in the future.

The intervention of DAA did provide some security to MSTC at a time when TFS had hoped that a Dutch tools organisation would help supply tools to MSTC – helping to ease the workload at TFS. Unfortunately this did not happen and TFS was not in a position to continue to supply 400 sewing machines at short notice. In many ways it has been a time to rethink how MSTC may have to operate given the well used phrase budget constraints (as if we have non constraint budgets).

In the last 16 months since the fire MSTC has supplied around 400 sewing machines, trained about 180 tailors and trained 4 mechanics (to help maintain machines



TFS volunteers posing with the last container sent to MSTC programme

DAA had secured funds to operate a project in Mwanza and linked in with MSTC to help deliver the programme. This supports people with disabilities and has had positive and negative impact on the work of MSTC. At one level it has helped support MSTC financially with money for the purchase of machines and technical support. On the other side it has brought significant money into a new project so as to affect existing staff aspirations. The net result



Training at MSTC

in rural areas). All this work has been achieved by all the volunteers at TFS doing the work to get machines, materials and funds ready for the shipments and to the 3 people in MSTC Jane, Christine and Athuman. They not only clean and check all the machines but organising training and backup support to tailors selected through the programme.

While we say goodbye to Jane it is important to sustain the work and progress that she made over the last 5 years. Looking to the future Christine will be promoted from junior mechanic to training officer and Athuman will continue in his role in machine refurbishment and take on a new role as maintenance officer.

JOHN WOOD

DEGROWTH, ONE OF THE ECONOMIC THEORIES AGAINST OVERCONSUMPTION

Degrowth is an economic theory and as with many economic theories in human history it proposes dramatic changes in social relations, in the hierarchy and in the distribution of resources and power. Degrowth raises this hypothesis through the following premise: given the evidence that human consumption is today a danger to natural regeneration of the planet's resources, it is necessary to find an alternative to the capitalist growth logic and sustainable growth. Although since the nineteenth century many authors have criticized the industrial logic (Henry D. Thoreau or Lev Tolstoy) and the original founder of the concept is the Romanian economist Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, is from the nineties when degrowth reaches an important theoretical rise and gains a lot of followers. For the simple reason that studies on climate change and ecological footprint warn that the earth, with its finite resources, is increasingly less regenerative in capacity due to human consumption. Moreover, inequality between countries and social classes has increased exponentially and in similar proportions to the deterioration of the planet. The third world, despite the excessive consumption of resources, still lives without electricity and one fifth of the humans suffer extreme malnutrition. As every year the circumstances become worse and reproduce themselves, the rise of ideas opposed to the logic of growth is inevitable. The main representatives of degrowth today are Richard Heinberg, James Howard Kunstler, Carlos Taibo, E.F.

Schumacher and most of all Serge Latouche.

Degrowthers propose a controlled decrease in consumption and production. The base of the reduction is the application of appropriate economic policies to the new planetary situation, called by them "situation of limited resources." In view of degrowthers, in a situation like now the large-scale production and delocalized



Serge Latouche

involves exaggerated environmental costs because it is impossible to control at any time human needs, so the current system tends to surplus and disposal. In their opinion, the solution will be in small scale economy, in similar system to Ulrich Beck's "glocalization": global citizenship consciousness –the term citizenship implies interdependence, responsibility with others– and at the same time, development of the local economy, administered by the citizens, as the local economy doesn't need excessive surplus and runaway production. In case of not to act this way, will be the collapse of global capitalism without background or lack of resources that require decreasing with abrupt and dramatic consequences.

But is degrowth a viable solution? There are different views on the subject, clearly opposed. The decline is, in a way, the result of pure logic: human beings in Occident (less than a quarter of the global population) consume more resources and generate more waste in one year than previous humans to twentieth century, all together. The consumer today is the result of growth logic: developing countries need to industrialize and exploit its natural resources to sell and generate the needed surpluses to refinance themselves and begin the cycle of growth. Developed countries need to generate an internal consumer demand that allows capital to flow through its borders. Again, the goal is refinance them and grow. If a country grows generates employment and the standard of living of its population increases, as long as we accept the never proved equivalence between living standards and consumption capacity. Consumers have become accustomed to their consumption capacity grows each year, to renew their products every few minutes. If there aren't consumers who would buy compulsively, there is no circle of growth. The circle of growth is mainly caused by widespread behaviour in West.

Degrowthers think that environmental conservation is not possible without the reorganization of resources and rationalization of consumption. The reduction of earth's natural resources and environmental destruction are a direct consequence of the economic system. In addition, degrowthers question from a philosophical point of view the modern or post-modern concept of wellness mainly associated with consumption. The Spanish writer Pere Subirana calls it "living better with less."

I think, Dr. Raily, you have given your "alarmists" a bad name. Surely there is very real and very convincing data that the planet cannot survive the excesses of the human race: proliferation of atomic devices, uncontrolled breeding habits, the rape of the environment, the pollution of land, sea, and air. In this context, isn't it obvious that "Chicken Little" represents the sane vision and that Homo Sapiens' motto, "Let's go shopping!" is the cry of the true lunatic?

That's David Morse's answer to Madeleine Stowe in Terry Gilliam's film "12 monkeys". Madeleine Stowe played the part of a young and renowned psychologist who was world famous for the study of certain mind diseases related to social alarm. Specifically, one named Cassandra Syndrome. According to one Greek myth, Cassandra could see the future but no one believed her predictions, falling into the agony of knowing something helplessly.

This fragment represents one of many intellectuals dialectical conflict. Cassandra's syndrome is a psychologist and psychoanalytic term. Another psychoanalytic term is regeneration, which is something similar to what George Orwell in "1984" called "doublethink" that is being aware of something but don't act consequently. People bury that certainty in the depths of their minds because can't assume that are faced with a reality that surpasses them. A mental illness is not a brain disease. Brain diseases are physical and have patterns, but mental illness is the deviation to "normal" social behaviour. The issue of mental illness is that, after centuries of

philosophical, sociological and psychological studies no one has been able to define the normal social behaviour. Basically, because it's impossible to do it.

So I resort to dialectics.

The dialectic that is still valid in many areas of philosophy, inaugurated by Hegel and continued by Marx and Engels raises the historical evolution as the result of conflicting views. Generally, with regard to political movements which have been the engine of political change throughout European history –think on the French Revolution or Russian revolution– has been either position, extreme and opposite to the other, which has won the battle and has mobilized the social mass in favour of their cause. Intermediate, conciliatory positions have never generated the necessary sympathy and have achieved a general mobilization. Into an ideological position that faces another, the mass is comfortable because it can explain the world through a few paradigms, and if you are in doubt, they just only have to examine the opposite view to formulate their own.

But sometimes appear positions that seem intermediate. Degrowth is one of them. Is degrowth a meeting between capitalism and anti-capitalism? The American progressist liberal theologian and scholar, John Capputo, intervened in the debate on degrowth: "I would be perfectly happy if the far-left politicians in the United States were able to reform the system by providing universal healthcare, effectively redistributing

wealth more equitably with a revised IRS code, effectively restricting campaign financing, enfranchising all voters, treating migrant workers humanely, and effecting a multilateral foreign

policy that would integrate American power within the international community etc. Intervene upon capitalism by means of serious and far-reaching reforms... If after doing all that Badiou and Žižek complained that some monster called

Capitalism still stalks us, I would be inclined to greet that monster with a yawn."

The solution of congenital capitalism's problems would make it the best economic and social system. Although, the solution of the problems of communism, mercantilism and the direct exchange would make them the best possible. In the discussion of economic systems are included and excluded elements of hierarchy, power, class, justice, hunger and death according to the preferences of everyone. But it would be simplistic to ignore the fact that each of the major changes in the economic system in the history has led to the development of new forms of social organization, different forms of political organization and inherent problems. Capitalism is not an exception. Throughout its history, capitalism said trends, regularities and congenital problems (inequality, accumulation and crises).

Moreover, it is quite evident that capitalism works through individuals. Any economic system exists apart from the



The snail is usually used as the degrowth symbol

people who work and think inside it. There are yogis in India who devote their lives to meditation and energy conservation. There are documented cases – like Yogi Prahlad Jani– which is fed with two cups of tea per day. Some religions of India considered the mental state of no-mind as the highest because it is the closest thing to divinity. I don't know if there is a middle ground between an individual who generate thousands of pounds of trash every year and another that feeds based on two tea bags. Everyone seeks happiness in their own way, and both think they are on the right way to get it.

Which raises degrowth is a change in global consciousness about consumption, and is certainly a revolutionary element. The problem which seems intractable in degrowth is that propose a radical change that destroys the principles of market capitalism: if a nation doesn't grow, their risk premium grow and the interest on its debt increase as well as the difficulty of finding funding on markets. The growth cycle is broken. If this trend goes global, the global financial system would break irreparably. This is where convergence anticapitalist and degrowthers seemed: small changes that destroy the status quo and market and oligarchies power. The question that still stands on the decrease is whether or not a capitalist or anti-capitalist theory.

In conclusion, it seems that the decrease is a kind of reflection of our childhood consciousness. You can remind the anguish that being children you felt with a small change in our lives (moving house) or changing schools. The changes aren't pleasing to humans, even though we know in advance that will be finally

positive. Many times we look back and recognize how beneficial have been many major changes in our lives such as leaving work or break up with our partner, but the decision making caused us a unique distress. With capitalism is the same: we examine its features, recognize its contradictions and its impact and we conclude that logic prevails. If it doesn't go away, we will disappear. There is a curious phenomenon: all degrowth academics are all Western people. And is that as Westerners we are living well: we have our public health system, hot water, heating and free time. We want that for everyone, but we are not willing to risk losing it to try to guarantee it to others. And degrowth was born in that gap, in that fear of losing everything.

I'm not saying that degrowth is bad just only for not being explicitly anticapitalist. In the opposite, I think that Western consumers today need to affront the reality but they need safety. It's like trying to touch a street cat: jerking should not be made. So, it's easier to awareness people on stop thinking about their lives in terms of consumption that awareness them about all the economic and system. But actually is the same thing. If conscience of everybody changes, everything will change: is a similar phenomenon to Nietzschean democracy. Nietzsche talked about "strong citizens" to "strong society". There's no problem in a society composed by "strong citizens" the appearance of a dictator, of a catastrophe or of a new hidden power.

We have to change our habits and try to change the habits of everyone around us in order to change the world. Big stories are over.

ÁNGEL LEIRA



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