

NEWSLETTER



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WELCOME GOODBYE

**"THE BEST WAY TO FIND YOURSELF IS TO LOSE YOURSELF
IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS" MAHATMA GHANDI**

Every year Tools for Solidarity welcomes seven European volunteers to work with them.

During their time here, they will learn how to fix tools or sewing machines, live in a community, share their time with people who come from different cultures and develop many skills.

Whenever a new volunteer arrives we are glad, because it's the start of new story. From the last newsletter a lot of things happened because of the pandemic, but we've managed to keep our spirit up!

It's why we want to say a warm Welcome / Bienvenue/ Bienvenuto / Bienvenido / Willkommen / As-salamu alaykum to

- Rahel (Germany),
- Zeinab (Spain),
- Rodrigue (France),
- Felix (Germany)
- Anton (Former French volunteer).

To welcome new volunteers unfortunately we need to say goodbye to others.

We welcomed back Finn our German volunteer who had been forced to return to Germany at the beginning of the pandemic. When the borders re-opened he came back with Mathilda another Eirene volunteer. They stayed with us 6 weeks. By their action, Finn and Mathilda represented the real meaning of volunteering, Thank you so much!

Birgit, another German volunteer came for two months. During her sabbatical year to work at Tools and her help was invaluable during our shipment for Njombe. Hope to see you soon!

Antoine after a year with us, left us to return to France and find a job in tourism. We want to say to him Good luck! And thank him for his help during the shipment for RASTC and for making masks.

*"Every new beginning comes from
some other beginning's ending"*
Seneca



SHIPMENT FOR MWANZA SEWING AND TRAINING CENTRE MSTC



The shipment is only the tip of the iceberg. Underneath, there is a lot of hard work, persistence, mutual aid, and stress for everybody. It's why we want to thank all our volunteers for their help and their dedication. Without them it would not have been possible to ship on time.



With the pandemic situation which started in March, we were worried about making the shipment on time. We managed to work from home and re-open at the end of May, with just our European volunteers.



Finally we were able to fill the container in a day (a record!!!); we put in the container 417 sewing machines, 12 knitting machines and 6 sewing industrial machines. We also added many boxes of materials, buttons, scissors, oil cans, etc. After painting our container, we sent it on June 17th.



The MSCT centre, based in Mwanza, received it in the middle of August.

During the month of September, MSTC sold more than 70 sewing machines and provided a training to 30 tailors. This is a great success for the centre.



What are the reasons of this success?

- **Communication** is the first key to understand this success. Before sending anything TFS undertook with SIDO a survey to find out what locals really needed. When we knew what type of sewing machines Tanzanian tailors were looking for we repaired and fixed these ones. Our philosophy is to send and sell what people need and not what we would like to send and sell.
- Giving a **one week free training** is our added value. We provide a training to the tailors to improve their skills with the aim to increase their incomes. During this week they will receive lessons in **business management, embroidery design, sewing machine operation, repair and maintenance**. At the end of the training, they will be able to buy one of our machines.
- The **good price-quality** ratio is another clue. As you might know, the Tanzanian sewing machine market is supplied by Chinese companies. Unfortunately, because of the poor quality of these machines Tanzanians have to regularly buy spare parts or a new machine. Our second hand European machines are much better quality and less expensive than the new Chinese one.



NEW PROJECT AT NJOMBE

"DO MORE THAN IS REQUIRED OF YOU" GEORGE S. PATTON

Busy could be a word used to describe our year. Within one hour of the shipment for MSTC leaving we were already working on our shipment for NASTC (Njombe Artisan Support Training Centre) and our current project RASTC (Ruvuma Artisan Sewing Training Centre)

WHERE IS NJOMBE?

Njombe is a town in southern Tanzania. It is the regional capital of Njombe Region. The town is 12 hours away from Dar es Salaam where the container arrived.



WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

After a field trip to Tanzania in June 2019, our team realised that there was a huge demand from the neighbouring region of Ruvuma our center RASTC is based .

Locals have asked for high quality second hand tools for carpentry, blacksmithing, building and furniture making. Consequently we decided to open a further centre.

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The project will support and **develop programmes to assist the artisans** in both rural and urban areas of the Southern Highland Zone.

Tools for Solidarity provides **necessary resources and skills to artisans**/groups to improve their generated incomes and to meet the challenges that they face in running small enterprise centres and support people with disabilities.





ONE CONTAINER - TWO SHIPMENTS

KEEP CALM AND PLAY TETRIS!

Tetris, a tile-matching video game created by Russian software engineer Alexey Pajitnov in 1984. How many hours have you spent playing it? A lot – like everybody I guess.

At this point you probably think that I lost my mind while finishing this newsletter but NO. So, what is the connection between Tetris and our container?

Filling this container was a real challenge! We lifted more than 11 tonnes into the container while making sure that we didn't mix the items allocated to Njombe and Ruvuma.

As for the first part bound for Njombe, we started first of all with the big pieces of machinery (compressor, table saws, pedestal machine, wood turning bench saws etc...). Then we packed many big black boxes and wooden boxes. Afterwards we put in the tool kits and the gardening tools. Finally, we finished with the treadles and the miscellaneous boxes.

The second part of the container was filled with 337 sewing machines, 6 knitting machines, 3 industrial sewing machines and 30 boxes of material.

GIRL POWER!

We would like to mention that this shipment was filled largely by our female volunteers and we are proud of it! Women are not weaker or stronger than men, if there is the motivation, mountains (boxes!) can be lifted. And believe us they had it!

Time passes quickly during a shipment and because we needed to finish some boxes and check some pieces of machinery, we divided our group in two.. Our male volunteers were checking and making boxes; this is the reason why the first part of the container was filled by the women!

Thanks to Jessica, Manon, Mathilda, Birgitt, Jennifer, Ecem, Daria, Zeinab, Roisin but also Andrei, Finn, John, Hamish, Geoff and Stephen for everything. Good team work!





NEW BUILDING

As you may know, TFS often receives donation of sewing machines and tools. We are really grateful to people who bring us their old tools.

Unfortunately, our actual workshop is running short of storage space. Consequently, TFS took the decision to find a building to store all the boxes and sewing machines that are ready for future shipments.

How will we proceed the tools?

Our volunteers in the Tools section have already started to box up the refurbished tools. The aim is to empty our shelves upstairs and dismantle our shelves downstairs and upstairs.

What will we do with the empty space?

Fill the workshop with more stuff of course! No it's a joke.

We are planning to add new tables and chairs upstairs to provide more space for our volunteers to work. Moreover, it will be easier to keep the workshop clean and tidy. Basically the workshop upstairs will contain only what is strictly necessary. Downstairs we will store all the big pieces of machinery and tools that are used more rarely.

With the pandemic situation, it will be easier to follow the social distancing restrictions and welcome back our supported volunteers safely.

When will we do it this?

Currently we're finalising an offer and exchanging contracts with the owner and estate agent, so the building is not ours yet . If everything goes to plan, we can move into the new building in late December.



ONE WORLD FESTIVAL

By Roisin

TFS was part of this year's One World Festival which took place in October. The festival was organised by CADA (the Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies in Northern Ireland). CADA's objective is to promote **sustainable development, social justice and a fairer society** in both local and global contexts.

Festival audiences and participants were treated to an array of **inspiring events**, culture and art which provided food for thought as well as entertainment. Well done and hats off to the organisations involved – the events challenged and uplifted in a time when we need it more than ever.

Even if you missed the festival, I would encourage you to visit the website and discover some of the people and organisations involved. We are already looking forward to next year's festival! TFS's festival offering was an activity pack for children including games, art and more!



You can download the One World Creative Pack here:

<https://oneworldfestivalni.com/one-world-creative-pack/>

Thanks to volunteers, Jennifer, Daria, Ecem and Noel for making the pack! We hope you learn more about our world and enjoy the activities!

IS THE TIME RIPE FOR A 'MORE JOYFUL AND RESONANT ANTI-CONSUMERISM'?

By Roisin

The answer is a resounding yes according to an opinion article which appeared in the Guardian last November:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/nov/29/mass-consumerism-black-friday-climate-catastrophe-consumption-shopping>

As we again approach the advent of Black Friday and before long, the festive season, why not revisit the question? It seems without doubt that straitened circumstances brought about by Covid-19 will result in less spending this year, but has the pandemic also allowed us to examine our relationship with stuff? Many of us may have found ourselves musing over the following:

- Have I shopped less during the crisis and found that I wasn't missing out?
- Does buying and owning more and more stuff make me any happier?
- Has my relationship with stuff changed as a result of the crisis?

Food for thought indeed. Maybe some of us got the breathing space we needed to finally liberate ourselves from the urge to shop. For those considering the questions above, take your ponderings further by watching 'The Story of Stuff' and its counterpart 'The Story of Solutions'. <https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of/>





The films allow us to take a long hard look at our whole system of production, consumption and disposal and offer an inspiring glimpse into what life can be like if we turn this system on its head. Yet aside from those who had a needed break from trawling the high street during lockdown, doubtless there were many others who got their shopping fix online. In fact, with millions of people across the globe having no choice but to work online or stay at home, retailers on the web saw unprecedented sales. Retail giant, Amazon, enjoyed what the Guardian referred to as a 'lockdown bonanza' with customers at one stage spending 'almost \$11,000 a second on its products and services'. Online fashion company, Boohoo, also cleaned up flogging 'lockdown loungewear' which has notably led to concerns about working conditions in Leicester factories. For more information see Labour Behind the Label's report [here: https://labourbehindthelabel.org/report-boohoo-covid-19-the-people-behind-the-profit/](https://labourbehindthelabel.org/report-boohoo-covid-19-the-people-behind-the-profit/) So apparently the feel-good factor that comes with buying new things is undeniable and the success of the companies above is testament to this.



However, it's also clear that the new purchase high is short-lived... that's why the vast majority of us are always hankering after more stuff. So this Friday 27th November we invite you to buy nothing! Rather than buying stuff, spend time doing something else! Go for a walk in the woods, ring a friend, read your favourite novel or do a jigsaw puzzle! These are only a few suggestions. Ask your nearest and dearest what they would do and spread the joyful anti-consumerism!





CLIMATE CHANGE PROTEST

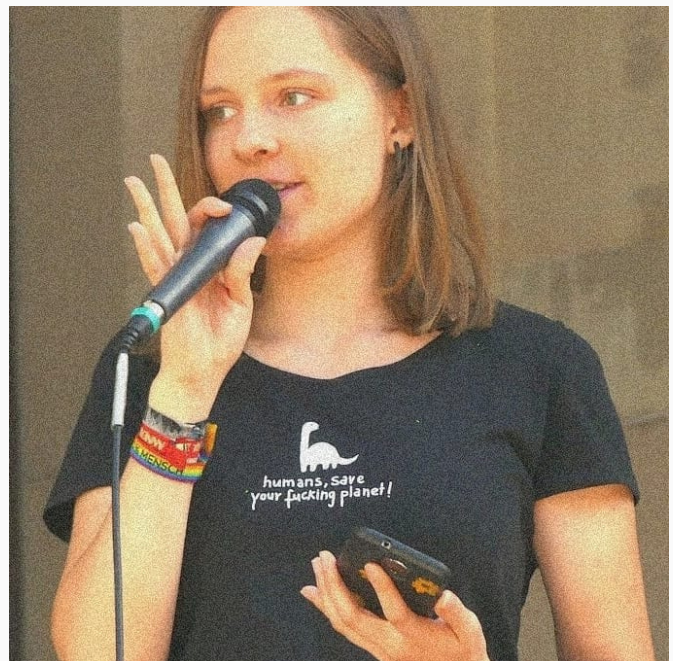
By Rahel Koch



After the young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg started her strike at the 20 August 2018 and became more famous, striking for the climate became popular on an international scale. In Germany the first ever climate strike, called "Friday for Future" was held on the 7 December 2018. In Northern Ireland and some other countries, it started soon after, all protests organized by students.

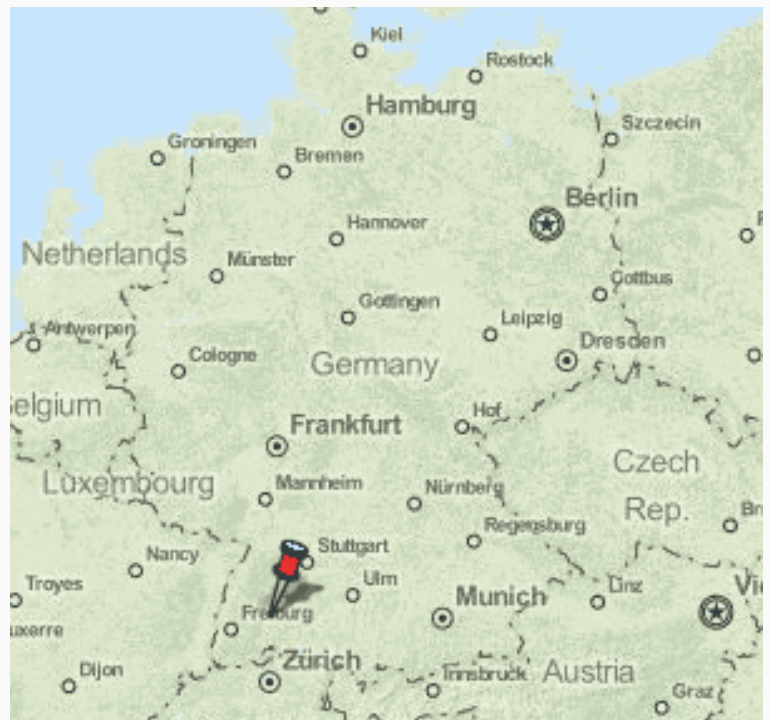
Of course, not only students in Berlin and Belfast were interested in protesting for the climate and for their future. The movement also spread to smaller towns. As politicians started to notice the youth rising up, they were at first concerned about the education of these young people not going to school on Fridays. "They should leave this Problem to the experts", one German politician said. But the students could not be stopped and soon started to write articles in newspapers, speak on radio and attend discussions on television. Many adults and politicians believed the students had irrational fears about their future: flooding, heat waves, bad harvests, nothing that would be a problem for us Europeans.

Right? But you can already see the consequences of human action even in Europe. Hotter summers every year let the soil dry out which affects the farmers in Europe who produce our food..



And why should we only look at Europe? What about all the people on the world's islands that will be flooded in a couple of years? What about the effects on our health? The heat waves and the higher chance of more global pandemics? Climate change will affect so many aspects of our lives, that it is hard to list them all. So, the young people do have a reason to worry about their future and the future of everyone else on the planet.

They should be allowed to be angry at governments that build new coal power plants, cut down decade old forests, prevent the use of renewable energy and plan climate politics that make it impossible to comply with the Paris agreement. But these discussions can not only be held in big cities. It is important that also people in smaller towns get confronted with this important issue and are able to get their opinion heard. That is why I and a few of my friends decided to start our own protests in our home town Schramberg in Germany.

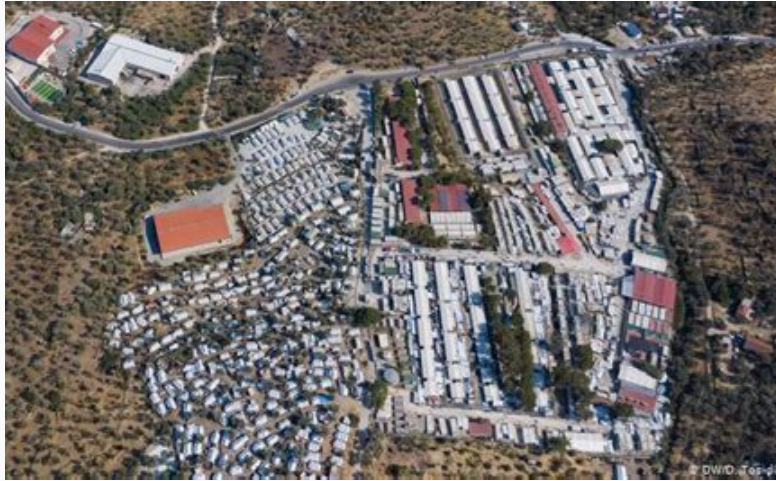


We really did not expect many people to come as our town is quite small and we always thought of it as more or less apolitical. Instead of the expected 30 participants, 180 came to protest with us. We saw students, teachers, and some older people. Especially some of the older people were very invested in the topic because they worried about the future of their grandchildren. We met people who were active in environmental groups in the 80's and who were delighted to see us young people protesting again. Our protests came to the attention of our mayor who also wanted to discuss local change with us. Sadly, the virus ruined our plans to do that. For us it was also very important to be a part of the German wide and international movement. We stayed in contact with activists from everywhere and had great discussions. Sadly, the virus prevented us from going on the streets again. But our fight is not over! Even if I am in Belfast now and most of my friends that I started the protests with are going to university, Fridays protests for Future Schramberg will not stop to exist. We found motivated successors who will organise more protests once it is possible and bring attention to this topic that is so important for our future.



MORIA REFUGEE CAMP PETITION

By Anton



I want to highlight an important cause in the newsletter, I think it is a cause to highlight : "Together we are calling on European leaders to act now. The fire in Moria camp on the Greek island of Lesbos was a disaster waiting to happen. The biggest refugee camp in Europe has gone up in flames, leaving over 12,000 people without shelter, amidst the global pandemic. The European migration policies that trap people in inhumane conditions across the Greek islands must end.

Moria camp was more than an overcrowded and unsafe camp. It had become a symbol of how Europe treats people on the move. For years, we have witnessed the harmful impact of European policies on people's lives: appalling conditions in camps on the islands, numerous deaths at sea, violence and push backs at the borders of Europe.

The European Union is at a critical turning point, soon presenting a 'fresh start' on migration (in the form of a new Migration and Asylum Pact). The whole world witnessed the fire at Moria: European leaders and the European Commission must realise that enough is enough. Those who have the power to make decisions in the next days, weeks and months have a historic responsibility.

Join us in calling on European leaders and the European Commission to :

- - Immediately evacuate all people who had to flee Moria camp. Basic human rights to shelter, food, sanitation facilities and healthcare cannot be upheld on Lesbos or the other Greek islands. Urgently decongest the islands and focus on relocation across Europe.
- - Abandon any future approach to migration that would again trap people in inhumane conditions in camps on islands (or facilities at borders), awaiting a decision on their asylum claim. The policy of restricting asylum seekers' movement from the islands to mainland Greece has to end.
- Implement migration policies that ensure protection, as opposed to exclusion. This requires increased solidarity and responsibility sharing between European countries, and an end to systematic human rights abuses at the borders

The need for action has never before been more urgent."

<http://chnng.it/QPNPdHvhGH>

Regards





HELP US SAVE THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

By Stephen Wood



The European Solidarity Corps Programme (ESC) is outstanding in international volunteering.

It is unique in that it is a funded programme enabling young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to volunteer for up to one year in another country.

More than 50 countries are involved with thousands of volunteers joining hundreds of organisations throughout Europe and beyond. They engage in such a diverse range of projects: environmental, working with refugees and asylum seekers, in kindergartens, organising cultural events, supporting women's centres and shelters, helping homeless organisations and many, many more.

ESC is grounded in the concept of Solidarity and uses non formal and inter cultural learning as its core approach. It is hugely enriching for the volunteers, the hosting organisation and the communities they serve. For many volunteers the experience is transformative – **they learn so much about who they are and what they want to do with their lives. So why is it coming to an end in the UK?**

In February this year the UK government announced that although it was interested in remaining in certain sectors of the Erasmus + programme it had no desire to remain in the ESC. There was no consultation or discussion with the organisation involved nor was any explanation given for this policy.

Last year NI hosted 76 international volunteers. **They worked more than 110,000 hours – equivalent to more than £1 million in salaried pay.** Hosting organisations received over £1 million from the EU to run their programmes. Loss of this income could tip many of the organisations into closure or drastic cuts in their programmes – **affecting services and support to many of the most vulnerable in our society.**

For the last number of months TFS along with other EEC participating organisations in NI have been working to try and save the ESC programme. This has involved lobbying within NI – all NI assembly members received a Briefing Paper in September and all NI MPs were asked in October to intervene on our behalf with the UK government directly. We hope that a motion will be put to the Assembly soon and that it will receive cross party support.



**EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS**



We have also received support from Marie McGuinness, Vice-President of the EU parliament and the issue has been raised with both Simon Coveney, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Norma Foley, Minister of Education and Skills in the Dail.

We have had meetings with sister organisations in Scotland, Wales and England in the same position we are in. We hope that there will be a more wide spread campaign throughout the whole of the UK and that we can persuade the UK government to rethink its position.

ESC and its predecessor European Voluntary Service have been invaluable for TFS. Without the very many wonderful, committed, passionate, enthusiastic and dynamic volunteers we have had, and continue to have, we would not have been able to support so many people here and in some of the poorest countries in the world. There is so much to loose.....

We welcome any support people can give towards saving ESC. The groups supporting the campaign:

On behalf of:

Bryson Charitable Group
Camphill Community Clanabogan
Camphill Community Glencraig
Depaul Family Services
Exodus
Habitat for Humanity
NOW
The Black Box
The Crescent Arts Centre
Tools For Solidarity
Ulster Wildlife
Women's Aid - Belfast and Lisburn
YMCA - Carrickfergus
YMCA - North Down
YMCA - Ireland

