

# Tools For Solidarity

## Strategic Plan 2022

A Review of the Strategic Plan was undertaken during three days of discussions and planning meetings in May-June 2018, to produce a three year plan. There was a further full Review of the Strategic Plan in 2021 over two days in August-September 2021. However, with the continuing uncertainty caused by the Covid 19 pandemic, it was decided only to plan for one year in the first instance, and to schedule a further review for Summer or Autumn 2022.

This document presents the updating of the Strategic Plan for 2022 to take account of the changing environment in which Tools For Solidarity operates.

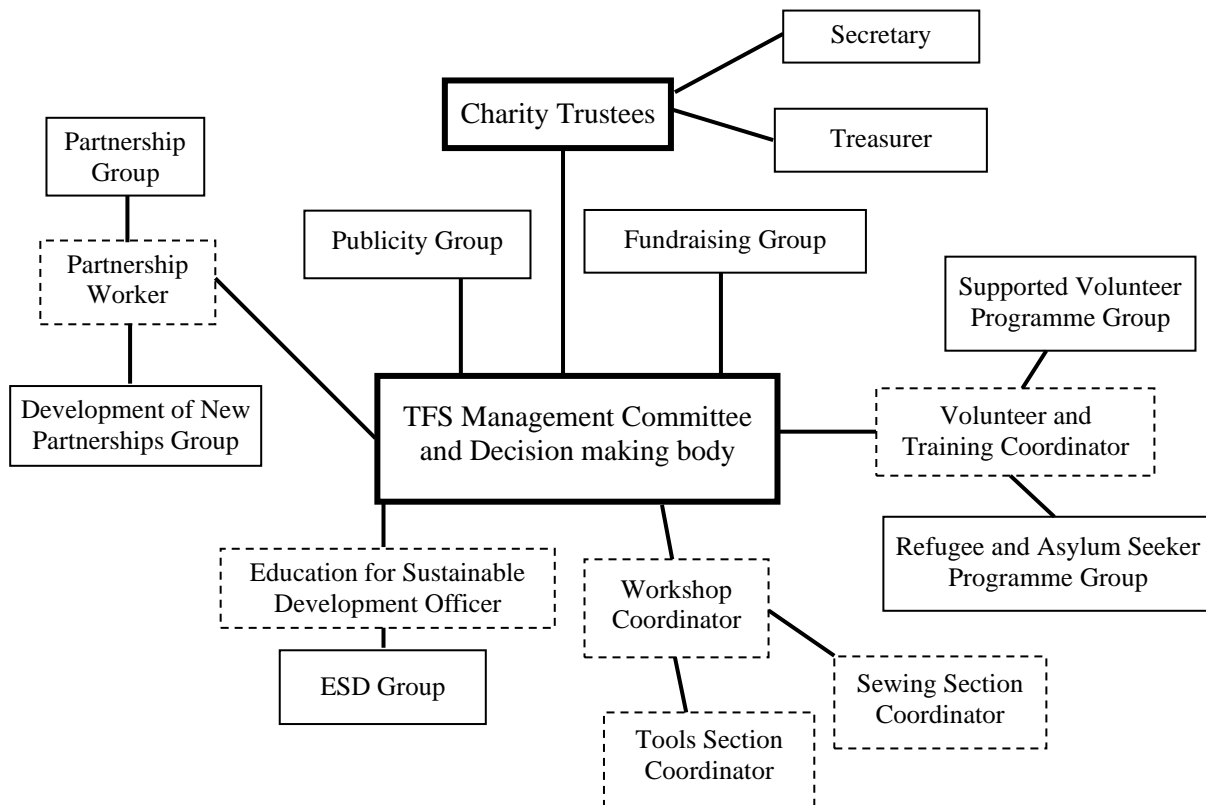
### **Mission Statement**

Tools For Solidarity supports self-reliance by providing high quality refurbished tools to working people overseas, promoting international solidarity, and challenging global inequalities through critical examination of development issues, environmental sustainability and ethical working practices.

### **The Aims of Tools For Solidarity**

- Promote self-reliance by furnishing overseas projects with high quality recycled hand tools and sewing machines.
- Involve individuals, organisations and the public in Development Education and environmental issues.
- Utilise working methods that develop and support a sense of international solidarity and promote volunteering and ethical working practices.
- Tools For Solidarity will have appropriate premises, personnel and funding to meet the agreed outputs and objectives of the organisation

## Organogram of Tools for Solidarity



### Office bearers and staff

1. The Charity Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the oversight of the charity, and in particular dealing with safeguarding policy, financial policy and issues arising.
2. The Chairperson chairs meetings and AGM
3. The Secretary deals with all inquiries and passes on information to the various sub-groups. These sub-groups deal with all issues relating to funding, partnership, publicity, and our ESD programme (Education for Sustainable Development).
4. The Treasurer keeps the accounts and presents them to Companies House and NI Charity Commissioners.

Tools For Solidarity has six part-time paid staff, one of whom sits in each sub-group. These groups plan the work of the organisation and if major decisions are needed report to the TFS Management Committee which meets every 4-6 weeks.

The six part-time paid staff are:-

- Workshop Coordinator – 10 hours/wk
- Volunteer and Training Coordinator – 10 hours/wk
- Education Officer – 20 hours/wk
- Partnership Worker – 20 hours/wk
- Sewing machine section coordinator – 10 hours/wk
- Tools section coordinator – 8 hours/wk

## Challenges in 2022:

- **Brexit:** The European Solidarity Corps volunteers, who carry out the bulk of the refurbishment and other work at the Belfast Workshop, have been extended until the end of the 2022-23 financial year. However, the longer term situation is still very unclear, and we need to assume that the scheme will not continue beyond that time. This will impact both the rate at which tools can be refurbished, and our finances, as the ESC scheme covered many of our costs.
- **Coronavirus:** Continues to cause disruption to our work. The workshop has not closed since Spring 2021, but some volunteers have had to stay off work due to catching the virus, and others have had to self-isolate as close contacts. The numbers of supported volunteers in the building at one time has been reduced, requiring a reduction in the hours each one can work. The Tanzanian projects have remained open through 2021, with social distancing in place. The Development Education programme has been affected by disruption in primary schools, but most have found a way to continue working and a full programme of workshops has been delivered.
- **Funding:** There are challenges to funding due to Brexit and the ending of ESC, coronavirus and the general economic climate.
- **Partnerships:** Despite the covid pandemic, the 2021 Field trip to Tanzania was highly successful, particularly in providing training support to the newest project in Njombe City, which has made an excellent start. Issues in Mwanza are to some degree on-going, but have been alleviated considerably by the forthcoming partnership with WorkAid, an England-based tool-sending organization with a much larger turnover than TFS. The field trip did also reveal some issues in the project in Songea, Ruvuma Province which need to be addressed in the near term.
- **Storage:** The new storage building on the Antrim Road has relieved pressure on the Sunnyside St workshop, but it is in need of some repair work in the medium term. Funding has been obtained from Ulster Garden Villages for around 50% of the work, but the remainder (£5000) needs to be found over the next two years.

## Strengths

- **High profile:** TFS has a high standing in the local community, and is well respected in the voluntary and community sector.
- **Partnerships:** The new partnership with WorkAid for the Mwanza workshop shows that our work to date is well respected. This partnership may well be extended to other projects in other countries in future.  
The partnership with Scottish charity Global Concerns trust continues to be very productive, giving another outlet for our tools at their projects for disabled artisans in Malawi.
- **Strong financial position:** Notwithstanding the possible challenges to funding, the current financial position of TFS is strong. We were able to finance the purchase of the new building out of the Reserve built up for that purpose, and still retain an adequate Unrestricted Reserve to allow for unforeseen contingencies. For the first time, we have obtained funding for the NI Executive Office (for the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Programme) and from Irish Aid (RoI Department of Foreign Affairs) for our ESD programme.
- **ESD programme:** The Education for Sustainable Development programme continues to develop well, despite the difficulties that the pandemic causes for schools and other groups. More local volunteers have become involved, making it more resilient to loss of international volunteers through Brexit. Grant funding for the ESD programme from Irish

Aid has been much appreciated, but is only for one year, and a renewal application will be required.

Along with the Irish Aid finance, a grant from the Ultach Foundation has permitted us to fund the translation of the ESD workshop materials into Irish, which will enhance their usefulness in a number of schools.

## **Actions for 2022**

- **Brexit:** Our international volunteers are recruited and funded through the European Voluntary Service (EVS) scheme, now transforming into the European Solidarity Corps (ESC). The extent of the UK's future commitment to ESC is not yet clear. If TFS cannot attract volunteers through this route, or an alternative, it will not be possible to maintain the same level of tool and sewing machine refurbishment.

TFS has taken a leading role in coordinating the response of the voluntary sector in NI to the current situation with regard to the ESC. We will continue to press local and national agencies to give clarity on the way forward, and maintain contacts with representatives at Stormont and Westminster to ensure the continuation of the scheme or an adequately funded alternative.

We will actively pursue other approaches to finding volunteers, particularly local ones, following the example of the ESD programme. We will research other schemes that may help us recruit volunteers, for example Peace IV money for cross-border projects. We have made some use of interns and placements from local businesses and FE/HE courses; we will pursue further opportunities like these.

- **Coronavirus:** We will continue to follow Government guidance concerning best practice in the workshop and throughout our projects, always bearing in mind the special requirements of our Supported Volunteers.
- **Funding:** The ESC scheme has provided a substantial part of the funding for TFS over many years, and has allowed us to purchase and maintain our volunteer house. Without this funding, and even though we will not have to support the same number of international volunteers, there will be a substantial shortfall.

Coronavirus has also had an impact on fund-raising; our usual events (marathon relay team, autumn sale....) have not been able to take place and some of the larger funders have diverted their resources from their usual areas of concern to focus specifically on those affected by the pandemic.

We will need to explore other sources of funding for the year ahead; the fund-raising group will need to be pro-active in approaching new funders. We will also need to explore possibilities for partnership with suitable local businesses.

- **ESD:** The ESD programme has had to adapt to the new situation with coronavirus. During the main lockdown, the Education Officer and team developed on-line resources which have been much appreciated by schools. The new local volunteers are an asset to the delivery of the programme, but are limited in their availability, and more need to be recruited and trained. The translation of the workshop materials needs to be completed during the first half of 2022, and they will be made available on-line.

- **Governance:** Recent applications to the NI Executive Office and to Irish Aid revealed gaps in our suite of governing policies. Those gaps have been remedied, but on-going work by the Management Committee is needed to ensure that we have a comprehensive package of up-to-date policies in place. We will also work towards formally signing up in 2022 to the principles of the IDEA Code of Practice for Development Education.
- **Partnerships:** The new partnership with WorkAid will be developed, particularly for the workshop in Mwanza, Tanzania, but also with a view to working together on other projects. A further shipment to the Global Concerns projects in Malawi is scheduled to take place in Spring 2022, and tool refurbishment for it will need to be complete by March. The Partnership Worker will keep in regular touch with all three of the Tanzanian projects, particularly in Ruvuma, where there have been recent communications difficulties.
- **Storage:** The new storage building on the Antrim Road is in regular use, but requires some repairs and modifications. Some funding has been obtained for this but more will be found during 2022.