

Tools For Solidarity

Strategic Plan 2023

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.

This document presents the updating of the Strategic Plan for 2023 to take account of the changing environment in which Tools For Solidarity operates.

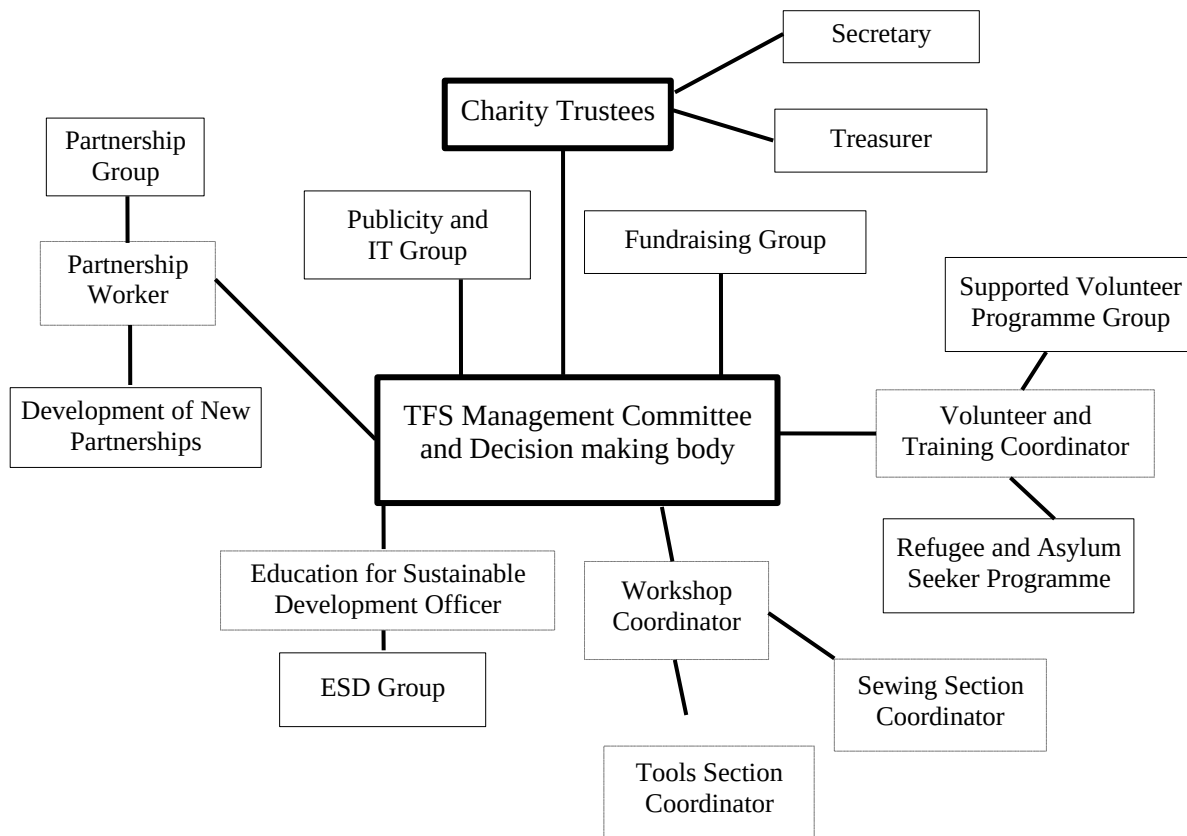
Mission Statement

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, sewing machines and machinery and through the provision of skills training.
- 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 five part-time paid staff, who sit in the different sub-groups. 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 five 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
- Supported Volunteer Programme Coordinator – 32 hours/wk

Challenges in 2023:

- **Brexit:**

The European Solidarity Corps programme has come to an end. This scheme has provided the European volunteers who have carried out much of the tool and sewing machine refurbishment in the workshop. The ESC programme also contributed considerably to our finances. We have been successful in finding other avenues to attract European volunteers, but these come without funding and there has been a consequent reduction in income.
- **Coronavirus:**

Continues to cause some disruption to our work, though much less than before. The workshop has not had to close since Spring 2021, but some volunteers have had to stay off work due to catching the virus.
- **Funding:**

As well as the impact of Brexit and the ending of ESC, it has been more difficult to attract funding in 2022 since many funders switched their focus to coronavirus mitigation. The economic climate has become increasingly difficult with high inflation. The weakness of sterling has increased support costs for our African projects, and shipping costs have risen rapidly.
- **Partnerships:**

With the Mwanza and Njombe projects well established in Tanzania and performing satisfactorily, we are planning the opening of a new Artisan Training Centre in Iringa province. Raising sufficient funds for this will be an additional funding challenge. Our Scottish partner Global Concerns Trust (GCT) has had some funding issues themselves, with the ending of a long-term grant to work in Malawi. Our contribution to the Malawi projects has been quite small-scale, but we may need to explore other avenues to continue working with GCT.

Strengths

- **High profile:**

TFS has a high standing in the local community, and is well respected in the voluntary and community sector. Our profile has been enhanced by continual development of our social media and website presence over several years.
- **Partnerships:**

The partnership with English NGO WorkAid has bedded in and is performing well. WorkAid are part-funding our Partnership Coordinator to manage the Mwanza workshop, which is performing much valuable work. Our relationship with the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) in Tanzania continues to be very productive. Relationships in the Njombe project are good, and in Iringa province we are actively working with SIDO to establish a new centre.
- **Stable financial position:**

Notwithstanding the possible challenges to funding, the current financial position of TFS is stable. We have obtained full funding for the renovation of the new Antrim Road storage building, and work there is progressing well. For the first time, we have obtained substantial funding for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) for our Supported

Volunteer programme, after many years when we supplied placements for clients from the Trust without payment. This has allowed us to employ a paid Supported Volunteer Coordinator and to expand that programme sustainably. Our ESD programme for 2022-23 is funded by Irish Aid (RoI Department of Foreign Affairs), and our Refugee and Asylum Seeker Programme (RASP) is fully funded by the Souter Trust. We retain an adequate Unrestricted Reserve to allow for unforeseen contingencies. For the first time, we have obtained funding for the NI Executive Office) and from for our ESD programme.

- **ESD programme:**

The Education for Sustainable Development has gone from strength to strength, reaching more primary age pupils than ever, as well as increasing numbers of youth groups and adult community groups. 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 permitted us to fund the translation of the ESD workshop materials into Irish, which will enhance their usefulness in a number of schools. These high-quality resources are now available to all teachers through the Internet.

Actions for 2023

- **Recruitment of volunteers post-Brexit:**

We will build on the new relationship with the French Service Civique which has provided three volunteers this year, and continue to actively pursue other approaches to finding international volunteers. We have made some use of interns and placements from local businesses and FE/HE courses; we will look for further opportunities like these.

- **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. The Partnership Worker will keep in regular touch with all three of the Tanzanian projects, particularly the new Tools Centre in Iringa.

- **Governance:**

The Management Committee will continue to enhance our suite of policies and ensure that they are kept up to date. The new contract with the BHSCCT will require us to develop new policies on Challenging Behaviour, and a revision of our Complaints procedure.

- **Funding:**

Building on the successes of 2022 in raising new funding from the Belfast Health Trust, and securing full funding for the new building and RASP programme, we will continue to explore other sources of funding for the year ahead. An approach to the NI Dormant Accounts fund has been discussed and will be taken forward during 2023.

- **ESD:**

The ESD programme will continue to expand in 2023, with more youth, adult and community work planned. With the Irish language workshop materials in place, it is intended to expand our work in Irish medium schools. A full external and independent Evaluation of the ESD programme is to take place in Spring 2023, funded by the Irish Aid grant for 2022-23.

Having formally signed up to the principles of the IDEA Code of Practice for Development Education in 2022, there will be further work required to ensure that we are fully implementing the Code, with the first self-assessment due on February 2023.

- **Storage:**

The renovation of the new storage building on the Antrim Road will be completed in the first part of 2023. It is already proving its value in freeing up space in the main workshop.