



TOOLS FOR SOLIDARITY

Newsletter

Volume 18 - May 2018

SIDO



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Welcome - Goodbye

We would like to give a warm welcome to our new international volunteers:

Alberto (Spain)
Jessica (Italy)
Nico (Germany)
Francesca (Italy)
Angeline (France)
Iuliia (Ukraine)
Yacine (France)

Unfortunately we have also said goodbye to:

Aminata (Belgium)
Selim (Turkey)
Alvaro (Spain)
Ruska (Ireland)
Juan (Spain)
Opheli (France)
Suzanne (France)
Anton (France)
Sophia (Germany)

Grassroots

CONSERVATION GROUP
Charity No: NIC 102932

Grass Roots is one of Northern Ireland's longest established practical Conservation Groups. We plant trees, build drystone walls, clear invasive species should as rhododendron, and lift litter on beaches. We work at a wide variety of locations, mainly in North Down and South Antrim, but also with visits further afield to Tyrone and Donegal. We have worked on many well-known sites around Belfast, including Belvoir Forest, Colin Glen, and the Bog Meadows, as well as on less prominent public and private sites.



Grass Roots is an independent group, though with close links to The Conservation Volunteers. The group is entirely run by and for volunteers; we have never had any paid staff. All our work is carried out by volunteers, from 8 to 80, from all walks of life, with a common interest in nature conservation. We provide opportunities to young people to carry out the Community service element of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and we try to attract people from all parts of the community. We currently have a grant from the Woodward Trust to encourage newcomers to Northern Ireland to work with us. Working with local people is a great way for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to feel part of their new surroundings and to become better integrated with the existing population.



In recent years we worked closely with Lagan Valley Regional Park. The Park oversees a swathe of countryside running from Lisburn to Belvoir Forest Park, described by the naturalist David Bellamy as the 'lung of Belfast', as it brings the countryside to the very heart of the city. Our latest projects have seen us renew an old partnership with Ulster Wildlife, and we are currently working regularly at their reserves at Slievenacloy, Bog Meadows and Balloo.

No experience is necessary to start, as training is provided 'on the job', but over the years members have developed skills in areas such as walling, pathwork and woodland maintenance. Funding comes from small charges to landowners that we work for, occasional grants, and membership subscriptions. Tasks are carried out once a fortnight around the year. A typical work-day sees us on-site from 10.00 am to 3.30 pm, usually on Sunday. There's no better way to see the countryside of Northern Ireland!

Quite a number of volunteers from Tools for Solidarity have worked with Grass Roots, on the beach at Ballyhornan, in the woods at Saintfield, and walling near Tollymore Forest, to take three examples. Everyone is always welcome!

Full details of all activities are on our Work Programme, ask Ken for a copy, or see our website www.grassrootsni.org and Facebook page www.facebook.com/grassrootsni

Switch on to global issues

In a time where uncertainty is higher than ever and inequality is growing at its fastest rate, how can we ensure that the next generations are well informed? What knowledge, attitudes and skills do they need to know in order to not make the same mistakes that were made in the past?



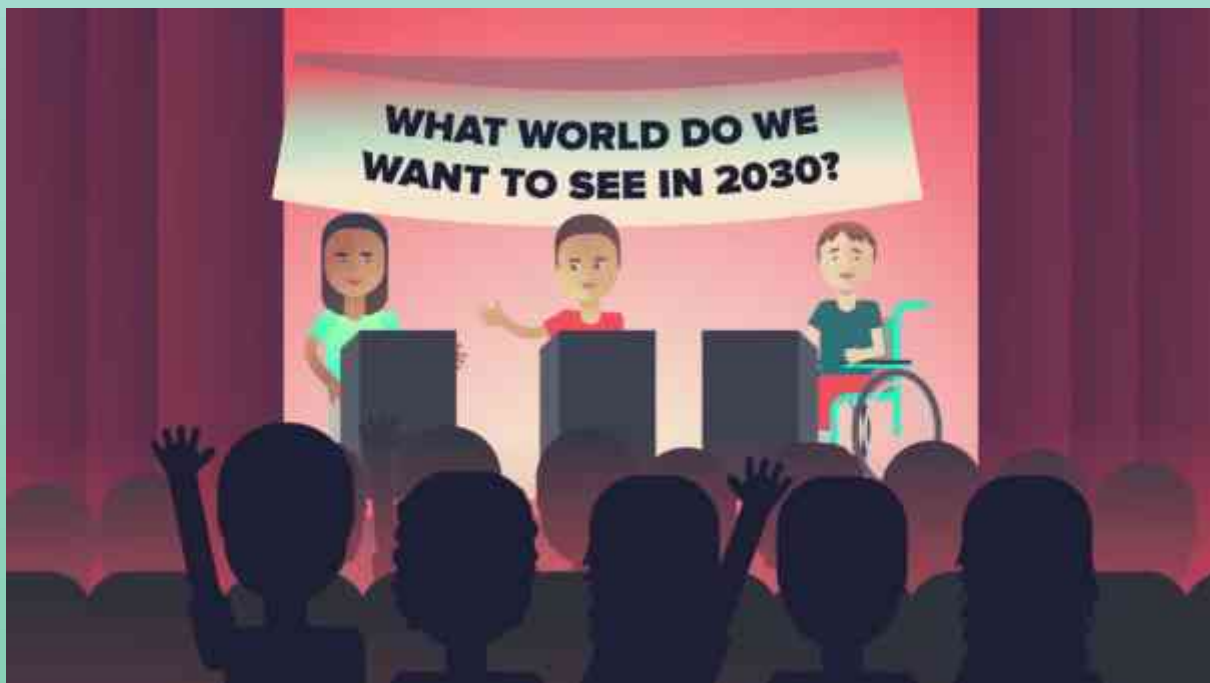
The first thought that comes to my mind is to be able to break stereotypes such as “I am rich because I worked for it” followed by “If you don’t have as much wealth as I do it is because you don’t work as hard as I do” and “they are poor because they don’t work hard enough”. Laziness is still a common believed reason for poverty meanwhile the unfair economic system is still a hidden reason ignored by the majority.

The well-known ***International Trade Game*** explores this issue in a fun and interactive way and it has a potential to explore a wide range of learning outcomes such as child labour, work inequality, immigration, supply and demand and many more. Its one of many resources (such as the issue tree, the paper bag or if the world was a village) that explore the root causes of Inequality and that can be adapted to many different audiences.

But knowledge is not the only factor that plays a key role in the achievement of a fairer global community. Furthermore the current technology devices allow us to have all of the information that we can imagine at the click of a button. It seems to me that there’s a greater need to educate on the right attitudes and skills rather than simply transmit information.

What all of the activities named above have in common is that, apart from being informative, they also have a pronounced impact on feelings and emotions. The participants can feel the injustice of the “rules” they play by and they gain empathy, courage and empowerment in exchange.

Each of our actions has an impact on the world. Each of our decisions will lead to different circumstances in many parts of the blue planet. We don't need to be educators or be involved in charitable organisations to ***switch on to global issues** and be the voice for a change. We are all educators in many ways. Whether we work in schools or we are parents, friends and relatives we can advocate for a better world every day.



#switchon2globalissues is a campaign and animation locally made by CADA members (including us!) that is designed to show people that education should help learners to understand the root causes of the social, economic and environmental challenges our world faces. Learners should be supported to think critically about these issues and explore them from different perspectives. This campaign and animation is an excellent starting point for those who want to make a difference.

For more information visit & share <https://www.cada-ni.org/education-and-action>

Journey through Newcastle



Tools for Solidarity is not just work, it is also fun. That is the reason why we decided to go to Newcastle. Thanks to Jeff who invited us to an amazing traditional Irish dance evening in the Morgen Range and to overnight in the cottage.

Every morning we woke up with the awesome view of the mountains and a fantastic breakfast all together.

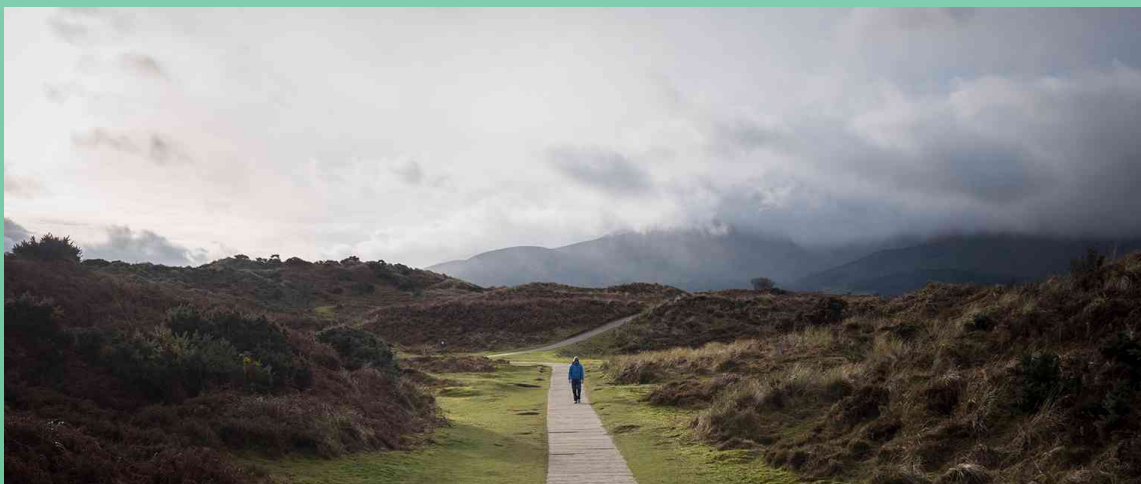
On the first day we did a journey through a park and saw a few spots where Game of Thrones was filmed. It was nice to see not just the city life rather to see the lovely nature

of Northern Ireland. It was the perfect day for hiking because it was not a rainy or cloudy day, like 80% in Northern Ireland. It was exceptionally dry and sometimes we saw a bit of sun. We enjoyed the journey trough the park so much that we went for a walk along the beach in the evening. After the walk, we did a celebration all together in the cottage with some drinks and a delicious meal that we cooked.

On the next morning we woke up early because John and Antonie wanted to show us two different places. The first place was a beautiful walk along the sea. Some of us relaxed by listening the sound of the waves, others wanted to collect shells as a souvenirs and John was throwing big stones into the sea. After the wolk by the sea, we went to see the castle. There John explained to us how the toilets system worked in the middle ages. When we were listening to John we had a beautiful view of the sea high above the mountain.



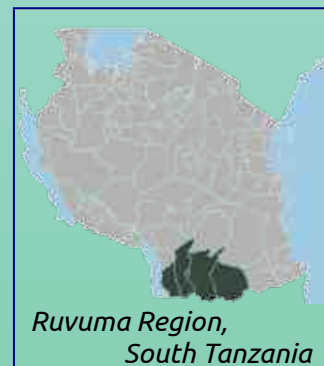
We would like to say thank you to Jeff for the opportunity to stay over the weekend in Newcastle and to Antonie who enabled the trip by driving the bus.



RUVUMA REGION

[illegible]

The closest large city is Iringa, which is 6 h away. The vast majority of the population engages in small scale subsistence farming and in hand crafts such as tailoring, carpentry, masonry, shoe making, bicycle repair, blacksmithing etc. The quality of the sewing machines and tools that the artisans work with are poor and some items are not available at all.



*Ruvuma Region,
South Tanzania*

GLOBAL FRAMEWORK

barriers to income generation. In order to achieve these goals TFS and SIDO - Ruvuma will establish a centre (RASC - Ruvuma Artisan Support and Training Centre) in Songea providing high quality refurbished tools, sewing machines and machinery to artisans and tailors.



The building where the workshop will be located

PROVIDING TOOLS

34 tool kits (959 tools) will be delivered in the form of starter kits for young men finishing Vocational Training Colleges who often come to SIDO looking for support in establishing a business after graduating.



A similar wood turning lathe sent within the shipment to Ruvuma

Additional 800 tools and machinery will be used to support individual artisans seeking only a few select tools.



A Carpentry Tool Kit

PROVIDING SEWING MACHINES AND TRAINING

210 sewing machines will be provided with a focus on women in rural areas (70 to 80% of the sold items).

The centre will organise training programmes for most of the tailors who receive a sewing machine (the target is to train 60 to 80% of those who receive a machine) to meet the needs of their businesses and provide support services including maintenance skills, business training and product development at an affordable price.



The future training room, provided by SIDO Ruvuma

During this pilot project, 6 people with disabilities will receive a sewing machine and free training.



A woman who benefited of the similar project in Mwanza with MSTC



A woman with disability benefiting from MSTC, the model for Ruvuma's pilot

LOCAL PRODUCTION OF TREADLES

The possibility of local treadle production has been discussed during the visits. There is a group of metal fabricators working in the SIDO compound and we have been assured that there will be no problem in finding a person to produce high quality treadle bases. A prototype is currently being developed in Tools For Solidarity.

A SELF FINANCING PROJECT

The idea of the project is to operate the centre as a self funding operation so that it can generate sufficient funds to deliver all its services in-country. TFS will cover shipping and transport of resources to the project and will provide 50% of the total project costs for the first year. The remaining 50% will be generated from within the project as sewing machines, tools and machinery are bought by the artisans. The second year costs will be funded entirely from within RASC own finances.

SUPPORT FROM MSTC

The staff at MSTC have gained great experience throughout the years in delivering a programme that supports the tailoring sector with high quality sewing machines and training. These skills and knowledge can greatly benefit the development of the pilot project in Ruvuma. In order to do so, the newly employed project coordinator for RASC will be trained in MSTC for 3 months. He arrived in Mwanza on the 23rd of April. During the life time of the pilot, MSTC will continue to provide technical support to RASC.

“SEA” YOU SOON!

The container arrived at our workshop in Sunnyside Street on the 30th of April. We had two intense days of work (to load up and record all the tools, sewing machines and machinery) and creativity!



The container will arrive in 2 and a half months in Ruvuma after crossing oceans and a long road trip!

INTO THE FOREST



Some volunteers and John were invited to Phillip's farm in ... to learn a bit about how and why the forest is so important. After an interesting guided tour through Phillip's private land we learned a bit more about the forest and we got some ideas about what we will do later in that day.

Phillip warmed us up with a tasty soup and a nice fire in the living room to prepare us for the work at the forest.

Our work was to transplant some new trees and restock some trees that are cut before by Phillip. We had to do holes in the earth to seed the trees and put some cardboard around the tree to be sure that the tree got some sunlight to grow up and is not in the shadow from the grass. He also explained us how to cut wood and some tricks for drying it quickly after cutting and the chop down.

We want to say thank you to Phillip for the unforgettable and .. experience. It was an interesting day.

"Let's take our hearts for a walk in the woods and listen to the magic whisper of old trees..."



Transforming Lives

Tools and Training for Livelihoods in Malawi

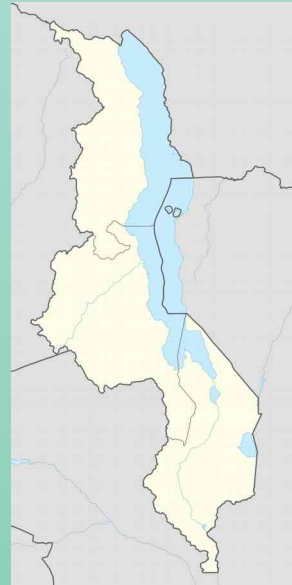


Dorothy Kabambiezy sits by her machine

Dorothy sits beside her machine, material and dresses hang down. Her house is remote, kilometres from the nearest trading centre and further still to any mayor town. Yet here is her business. People did not believe that a person with disabilities could be a tailor – some walked miles to see for themselves, and in the end asked her to make clothes for them because of the quality of her work.

So here is the transformation – Dorothy is running a successful business – she can earn as much as 60000 Kwacha a month (£65) whereas before she was trained and received her sewing machine she was earning only 5000 a month selling

doughnuts. This increase in income has enabled her to buy a cell phone, goats, food and seeds and she has used her sewing machine to make school uniforms – unfortunately many children in Malawi do not go school because they cannot afford to buy a uniform, and cannot attend without it. She plans to buy a bed and tin sheets for her roof and she hopes in the future to learn from local tailors how to make suits. That is not the end of the transformation. Social attitudes are also changing: attitudes that have historically associated people with disabilities, with inability. With the right training and support, people with disabilities can be as active and productive as anyone else.



Malawi



Salima district

Dorothy was trained at KODO – a small community based organisation in *Salima* district founded by George Chimpiko, who himself has physical disabilities. KODO along with MACOHA – Malawi Council for the Handicapped are The Global Concerns Trust's (GCT) partners in Malawi.

The programme that GCT run in Malawi is comprehensive. Trainees receive skills training in tailoring, cane furniture making or carpentry. During the training they are provided with accommodation and subsistence. As well as specific skills training, they are also trained in how to make organic manure. They learn about HIV prevention, reproductive health and gender awareness. They get business training and are shown how to manage accounts. At the end of the training the graduates are each given a kit of tools or a sewing machine that have been refurbished by Tools Groups in Scotland or by Tools For Solidarity in Downpatrick, Kilkeel and Belfast. They also receive a solar panel and lights. Trainees receive on-going support, and are visited at home 3 times in the year after completing their training. They are also invited to attend skill sharing workshops twice a year, where common challenges and successes can be shared with their fellow graduates.



Nkhosha

I am extremely grateful to Emma and GCT for the opportunity to see for myself the impact this programme has on the trainees, graduates and their families and communities. Together with Bela Mayer – our Hungarian friend and film maker – we travelled to Ntcheu, Salima and Nkhosha, met with over hundred participants in the programme and the partners. It was inspiring to hear stories of how this programme has changed the lives of so many people; the challenges and difficulties that they face in starting and developing their businesses, and the hopes they have for the future.

Malawi is an extremely poor country – one of the 10 poorest in the world. It also has one of the highest birth rates – nearly 50% of the population are 14 or younger. Its economy is dependent on rain fed agriculture - this has suffered badly from the effects of changing weather patterns and is now threatened by a **fall** (?) armyworm infestation. Yet despite all the hardships that people face –especially true for people with disabilities whose lives are harder still – everyone we met was friendly and welcoming. The artisans we support here are so grateful for all the help they have received: clapping their appreciation when I explained to them about the people who have donated the tools and the sewing machines, and the volunteers who worked on them.

GCT are in the process of applying to the Scottish government for funding to develop and expand this programme to 3 new areas. We wish them all success and we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with them.



Ntcheu district

One more day for superheroes

Heavy drops started to knock on the roof loudly, and she woke up. She has looked through the window. Dark grey sky were touching the top of Mount Napoleon. Long green leaves of a neighbours palm were showing the direction to Antrim Road.

"The rain. So, the superpowers have been already activated. One more day for a superhero." - she has thought, and went downstairs. She put the kettle on. The doors slammed, she heard footsteps on the stairs. The house was waking up.

Near the Duncairn Centre, Yasin outran her on his "SuperJet3000" on the third cosmic speed. Her old-school "WhiteComet2000" turbo bike can do only the first.

Early coffeeshop visitors were watching seagulls flying between lorries unloading the goods for city centre shops.

She stopped on the red traffic lights before the bridge. The Lagan river was reflecting the sky. The water's surface under the wind looked like grey sand paper.

"I've fixed the button."- Said Alberto, proudly. Standing near the blue door.

"It's here, just near the board with the sign "Please, ring the bell" - he continued.

"Now the teleportation works properly. Welcome, to Tools for Solidarity world." - he added.

It was Tuesday, so the "fancy" kitchen was full.

"Good morning, Iuliia. Nice to see you again." - slowly and clearly said Peter and took out Nutella from his bag.

"Would you like some tea?" - asked Larry, holding the kettle.

The door opened and young gentlemen in a blue jacket has appeared. He was smiling.

"Hello." - he said. - "Do you know John Wood?".

"We do!" - the kitchen smiled in response. They were happy to see Michael.

They heard somebody running from the office. The door opened. The silence hung over the kitchen. It was John.

"Okay. It's time to work." – he said, and then ran out to the yard.

"Heelloo!" - almost singing said Stephen, sitting in front of his computer in office. Most probably, Stephen was finishing the report for Intergalactic Foundation until late in the night.

Jessica and Yacine were already working upstairs. Their work tables were full of sewing machines of any kinds and their parts: bobbin winders, plates, foots, springs, dog feeders. In one rainy day they can fix together more than twenty Singers, Brothers and Johnes machines for tailoring. Their superpower and speed doubles when John is present in radius of 10 meters.

Near the mini-portal, which we call “Lift” just for fun, was Nico. It is only five to ten, but he is barely seen behind the wooden boxes he has already made. A shipment to Tanzania is about to go in a couple of weeks. And everything needs boxes. Pencil behind the ear, orange drill and silver screwdrivers – are the magic artefacts he needs to create a masterpiece. His powers double when he sings his “Funky shoe” song.

The BBC Radio Planet-U with a Northern Irish accent is advertising holidays in Seattle, USA. Well, you never know what the most popular holiday destination for the locals is.

In front of a big plasma screen that shows the backyards of houses nearby, there is big white table. Larry, Tapi, Stewart, and Roger are working there. Outwardly, they do something very simple: sanding, painting, or unscrewing. However, in reality, they keep the planet spinning. Angeline always works around these guys. She has magic glasses. This is why Angeline can oil tools and check toolboxes before the shipment, while keeping an eye on the guys and Michael in a grinder room. Her superpower doubles, when she receives text or call from Sebastian.

The clock under the door showed half past ten. The bell rang. It is a tea time. I went to the kitchen, made a tea with milk, took a cookie, and rolled a cigarette.

“One more day for superheroes” - I said, watching the landing plane in a sky above the workshops roof.

To be continued (maybe)))...



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