

TWAM

Tools with a Mission

Our News

October 2024

Partnerships for livelihood creation



Giving communities in need tools to build a future for themselves

Welcome to TWAM News

Every person in the TWAM community has unique gifts that we share with each other and the world. One valuable gift is our generosity of spirit, which shows in our growing impact and in the stories here, made real by you.



In August, a team from TWAM raced in a charity soapbox derby. Many friends dedicated a great deal of time to preparation and it was a joy to spread the news of our mission amongst like-minded people and organisations.

- This year to date we have sent ten 20ft containers and four 40ft containers to Africa
- Since our last newsletter we have shipped well over 5,000 toolkits
- We create more than 45 livelihoods a day, and in 2025 we aim to increase that to 50 livelihoods a day - made possible by you, our community.

We hope you will share Tools With A Mission with your family and friends and they too will become part of our community. I would like to thank all our volunteers, partners, donors, supporters, board and staff for making this yet another impactful year.

God bless,

John Noble
Chief Executive Officer

"I give you a new commandment - to love each other, as I have loved you." John 13:34

About us

We are a Christian charity that collects donated usable tools, refurbishes them, sorts them into trade kits and sends them to the developing world for livelihood creation.

We support local people, meeting local needs with life transforming skills training projects. We supply the tools to equip the training centres and to give to trainees when they graduate. With this support we see long-term sustainable livelihoods created. Thanks to over 500 volunteers in the UK and your support, we will continue to transform lives and communities.

Time to donate?

We are always looking for more volunteers to help in our centres. At present we particularly need volunteers in our refurbishment centres and office admin help. Please visit twam.uk/volunteer to browse our available roles or call us on 01473 210220.

Tools to donate?

To find your nearest collection centre, or to contact a local collector, have a look at our website or call our Ipswich office.

Financial support

We keep our costs very low, but we still need a lot of support. We value all gifts, whether one-off or regular. You can donate online, send donations to our Ipswich postal address, or request a Standing Order and Gift Aid form.

Prayer support

TWAM depends on prayer. If you don't currently receive our quarterly prayer diary and would like to, please contact our Ipswich office.

Tools with a Mission

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From dwindling fish stocks to a sustainable future

Samfya is a small fishing town on the banks of Lake Bangweulu in Zambia. Once a thriving town, diminishing fish stocks have left it in decline for years.

Families that relied on fishing for generations are destitute, and the situation is made worse because climate change affects their ability to farm the land. As a result, young people from fishing families have few options beyond day labouring.

Day labouring is the cruellest work. The worker is employed for just one day with no security. The work is hard and physical, often digging fields or unskilled building work, but the truth of the matter is, if you don't work you don't have money to live on. It is totally demoralising.

Great ideas need tools

To help young people from fishing families avoid this fate, the Samfya Fishermen's Society was formed. But they had a huge problem. They had great ideas but no means to make them happen. They had no tools.

Help arrived in the form of the very enthusiastic TWAM District Development Team (DDT), made up of local people who share a passion to transform lives through tools and training. They had put flyers around the town promoting their group and



asking people with big ideas to contact them. The Fishermen's Society approached the DDT and applied for sewing machines and carpentry tools to equip a training centre.

And great ideas need people

They were so excited when they heard their application was successful and soon set about preparing for the arrival of the tools. One of their first tasks was to recruit a trainer and they found Simeon, a tailor. He tells us:

“When the group started they chose me because I have leadership experience so I can talk to people and they understand me. I wanted people to learn so they could upgrade their lives. I am very happy to be transferring my skills.”

Simeon was keen to invite young people to join the training course, but he got a mixed response:

“I asked people in need if they were interested and six said yes and

twenty said no. They said no because they did not want to work hard to learn. There are no fees, so this is a bad decision, but leaving a fishing community is hard.”

Sometimes it is hard to accept change and do something different, and sometimes parents see such a move as a betrayal of the family tradition. This is difficult to understand when everybody recognises the fishing community is in deep crisis, but nonetheless it is something that's hard to fight against.

But Simeon and the Fishermen's Society did not give up and by the time the tools arrived six men and eight women were ready to start their six-month course.

Long-term sustainable employment

One of the students tells us his story:

“Simeon was running a project to give tailoring training to young people from the fishing community.

He saw me on the street and told me about it. I have been learning here for three months. Before this, I had nothing to do. I had dropped out of school because I got bad grades and had to keep retaking my exams. My father passed away when I was young, and it was impossible for my mother to keep paying my school fees. I live with my siblings and our mother comes back during the rainy season to help us farm; we all grow food for the family to eat.”

With the death of his father, the family relied on basic subsistence farming where you grow the food you eat in an almost ‘no-money’ economy. In an increasingly unpredictable climate, this offers no security, whereas tailoring provides long-term sustainable employment. He continues:

“I first became interested in tailoring when I used to walk through the market and see tailors with their sewing machines showing the things they had made.

I thought if I become a tailor, I could even make school uniforms. I have even made my own shirt. I already sell the clothes that I make and earn a bit of money.”

At the end of the course he will receive a certificate and access to a sewing machine with the help of the TWAM DDT. His life has changed so much. He has been able to put behind him the hopelessness and despair caused by the declining fishing community and lack of employment, and now he says:

“For me to succeed I need to work hard. If I work hard, my future will be okay.”

Plans for growth

The Society has big plans for the future as their first students graduate, as Simeon explains:

“We are applying for industrial sewing machines, which will help us go to the next level. An industrial machine will attract more students because they will see us growing.”

The Samfya Fishermen’s Society is responding to the challenges of climate change and dwindling fish stocks by offering sustainable sources of employment. This is a fine example of a project that seeks to help communities in crisis overcome environmental challenges.

In the coming years, there will be an increasing need for TWAM to support groups like this in crisis. Thank you for helping us meet this challenge.



Student, Rebecca



A new start with a new forklift

Earlier this year, we came to the decision that our Ipswich forklift was in dire need of replacement.

Our TWAM refurbishment centre warehouses are a hive of activity, and our hardworking team of staff and volunteers need ease of access, fluidity and efficiency. Without a good forklift to meet the physical demands of our work, TWAM's mission would - quite literally - grind to a halt.

When the Rugby centre opened a new electric forklift was sourced; however, the Ipswich forklift was an old LPG unit that had been showing its age, and with reliability and cost becoming an issue, a replacement was sorely needed. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters we received sufficient funds to secure a deal on a new electric forklift with Acclaim Handling, who also supplied

the Rugby unit. Our new forklift will be far more agile, reliable and fully sustainable. Trevor Maynard, TWAM's head of refurbishment, says: ***"We have moved from a four-wheeled unit to a three, which will help with the ever increasing demands of space in our warehouse, giving a need to a forklift that can operate in tighter spaces."***

The response to our summer appeal was amazing and we are so grateful for the support of our friends and donors. We hope to be able, with their permission, to use excess funds from the appeal towards the forklift's running costs and maintenance, as well as installing and running a charging station. As the new forklift is put to work carrying heavy loads to and fro, and packing the next array of containers leaving for overseas, we are sure that with this valuable new equipment TWAM will continue to go from strength to strength.

A thank you...and a welcome

At the time we went to press with the July issue of TWAM News, there were big changes taking place that print deadlines did not allow us to share. We are delighted, therefore, to include in this issue a little more detail about our new CEO, John Noble.

But first, we would like to say a huge thank you to our outgoing CEO, Mike Griffin.

Mike led TWAM for over nine years, during which time the Rugby facilities opened, we increased our container sending capacity, our number of regional vans went up to five - collecting from tool collectors across the country - and as the charity grew exponentially, its reach extended to seven countries in Africa. Mike spearheaded our five-year strategic plan - a document that guided our growth and helped us reach the milestones and objectives set out. So many people's lives were impacted because of support from TWAM under Mike's leadership. Mike's wife, Linda, also played a key role, volunteering as a Country Coordinator and helping in the office.

Mike – our grateful thanks and prayers go to you and Linda.



John (pictured above) grew up in South Africa, spending much of his career there before relocating to East Anglia with his wife. He has three children, two daughter-in-laws and five grandchildren.

John's background is in mining, HR and adult education. He founded a management consultancy that specialised in business restructuring, process improvement and training. He founded, grew and eventually sold a HR outsourcing company and has owned and managed a range of small businesses. Ten years ago he founded a social enterprise project in South Africa's rural Southern Cape, learning much about development in the process.

John is delighted to take up the post of Chief Executive Officer and is eager to continue TWAM's work to which Mike was so dedicated.



Stories and milestones

TWAM welcomes Tim

Since joining at the end of June, Tim Laczko has been busy settling into the life of TWAM. As our Fundraising and Communications Lead, his first job was to get to know the staff and volunteers - his second, to spread the word. Tim comes from a teaching background, and as English Literature is his speciality, it is the stories of TWAM that inspire and guide him. ***“We are storytellers at TWAM,”*** Tim says. ***“Each tool, each shipment, each community that gets in touch with us, has a story to tell. Each volunteer has expertise they can share. Each person who applies for tools has a reason.”***

The summer months are busy ones for TWAM, with donated tools arriving as swiftly as they are packed



and sent to Africa. Yet from the bustle and busy work of the day-to-day refurbishment emerge stories, waiting to be shared.

The power of a sewing machine

Roughly a quarter of all the tools TWAM has sent this year have been electric sewing machines - and that isn't counting the myriad other types of sewing machine, from treadles to industrials and manuals. A well-worn clipboard tells the tale of each sewing machine processed by our volunteers, from 2008 to the present day, and earlier this year it came to our attention that a major milestone was rapidly approaching.

The Rugby centre's 5,000th sewing machine was cleaned, tested and packed without much fanfare - but the reality of such an achievement was mind-boggling. Each sewing machine can quite literally change the life of not just one person, but many.

Across Zambia and Uganda, stories are shared with us of widows, schoolchildren, single parents and community leaders who have taught others how to sew. Being able to use a sewing machine can provide for an entire family. Far more than 5,000 lives have been transformed for the better by the work we do.

But that work does not end. There is always another machine to be cleaned up, another family in need

of help, another shipment waiting to be sent. As we celebrate Rugby's 5,000th sewing machine - with a very special cake made by one of our own volunteers - we remember the stories we have heard...and the ones waiting to be told.

One container, many lives

There's another, 40-foot long, story to tell. 40ft shipping containers are the larger of the shipments we send, and whilst they take a much longer time to pack, they are also easily worth the extra effort. Ipswich has already sent two of these behemoths this year, with Rugby fast catching up after sending their first ever 'forty footer' in August.

There was a distinct sense of wistfulness as TWAM waved goodbye to the August shipment. Ian, one of our refurbishment volunteers, puts it plainly: ***"If we could send one of these containers every day, we still wouldn't meet everybody's needs"***,

a poignant reminder of the very real power of what TWAM does, and just how valuable our mission is.

TWAM is nearing its target for the number of containers sent this year, and we would like to thank all those who have helped fill them - whether you have donated tools, refurbished them, or helped pack them away. We also ask for prayers that these vital tools will have a safe and swift journey to the places where they are needed most.

Moving forward...to Tanzania

It has been literally years since TWAM has had the capacity to send tools to Tanzania. Now, at last, with the profound support of the TWAM team in Tanzania and with the help of the community organisations on the ground, we are able to make this mission possible. As the Rugby team start preparing for the container's arrival our thoughts are with those in that country who await a change for the better. We pray for guidance and support as we move towards this next milestone.

Your support

None of this would be possible without your help. We want to thank our volunteers who work tirelessly in our warehouses, offices or in the community, and you, our wider TWAM family, for your ongoing support of our work.

Container leaving Rugby





It's almost impossible to help just one person in Africa

Solwezi is one of the larger towns in Zambia, having quadrupled in size in just 20 years due to the development of copper mines.

But, as is so often the way, the wealth of the mines has not filtered down to ordinary people. Most roads remain unmade and most townships are unaffected by the nearby affluence.

This is reflected in the members of the Oneness church situated in one of the poorest communities of Solwezi. The leadership saw that few of their young people were working and none had good jobs. They wanted things to change.

So they decided to open a carpentry workshop and turned to TWAM for the tools. They applied for our

largest kit - the Carpentry Workshop Kit. It supplies everything from hand and power tools to large floor standing industrial tools to equip a training centre or workshop. The church was delighted when TWAM approved its application and they set about recruiting a trainer.

Crispin, an amazing volunteer

The church turned to their minister, Crispin. It may seem strange to us to hear of church ministers learning tailoring so they can open a tailoring workshop, or carpentry so they can teach young people. In Africa, this is the norm and seen as a practical expression of God's care for the poor.

But Crispin supported his family by driving and could not afford to give it up. If we put ourselves in his shoes, we may imagine that we would agree to volunteer one day a week,

but in fact Crispin offered to work in the carpentry workshop from Monday to Saturday, 8am to 4pm. He would simply fit his driving around his new role as a trainer. Few of us would agree to this level of volunteering, let alone continue to work outside of these times to support our families.

Crispin tells us:

“We are only a small church and this was our way to give something back to our community. There is no work and this will empower our youth. The church asked me as a volunteer to train the boys. With these skills they can get a job in the mining companies.”

Stanford, a budding carpenter

The six-month course is overseen by an external examiner from a local college. Two of the first students

were Stanford and Peter, who told us of their high hopes.

Stanford is 21 and has been learning carpentry for two months.

“It’s going well, I’m picking up skills quickly. I had a bit of carpentry experience when I was at school. I used to watch carpenters work and I developed an interest in it myself.”

Peter, a man with a plan

Peter has found life a real struggle. Without any skills or permanent employment he has been trying to support his wife and four children. The church recognised he was in great need of employment so invited him to join the course. Even though he is still training, he already benefits as he can sell items he has made. But to be able to look after his family, he knows he needs more than this.

“I hope to set up my own workshop one day, I just need to find the money to do this. I really enjoy making chairs. I like working with timber.”



“I hope to have my own workshop eventually. I still have challenges to overcome with starting my own business, but I have plans for big achievements. I’m learning carpentry because I want to achieve more in my life.”

Sharing new-found skills

Stanford and Peter are from different backgrounds and have different challenges, but both have an ambition to open their own workshop and take full advantage of the training. In the short term they plan to work for the mines, which will enable them to save towards workshop rental costs and buy more tools.

The work will be of immediate benefit to their families, but they want to pass on their skills, as Peter tells us:

“I will employ fellow youths like me and give them training.”

The impact of tools from TWAM is already immense in this part of

Zambia. Just one Carpentry Workshop Kit changes the lives of many young people in Solwezi. Over time, those young people will open workshops of their own and that will benefit the whole community.

This story demonstrates the truth that it is almost impossible to help just one person in Africa. We are nearly always told:

“I have received so much, now I must share my skills with others.”

The Oneness church is beginning what will become a very long story of lives changed, families’ futures transformed and communities improved. It demonstrates what can be achieved by remarkable people like Crispin when they receive TWAM tools and use them to benefit their community.

Thank you for helping us begin what will become a remarkable story of individual lives transformed by new skills and hope for the future.

Carpentry workshop



Martha's House of Joy



Child at Martha's House of Joy

Martha is an amazing woman from Zambia who, despite her own tragic background, has proven that she has a selfless heart.

Both Martha's parents died when she was young, leaving her to somehow cope with her grief while being extremely vulnerable to recruitment from street gangs. Many girls who find themselves in Martha's situation are forced into sex work and she could, so easily, have joined them.

Thankfully, she was rescued by a local teacher who not only gave her a home but also paid for her schooling. Her future transformed, Martha became a police officer and she now works in victim support.

The story could have ended there, but Martha chose to share this incredible act of kindness by giving back to other orphaned children left vulnerable and destitute.

Martha's House of Joy is an orphanage that offers a secure home to six girls and helps a further 20 orphaned children who live with their grandparents.

This may sound like the perfect solution but there are inherent problems. In a country with no State pension and little ability to earn an income in older age, Martha knew that her project would never be sustainable. While she is able to work, the children benefit from the security of her income, but the situation is fragile.



Martha recognised that a home - although essential - was an interim solution and that long-term employment opportunities were needed if the children were to have a future.

She knew that for most girls and women this would mean tailoring or knitting and so she applied to TWAM for help. A local evangelical church trained her as a seamstress and she found a lady in her own church who was willing to teach the girls how to use sewing and knitting machines.

This training transforms lives. It enables girls to support themselves and their families long term. It means they can return to school and permanently avoid the clutches of the street gangs. And it gives the children in Martha's orphanage the peace of mind and confidence that when they complete their schooling and leave her care, their lives will continue to improve.

Martha's income as a police officer barely provides enough for her to live on, so the orphanage is funded through a contract to produce jumpers for a local school. Martha also uses the sewing machines to make clothes for the children.

Despite her desperately sad start in life, Martha's selfless heart has reached out to children who have been left destitute. She says that her police work has given her real life examples of the terrible things that could happen to them if she simply stood by and did nothing.

Your gifts of sewing and knitting machines allow us to help people like Martha provide long-term security for children and young people. As for Martha herself, her indescribable generosity of spirit has truly created a House of Joy.





The Toolbox

You could make a long-term difference by joining The Toolbox.

Donate a certain amount each month and over the course of a year you cover the costs of collecting, refurbishing and packing all the tools for a certain number of tool kits. You will receive a letter at the end of the year stating which kits you have supported, as well as a calendar. To join The Toolbox and make a long-term difference, go to our website:

twam.uk/toolbox

My lasting legacy, my gift of hope

Writing a will can seem a daunting prospect, but it can be a very precious time when we remember the things we care about the most. There will always be more countries and more people that need our help, and your legacy would help to ensure that the most vulnerable people continue to be supported.

We still haven't won the fight against poverty. Below, you can see Yolanda and her son. They once used to go to bed hungry, but now, they always have food to eat. They have left poverty in the past, but there are still so many more families who need our help.

For more information about leaving a legacy to support livelihood creation and having a impact that lasts for generations, please visit our website:

twam.uk/legacy



In this edition, we show how giving one person a new skill can have many positive repercussions. A single toolkit goes far beyond the person who receives it, transforming entire communities. Please continue to support us to ensure that every suitable tool is used to transform lives in Africa.



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