

The Anvil

Your monthly update from Tools For Self Reliance Cymru

In Tanzania our crew are doing their best to continue the work of refurbishing and delivering tools to fill requests. It's a challenge as the workspace is not fully operational so temporary workstations have been set up. Nothing stops these guys. Need to get a container off a flat deck lorry but no crane? No problem. Need to unload 30 tons of tools? No problem. Need to fill requests for tools but no workshop? No problem. When the job needs doing they get it done.



And speaking of getting the job done...We also follow up on the working groups we have provided tools to. These reports help us design projects and help us keep focused on our main goal of providing tools to rural artisans.

The following is a typical assessment provided by our Project Officer, Michael Kimaryo.

Consulting sewing machines maintenance trainees – impact evaluation

The Project Officer communicated with former tailors who received sewing machines maintenance and repair training at Kalwande. He also managed to have physical encounter with a few nearby ones. This was to assess the impact so far achieved after training, and to gather lessons learned and challenges faced.

Achievements

- All of them are able to practically solve technical problems occurring in their machines and none has reported seeking help from another fundi. This was not the case before the training.
- All of them had assisted other tailors by fixing their broken machines and obtaining some income. A minimum of two clients per trainee and a maximum of six were reported.
- Kalwande as a training centre, and the project in particular, are now more widely known in the surrounding villages and Misungwi district as a whole since the project began.

Challenges

- Some machines provided to them as practice/training machines do not function well. The common problem across is the wheel either does not turn or doesn't move at all. But this might be simply because of rust and they were advised to contact Lucas who can advise them further.
- The machines provided to them do not fit in their existing treadles/tables since they all have inexpensive "butterfly" machines. At this juncture the PO advised Kalwande director to establish treadle making unit at the centre in connection with the new plans to have sewing machines short courses in future. In the short term communications could be made with MSTC to possibly obtain treadles for those who are able to buy.

- During their supporting work to tailors they meet clients who use overlock machines. However, since their course did not include those kinds of machines they could not help. More of these machines have been requested so training will need to be considered.
- Training on leather work at DIT (Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology in Mwanza) was very useful but too short for them to capture long list of topics they were supposed to cover. Most of them are therefore not confident of working comfortably on leather products.

Lessons

- Combining sewing machines maintenance course and tailoring could be very helpful in making a tailor competent in the trade. It will save time for taking it to fundi and also ensure security and safety of the quality machines as those provided by TFSR.
- Since most of the artisans including tailors all aim at increasing their income it has been noted that they lack skills on how to manage money and keep records. Giving them a simple package of basic project management and book keeping during training can add value to their work

We look at all assessments and try to resolve the issues that arise. The key points within this report are going to be difficult to overcome. More training, and even more training. As our projects get more notice, we run the risk of being overwhelmed. The issue with the overlockers is a good example. Yes, they are useful, and they are complicated but if you have an overlocker in your tailor shop do you really need our support any longer? When do we let go of a group and how? Where can we draw a line? Should we draw a line? Time and money supporting highly technical machines could possibly be better spent delivering less exotic tools to someone with no sewing machine at all. Maybe we could train one or two 'overlocker mechanics' and set them up to cover this new opportunity?

So, discussions abound here and in Tanzania. Projects don't end once the tools are delivered or the people graduate their training. There's so much to consider in this report alone and this is just sewing machines.

Locally

We had an amazing turnout at the Carmarthen Seedy Saturday and thank you everyone for coming out to support us. Phil, Gareth and Colin were amazed at the generosity of everyone.

In April we will be at the **Cart Shed Plant Fair in Broxwood** on April 26th and then on the 30th we can be found [at Spring Greens](#). We look forward to seeing you there but don't forget our little shop in Crickhowell! As always, if you wish to support our work but can't get to us at events or to our shop you can donate to us directly through this [link](#). Paypal provides this service without commission, you don't need an account and you can use any card and even make your donation a recurring one.

Thank you, and as we say in Wales and Tanzania:

Diolch yn fawr / Asante Sana