

# The Anvil

## Your monthly update from Tools For Self Reliance Cymru

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**Our First Visit** to Tanzania since 2020 was unquestionably a huge success. We had just two weeks at the end of May to do a lot of work but somehow managed to check off nearly everything on the 'To Do' list. We were able to connect with old friends, meet new contacts, local and regional politicians and administrators and we even managed a little sight-seeing excursion of sorts.

Our first priority for the trip involved meeting our workshop team to discuss any issues they were having in the new location and working conditions they were facing. There were very few but one that was obvious as soon as we arrived was the lack of shelter.

As luck would have it, right next to our outdoor workshop was an underused and quite dilapidated building that was used occasionally as a woodworking workshop. A short discussion with the school's director and we were allocated a third of the space if we paid for the needed repairs and construction work. We agreed and, by now, our team has a covered temporary workshop with a bit of privacy and security. By the time we had to leave the interior walls were half built! This temporary space will become a storage space for us and possibly a small shop once the official new workshop has been built.



**Next up** was a visit with our old friends from SIDO. Our partnership with them may have ended but our relationship is still friendly and cooperative. We had a very productive meeting with Bakari Songwe (regional manager) and Emmanuel Ngoyinde (technical officer) at SIDO's headquarters in Mwanza. We still had items that needed shifting to Kalwande and we were able to identify all of these and there was some administrative paperwork regarding our team's employment that needed addressing. In all it was a very good meeting and a very pleasant one, too.

Afterward we took the chance to visit MSTC (Mwanza Sewing Training Centre) and have a chat with them. It was interesting to see the differences and similarities between our two training centres. I'm sure we all took ideas away with us.

A side trip to the Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (Mwanza) and a visit with William Lohay, who gave us a tour and explained the changes that the campus was undergoing. It was a good tour and we got to see some of the big leatherworking machines we donated being put to use by students.



Unfortunately we could not coordinate visits to Dickson Shenkalwa in Tanga or Damian Changa but we did have a chance to grab a beer with Charles Iganja, a long time associate from SIDO and an excellent technical officer now working in Musoma.

And that now leads us to some new friends...

With the move to Kalwande almost completed we are becoming much more visible to the people responsible for those groups we help the most. Local and regional politicians and community leaders are taking a real interest in our projects. Florah Magabe, who works with Stanslaus (Jimbo) Mabula MP, Nyamagana District, Mwanza Region with a focus on women's equality, has taken a special interest in us. She also introduced us to Michael Smart, chairman of the regional Chama Cha Mapinduzi party who are currently the government in Tanzania.



Through this network we were able to meet with the directors of two other schools as well.

**Hakizetu**, whom we've supplied with sewing machines, is a school that trains vulnerable young women in tailoring, handcrafts and photojournalism.



They have an excellent system of follow up monitoring and even micro-financing and are very interested in sharing these processes with us which will open a new way for us to help very rural artisans who may never receive financial support in more traditional ways. That's still in discussion stages now but everything starts somewhere.

**St. Francis pre/primary school**, you may remember, was a little side project for us. We provided some money to build playground equipment for the students. It was really heartwarming to see the children getting so much joy from the playground. They even sang for us and, in particular, Co-chair Corin, as it was his birthday. ('How old are you now?')



We attended (as VIP's I might add!) the grad parties at both Hakizetu and at Kalwande, where the first cohort of students who were trained in the new sewing machine training room, graduated. It was quite the party with inspirational speeches, dancing, demonstrations, bubbly and even some hip-hop.



A visit to some past graduates was also arranged. We focused on groups who had previously taken the sewing machine fundi training to discuss the successes and/or difficulties that developed for them post graduation. It was pretty positive overall but we did take some suggestions back to the college.



One other important development was the discovery of a new shipping agent that has experience with import tax exemptions who feels they can help us. This would certainly save us many thousands of pounds over the next few years, so fingers crossed.

Thank you, very much, to ...

Our project officer, **Michael Kimaryo** who did an outstanding job of scheduling our very busy trip and driving us around in his Rav 4.

The team, **Said, Viviana, John and Lukas** who are doing wonderful work in less than perfect conditions.

**Father Akriatus**, director of the college, for his hospitality, infectious energy and hard work redeveloping the college.

The amazing **Florah Magabe** (Iron Lady) and her excellent media crew for all the introductions and publicity.

**Bakari Songwe** for his understanding, assistance and continuing support for our charity.

**Gervas Evodius** - Executive Director - Hakizetu

Our very supportive patron, **Mike Laiser** who shared his time, experience and advice with us for a couple of days.

The Director General and the Chancellor of the Mwanza Diocese, which owns and operates the college, who gave us some excellent advice and a wonderful lunch.

And of course all the trustees, members, volunteers and people who come out and support us at fairs and festivals throughout the year in and around Wales.

## Look for us in June at:

- Hellen's Garden Festival, Much Marcle
- Glastonbury

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

**Diolch yn fawr / Asante Sana**