



## NEWS

Welcome to Workaid's Spring Newsletter. It is so sad that while we were preparing this we were caught up in the unfolding pandemic of COVID-19. However, we felt it was important to still produce this to not only tell you how Workaid is being affected, but to share with you some of our stories of hope and endeavour.

These are difficult times for everyone, and Workaid is no different. The Boot Factory is eerily quiet, the shop is closed and a container is in our yard full of things that should be on their way to helping disadvantaged young people in Africa to learn a skill.

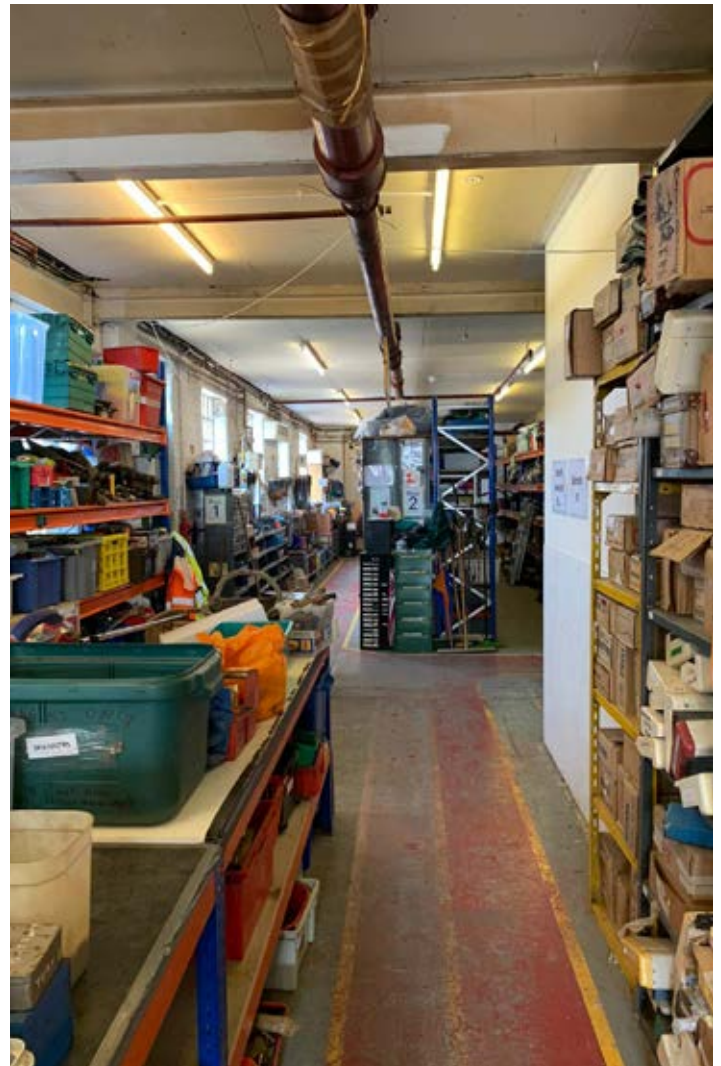
As you would expect though, Workaid's spirit continues to shine brightly even when things are challenging:

- **We've done a very prudent financial forecast and are as confident as we can be that we will be able to resume our work of 34 years when things return to normal.**
- **This is because we have managed our reserves carefully, our staff have accepted being furloughed with their usual good grace, and we are managing all other expenses carefully too.**
- **So far, our team of wonderful volunteers seems to be holding up well. Jason has set up virtual tea breaks so that we get together on Zoom each day – it's not quite the same as the banter in the canteen but it's a near thing!**
- **For those who aren't in touch with us online we have a call rota, so they still feel connected.**

You may be wondering whether there is anything you can do to help and you won't be surprised that we have some ideas!

- **Follow us on social media** and spread the word about Workaid - the more supporters we have on Facebook and Twitter the stronger we will be when we get going again.
- **Send a message of support that we can share with the volunteers** - these really help to keep spirits up and encourage them to return - via Facebook or [admin@workaid.org](mailto:admin@workaid.org)
- **Make a donation** - with the shop closed and grant-making bodies inundated with requests our income has dropped off a cliff. If you can make a donation here: <https://donorbox.org/workaid-newsletter> to help us keep going that would be fantastic.
- **Go through your shed** and box up the tools and equipment you've been meaning to get rid of for years! We can't do collections now for obvious reasons but will be starting up as soon as we can.

Take care and stay safe  
Adrian Hatch, CEO



# WORKAID SUCCESS STORIES

**One of the best things about being involved with Workaid is hearing how young people's lives have been improved by learning new skills and having access to tools. Here are just a few of their stories:**

## **Jane opened a small tailoring shop in Kenya**

Following her husband's death from an AIDS related illness, Jane struggled to provide food and medical care for her two daughters and couldn't afford to send them to school. Now that she has completed her training in tailoring, and gained some business skills, she's able to make clothes and school uniforms. Jane said, "I am free from the worries I had before. I know how to determine the price of my products so that I can take care of my family without a husband."

## **Carpentry training changed two men's lives in Zambia**

Having learned carpentry at the Lukulu Training Centre, Mundia and Denny took on a project to make 62 desks for 7 schools. As a result, Mundia was able to pay for his wife's tailoring course and his daughter's school fees. He will now be part of the team training others in carpentry and joinery. Meanwhile, Denny was able to build a house for himself and his 80-year old mother.

## **Kenya news**

Container 'Irene' has been filled and inspected and will leave for Kenya when possible. We've decided that we will no longer support projects there as poverty levels have improved compared with other countries and pre-inspection creates challenges.



## **Electrical student completed Tanzanian national exams**

Andrea trained at the Mbeya Trade School for 2 years using electrical tools from Workaid, then completed his national exams. He is now able to earn a living doing electrical work and he's also helping to train other young people.

## **Francis found full-time work as a motor mechanic in Kenya**

Francis had to drop out of high school after his father was killed in election violence and he could no longer pay his fees. Francis said, "I had my breakthrough when the Levozy Vocational Training Centre identified me to undertake training as a motor mechanic. I am now working at the New Auto-World garage and am able to support my family and live a decent life."

## **James found work growing and selling vegetables in Zambia**

James started a horticultural business using tools from Workaid. The money he makes selling vegetables to the local community enables him to support his family. He's now planning to get his driver's licence and start working as a taxi driver and he is training others in horticulture.

## **Leah learned tailoring and is now sharing her skills in Zambia**

Leah, who is a single mother, trained as a tailor and now trains others. As a result Leah's children are attending school and she can afford regular meals for them.

## CAN YOU HELP US TO MEET OUR ONGOING COSTS?

During this period we are managing our outgoings carefully. However there are many unavoidable costs that we will continue to incur so that we can be ready to open as soon as possible. Please help us continue our work enabling disadvantaged young people in Africa to build sustainable livelihoods by donating today.

As our income is going to drop significantly, your help at this time is invaluable and very much appreciated.

Two containers have been despatched from the Old Boot Factory this quarter – 'Jeremiah' left for Uganda on 31<sup>st</sup> January and 'Bethlehem' began its journey to Tanzania on 7<sup>th</sup> February. Container 'Irene' is ready for sending to Kenya.

With input from our partner organisations in Africa, we've got even better at ensuring our containers are packed with quality tools and equipment which will meet the needs of young people.

There are many ways that you can help us to meet our costs – please visit our website <https://donorbox.org/workaid-newsletter>





## Celebrating Ray Richards' 34 years with Workaid



It is with great sadness that we bring you the news of Ray's death in February. Many people reading this newsletter will have known Ray, or will be aware of his contribution to Workaid. We have nominated Ray for the 2020 Chiltern Community Awards in recognition of his enormous contribution.

Ray was one of the founders of the Workaid charity in 1986. He offered to take on the role of Publicity Officer and did a great job of involving the local press and helping Workaid to attract other volunteers and supporters. He came up with many ways of spreading the word, such as market stalls, events and speaking opportunities. Ray also helped to produce the first publicity leaflets and the Workaid newsletter whilst still working full time at the Boughton Engineering company, who gave Workaid our first Workshop on their factory site in Little Chalfont. Ray was also a trustee of Workaid until his retirement from Boughton's.

When Workaid expanded to the point of needing full-time staff, Ray became our first employee. Workaid had grown a great deal, with around a hundred volunteers, and was based at a factory unit on White Lion Road owned by Amersham International. As Administrator, Ray supervised the office and volunteers, organised freighting to Africa, oversaw health and safety, as well as still being involved with publicity. When Ray retired as Administrator he continued as a valued volunteer.

Ray was a fantastic supporter of Workaid and a shining example of someone who dedicated his time and talents generously and steadfastly over many years to help others.

## From Workaid volunteer to charity CEO

I volunteered at Workaid once a week for two years during sixth form when I attended the Amersham School and was doing my Duke of Edinburgh Award. I worked closely with Claire in the sewing machine section and loved the skills I learnt there! I looked forward to coming every week. I recently heard a podcast on Charity Chat about Workaid and it brought back such fond memories!



I went on to study Medicine at the University of East Anglia and graduated in 2012. Whilst at University I got involved with a charity called Medic to Medic who sponsor trainee health workers in Malawi through their training. We support the most disadvantaged students at risk of dropping out of their training in an effort to increase the number of graduates in countries with critical shortages. In 2014, I took over as CEO of Medic to Medic and go to Malawi each year to visit our students.

I've also worked in rural Zambia in a primary health clinic and have lots of ideas for other health related projects in disadvantaged rural communities. I'm now nearing the end of my training in Urgent Care in New Zealand and hope in the next few months to have more time to pursue global health interests.

**Tamsin Lillie, CEO Medic to Medic**

## Join our amazing volunteer team

Workaid is fortunate to have over 300 volunteers from all walks of life and of all ages. Whether you are retired, at school or college (minimum age requirement: 16), taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, a corporate body or have a special need, we would really value your skills. No specialist knowledge is required and there is something for everyone, not to mention stopping for tea and coffee breaks! All you require is enthusiasm.

We believe everyone has something to give. Volunteering is a wonderful opportunity to work together and learn new skills, enhance your CV or just do something fun and practical. Giving your time can open up a whole new world to you, while benefiting someone else via the projects we support.



**We have a wide range of volunteering opportunities available. If you're interested, please contact Jason Paul via email [jason.paul@workaid.org](mailto:jason.paul@workaid.org) or telephone 01494 775220.**

## MY SINGER SEWING MACHINE

The story of a much-loved machine that was donated to Workaid



**We recently received a Singer sewing machine from Alison Chichester-Miles who also shared with us its fascinating history and why she decided to donate it to Workaid.**

“My Singer sewing machine was bought for my mother by her mother-in-law in the late 1940s. My mother was a very skilled seamstress. She made most of her clothes, soft furnishings, our clothes as children, and beautiful dolls’ outfits and bedding for me to play with. They were always beautifully made and much admired.

At the age of about ten my mother taught me how to use her machine. The one instruction I still remember was not to let my fingers get too close to the pressure foot as the machine WOULD stitch them and it would be very painful! I had always been fascinated watching her work, following patterns, cutting fabric and then stitching the pieces together.

In my early teenage years, my mother treated herself to a new electric machine. It was very exciting because it did a variety of stitches at the turn of a lever and I was allowed to use it. However, what was more momentous was that she gave me her old Singer hand machine.

My mother taught me how to stitch button holes and put zips in and, as I went through my teens, I learnt to adapt patterns and even made some of my own. At thirteen I progressed to a ‘clothing allowance’ which meant the more clothes I made for myself, the more I would have. When I was seventeen I made a full-length maxi dress from an old sheet and wore it to parties. Later, when I was married, I made clothes for my children and my mother taught me how to make curtains. The last things I made on it were some big ‘stockings’ for my children to put out on Christmas Eve and some fancy-dress costumes.

In 2014, when my mother died, I took over her electric machine but I couldn’t part with my lovely Singer. The idea of scrapping it was awful. It had always been in my life and held many memories.

Then I heard about the wonderful work done by Workaid. The idea that this wonderful machine, that meant so much to my mother and me, could go on to someone in Africa to give them an opportunity to learn from it and use it to develop a skill and independence was perfect. I knew that my mother would wholeheartedly approve too. This has made parting with something so very precious a lot easier. Thank you Workaid.”

## The Workaid shop just got bigger and better!

Ten years since the Workaid Shop opened in Chesham, we’ve expanded and upgraded our “charity shop with a difference”. The shop has doubled in size which means we can offer a bigger range of haberdashery, craft goods, gardening tools and more.

According to Claire Vincent, our shop supervisor “Since it opened in 2010, the shop has steadily grown in popularity and we’d outgrown our previous space. The refurbishment wouldn’t have been possible without the support of Waitrose Ltd, who donated our new shelving, and our volunteers who helped with decorating and finishing touches.”

The shop was formally opened on 6<sup>th</sup> March by Gary Grant, Workaid Patron and founder of The Entertainer toy stores. We were delighted that so many of our regular customers and volunteers were able to join us for the occasion and we look forward to welcoming many new shoppers in the coming weeks.

**Although the shop is currently closed, normal opening hours are Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10am to 4pm. We hope to extend opening days later in the year.**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Wherever possible we refurbish items donated to us, but recycling is also an integral part of our work. In 2019, Workaid raised £11,150 through our waste management activities, including transfer of household and metal waste for recycling.