

Empowering Young People in Africa Through Vocational Training

Forming Long Term Partnerships

Since our last newsletter, we continue to implement our strategy, developing partnerships to provide vocational training to young people so that they can acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to find gainful employment.

In March I travelled to Uganda, my second trip since the country reopened after the pandemic. The purpose of my visit was to continue to develop, evaluate, and enhance the programmes established by our country partners. We have forged strong partnerships with Albert Valley Vocational Training Institute in the west of the country, which oversees several young people-focused vocational training organisations and Amigos Kira Farm, whose main training facility is in Guyaza District with outreach programmes in Masindi, Gulu, Kitgum, Kaloro and Lira Districts.

We remain committed to developing our partnerships in Uganda which provide quality vocational training in carpentry, masonry, motor mechanics, metal fabrication, welding and, tailoring and design. We have learnt from previous visits that one of the best ways to help young people once they graduate is to provide tool kits to enable them to establish their own sustainable business.



Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning are key for any organisation working in international development.

The importance of having an effective system that enables us and our partners to evaluate the impact of their vocational training programmes cannot be overstated. We are working with our partners in Uganda to put in place an monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure that our donors receive comprehensive reports and our support is accurately targeted. This enables us to provide our donors and volunteers with a better understanding of what we are achieving, and increase our chances of securing ongoing funding for these vocational projects. Additionally, all our African partners have the opportunity to learn from the framework and share best practice.

Based on our experience in Uganda and Zambia, we are reviewing how we work in Tanzania. We will focus on building long-term partnerships and monitoring vocational training projects. Due to the country's size, it is challenging to consistently facilitate and monitor large numbers of projects throughout the country as we have in the past. Later this year, we will send a container to Tanzania to supply tools to meet the needs of approved vocational training projects. In future we will develop fewer but more focused partnerships that will involve ongoing donations of tools and project evaluation.

As a relatively small charity we recognise the importance of developing partnerships with like-minded organisations in order to increase our reach and maximise impact.

We continue to work on a number of successful projects in Zambia, in partnership with VWILA Foundation. One of their most successful projects in the past few months has been working with the Zambian Ministry of Education to establish vocational pathways at secondary schools in rural Chibombo and Mumbwa Districts. The provision of tools and equipment by Workaid has had a massive impact on the schools' ability to provide quality vocational training in tailoring, masonry and carpentry. You can read more about this dynamic schools programme in the newsletter along with case studies from my recent visit.

Adrian Hatch, CEO

Zambia Update

The Positive Impact of Vocational Training

Workaid’s partner organisation in Zambia, the Vwila Foundation have formed a strong working relationship with various government departments to support their efforts to provide young people with the best possible vocational training. In a recent interview between Annie Njovu, Head Teacher, Bulungu Secondary School, Mumbwa and Emmanuel Zulu from Vwila Foundation, they discussed the positive impact of the vocational pathway on the young people and local community.

Can you describe Bulungu Secondary School?

The Secondary school is in Mumbwa district of the Central Province, on the western side 4 km from the town. Currently we have over 90 teachers and close to 3000 learners. The age range of the learners is from 11 to 45. The children are coming from all over, we have some learners coming as far as Nambala, almost 10 km from the school, and they make it on a daily basis starting off around 4 am to reach the school. We also have some learners who come from different districts, and because the school is located in a densely populated area they come and live in small rooms in a boarding house quite near the school which their parents organise.

A typical day starts at 6:45 am and we expect all the learners to be in school at 7 am exactly when the lessons start.



Emmanuel Zulu



Annie Njovu



Can you give us some background to the vocational training that is offered at the school and why is it important?

At our school, we are offering both academic and vocational career pathways. The vocational career pathway was introduced in 2014/2015 by the Ministry of Education. We started offering the vocational career pathways in 2016. We offer Design and Technology, Home Economics, Agricultural Science and ICT. Learners start as young as 11, when they are in grade 7 and go on up to grade 12.

Almost 50% of the 3000 learners follow the vocational career pathway. We have an average of 80 learners in a class, with six classes in a year grade. For each grade there are three classes for the vocational pathway and three classes for the academic pathway. So, it’s about 50/50. Having 80 learners in one class is quite a challenge. Sometimes we go up to 110 learners in some classes, it’s a big challenge, but we’re trying our best.

What specific courses are in the design and technology vocational programme?

Woodwork, metalwork, electrical, bricklaying and design, spray painting, plumbing and construction. It’s a youth training centre!

Have you had to make any improvements to the school infrastructure for the design and technology vocational training?

Vocational training is a practical subject, which requires hands-on activities. So that’s why the infrastructure itself is really critical in this area. We have limited infrastructure, of course but we’re able to offer the services to the learners in a small workshop. We have worked on the storage facility and the strong room with the help of Workaid tools and equipment. We are now working on a small shelter that will help our learners to access lessons.

In your own assessment, has the vocational career pathway been helpful?

Yes, very helpful in the sense that the learners, they acquire skills. They’re able to go out there and they set up their own small-scale businesses. Some of them have opened up their own shops and are doing fine. Not every child can manage to go to university and college. The skills they’re gaining from the school means they’re able to take care of themselves and when they leave school, they’re able to sustain themselves. Some learners are joining existing entrepreneurs who are working in the district. In agricultural science, we have young people who are running businesses with small gardens and in construction we have some who have joined the contractors and they end up living there.



Do you have examples of students who have set up such businesses?

Yes, we have a prominent businessman here in the district, he’s one of our former learners. He has already established a business with trucks and he is quite an important person now. He has employed so many young people from our school. In construction, we have some learners who have joined contractors. We have a few through the help of the school who are doing welding and metal fabrication, making window and door frames.

The school has benefited from some tools and equipment donated by Workaid, how has this helped the vocational programme at the school?

The receiving of the tools is what led to an increase in the number of students taking the vocational pathway of design and technology. We have the majority of learners in that subject because of the help that we received from Workaid. The teaching has been made easier, we really appreciate the donations.

My concluding remarks would be as a school we appreciate the services we are receiving from Workaid. The school wouldn’t have reached the level it has reached without your aid. When you visit our school, you’ll find a lot of activities, especially in the vocational career pathways, even in the home economics department we have a good number of learners there who are doing tailoring.

So, we are just saying thank you so much Workaid for being a good partner to the school. You’re not just helping the school, but the community, when the learners acquire the skills they go out there and do things for others, they help the community, they employ others.

“Thank you so much.”

Success Stories from Uganda

In Western Uganda, we partner with Albert Valley Institute of Vocational Studies, accredited by the Ministry of Education as a Centre of Excellence. We are also working closely to strengthen and expand vocational training programmes with several small but dynamic organisations including the Kirabho Vocational Training Institute and Bulhalo Vocational Training Institute. Adrian met several graduates during his trip to Uganda earlier this year from the vocational training institutes. Here are just some of their stories:

Albert Valley Institute of Vocational Studies

Godfrey - Carpenter

Godfrey completed his training in carpentry at the end of 2022 from Albert Valley Institute of Vocational Studies. Prior to attending the training course Godfrey was a subsistence farmer. Having lost his wife in 2021, leaving him to care for their five children, aged 3 to 6, he decided to learn a trade in order to better provide for his children.

Shortly after graduating he set up a small business in Kasese producing bedframes, chairs and cupboards. A very high level of craftsmanship is evident in Godfrey's work. He creates intricate carvings in the headboards for beds. He now employs a trainee and besides teaching carpentry skills he also provides food and soap for him to wash his hands after work.

Godfrey initially struggled with a lack of tools but he was identified as a potential recipient of Workaid tools, which has allowed him to strengthen his business and recruit trainees.

Godfrey is able to send his children to school and he hopes that in 5 years he will have a bigger workshop and a plot of land to build a house on for his family.



Aini - Mechanic

Aini graduated in 2022 from Albert Valley Institute of Vocational Studies (AVIVS), where he completed his training as a motorcycle and bicycle mechanic. Before training at AVIVS, he was a subsistence farmer.

He now rents a small plot under a tree beside a busy road in Kasese town and his monthly income enables him to rent a single room in the town where he lives. Aini has one trainee who has paid for three months informal training.

Over time Aini wants to build up his business and find a bigger garage or workshop. He saves some of his earnings each month as one day he hopes to buy a small plot of land and to build a house and raise livestock.



Bulhalo Vocational Training Institute

Kule - Mason

Kule is a masonry trainee at Bulhalo Vocational Training Institute (BVTI) taking a six-month course.

He is undergoing practical training on a project to build a small house. His instructor is very impressed with his work and says he is a 'natural mason'. Kule chose to study masonry as he feels there is plenty of work available.

Before attending BVTI to train as a mason, Kule was a subsistence farmer and generated a small income from cash crops, such as onions. During his training he will need to continue farming to earn an income but once he graduates, he hopes to earn as much in a month as he earned as a farmer in a year.

Kule lives with his wife and a 5-year-old child and he hopes to build his own house and send his children to school.



Kirabho Vocational Training Institute

Rita - Tailor

A graduate of Kirabho Vocational Training Institute tailoring training programme, Rita completed her training in 2022 and established a small tailoring business in her local village. She married soon after leaving school and at 20, she provides for her daughter and her husband, who has just completed secondary school and is yet to find a job.

Rita rents her sewing machine which accounts for nearly a third of her average monthly earnings. Her work comprises making traditional clothes including Basuti, a traditional ladies dress and repairing clothes. At Christmas and Easter her income rises dramatically as more work is available.

Rita has been able to start paying her daughter's nursery school fees. She hopes to continue to support her child through education, to buy her own workshop and build her own house. In order to achieve her plans, she saves a proportion of what she earns each month.

While Rita was lucky to find a machine to rent, there are several other young women who have not and struggle to obtain gainful employment.

Rita, Kule, Aini and Godfrey are just a few amazing examples of how young people can greatly benefit from the vocational training programmes that Workaid facilitates and the value of providing starter kits to our training programme graduates.

Visit our website for more information about Adrian's recent visit, including an update on Jofrey who was featured in our last newsletter.

Fundraising Update

Patchwork, Paper and Forecourt Sales

The beginning of the year was busy with sales in January, February, and March. Whether it was papercraft, incredible quilting/patchwork donations from the estate of Mary Gamester, or spring bargains at our forecourt sale, everyone was sure to find something they liked!

Of course, these sales wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and support of our wonderful volunteers.

Thanks to everyone who stocked up this spring. These events raise valuable funds to support the increasing cost of transporting much needed tools, equipment and starter kits to projects in Africa.

Autumn Forecourt Sale, Saturday 16th Sept 2023



Community Funding Awards

Workaid have been awarded a three-year community fund grant by the Rothschild Foundation to expand and develop the Hub programme.

This provides a unique opportunity for people with mild to moderate learning support needs to get involved and feel a sense of purpose. It helps them make the steps towards employment or voluntary work and creates a supportive environment for them to develop friendships.

It is managed by an experienced coordinator responsible for planning activities tailored to each individual. The young people are able to learn valuable life lessons and skills, such as perseverance, patience and teamwork by participating in meaningful tasks and seeing them through to completion. The Community Fund Grant secured, Workaid will be able to expand and develop The Hub programme for more young people in the local area with mild to moderate learning disabilities.

Heart of Bucks also awarded us a grant and we were delighted to show them around the workshop during their recent 'Seeing is Believing' event. They were able to visit the newly refurbished Hub and meet some of the young people in the local community the facility is benefiting.

Leaving a Legacy

Gifts in your will are a wonderful way to leave a legacy for future generations. We realise writing a will can be a daunting task. Having an up-to-date will ensures that the people and causes you care about will be taken care of the way you want. We are delighted to have partnered with Bequeathed to offer you a free solicitor written will service.

For further details please visit workaid.org/writeawill

Tools on the Move

Our latest shipment to Zambia left our workshop in February, filled with over 700 boxes containing a variety of kits and tools.

The container was named after one of our long-standing volunteers, Byron Secoy. Byron helped pack the container with carpentry kits, motor mechanic kits, electrical kits, hand knitting kits, horticultural kits, plumbing and masonry kits, as well as sewing machines, knitting machines, haberdashery boxes, drills, power tools and hand tools.

"When I retired I wanted to find volunteer work to keep me active and to help others, in the business world there is little free time to do this. I can hardly believe that I have been with Workaid for 23 years. I have taken on several roles during my time here and currently work in the packing section. It is a great privilege and honour to have my name on the container going to projects in Zambia."

The container arrived safely in May and items have been offloaded and collected by 17 projects in Zambia that can help communities to develop positively and sustainably.

From one of our longest standing volunteers, to one of our newest and younger volunteers Daniel. He joins our team of dedicated volunteers, and has already acquired new knowledge and skills in sewing and knitting machine refurbishment. We believe that everyone has something to give. It is a wonderful opportunity to work together and learn new skills or just do something fun. Giving up your time can open a whole new world, while benefiting a project in Africa.



Volunteering

Interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities and finding something that you are passionate about?

Join our wonderful team of volunteers refurbishing and preparing items for youth vocational training projects in Africa.

All you require is enthusiasm!

We have volunteer openings across the board in a variety of roles so why not get in touch to arrange a tour of the workshop.

Explore in more detail on workaid.org/volunteer or scan the QR code.



SCAN ME



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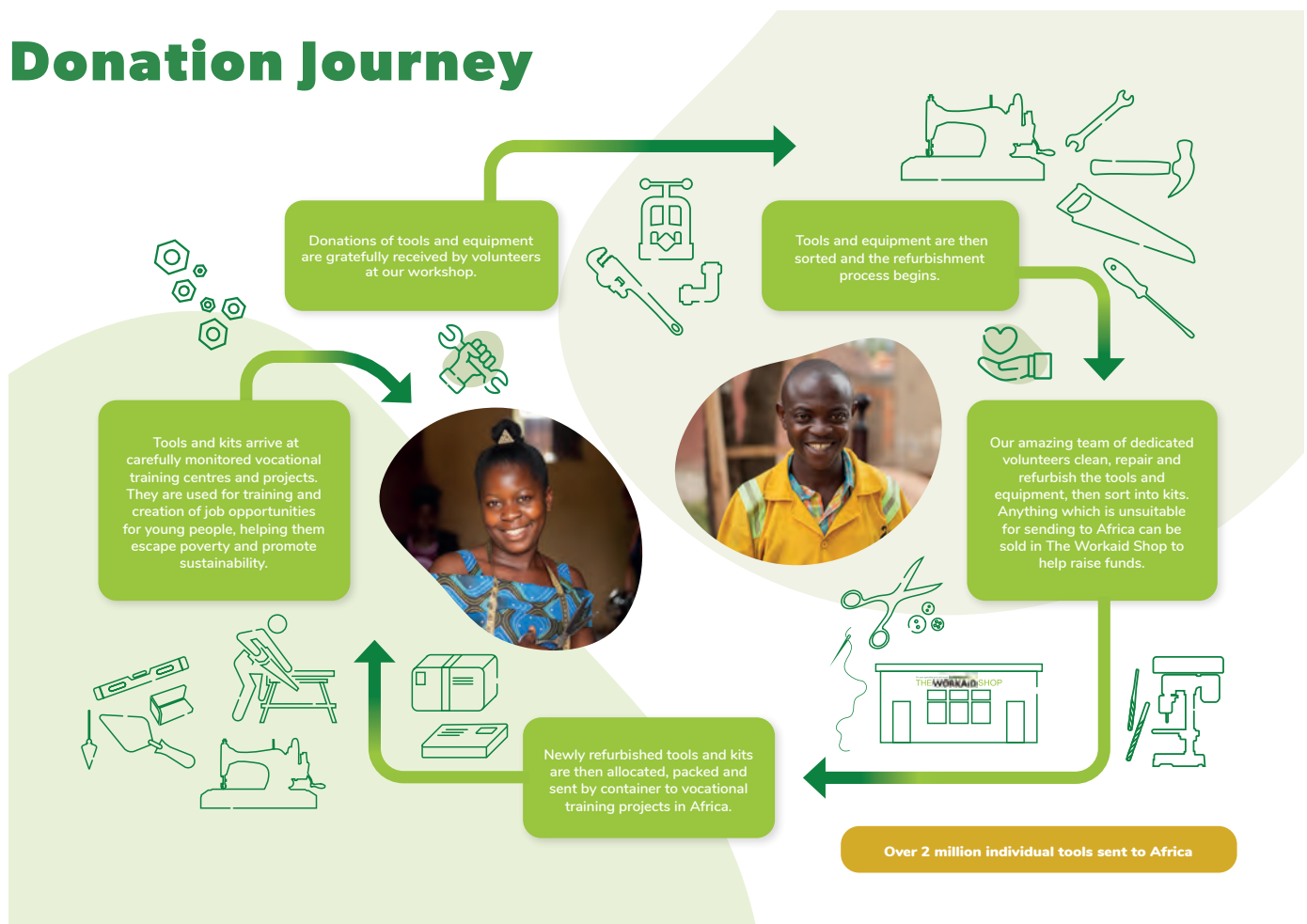


Patrick's Story

An amazing story of how donations can help young people to build a sustainable livelihood. Patrick, a student from People's Mercy Foundation, Uganda says 'I send thanks to you for making my life a little easier with the sewing machine. I am comfortably able to sew clothes as well as skins for simple shoe products.' The ability to be self sufficient is even more important to Patrick, as his disability may not give him the same opportunities as other young people.

Workaid is delighted to have been awarded a Certificate of Recognition by People's Mercy Foundation.

Donation Journey



Visit workaid.org/donatetools for more information on items that we can take on this journey and make a difference to a young person's life.

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