

Empowering Young People in Africa Through Vocational Training

Focus on Uganda

Welcome to Workaid's Summer Newsletter. I recently travelled to Uganda to meet our partner organisations and visit graduates we have helped to establish small scale businesses. Our partnerships in Uganda have been in place for over two years so we are now able to better measure the impact of our efforts.

I visited graduates in the West of Uganda and the North of the country in Gulu District, including tailors, carpenters, motorcycle mechanics and metal fabricators. A few of their stories are featured in this newsletter, including a group of three young tailoring graduates from Empathy Vocational Training Institute who at first glance seemed to be performing quite poorly, but impressed me the most. The majority of my visits were to groups who had established their businesses over the last 9 to 12 months; the more established had developed well and tended to be more profitable.

Regardless of the stage their business was at, everyone was incredibly passionate about what they were doing and most had bold plans for the future, ranging from buying a plot of land to establishing a larger business in their local town.

Potential Partners and Tool Supply

Our focus will increasingly be on helping young graduates to establish their own businesses, as many go on to employ and train other young people in the community. In Uganda there is a qualification from the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT), which is 85% practical. Young people receiving training from graduates can gain their practical experience in a working environment, and then a vocational training organisation provides the theoretical part.

Supplying tools to all young graduates is a challenge for Workaid, so we are exploring a new scheme where our training partners would loan tools to their graduate trainees. Graduates would keep tools for two years and then return them to be refurbished for the next group of graduates. This will enable us to reach even more young people and help them more effectively.

We are also researching further potential vocational training partners with J.W. Interservices, who carry out a vital role as our clearing agents for the tools and equipment we send to Uganda. Interservices currently carry out project assessments for us around Kampala and they plan to identify four new partners for us to work with in the east of the country.

I look forward over the coming years to reporting back to you on how we continue to develop and grow our support to young people in this beautiful country in East Africa.

Adrian Hatch, CEO



NEWS FROM UGANDA

Interview with Benjamin Mwine

In the last newsletter we introduced you to Benjamin Mwine, our Project Assessor and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for Amigos, based at Kira Farm. During Adrian's recent visit to Uganda he took the opportunity to sit down with Benjamin to find out a little more.

Why did you apply for the job with Amigos as Project Assessor & Monitoring and Evaluation Officer?

When I finished my university studies in 2015, I was a trained accountant, but my first job was as a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. The company was doing similar projects to Workaid and I found it very interesting and it felt good to know that you are having a positive impact on someone's life. I did this job from 2015 to 2019 then I moved and went back to work for an IT start-up as a Business Manager. However, it didn't feel right because I wasn't enjoying the job, my head had already twisted to working for an NGO. When I saw the advert for the job, I was so impressed by the work Amigos and Workaid were doing and I wanted to reconnect to the communities again. So, I had to apply.

So how long have you been at Amigos Workaid and how are you finding it?

I started in September and I've blended in quite well. The community and working environment at Kira Farm is really nice, I'm enjoying the work. When I go to the north of the country and see how the young people have really changed from when they started to where they are today, it's really positive.



Benjamin, right-hand side

How do you feel about the coming months and what's going to happen?

I'm already looking ahead, as the last few months I have been learning and setting up the framework to assess and monitor projects. Now, I feel I know what I'm supposed to do, and it is going to be very interesting.

Do you have any message for the supporters, the volunteers, and the staff of Workaid?

I really want to thank Adrian, the volunteers, and the staff of Workaid for the great work that you're doing. I hope one day you'll get a chance like Adrian to come and visit and see the impact yourselves. It's so helpful, you're really doing magic for the communities of Uganda. Please don't get tired of giving us more tools and support, it is appreciated – thank you!

How a Sewing Machine can Improve Lives Beyond Measure

A group of three young tailoring graduates from **Empathy Vocational Training Institute** in Western Uganda received a sewing machine from Workaid upon graduation.

They struggled to manage with just one machine so decided to rent a second machine. Over the following months their business did reasonably well, making clothes for people locally and carrying out repairs. When Adrian visited, they told him they were able to pay for their children to go to school and to provide food and other necessities for their families. After they had paid for renting the second machine and for the small tailoring room, they were left with very little money.

However, they were such a happy group of friends and felt their lives had improved beyond measure since graduating and started working together. With the little profit they made, they bought schoolbooks for their children and little luxuries including better quality bathing soap.



Uganda Case Studies

During Adrian's recent visit to Uganda, he was able to meet with several graduates whose lives have changed since completing their training at one of the vocational training institutes. Here are just some of their stories.

Kira Farm Brenda - Tailor

Brenda graduated from Kira Farm's tailoring training programme in December 2023. She did so well on the course that upon graduation she was awarded a manual sewing machine from Workaid, enabling her to set up her own tailoring business. A single mum with a five-year-old son, Brenda was a subsistence farmer producing barely enough food to eat before completing the course.

Her skills and interest in dress design ensured her business was a success and her first month's profit allowed her to enrol her son at nursery school for the first time. Currently she works under a mango tree in the family compound and plans to build her business and save. She hopes one day to buy a plot of land in the local trading centre and build a small shop.

Brenda's face lights up when she talks about all she is doing. She is an inspirational young lady with an exciting future.



Visit our website for more information about Adrian's recent visit, including several other wonderful case studies.
workaid.org/uganda



Albert Valley Institute Robinson - Mechanic

Robinson dropped out of primary school and for years worked as a subsistence farmer with no direction in his life. When he heard about Albert Valley Institute he enrolled on their motorcycle maintenance course and graduated last summer as one of the top students in his class.

Robinson and two other graduates were provided with a mechanics starter kit by Workaid and established a roadside repair shop. He is now able to generate enough money to pay for the ground rent, food and for somewhere to live with his wife and young child. He can also afford to send his son to primary school, and has big plans for the future. He hopes to have his own workshop and to buy a plot of land to build a house for his family.

Basu Bandu Raymond, Jackson, Bruno and Ronald - Carpenters

In the remote village of Mirami, Basu Bandu has been a beacon of hope for four young individuals who graduated from its carpentry programme in March 2023. The group, equipped with essential tools provided by Workaid, have not only gained valuable skills but also transformed their lives.

Raymond, Jackson, Bruno and Ronald all have their individual stories including a couple of them who had dropped out of school with little or nothing to do in the village. However, they all had one thing in common. They were keen to gain skills to build a sustainable livelihood. After graduating from Basu Bandu, they gained valuable carpentry skills enabling them to earn a living. The Mirami Village Carpentry Group plan to work together until each member achieves self-sustainability. Their success will not only benefit them individually but will also have a positive ripple effect on the community.



NEWS FROM ZAMBIA

Schools Update

Thank you to everyone who kindly donated to The Big Give Zambia Rural Schools appeal in December 2023. Together you raised an amazing £28,000!

We are working closely with our country partner Vwila Foundation to successfully facilitate the development of infrastructure and equip an additional six secondary schools in rural Zambia.

Myooye and Nangoma Secondary Schools infrastructures have been certified and are just awaiting power to be connected, which will be completed by June. Each of these schools will then be able to teach over 300 students a year in a variety of vocational skills.

Construction of the workshops at Lukanga Basic School and St Edmunds are well underway and two further sites have already been identified.

The majority of the construction is being led by Gilbert from GHands Works. A former graduate from Lusaka Youth Resource Centre, he has built a successful and reputable business, and is now a major employer in the local area. He is helping other young people gain valuable skills training, qualifications and work experience. Gilbert is an inspiration to young people in the community showing that with skills, the right tools and an unwavering work ethic, sustainable change can happen.



Bulungu Secondary School goes from strength to strength

It has been a busy start to the year for the students of Bulungu Secondary School with Youth Day celebrations and course assessments for the fashion and design students. The Youth Day was a vibrant and insightful event, with students from the school taking centre stage in exhibiting their talents and skills. The theme “Zambia at 60: Be the Change” resonated throughout the day’s activities. The event celebrated not only their youth but also highlighted how vocational skills pave the way for a brighter and more skilled future generation.

The fashion and design students at the school have created amazing outfits, using refurbished sewing machines and fabric from Workaid, as part of the school-based continuous assessment. We wish all of the students good luck for the remainder of the course, and congratulate them on their stunning creations.

Generous donations of unwanted tools and equipment enable Workaid to continue its work empowering young people, such as the students at Bulungu School, with skills and knowledge to build a sustainable future.



VOLUNTEER NEWS

Tools on the move

The journey of tools destined for projects in Africa starts with someone choosing to give tools and equipment a second life.

Once the tools have been refurbished the items are picked and packed. Our first two containers of the year, one destined for Uganda, the other Zambia, marked nearly 40 combined years of volunteering by two of our long-time packing volunteers, now great friends, Maggie and Bob.

Hope, Pride and Dignity Maggie’s Story

The first container of the year, Maggie, headed to Uganda ‘filled with Hope, Pride and Dignity’, packed with nearly 800 boxes containing a variety of kits and tools for 17 identified and assessed vocational projects.

Maggie worked for GSK for 34 years, where she had several roles including lab technician in a variety of departments, later moving to IT where she was a computer programmer and secretary. In addition to working full time, she served for over 11 years in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force as a voluntary member. While stationed at RAF Northwood, Maggie took part in a number of NATO exercises, but the most important thing for her was that it was a lot of fun.

In Maggie’s words she was very fortunate to retire early. “Retirement for me was just amazing. I’ve got time, I can do what I want to do, when I want to do it. I saw it as a wonderful opportunity to do other things in life, things that I care about, things that I believe in.

“In my heart, I wanted to do something and help people in other countries, but it had to be practical. So, I visited Workaid and thought, wow, this is amazing. Since then, I have been working half a day a week in the packing department, making up kits, packing up all kinds of tools and equipment. I never imagined I’d be here for 20 years, but I enjoy it. The impact we’re having on other people is immeasurable, and it’s so fulfilling to do.”



“I joined WORKAID in packing almost 20 years ago. I really enjoy my shift and find it interesting to see the variety of tools that have been cleaned and repaired. But, more importantly, I know it will change the lives of those who unpack my boxes. Our tools enable them to learn skills, so they can find work and provide for themselves and their families.”

“We send containers that are filled with Hope, Pride and Dignity. What a wonderful gift! I am delighted to play a small part in this amazing organisation and feel honoured that a container has been named ‘Maggie.’”

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 in a variety of roles so why not get in touch?

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



SCAN ME

Sending Wendy to Lusaka

Bob's Story

Bob worked in retail finance for over 30 years, 1970 - 2005. Whilst pursuing his interest in Geology during a field trip to Dorset with Sheffield University's continuing education division, he met Wendy. They found that they shared many interests including archaeology and walking.

During Bob's career in retail finance, he faced several challenges and changes including being made redundant. Throughout his career 'ups and downs' his friend Wendy was an enormous support to him. In August 2005, when Bob was made redundant for the second time, he immediately signed up to join her on a community archaeological dig at Staveley Hall in Derbyshire. Digging in a trench in the cellar of the demolished part of the hall, they discovered high status plates, representative of the pottery type of that period.

"Wendy was concerned that I might become unsettled whilst being unemployed. She helped me choose Workaid as a suitable voluntary outlet for my skills and spare time, where I could actively give back to communities that were far less privileged than I was," says Bob.

He really enjoys volunteering in the packing department, alongside some remarkable colleagues who give their skills, time and energy to helping the less fortunate. Before the pandemic, Bob volunteered on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, working with three splendid groups of volunteers, which was beneficial to his physical and mental wellbeing.

When Workaid reopened following the pandemic, he was able to regain the benefits of volunteering and help young people in Africa. Bob continues to volunteer as one of Workaid's wonderful packers, one afternoon a week.

"After 18 years I was honoured by being given the opportunity to name one of our containers. So, without hesitation I asked the container to be named Wendy after my partner who has supported me through thick and thin for over 30 years," comments Bob.



We know that some supporters like to know exactly what their donation pays for. So, we've handpicked a range of items for you to choose from that will help complete kits for projects in Africa.

To buy an item from our Amazon wish list, visit workaid.org/wishlist, select item and add it to your basket. When you checkout just double check the item will be posted to: Workaid, The Old Boot Factory, HP5 2AA

Your gift enables us to help young people gain the skills and knowledge needed to find gainful employment or start a small business. Thank you!

available at

FUNDRAISING

Community Support Thank you!

We are constantly amazed by the continued donations and support not only from individuals in the community but from local groups, clubs and organisations. Last year Workaid was nominated as the chosen charity by Supplies Web who raised over £100 through their toner/cartridge recycling program and Chartridge Park Golf Club.

Early this year, Adrian was delighted to visit Chartridge Park Golf Club, to receive cheques from the 2023 - 2024 Ladies Captain and Mens Senior Captain. We would like to thank both Trish and Paul plus the members of the golf club for their support and their amazing fundraising efforts throughout the year, raising nearly £6500.

Your donations enable us to continue our work to empower young people in Africa and the UK.

Looking to fundraise for Workaid? Visit workaid.org/fundraising



Spring Forecourt Sale

Spring is typically a time for a clear out, and with the help of our dedicated volunteers, without whom these events wouldn't be possible, we held another successful Spring Forecourt Sale.

We were incredibly lucky with the weather; the sun came out and the April showers stayed away. Thank you to everyone who came along and stocked up, not only at the Forecourt Sale, but to those keen upholsterers who came to our fabulous high-end fabric sale earlier in the year.

Shop with a Difference

Our 'charity shop with a difference' is a key part of our fundraising efforts, specialising in tools and hardware, gardening equipment, craft materials, sewing machines, and general haberdashery.

The stock changes every week based on the generous donations we receive from the local community.

The team has had a busy start to the year with special events in fabric, paper craft, and weaving.

Visit our social media pages for updates on upcoming special sales, or drop by and browse.

Shop Opening Times: Thurs, Fri & Sat 10am - 4pm



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Registered Charity: 1041574

Registered with

FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Follow Us

RADIOS AT THE READY

We are delighted to announce that Workaid will feature on the BBC Radio 4 appeal.

It will be broadcast on

Sunday 23 June at 07:55 & 21:26

Thursday 27 June at 15:27

Mark your diary and tune in your radio.

Listen to Eric Knowles, antiques expert, talk about how Workaid is empowering young people in Africa to gain vocational skills to support their families.



To donate to our appeal please complete the flyer enclosed or visit

**[workaid.org/
bbcradio4appeal](https://workaid.org/bbcradio4appeal)**



A BBC RADIO 4 APPEAL



Help us transform lives in Africa, like Godfrey. Through tools supplied by Workaid, he has trained to be a carpenter and built a small business, enabling him to build a better future for his family.