

Empowering Young People in Africa Through Vocational Training



Bulhalho graduates with the tools we donated, Uganda

The past twelve months have seen a number of significant (but positive) changes at Workaid, both in Chesham, and overseas in Africa.

In Chesham

We continue to maintain and develop The Old Boot Factory in Chesham. As an old building, we need to keep up with its maintenance. However, over the last twelve months, our primary focus has been the renovation of the covered lean-to area at the side of the shop. This area was susceptible to the elements and items for sale in this section were subject to tampering and theft. As such, we tended to have low value goods for sale in the area.

Towards the end of 2024, we were fortunate to secure grants which allowed us to install a new secure double-glazed frontage, roof, ceiling, lay new flooring and update the fire alarm and security systems. As part of this renovation we also knocked through from the main shop and extended the counter.

These works have significantly improved our shop area, allowing us to more effectively manage shelf space for high-value items.

We always try to make the most efficient use of space across our site, including each section of the workshop. Recently, we extended the electrical section to accommodate the increased number of volunteers working in this area and to allow more items to be serviced.

Nothing would be possible without the dedication and efforts of our incredible volunteers. By sorting, packing and refurbishing tools we can continue our work and open up employment opportunities to young people in Africa.

In recognition of their hard work, our volunteers are given the opportunity to name a container full of the tools we send. Please visit our website to read some of their stories.

In Africa

We recognise the importance of sharing resources and expertise to increase our reach and better serve projects and people. Over the past few years we have constantly been looking for potential new partners to work with in Africa, whether these be British or African organisations.

We particularly look for three qualities in a potential partner: 1) a shared vision of people helping themselves, 2) strong and transparent accounting practices, and 3) robust monitoring and evaluation systems (M&E).

The first is crucial so we can work with like-minded people whose goals align with ours. The second is of vital importance, especially considering we now send more funds to projects. Lastly, we place a strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluating. This enables us to measure our impact, provide feedback for our supporters and target projects to provide the greatest outcomes to the communities most in need.

As a relatively small organisation we take pride in our targeted approach and our ability to measure the difference we are making. It is important for us to account for what we send to Africa and what we spend our resources on.



Students learning sewing machine repair and maintenance, Zambia

Uganda

Albert Valley Vocational Institute Karugutu (AVVIK)

We continue to work closely with AVVIK and the seven other small vocational training institutions in the region. While working on a relatively small scale, these organisations offer training to those who need it the most. We are also able to help many of their graduates set up their own small businesses.

Working with AVVIK, we have helped them establish a vocational training centre of excellence. We have secured funding for this and the centre will be fully operational by the end of August 2025. It will become the main vocational training centre in the region and all the smaller vocational training organisations we work with will send their students to sit their practical examinations with the Department of Industrial Training (DIT).



Basu Bandu tailoring graduates, Uganda

Organisation for Community Action (OCA)

OCA are a very well respected and professionally run local development organisation. Together, we have developed an exciting programme to empower disadvantaged young women in Northern Uganda through tailoring, design and sewing machine maintenance and repair training. The programme will teach valuable life and business skills.

This project will be the focus of Workaid's 2025 Big Give Christmas campaign.

In the weeks leading up to the campaign, we will share more information about how to donate to this project where every donation will be doubled!



AVVIK carpentry graduates with donated tools, Uganda



Kas (right), Director of AVVIK, with masonry students helping to build a centre of excellence

We are also hoping to establish a programme with OCA to identify and partner with a network of vocational training organisations in Northern Uganda. The programme will be developed in the latter half of 2025.

OCA has robust financial control systems and an excellent M&E framework that they have developed and used successfully for a number of years. We have introduced them to AVVIK and they will work closely together to implement the M&E system in Western Uganda.

Over the coming months and years, we hope to further strengthen our working relationship with AVVIK. We also hope to continue to work with OCA to implement and support a programme for its own vocational projects and for other organisations in Uganda.

Tanzania

Continuing to work in partnership with Tools for Self-Reliance (TFSR) Cymru and the Kalwande Vocational Training Centre, near Mwanza will be our main focus.

The first container of tools we sent at the end of 2024 were refurbished in Kalwande by local artisans. A second container will be sent later this year.

In the last two years we have supported two intensive vocational training courses. We have also secured funds to fully refurbish Kalwande's metal fabrication and welding workshop. While this will be a valuable workshop for teaching it will also be used as a production facility to fabricate treadle bases for the manual sewing machines we send.

Earlier this year we recruited Suzana Kaijanangoma as our Project Assessor in Kalwande. Suzana has extensive experience in international development. Her role is to identify small groups and organisations suitable for specialist vocational training. These groups will then have access to purchase quality refurbished tools from Kalwande that we provided. Her focus will be to find organisations who focus on young women, particularly in the subjects of tailoring, design and sewing machine repair and maintenance training.



Father Akriatus, Director of Kalwande, with Suzana

Zambia

Our partnership with the Vwila Foundation, led by Emmanuel Zulu, goes from strength to strength.

Over the past twelve months we have supplied tools and equipment to 61 projects which include 33 secondary schools. We have also funded the construction of workshops for four schools to run their vocational training programmes. These schools include Kabwanga Secondary, Nangoma Secondary, Lukanga Secondary and St Edmund's Primary.

In the last quarter of 2025, our CEO will meet with the Vwila team and representatives from key vocational training partners in Zambia to review progress compared with the organisation's strategic plan and put in place new objectives for the year ahead.



Tailor, Tanzania



Carpentry student at Saleh Furniture, a furniture making business, Tanzania

In conclusion, we are a small but effective advocate for young people's vocational training in Africa. The partnerships we have built and continue to build with like-minded organisations allow us to reach more young people, giving them the skills and tools to change their lives and be forces of development in their communities.

The Big Give

We will be participating in the
Big Give Christmas Challenge 2025!

Tuesday 2nd December to Tuesday 9th December 2025

Every donation you give will be doubled

Visit workaid.org/biggive to donate



This year our fundraising focus is on vocational and business training for young women in Northern Uganda.

Working with our partner, OCA, we will develop a vocational training centre in Lira. This centre will offer training in tailoring, sewing machine repair and maintenance and business skills courses to young people, especially young women. The centre will focus on delivering quality training and aims to become a cornerstone of vocational excellence for young women in the region.

Upon completion of the one-year course, groups of graduates will be provided with sewing machines to start up small businesses. This will encourage collaborative working and economic self-sufficiency.

Tailoring student,
Uganda



Why Uganda?

Northern Uganda faces high levels of poverty, gender discrimination, stigma and ongoing conflict particularly in rural areas. Early teenage pregnancy and marriage are barriers for young women on their journey to further education. This is both a consequence and a driver of poverty which reinforces harmful societal norms and expectations within the community.

Uganda reports the highest proportion of women giving birth before the age of 20 (63%) and the highest total fertility rate (6.2) in East Africa (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2024).

Together with OCA, we hope to address these issues and break the cycle of poverty by equipping young women with the vocational skills they need to become self-sufficient. Also, to ensure open accessibility to the courses, the project will provide funds for training scholarships that will allow those from extremely poor backgrounds to attend.

With your help, we can empower young women to become community leaders and provide them with the skills they need to teach others.

**Make your donation
online from 2nd December
to 9th December 2025.**

With matched funding, your donation will go twice as far, **doubling its impact.**

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