



Summer 2026 Newsletter

Empowering Young People in Africa Through Vocational Training

Forty Years of Workaid

It's remarkable that Workaid is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year! Tens of thousands of young people have learnt a practical, life-changing skill with the tools and equipment we have supplied since we started in 1986.

We have always tried to work with projects and community groups in Africa in the areas where economic development is most needed. That remains the same now and I'm proud that our small but well focussed organisation is reaching the people who will benefit most from vocational skills training and the employment and entrepreneurial opportunities they bring.

This newsletter features our latest projects and some of the young people who are benefitting from them. These stories are truly inspirational.



The one thing that impresses me more than anything else is that the majority of graduates who gain a vocational skill, and then establish their own business, go on to informally train other young people. Some take on one at a time, while others train a small group.

When talking to these entrepreneurs, they say they feel blessed to have had the opportunity to improve their lives, and they want to give that opportunity to others.

So here is to the next 40 years! While there is a need for good, refurbished tools in Africa for young people to be able to learn vital vocational skills, Workaid is there for them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Adrian'.

Adrian Hatch, CEO

The Old Boot Factory

We continue to maintain and develop the Old Boot Factory and our overall site in Chesham. In recent months, we demolished 'the barn', an ageing structure at the back of the site that was no longer fit for purpose, allowing us to make much better use of the space. The area has been converted into a concrete surface, providing much-needed additional parking for volunteers — something that has long been a challenge, particularly during busy times such as fundraising events. It has also created extra secure storage space.

By repurposing this space, we are making the most of the site's potential and improving how it supports both our work and our volunteers.

The Shop

We're pleased to announce that The Workaid Shop opening hours have been extended, now open from Wednesday through to Saturday from 10am until 4pm. We hope this additional day will give more people the chance to visit us and, in turn, help raise vital funds to support our work in Africa.



Uganda

Here, we work through two main partner and coordination organisations: The Organisation for Community Action (OCA) and the Albert Valley Vocational Institute in Karugutu (AVVIK). Although they are located hundreds of miles apart, they regularly communicate with each other to share ideas and best practice. Later this year, OCA plans to send a small team to AVVIK to help them establish a more robust monitoring and evaluation system, further improving our ability to measure the changes and impact we are making.



AVVIK Carpentry Graduates, Uganda

OCA

OCA works in North Eastern Uganda, primarily in Lira District — a huge rural area with high youth unemployment, particularly among young women. OCA has worked successfully for a number of years with rural communities, helping them to embrace gender equality, improve their agricultural production and sanitation and to generate more income.

They empower disadvantaged young women in a particularly poor and overlooked part of Uganda. There are a good number of women's development and vocational training groups that have been identified in the region. OCA aim to build a network of like-minded organisations that, with help from us, will focus on strengthening and growing their vocational training programmes for young women.

We are now working with OCA to focus on training unemployed young women in tailoring, design, and sewing machine maintenance and repair.

They use their own premises, which we helped to refurbish, and began training 20 young women for one year in January 2026. Even after a few months the trainees show good potential and are able to make and repair clothes, as demonstrated by Awio Lona in the story overleaf.

Awio Lona – Restoring Hope Through Skills and Self-Reliance

Awio Lona, a young mother from Lira District, is an inspiring beneficiary of the programme.

Living with her mother, who is a person living with HIV, Lona has faced significant socio-economic hardships from an early age.

Before joining the training, Lona admired tailoring from a distance, often inspired by a friend who practiced the trade. Today, she no longer sees it as a distant dream, but as a skill she confidently possesses.

Through the programme, Lona has gained practical tailoring skills, enabling her to make her own clothes and carry out basic repairs. She has already started earning small amounts of income, which she uses to support her child.

For Lona, this training represents more than just skill acquisition; it is a pathway to dignity, self-reliance, and renewed hope for her family.

Lona also shared a deeply personal moment of pride when she presented a dress she had made to her mother. Her mother, Evelyn Akello, expressed her joy, saying: **“I am so happy for you, my daughter.”**

Written by OCA



SCAN ME

To read more inspiring stories like Lona's and hear from the young people we support in Africa, scan the QR code or visit **workaid.org/news**



Awio Lona

“I used to admire my friend who is a tailor, but not anymore. I can now make dresses for myself and even do repairs. This has helped me earn some money to support my child.”

AVVIK

AVVIK's Centre of Vocational Training Excellence was completed in late 2025. It is now fully operational and 80 students are being trained in carpentry, motor mechanics, plumbing and tailoring.

During 2026, AVVIK will continue to fully repair and re-use up to 500 broken manual and electrical sewing machines which they have collected from a number of vocational training organisations in Western Uganda. Many of these will be loaned to tailoring graduates to help them establish small businesses.

A number of electrical sewing machines will be given to OCA to help with their tailoring and design training programme.

Zambia

The Vwila Foundation successfully moved to their new home in Lusaka in 2025. This new office and compound are perfect for Vwila's needs. Three Workaid-supplied containers have been moved to the site and, during 2026, two of the containers will be converted into a sewing machine repair and maintenance workshop. A corrugated iron roof will be installed, which will also create an outside work area. In addition to repairing and servicing sewing machines we donate; the workshop will also maintain and repair machines supplied to all the secondary schools we work with.

Zambian secondary schools have had extensive support from Workaid and the Vwila Foundation in recent years.



Kabwanga Secondary School, Zambia

Since 2023, a total of 54 schools have received support in the form of tools and equipment, 14 workshops have been constructed, and over 16,000 students have benefited from vocational training.

Tanzania

The Kalwande programme in Northern Tanzania continues to go from strength to strength. Over the past 18 months, we have supplied two containers full of tools and equipment to be refurbished by the artisan team there. During the same period, our partners, Tools for Self-Reliance–Cymru have also supplied two containers.

In 2025, an incredible 555 artisan groups purchased tools for their work from the Kalwande programme.

The refurbishment of tools and equipment in Africa demonstrates our belief in the skills and craftsmanship exhibited by African artisans. By charging a small fee we find that the artisans place greater value on the tools. As an example, a Singer sewing machine, supplied by us and refurbished by Kalwande artisans is sold for 50,000 Tanzanian shillings (TZS) which is approximately £15. To purchase a poor-quality machine in Tanzania costs 250,000 TZS (approximately £75).

The Kalwande campus has become very run down over the years, so we have highlighted two urgent areas for refurbishment: the metal fabrication and welding workshop, and the carpentry workshop. Both were in a poor state and required extensive repairs, which we have now fully completed and reinstated.

Over the next two years our plan is to fully refurbish the boys' dormitory, the kitchen where fuel efficient stoves will be installed, the electrical workshop and the motor mechanics workshop. Kalwande is about a quarter of a mile from the main road and is hidden by trees. We therefore propose a simple roadside showroom and store, enabling the institution to display and sell items of furniture produced by its students. At the same time, it is a great opportunity to advertise the fact that Kalwande sells tools and equipment for artisans.



Wana Mandaleo
Carpentry Group,
Tanzania

Ultimately, while we may be a small organisation, our impact continues to grow through the strength of our partnerships and shared commitment to vocational training in Africa.

Together with like-minded organisations, we are equipping more young people with the skills, tools and opportunities they need to **transform their futures** and become drivers of positive change within their communities.

If you would like to support our work in Africa and help us continue **transforming lives** through vocational training, there are many ways you can make a difference.

Donate Tools

Monday, Wednesday & Friday
9:30am – 12:30pm
1:30pm – 4:00pm

Visit the Workaid Shop

Wednesday to Saturday
10:00am – 4:00pm

Donate Money

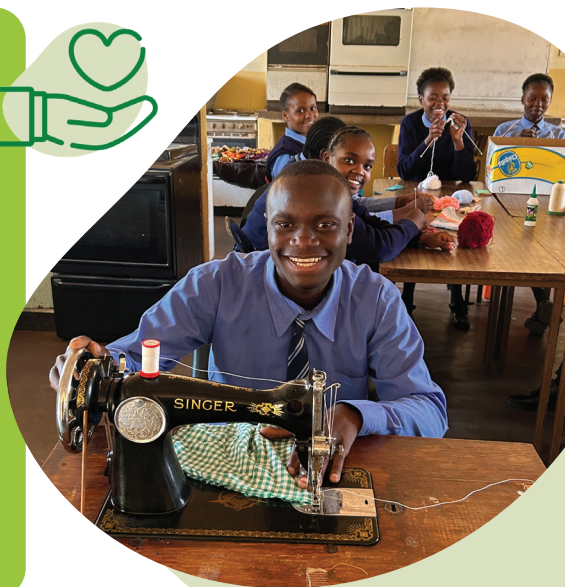
Our work in Africa is made possible through the generosity of our supporters. Whether it's a small donation to help us put together a haberdashery kit for a young tailor or a larger contribution to help build a vocational training centre, every donation — large or small — supports our mission. Visit **workaid.org/donate-money** to find out how you can help.

Amazon Wishlist

To help us send tools and kits to Africa, we regularly need to purchase essential items such as saws, tape measures, spirit levels and replacement blades for craft knives.

We've created an Amazon Wish List featuring many of these tools and supplies and we would be thrilled if you could help by purchasing

Visit: **workaid.org/wishlist**



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