



**TWAM**

Tools with a Mission

August 2025

# Our News

**Creating happiness**

**How your money is used**

**Our mission in Tanzania**

**Giving communities tools to build a future for themselves**

# Welcome to TWAM News

Dear Friends

In this quarter's newsletter, I invite you to contribute towards our work.

We hope to send an ambitious 25 container-loads of toolkits this year - but the reality is that our current resources will not meet these demands. We operate entirely on the generosity of our supporters, partners and friends to fund our toolkits, and to empower our mission.

In this edition of TWAM News we are pleased to give you an idea of where your generous funds go. The gift of a sewing machine could transform the lives of hundreds of women, as the story of Annie tells. Meanwhile, funding a mechanics or carpentry kit upsills an entire organisation - we tell the story of Mentra Youth Solwezi's life-changing work. The team's thought-provoking report on our presence in Tanzania also helps to show the scale and costs of our in-country mission. Finally, an insight into how we send our containers might give you an idea of where our biggest funds go!

It was encouraging and uplifting to see so many of you engage with our National TWAM Day and AGM in June. With your prayers and support we look to the future with confidence and joy. There are many new faces in TWAM, and many more tools to be given new homes. This summer, please consider giving to our work in whichever way you can.

As always, with much love and gratitude,



**John Noble**

Chief Executive Office

*"By this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

Acts 20:35



## Tools with a Mission

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# About us

We are a Christian charity that collects donated usable tools, refurbishes them, sorts them into trade kits and sends them to the developing world for livelihood creation.

We support local people, meeting local needs with life transforming skills training projects. We supply tools to equip training centres and to give to trainees when they graduate. With this support we see long-term sustainable livelihoods created.

Thanks to over 500 volunteers in the UK and your support, we will continue to transform lives and communities.



## Time to donate?

We are always looking for more volunteers to help in our centres.

At present we particularly need volunteers in our refurbishment centres. Please visit **[twam.uk/volunteer](http://twam.uk/volunteer)** to browse our available roles or call us on 01473 210220.



## Tools to donate?

To find your nearest collection centre, or to contact a local collector, have a look at our website or call our Ipswich office.



## Financial support

We keep our costs very low, but we still need a lot of support. We value all gifts, whether one-off or regular. You can donate online, send donations to our Ipswich postal address, or request a Standing Order and/or Gift Aid form.



## Prayer support

TWAM depends on prayer. If you don't currently receive our quarterly prayer diary and would like to, please contact our Ipswich office.



## Thank you Tim!

Tim is one of several volunteers who raise funds for us by reselling rare yet unusable items we receive. He's been selling items on eBay for TWAM for over two years. In his first year £800 was raised, now he manages that amount every month! We are so grateful for his time and expertise. If you have an interest in tool sales and online retail, get in touch - there could be a place for you here!

## Could you join us?

TWAM is a Christian charity that welcomes people of all faiths and none. We are always looking for new volunteers to support us. No matter what your experience or skills, there is something for everyone.

If you would like to find out more, please get in touch on 01473 210220. You could support us in our offices, at our tool benches, or as a member of our van team.

More details can be found at [twam.uk/volunteer](http://twam.uk/volunteer).



# Creating happiness

As you can see from Moyo's face, he is delighted to receive toolkits from TWAM as they will help him to help others.



Moyo is from the Insiza Godlwayo Development Association in Zimbabwe, to whom refurbished tools were given in 2021. Sewing machines, an agricultural and carpentry kit, and several packs of saws - all were safely packed up and brought to the Association's headquarters in Filabusi.

They have used the sewing machines to equip a local primary school, and are working hard (in a highly charged political environment) to empower local groups with tools, regardless of their political affiliation.

This is an example of the courage our tool recipient groups show on a daily basis. Despite the challenges of drought, political pressure, rationed electricity, and even lack of space, they show determination to have a positive impact on their local community with the tools that TWAM supplies.

If you are a regular reader of TWAM News, you will know that the gifts you give - in money, time or donated tools - not only bring joy but genuinely change lives.

**In this issue we highlight a handful of stories that demonstrate how a particular sum of money – from as little as £25 – can have a far reaching effect.**

One thing is for sure at TWAM: we never take our donors, volunteers and supporters for granted. At a time when many people are facing cost of living pressures and charities across the country are crying out for funds, we are even more grateful for your gifts. No matter how big or how small, each one is received with love and will go towards creating livelihoods for people that previously had little hope for the future.

Thank you!





# A gift in every stitch

**It is amazing to think that just £25 can transform not only a life but an entire community.**

In Zambia, the Blessed International Ministries Organisation has been helping local women since 2015. Most of the women who use their services are widows, their husbands lost to accidents, war, or street violence. Some have disabled children. Some have college education, yet cannot find a job. But by providing a practical skill, the organisation gives hundreds of young women an opportunity to make money and support their families, each year, every year. Many women stay on to instruct others, such as Annie. And all this started with a shipment of sewing machines.

The machines have changed everything. Prior to 2016, the trainees used needle and thread. Now, equipped with TWAM tools, they can raise funds both for their own wages and for the upkeep of the organisation itself. The women make doormats, shirts, reusable bags and carpets out of a material called chitenge. Annie has worked here for seven years.

She has mobility problems and uses crutches, but her spirit remains strong. When we interviewed her, her answers went straight to the point. “I wanted friendship,” she said. “I wanted to share ideas.” Annie was trained in haberdashery and tailoring at the disabled school in Ndola, and came to Blessed International Ministries to help teach. That was seven years ago. Why did she stay? “There is so much more that we can do,” she says. “And I wanted to do more than just what people thought I could do.”

A sewing machine course lasts six months. Many leave with a machine of their own, but others stay to use the organisation’s machines and benefit from friendship. It costs £25 (on average) to pack and send an electric sewing machine. And sewing machines make up 25% of all the tools we send. Countless women like Annie are strengthened through the gift of tailoring.

**Will you be part of this gift?**

# A change of gear

**A TWAM mechanics kit, which costs only £110, brings transformation to hundreds of people.**

Luapula is one of the poorest provinces in Zambia, with over 70% of the population living under the international poverty line. But in 2021, Pastor Davies Chibwe, one of TWAM's Zambian Regional Development Managers, walked into the Luapula District Commissioner's office with an ambitious proposal. His dream? To create a unique skills training centre.

What makes the centre unique isn't what it teaches, but how. There are no formal teachers on the payroll. Instead, the centre has pioneered an innovative approach that benefits everyone involved.

Skilled craftspeople – such as mechanics – are invited to make the centre their workplace. Many arrive with abundant skills but few tools, or without adequate work space to build their businesses. At the centre, they find both: free access to high-quality tools and a place to work. In return, they share their knowledge, teaching students as they work.

One of the students, Sande, shares with us the struggle to find employment. “Here, in Mansa, there is nothing to do. After leaving school, I was just doing nothing, walking up and down the streets. I want to improve my mind and improve my life. I've been learning mechanics here for five years. I'm confident in my skills now, I'm a fast learner. In the future, I hope to have my own garage.” Sande's words are a mixture of despair at his past and hope for his future. He came to the Luapula Regional Skills Training Centre in desperation, but stayed because he saw the professionalism of the trainers, the abundance of quality tools from TWAM, and the commitment of Pastor Davies to support him through to employment.

The impact of this centre is extraordinary, with hundreds of lives transformed through TWAM tools and ‘skills transference.’ But most importantly, it is your support that has enabled this change in gear.

**Will you be part of this change?**

A man in a black polo shirt over a red t-shirt is using a yellow power planer on a piece of wood. He is outdoors, and wood shavings are flying. In the background, there is a brick building and some trees.

# Working in wood

**A carpentry workshop kit – £240 – provides equipment for a whole carpentry school!**

Meet Didier, a carpenter from Solwezi in Zambia. He began to train and teach at the Mentra Youth Training Centre in 2020 – a year none of us will forget. But despite the worst restrictions of the pandemic, that year TWAM managed to send 513 carpentry kits to Africa with the support of our heroic volunteers and donors. One of these kits contained the tools for Didier, and for Mentra Youth.

Didier thinks of himself as ‘getting old’ at just 39, but this is the sad reality of the badly paid, back-breaking work of day labourers. After the physical demands of bricklaying became too much, Didier explored carpentry.

“Thanks to carpentry, I have been able to send my children to school and pay nursery fees. My eldest daughter wants to be a nurse, and I plan to raise funds to pay for education for both my daughters so that they will always have work. My son comes with me sometimes – I want him to

grow up watching me so that I can pass my skills down to him.”

This incredible change – from not being able to feed or school his family to his new found success – shows the impact training and skills can have on just one man. But the impact will be even greater as others benefit, hence he continues with a clear sense of pride and achievement: “When I train a young man, I secure the future for him. And when I do this I secure the future for Zambia.”

With the support of TWAM tools, Mentra Youth has totally transformed the lives of all those who have learned carpentry since 2020. Some have gone on to start businesses; others like Didier have stayed to gain more experience and earn a good living making furniture to sell. Just one box of tools – vices, clamps, power tools and other essentials – has totally transformed their lives.

**Will you be a part of this transformation?**



# A container full of treasure

**Every container that leaves Ipswich or Rugby takes with it the promise of new starts and sustainable livelihoods.**



**At the heart of TWAM's mission are our container loads of toolkits. Bound for communities in need overseas, they cost between £7,500 and £15,000 each (depending on country), including shipping fees, customs duties, and of course the packing costs!**

## **How to pack a container**

Filling a TWAM container is an art! Our volunteers work tirelessly together in the complex task of wrapping, organising and packing to make the most efficient use of space. Heavier items are distributed throughout to balance the load, and softer items such as wool sacks are used as padding. Spaces between boxes are ideal for rakes, spades and hoes. Finally, larger tools such as treadles are often dismantled and taped up to make the most efficient use of space.

## **Sending our shipments**

Behind the scenes, our country coordinators manage the logistics, ensuring every one of the container's 900-odd kits gets to its final destination safely and quickly. Lyn, our long-serving logistics manager, oversees the process. Our refurbishment teams; Trevor, Garth, Sheldon, Caleb and countless volunteers ensure the pick-up and drop-off of each container is done safely and swiftly. Since the last TWAM News, our first Burundi container has left Ipswich and is currently on the seas en route to Dar Es Salaam. Pictured above is our Tanzania container, packed and ready to leave - see page 11.

Without the generosity of so many supporters, these containers would not leave the ground! Our ambitious aim is to send 25 containers this year, the most ever. Will you partner with us to pack and send these amazing shipments?

# What can you do?

The stories in the preceding pages show just how much difference your support makes. Here are just some of the ways in which you can help.

**Support us through giving.** We are continually amazed by the generosity of our donors. Your practical, financial and spiritual support is essential if we are to achieve our aim to ship 25 containers this year and reach some of the poorest communities in Africa. More about giving and Gift Aid can be found on our website at **twam.uk/donate**, or for details about leaving a legacy to TWAM, please visit **twam.uk/legacy**.

**Tools can be donated through our network of volunteer collectors.** If you have tools you no longer need, give us a call and we will be pleased to explain how our collectors can help - **01473 210220**.

**Volunteer with some amazing people!** If you have time to give, why not volunteer at TWAM? There are many different roles for all levels of skill and experience, and you are guaranteed a warm welcome. Our current volunteer roles can be found at **twam.uk/volunteer**.

**Pray for our work.** TWAM is a Christian organisation that values your prayers. If you feel able, please join with us in prayer for our work and please visit **twam.uk/prayerdiary**.



*Restoring dignity at the Kisa Kya Outreach Foundation, as TWAM sewing machines are used to make reusable hygiene products.*

## Welcome Jess!



Jess joined us in June 2025, having lived and worked in southern Africa for several years. She lives with her husband in Suffolk. As volunteering coordinator, she will support our team of volunteers across the country.

# Opportunity and need in Tanzania



*Carpenter at work in Stone Town, Zanzibar*

**In 2024 we sent the first container for five years to the east African country of Tanzania.**

With its stunning beaches and scenery, and some of the most incredible wildlife on the planet, Tanzania is well known as a luxury holiday destination.

**What is less well known is that Tanzania is a very poor country – in fact, one of the poorest 15 nations in the world.**

Tanzania gained independence from Britain in 1961 and in 1964 it merged with the island of Zanzibar to become the United Republic of Tanzania. Today it has a fast growing population of around 67

million people, many of whom are self-employed or work in very small businesses.

## **Beauty, wealth and poverty**

There are many positives in Tanzania. Situated on the edge of the Indian Ocean and containing within its borders National Parks such as the Serengeti and part of the Great Rift Valley, the country is hugely attractive to tourists. Just off the coast, the beautiful island of Zanzibar is a dream destination for many.

But behind the glossy pages of the travel brochures there is a darker side to life in Tanzania. Around 70% of people live on less than US\$2 per day and half of those are classed as living in extreme poverty. While tourism and the country's mineral wealth - gold is just one example - are critical to its future opportunities and



development, many Tanzanians are in need of help...right now. Healthcare and sanitation are limited and although the country is surrounded by lakes, almost half the population has no access to clean drinking water.

Agriculture is important here - crops include rice, maize, beans, cassava, wheat and bananas - but without proper tools to work the ground, growing anything is a real struggle.

Many children go to school but few go on to secondary education and even fewer complete it. Despite being free, the cost of uniforms, books and getting there is often beyond the means of parents.

### **Finding ways to make life better**

Outside of the main cities - Dar-es-Salaam and the capital, Dodoma - life revolves around rural activities. At TWAM we are working with partner organisations to provide local people with opportunities in agriculture and tailoring, among others. These skills create sustainable livelihoods and can be used anywhere, regardless of infrastructure and transport links. And as we often supply manual sewing machines, even without the need for an electricity supply.

## **On the ground**

After our 2024 Tanzania container landed, TWAM visited one of our in-country partners, SIDO - the Small Industries Development Organisation - who facilitated the distribution of toolkits to over 40 organisations, NGOs, churches and skill centres.

The toolkits will increase SIDO's capacity to train local people and change lives. The photo below (from right to left) shows Sofia, who runs the women's organisation of Sauti Ma Wanawake le; Christina, who facilitates the sewing programme; and Ian, our country coordinator, alongside three of the ladies who are training in tailoring.

Our deepest thanks to SIDO for their hospitality, and to Ian, for his dedication and perseverance. And a huge thank you to you, our supporters, without whom it would have been impossible to ship this container.



**Just one toolkit can have positive repercussions for a whole community. People like Moyo, featured on page 4 of this edition, share their skills to help create many livelihoods. Please continue to support us to ensure that every suitable tool is used to transform lives in Africa.**



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### ONLINE

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### CARD

You can donate by credit or debit card by ringing our head office on 01473 210220. We're open Monday to Friday, 9am-3pm.

Would you like to receive our monthly **Supporter E-News**? It's packed with up to date news and inspiring stories. If so, you can either write your email address below, or go to **[twam.uk/stayintouch](https://twam.uk/stayintouch)** to sign up online.

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☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Tools with a Mission. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

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## Tools with a Mission



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