

TWAM

Tools with a Mission

Our news

This was our year - these are their stories

April 2021



Empowering people with the tools that create livelihoods and transform lives

This was our year - these are their stories



Welcome to the April edition of TWAM News. It has been a very hard winter for all of us, with restrictions affecting every aspect of our lives. TWAM has struggled with hugely reduced tool donations and limited numbers of volunteers. But we are grateful for the way the Lord supported us through 2020 and for the number of containers we were able to dispatch. This edition highlights our year and most importantly the lives transformed because we kept going through 2020 and we will keep going through 2021.

Mike Griffin, Chief Executive

Tools to donate?

To find your nearest collection centre or to contact a local collector check our website or contact Ipswich.

Time to donate?

We are in particular need of drivers at our Coventry Refurbishment Centre. If you are interested please contact the Ipswich office, we'd love to hear from you.

Financial support

TWAM operates seven refurbishment centres across the UK and sends out over 20 containers of tools a year. 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 send donations to our Ipswich postal address or request a Standing Order and 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 the Ipswich office.

*This I recall to my mind,
Therefore I have hope.
The Lord's loving kindness
indeed never cease,
For His compassion never fails.
They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.*

Lamentations 3:21-24

About us:

Tools with a Mission is a Christian charity enabling people to earn a living and support themselves and their families. In many countries people have few skills, little education and no means of earning a living. A switch from aid dependency to self-sufficiency is impossible without help. TWAM started over thirty years ago, and has since provided this help by collecting and refurbishing tools and equipment no longer required in the UK and sending them overseas. Through collectors and centres across the UK, our team of dedicated volunteers and supporters help transform thousands of lives every year.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Tools with a Mission

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TWAM is grateful to the Aall Foundation for their long-term generous support of our work.



This was our year - these are their stories

2020 was a tough year for all of us and one most of us would rather forget. But, TWAM has much to be thankful for as we managed the amazing achievement of dispatching 12 of the planned 18 containers. For this we have to thank our incredibly committed volunteers and our very generous supporters. Without all of you, it would have been impossible.

In this edition we want to share with you just what a difference your amazing support has made. Below we've listed just the main kits we sent out during 2020 - despite all the challenges!

- 2124 Sewing Machines
- 544 Haberdashery Packs
- 187 Knitting Machines
- 115 Hand Knitting Packs
- 352 Carpentry Kits
- 161 Carpentry Workshop Kits
- 84 Drill and Power Tools

- 43 Box of Carpentry Tools
- 274 Saw Packs
- 562 Computers
- 175 Builders Kits (Box of 2)
- 150 Groundworkers Kits
- 205 Agricultural Kits
- 217 Motor Mechanics Kits
- 90 Mechanics Workshop Kits
- 120 Plumbers Kits
- 161 Electricians Kits
- 482 Electric Drills and Power Tools
- 1928 All other tools - large and small

Behind every one of these kits are many amazing stories as hundreds of lives are impacted by TWAM kits. So please, read the stories and imagine how many thousands of lives have been transformed because of your support.

So this was our year - and these are their stories.

'I would not have survived without my sewing machine.'

Yvonne Kunda is a member of the Mama Poverty Reduction Club in Mansa, Zambia. The club is run by Pastor Davies and offers training and tools to men and women identified as the most vulnerable and poorest in the community.

Yvonne suddenly found herself one of the poorest in the community when her husband died. In a country with no social services, no savings and hand-to-mouth living, this immediately plunged her into severe poverty. She was left with two grieving children to care for, both of whom not only lost their father, but also schooling and food security. The life of a widow is not one we would wish on anyone.

It is no surprise that Pastor Davies soon spotted Yvonne's plight. He tells us:

'We started the group to promote the wellbeing of members, socially, economically and environmentally. We look for vulnerable people and those affected by HIV/AIDS.'

He soon spotted Yvonne and offered her a place on the tailoring course. For Yvonne this was a lifeline, not just as a means to earn an income, but also to feel loved and cared for. In a culture that thrives on family, the ability to belong to a group means everything.



For Yvonne it was losing a husband, but gaining a family. Yvonne tells us:

'I would not have survived without the support from Pastor Davies. My sewing machine is my lifeline. I now work making clothes to order, along with school uniforms and repairs. I now have support and friends. I am so grateful; it has changed my life.'

It also changed the lives of her children as they are able to complete their schooling, have uniforms made by Yvonne to wear and come home each day knowing there will be a meal on the table.

Yvonne knows all too well, how different her life and her children's lives could have been. **In 2020 we sent out over 2100 sewing machines.** Thank you for helping us throw so many lifelines to people like Yvonne.

Turning Katwaamba's nightmares into dreams

Katwaamba's life hung in the balance. Her parents were poor and she knew she had no hope of attending school. With no schooling and no skills, employment was an unattainable dream. Katwaamba knew this, and she also knew the nightmare life many girls in her position were forced into. She had seen the terrible results of child prostitution and was desperate not to join the long list of victims. But what could she do?

Thankfully, Pastor Isaac of Streams of Life Community Church gave her a way out when he opened a school for vulnerable children. He tells us:

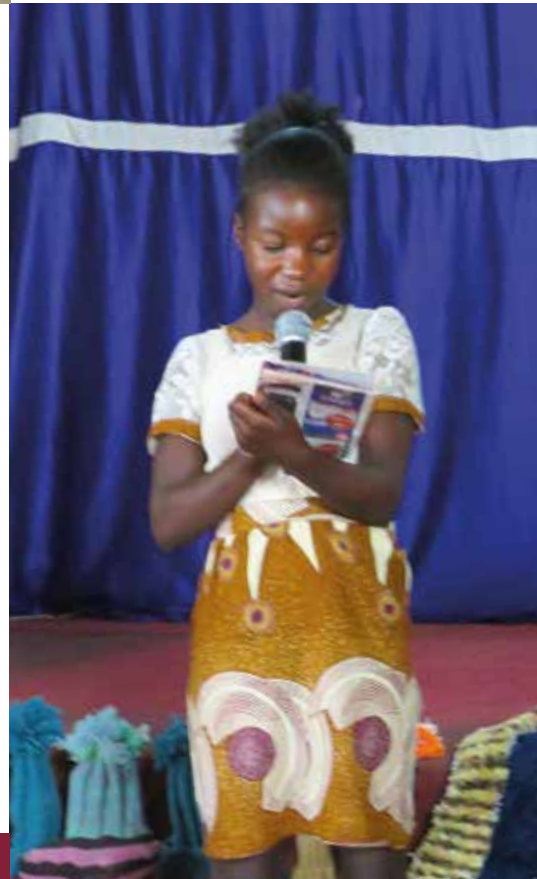
'I saw the problems and they touched me because I'm an orphan and grew up with just my mother. So I thought I must do something because it breaks my heart to see this.'

But he also knew that there was little point offering children an education, when what they really needed was a skill to support themselves. So he started a school that taught Maths and English, but also tailoring, knitting, computing and carpentry. This enabled the unpaid teachers to learn a trade that would also help to support them.

Katwaamba is one of 90 children at the school and in the photo she reads out her letter to TWAM:

'I would like to pass on my appreciation and greetings for all the things you have brought us. Thank you very much for the sewing machines and materials. Please do not stop, but continue to support and empower our community and all of us vulnerable orphans and young. Thank you for helping our parents so they can help our future.'

Katwaamba no longer lives in fear of what her future may hold. Now she knows it will be her dream of tailoring and not her worst nightmare. **Another wonderful story of over 2000 from people given a TWAM sewing machine in 2020.**



'I saw how idle I was and that I could do more with my life.'

Whereas much of the western world revolves around plastic, wood remains the staple product of Africa. From simple hand tools to entire structures, wood, for many, is the first choice of materials. This is certainly true in the rural areas of eastern Uganda hence carpentry will always be the staple employment within Africa as wood is plentiful and cheap.

This is why one of TWAMs partners, URICT, has opened a carpentry workshop to teach the local people and the students from their school and orphanage these vital skills. The workshop is filled with TWAM tools and impressive benches and shelving made by the students using the tools.

Brian is one of the early beneficiaries of the workshop. He tells us:

'I had nothing, so I accepted the invitation to join the course. I was all alone until my friend brought me to the course and when I saw what he could do, I realised just how idle I had been.'

Brian is sharing with us one of the biggest problems of living in an area that suffers from long term unemployment and no obvious way out. You can almost hear the despair and hopelessness as he shares that he had 'nothing' and that he was 'alone' and that because he had never known anything else he did not even realise how 'idle' he was. It is the classic case that you do not miss what you have never had.

It is the problem of believing life can never get better; you can never change; and that you will never be able to achieve anything. But then the dramatic epiphany at the sight of tools and a workshop and the invitation to come and learn. For many like Brian, it is like a light suddenly being shone into the darkness; and it changes everything.



It is the reality, that while they may be just tools to us, to many like Brian they are an opportunity that offers to change everything. Hence Brian's language begins to change, as the excitement builds. He tells us:

'Then I saw how idle I was and that I could do more with my life. I have not been to a carpentry institute to learn but I would like to go after this course. Then I want to set up a project like this in my village.'

What a change! You can sense the energy and enthusiasm starting to bubble over, as Brian suddenly sees attending a carpentry institute is possible; as he sees setting up his own workshop possible; as he starts to dream ambitious dreams. Finally, he tells us:

'I completed both primary and secondary schooling, but there is no work because I have this knowledge; that work comes through a practical skill. This is a good skill and I do not need a lot of capital, but I have a brain instead.'



Every TWAM carpentry kit gives someone like Brian the opportunity to see that idleness and doing nothing does not have to be your life, but that you can dream big dreams because they can come true.

Hundreds of men and women of all ages are dreaming big dreams because, with your help, we sent out 352 carpentry kits in 2020.

'I have known hunger - but I will not know hunger again.'



Uganda is an incredibly fertile country growing plentiful supplies of tea, coffee and a huge variety of vegetables. URICT, one of TWAMs long term partners, is making the most of the fertility to grow a vast array of produce for sale to support their orphanage, school and training centre. The local community benefits from quality cheap food and employment.

There are few jobs in the area and most agricultural work is poorly paid and unreliable. But with the support of TWAM and our agricultural tools, URICT is changing this. They have offered permanent employment to many from the community and one of the first to benefit is Fred. He tells us:

'I have been to agricultural college and have many skills to share, but normally this is not welcome and farmers just want labourers. URICT has offered me an opportunity to use my skills and make a difference.'

Tragically, Fred tells us that many farmers do not welcome his training and skills because they have no interest in improving their yields and productivity. They instead prefer inefficient methods supported by cheap labour. But URICT was different and this is evident by the acres of cultivated land with well tended vegetables planted with near military precision. They are growing aubergines (egg plants), tomatoes, cabbages, carrots and onions. What makes it all the more remarkable is that just a few months ago they lost their entire crop to unseasonal flooding and had to start again.

But now, Fred is valued and his skills utilised. He is very pleased to work for URICT and for the huge benefit it brings to his family. He continues:

'I have peace in my heart because I know my family will never go hungry. I am allowed to take home a little of what I grow, so we eat well. I have known hunger; we have all known hunger; so it is so good to know as long as I am here, I will not know hunger again.'

Fred has also helped plant 10,000 Eucalyptus trees, which, as anyone who has made the mistake of planting one in their small garden knows (yes, I have to admit to that) grow very quickly and very big! In just a few years they will be available for firewood and charcoal. This sustainable source of charcoal will be very important, as Uganda, along with much of Africa, is suffering from significant deforestation as trees are cut down for cooking.

He has also helped plant pine trees, which grow much slower, but as Uganda gets electrified will be a very good earner of income for telegraph poles. This is visionary long-term planning at its very best.

Fred and URICT are an example of a group supported by TWAM that has the vision, skills and ability to create huge projects that feed thousands of people and provide quality employment for dozens. Groups who can recognise and benefit from skills like Fred's. So he feels valued, and most importantly for him, provides precious food security for his family.

But all of this is only possible because of TWAM tools.

We sent 205 agricultural and 105 groundworkers kits to Africa in 2020. What an amazing difference they make!



'I want them to learn self reliance through a skill.'



In much of Africa, wood is cheap and relatively plentiful and everybody needs furniture. So when Ronald wanted to start a project to help young men, it was the obvious choice.

Ronald lives in Kalulushi on the outskirts of Kitwe, the third largest city in Zambia. Once, this area was prosperous, as it sits in the middle of the mineral rich copperbelt. But that is becoming a distant memory as the mines close and the area collapses into high unemployment and poverty.

With no work, children are forced to drop out of school. As a result they have virtually no hope of ever having meaningful employment. This is devastating and many young people escape through alcohol dependency or crime. Ronald decided the only way to make a difference was to offer young people an alternative. Thus, he started the Rules Youth Project. Ronald tells us:

'I want to help my fellow youth to have something to do in the community. I want them to learn self reliance through a skill.'

He is currently training 9 young people who spend every day at the Centre - making, repairing and selling furniture. They make benches, tables, chairs and beds and unusually, they also make lots of curtain rails. But he knows many more need his help so Ronald has big plans: He tells us:

'I am looking for a more permanent facility and have asked my local councillor for help. I want to develop the training and also offer a tailoring facility, which really needs to be under cover.'

Ronald started his project with a TWAM Carpentry Workshop kit and 2 Carpentry Trade Kits (designed to provide one carpenter with all the tools they need.) The furniture produced with those kits not only train the students but also fund the project when sold. The tools have so far trained over 40 young people and with Ronald's plans will train many more.

In 2020 TWAM sent out 362 Carpentry Kits and 161 Carpentry Workshop Kits. Imagine how many lives they have transformed. Thank you for helping Ronald realise his passion.

'I have turned my life around for my children.'

Judith lives in a remote village in Zambia. There are no roads and the only access is by foot. Life is hard, with agricultural day labouring the only work. But this is very hard, irregular work that pays so little she can only survive on a meagre diet of vegetables and should she ever get sick and be unable to work, then starvation is a very real fear.

Judith had no expectation that her life could improve, but desperately hoped it would not get any worse. Tragically it did when her husband walked out leaving her with three young children to look after. She was left homeless, with no means to support her young family. Over the years her life went from bad to worse, culminating in her eldest daughter becoming pregnant by an older man who promised, but then failed to help the family.

Then Judith met the Revd Edward in 2015 and he offered her a place on a tailoring course. It changed her life. She loved tailoring and when she was given her own sewing machine, could not believe how blessed she was. Judith quickly started a small business repairing and making clothes.

Occasionally she is paid with money, but more often than not with vegetables, chickens and even building materials. The money she received paid for her children to go to school and the various building materials have helped Judith to build her own house. It has so far taken 8 years and it is still far from being completed. But it is her home and most importantly - no one can evict her.

Judith involves all her children in the business and they too are falling in love with tailoring. She tells us:

'I have done this for my children. My life has been so hard, but I have managed to turn it around through determination and the help of my sewing machine. I had to do this for my children.'

Judith is a remarkable woman, who decided she would not be beaten by her problems, but would overcome everything through love for her children, determination to make a home for them and through the precious life-changing opportunity of tailoring and her TWAM sewing machine. A truly wonderful story of a life transformed.



‘I thought nobody would ever want to help me - but I was wrong.’

Prince is a clever young man, but to most people that does not matter. Prince does not lack drive or determination, but few are impressed. Prince is ambitious, but few really care. None of these things matter when it comes to Prince, because this young man is deaf. Being deaf need not, and should not, be a hurdle, but in Zambia and many countries within the developing world it does matter.

Few countries have the resources to support disabled people, so schools do not have access to sign language and deaf children are dismissed as unteachable, or, simply refused schooling. Hence, nobody sees the many great qualities Prince has, just his inability to hear and easily communicate.

But Pastor Paul wanted to change that, so he started the Fly Deaf Inclusive Centre on the outskirts of Lusaka, Zambia. He tells us:



‘I want to empower the deaf. They have to leave school and have nowhere to go and cannot find their own way. There is so little help in rural communities, and I want to help them support themselves.’

So Pastor Paul opened his Centre, and invited Prince and many other deaf young people to join. He also invited hearing vulnerable people to avoid the danger of discrimination. To help, he learned sign language and also learned tailoring, carpentry and computing so he could lead the training. The project has very little money and cannot afford to pay a trainer. What a truly remarkable man!

Pastor Paul received 7 sewing machines, 4 carpentry kits, 1 knitting machine, 1 computer, a plumber’s kit and a bicycle from TWAM. He uses the bicycle to ride around the community to find the people who most need the project. Currently 40 people, many deaf, are receiving training and support.



Prince was one of the first people Pastor Paul found. He lives nearby and has never once had access to any support or help. Projects that may offer to support the deaf are many miles away in the city and completely inaccessible by Prince. Without hearing, or clear speech, he could never navigate the chaotic and bewildering public transport system.

He is learning carpentry and computing, both with TWAM tools. These are good things for deaf people to learn as they are very visual and do not need hearing to learn or operate. Prince’s dream is to work in computing when he finishes his course. He says:

‘It is hard to get a job when you are deaf. You are never the first choice, but computing is much easier than other jobs. I want to try and find a job in the city. Once I have a skill, I think this will be possible.’

In all honesty, it will always be hard for Prince, but now, at least, he stands a chance. He has found in Pastor Paul someone who believes in him and who is willing to invest time in him. With his support he stands a chance. But only because TWAM first believed in him and the project Pastor Paul wanted to set up.

TWAM sent 562 computers to Africa in 2020, and they have impacted thousands of lives. They have been used to run projects as well as train thousands of people in life changing IT skills.

‘The pandemic meant nobody came to market - but then I had an idea!’



Lizzy learned tailoring in 2016 when she joined the Kalulushi Women’s Group. This is an amazingly enthusiastic group of women who started meeting in an open air enclosure and slowly developed into a well-organised and trained cooperative. Thankfully they acquired a roof just before the rainy season! When she graduated, Lizzy was thrilled to be given a TWAM sewing machine.

Lizzy quickly became the main earner for her small family. Her husband is a teacher, but that pays very little and they could barely survive on his meagre salary. Ironically he does not earn enough to pay his own children’s school fees. By working hard she soon took on the responsibility of feeding her children and paying their school fees.

Lizzy was doing very well and her business was thriving, but then it all changed. The Covid 19 pandemic hit Zambia and with lockdowns, fear and restrictions, like so many businesses across the world, her income dried up virtually overnight. She tells us:

‘I was going to the market everyday to sell the clothes I had made but there were few people about and I sold very little. I did not know what to do.’

We can all understand her dilemma as we have witnessed deserted high streets and the collapse of many high street brands, most of which, like Lizzy, sold clothes. Lizzy is far from unique and the story she is about to tell is common to many tailors supported by TWAM.

‘When I heard that the Zambian Government had made it compulsory for all citizens to wear a face mask in public, I hit on the idea of making face masks! I spent a day working out how to make them and made 75. I then took them to the main market in Kitwe (the nearest large town) and sold all 75! This is the most money I had made in months. Since then, I have continued to make masks and have done very well.’

Lizzy shows us that one determined tailor in partnership with a TWAM sewing machine can overcome even the worst economic effects of a pandemic. With her husband unable to work because schools are closed it has literally saved the lives of her young family and potentially the lives of many more who have gained protection with her face coverings.

It is also an important lesson about resilience and the ability to survive almost any disaster. Unlike so many large companies whose resilience has failed them during the pandemic, an

individual tailor or tradesperson can generally survive by using their skills and tools to quickly adapt. It shows again the importance of learning a trade and being given the tools required to work. It genuinely can mean the difference between life and death.

Lizzy has shared with us another great story from one of the thousands of sewing machines we send out every year.

The deserted clothing market



I want to help create wonderful stories this year.



In this edition we have looked back at 2020 and the amazing life-changing stories that have resulted. Will you help create hundreds more life-changing stories in 2021? **Please support us if you can.**

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- £15 £25 £50 £100
 £150 £250 Other £ _____

Or you could donate online at twam.uk/donate;
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