


Tools for Solidarity

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025



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Strategic Plan 2025

A Review of the Strategic Plan was undertaken during three days of discussions and planning meetings in May-June 2018, to produce a three year plan. There was a further full Review of the Strategic Plan in 2021 over two days in August-September 2021.

This document presents the updating of the Strategic Plan for 2025 to take account of the changing environment in which Tools for Solidarity operates.

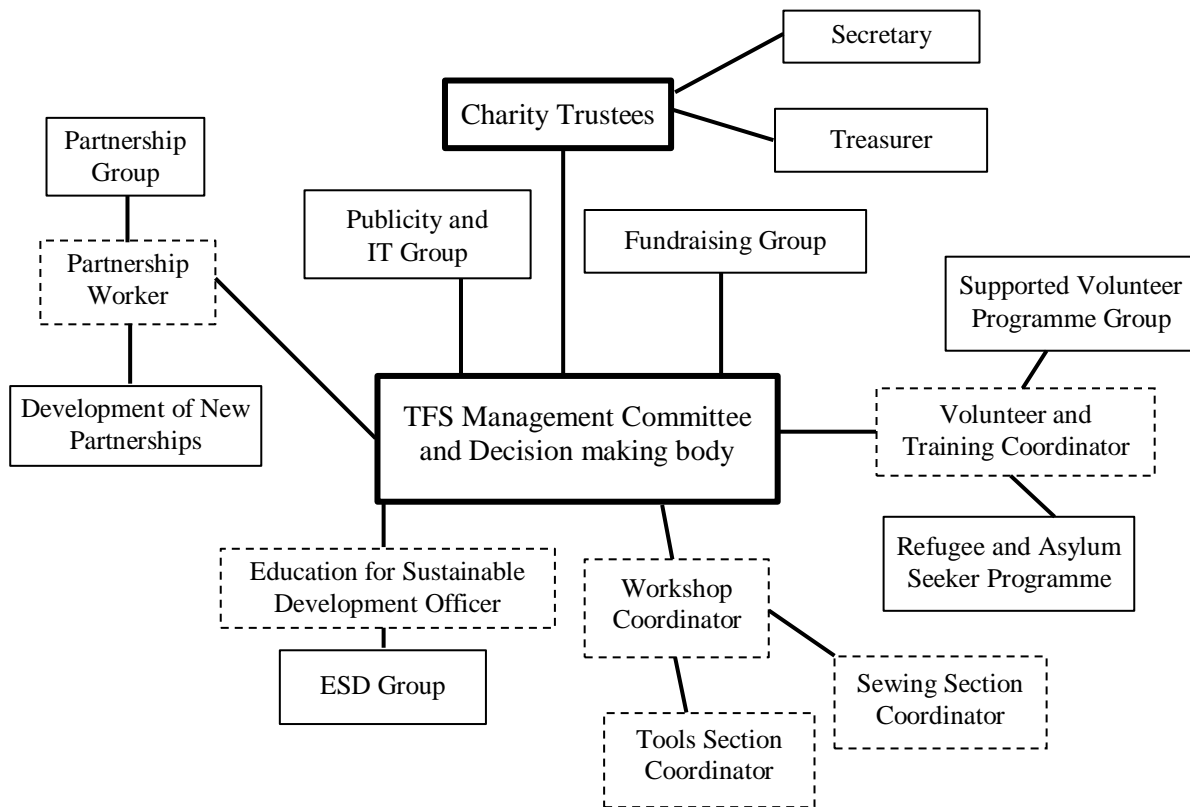
Mission Statement

Tools For Solidarity supports self-reliance by providing high quality refurbished tools to working people overseas, promoting international solidarity, and challenging global inequalities through critical examination of development issues, environmental sustainability and ethical working practices.

The Aims of Tools For Solidarity

- Promote self-reliance by furnishing overseas projects with high quality recycled hand tools and sewing machines.
- Involve individuals, organisations and the public in Development Education and environmental issues.
- Utilise working methods that develop and support a sense of international solidarity and promote volunteering and ethical working practices.
- Tools For Solidarity will have appropriate premises, personnel and funding to meet the agreed outputs and objectives of the organisation

Organogram of Tools for Solidarity



Office bearers and staff

1. The Charity Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the oversight of the charity, and in particular dealing with safeguarding policy, financial policy and issues arising.
2. The Chairperson chairs meetings and the AGM.
3. The Secretary deals with all inquiries and passes on information to the various sub-groups. These sub-groups deal with all issues relating to funding, partnership, publicity, and our ESD programme (Education for Sustainable Development).
4. The Treasurer keeps the accounts and presents them to Companies House and NI Charity Commissioners.

Tools For Solidarity has five part-time paid staff, who sit in the different sub-groups. These groups plan the work of the organisation and report to the TFS Management Committee which meets every 4-6 weeks. Major decisions are taken by the Management Committee. Minutes are kept of all Management and sub-group meetings.

The five part-time paid staff are:-

- Workshop Coordinator – 8 hours/wk
- Volunteer and Training Coordinator – 12 hours/wk
- Education Officer – 30 hours/wk
- Partnership Worker – 10 hours/wk
- Supported Volunteer Programme Coordinator – 8 hours/wk

Challenges in 2025:

- **Volunteer numbers:**
With the ending of UK participation in the European Solidarity Corps, we have had to find alternative sources of international volunteers. This has been quite successful in 2023 and 2024, with young people coming from France, Germany and Spain, but there is still a need to diversify the volunteer sending organisations we work with. We have attracted some new local volunteers in recent months but still need to strengthen our core volunteer pool.
- **Funding:**
Overall, finances of Tools for Solidarity have been strong during the past two years. Support from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust for our Supported Volunteer Programme was made recurrent in 2023-24, securing the future of this significant aspect of our work. However, there are still challenges in the form of higher energy costs, and particularly higher shipping costs. Grant applications and fund-raising events will continue to be important.
- **Partnerships:**
With the Mwanza and Njombe projects well established in Tanzania and performing satisfactorily, we began work in 2023 to open a new Artisan Training Centre in Iringa, in the west of Tanzania. Sufficient funds were raised from a number of sources to make this a reality, but some further work is needed there. We are also investigating the possibility of opening a storage and refurbishment facility in the capital, Dodoma, to ensure a steady supply of tools and sewing machines to the various projects. This will require a further substantial injection of funds, and we anticipate a new round of grant applications will be needed early in 2025.

For a number of years, we have had a partnership with our Scottish partner Global Concerns Trust (GCT) to provide tools for disabled people in Malawi. However, their funding from the Scottish Government has not been renewed, and the future of these projects has become uncertain. Our contribution to the Malawi projects has been quite small-scale, but we may need to explore other avenues to continue working with GCT.

Strengths

- **High profile:**
TFS has a high standing in the local community, and is well respected in the voluntary and community sector. Our profile has been enhanced by continual development of our social media and website presence over several years.
- **Partnerships:**
The partnership with English NGO WorkAid has bedded in and is performing well. WorkAid are part-funding our Partnership Coordinator to manage the Mwanza workshop, which is performing much valuable work.

Our relationship with the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) in Tanzania continues to be very productive. Relationships in the Njombe project and the new Iringa centre are good.

- **Stable financial position:**
Notwithstanding the possible challenges to funding, the current financial position of TFS is stable. We have obtained full funding for the renovation of the new Antrim Road storage building, and work there is progressing well. Funding from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) for our Supported Volunteer programme has been made recurrent. This has allowed us to employ a paid Supported Volunteer Coordinator and to expand that programme sustainably. Our ESD programme for 2023-25 is funded by Irish Aid (RoI Department of Foreign Affairs), and our Refugee and Asylum Seeker Programme (RASP) is fully funded by the Souter Trust. A new ESD application to Irish Aid will be submitted in December 2024 to cover 2025-27. We retain an adequate Unrestricted Reserve to allow for unforeseen contingencies.
- **ESD programme:**
Despite the staffing problems at the start of the 2023-24 academic year, the ESD programme has continued to progress. Work with adult and community groups has been particularly strong in the area of Sustainable Fashion, with several high profile events.

Actions for 2025

- **Recruitment of volunteers:**
We will build on the continuing relationship with the French Service Civile which has provided several recent volunteers, and continue to actively pursue other approaches to finding international volunteers. We have made some use of interns and placements from local businesses and FE/HE courses; we will look for further opportunities like these.
- **Partnerships:**
There will be further shipments in 2025 to the three current Artisan Centres in Tanzania, starting with one in the Spring. A Field Trip is planned for January 2025, during which it is hoped to make concrete progress on a new Storage and Refurbishment centre in Dodoma. This is likely to involve a new partnership with the Catholic Diocese of Dodoma, and if successful will entail further substantial shipments of materials and equipment.
- **Governance:**
The Management Committee will continue to enhance our suite of policies and ensure that they are kept up to date. Our Treasurer has given notice that he intends to step down by the end of 2025, after preparing the 2024-25 accounts, giving us time to find a replacement who can work alongside him for several months before that.
- **Funding:**
TFS will continue to look for new sources of income, aiming for a wide spread of funders to ensure resilience. As well as ensuring that the current projects all remain viable, the proposed Dodoma Centre will require substantial extra funds during the initial implementation stage.
- **ESD:**
More youth, adult and community work is planned for 2025, with a particular emphasis on Textiles and Sustainable Fashion. A full external and independent Evaluation of the ESD programme is to take place in Spring 2025, funded by the Irish Aid grant for 2023-25.

Having formally signed up to the principles of the IDEA Code of Practice for Development Education in 2022, there will be further work required to ensure that we are fully implementing the Code, with the next self-assessment due in February 2025.