



FROM MIKE VALLEZ™

Newsletter No. 8

October 15, 2025

REPORT OF THE TEN COUNTRY AFRICAN LECTURE TOUR

Message from Eng. Michael Vallez

Founder and Executive Director, GFP International
Founder and CEO, African Skills and Development Ltd

On July 28, I finished my tour of eleven countries and visits to some of you who have become engaged in the African Welding School Program. It was a very successful trip, and I appreciate all the hospitality shown to me during my travels. I wish I had more time in your country to visit everyone. It should be easier now that I have relocated to Nairobi, Kenya.

Every day, week, month, we get closer to the formal launch of the program. We continue to build our organizations and detailed plans for such things as the Train the Trainers Program, student scholarships, and other initiatives. Special groups are being formed, drawing together some of the top talent in Africa and beyond. We continue to prepare more newsletters and market awareness campaigns.

We are expanding the Blue-Ribbon Committee with top African representatives of industry, academia and civil society. If you would like to nominate anyone for this committee, please let us know. Our current committee page currently shows 19 members, but we are always welcoming more members who are willing to “put their shoulder to the wheel”.

<https://www.gfp-intl.org/blue-ribbon-committee-members/>

Over thirty schools have now submitted letters of interest, and most have submitted grant applications for modern welding centers of excellence. Brian Masicha, our Assistant Program Director located in Kenya, is working hard with some remaining schools who are still working on their grant applications and other documentation. He can be reached by email at bmasicha@gfp-intl.org.

To address the critical need for manufacturing skills and technologies in Africa, we are working on developing a concept for a **Center for Manufacturing Skills and Technologies** for one of the universities we are working with. This could become a model for other institutions.

We do have one request..... patience. It has taken us three years to get to this point in our development, team building and organization. Our big challenge will now be fundraising. We believe that the groundwork we have been doing with our newsletter to 4,000 key people has raised awareness about the work we are all doing together. As a sign of my personal confidence and commitment, I have relocated to Nairobi Kenya to provide leadership to the planned \$100 Million African Welding School and Training Program.

Below finds an updated history of our work and the recent lecture tour captured in photos.

Best regards,

Eng. Michael Vallez

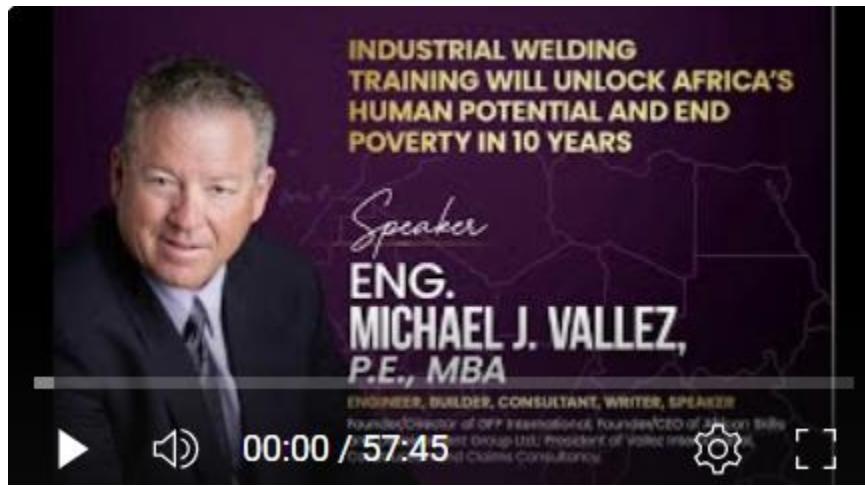
If you have not read our strategic execution plan or watched our full lecture yet, here are the links:

Execution Plan (copy and paste in your URL bar)

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.gfp-intl.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025-02-20-Execution-Plan-for-African-Welding-School-and-Training-Program-with-attachments.pdf

Full Lecture

https://youtu.be/XhYbkGVE5so?si=Iff_KFn5W7GcHZTo



The Ten Country Lecture Tour - 2025

NIGERIA - 2025



In Port Harcourt Nigeria with our new friend, Mazi Sam Azoka Onyechi, President of the Oil and Gas Trainers Association of Nigeria (OGTAN); Member of the Governing Counsel of the Nigerian Local Content Development & Monitoring Board; and CEO of Inspection and Testing Nigeria Ltd. whose clients include but are not limited to all the domestic and international energy, mining, and manufacturing companies in Nigeria.



Don Bosco training center in Abuja, Nigeria



National Center for Technology Management



**Institute for Industrial Training (IIT) Center,
Lagos**



The Proposed Kaduna Welding School Team



The Petroleum Training Institute, Warri, Nigeria



Homik Oil and Gas Facility Engineering School



ICON Lifting & Rigging Inspections and Training Center



Federal Ministry of Youth Development, Abuja Nigeria.



Harmattan City Institute of Welding and Fabrication



Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology Ikere-Ekiti



With David Okechukwu, director of the Institute of Industrial Technology (IIT) in Lagos Nigeria and his brothers in the Opus Dei Organization.



With Father James at the John Bosco Institute of Technology in Ondo, Nigeria.



With Professor Leo Adegun, Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Ado-Ekiti and his lovely wife, Maria. Honored to be a house guest with them and their wonderful family.



With Father Samuel Agudos, Rector at the West Africa Don Bosco Center in Lagos, Nigeria.



With Professor Michael Ugota Awoke, Vice Chancellor of Ebonyi State University in Enugu State, Nigeria, visiting construction site of a university expansion project.

GHANA - 2025



Tour of the Accra Ghana Technical Training Center.



With Engr. Dr. Eric Kofi Adzro, Director General of Ghana's TVET Services with over 100 vocational schools in Ghana.

CAMEROON - 2025



In Douala Cameroon. From L to R: With Erick Wanffeu of Petrocertif Consulting; Fr. Fabien BETENE EBANDA, Engineering Department Head, Ecole Normale Supérieure d'Enseignement Technique (ENSET); Rodriguz Ndoudjeu of Petrocertif Consulting.



In the welding training workshop at the Training Center for Professional Excellence of Douala (Cameroon) with L to R: Rodriguz Ndoudjeu; (yours truly); Amadou Bobbi, General Director; and Dr. Benoit Ndiwe, Department Head.



Meeting with vocational school leaders in Cameroon on July 25, 2025

KENYA - 2025



In discussions between GFP International and a leadership team of the 70,000 student Kenyatta University in Nairobi Kenya about creating a Center for Manufacturing Skills and Technologies. A modern welding training center would be a cornerstone of this new center that will serve to equip students with the skills needed by employers in Africa's transformation. It would also engage the mechanical, electrical and other departments plus industry to create the innovative Center for Manufacturing Skills and Technologies.

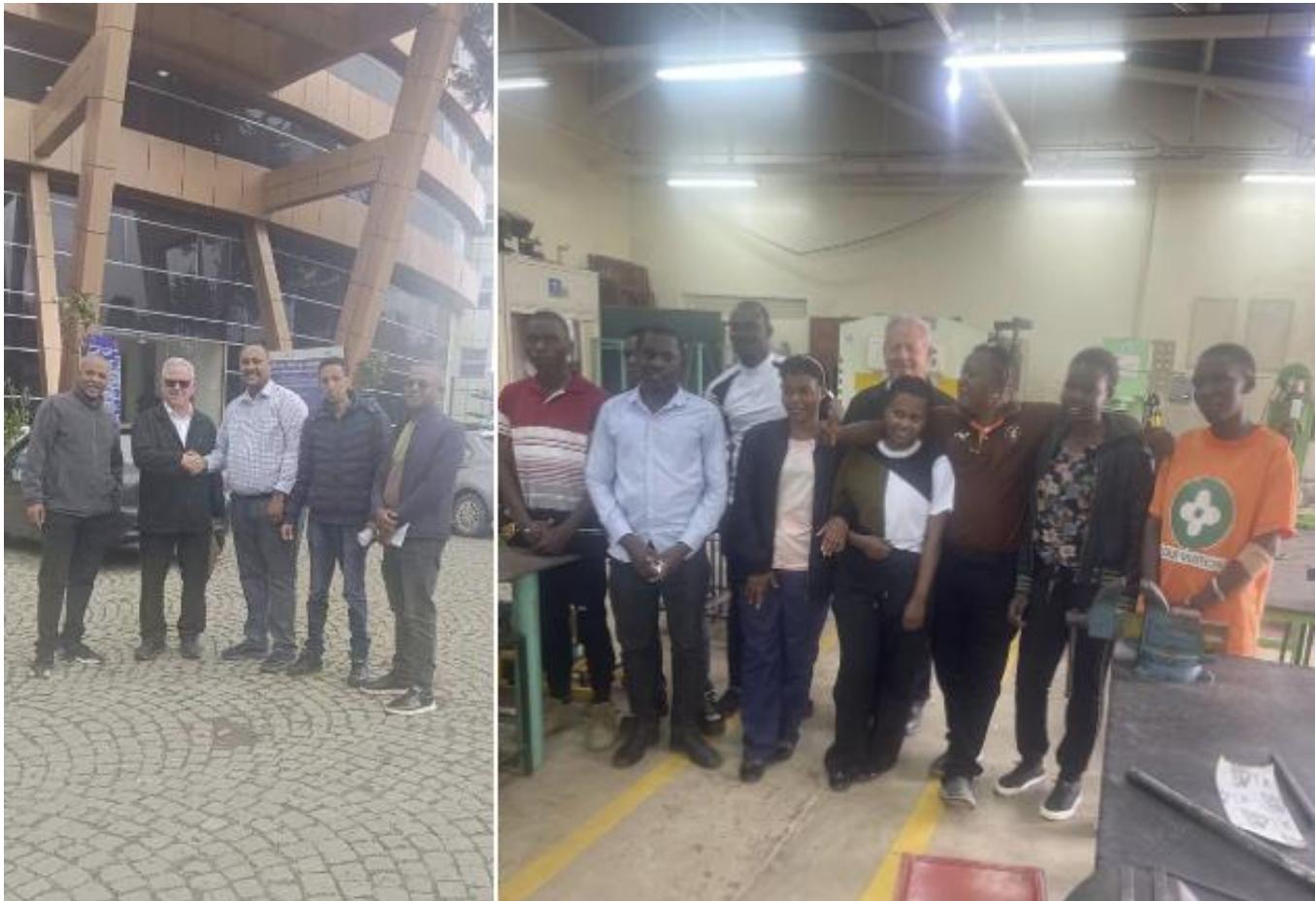


We are extremely pleased to share that the Don Bosco Africa leader, Father Maximus Okoro (Second from left) has offered to assist GFP International with community engagement and feasibility services for all of our welding school projects, whether they are Don Bosco projects or others. The Don Bosco organization has over 115 vocational schools in 35 African countries, and hundreds more across the globe. There are more than 3,600 Don Bosco schools and over 800 vocational training centers worldwide. They are operated by the Salesian Priests, Brothers and lay teachers and staff. Community engagement will be a key element in achieving our goal of 30 welding centers of excellence across Africa, supporting the rapid industrialization, job creation, and poverty reduction that is starting to take shape.



At the Morendat Institute of Oil and Gas with Mikail Tomno, CWI Inspector and Welding Instructor

ETHIOPIA 2025



Meet the top-notch welding, fabrication and manufacturing training administrators and faculty at Ethiopia's highly acclaimed Center of Excellence for Engineering and Welding Training and Technology Center in Addis Ababa. Dr. Selamu Yisihak Handiso, CEO; Tesfaye Gurmesa, Lead Executive for Technology Design, Development and Manufacturing; Dr. Habtamu Mulugeta, Deputy Director General for Research and Community Service; Fantahun Yemana, Lead Executive for International Welding Certification; Besufekad Fayisa, Technology Design and Fabrication Quality control and Assurance Senior Expert.

UGANDA 2025



Meet Engineer, Fabricator, Manufacturer, Educator, and Trainer, Mr. Sseziwba Ronald of the SEB Group of Companies in Uganda. He has emerged as a visionary thought leader and influential change agent in the vocational training sector in Uganda and beyond. An Electrical Engineer by Education, he has built an innovative and successful business in welding and steel related fields, and is committed to helping Uganda and Ugandans succeed in this changing world that demands more skilled labor.

TANZANIA / ZANZIBAR 2025



We at GFP International are happy to be working to support the Karume Institute of Technology to create a welding school of excellence and underwater welding school for Africa. Zanzibar is home to numerous SCUBA diving shops and sites and is a perfect location to create a globally recognized destination for training underwater workers / welders to fit the coming offshore energy boom in Africa.



The Karume Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) was originally funded by the USAID in the 1960's.



KIST is situated on a large land plot close to the center of Zanzibar City.



Follow up meeting with Father Felix Wagi, newly assigned Principal of Don Bosco Oyster Bay vocational school in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

MALAWI – 2025



Lilongwe Technical College

Left to right: Mr Spencer Mkonya, Head of Electrical Section; Principal Suzgika Mvalo and Deputy Principal Ngugi Chilalika of the Lilongwe Technical College in Malawi, Africa. This institution and its students would most certainly benefit from the construction of a new modern welding school.



Inside the Malawi Technical College welding department.



Inside the Malawi Technical College welding department.



Meet Mr. Kasembu, owner of the roadside welding business, KASEMBI WELDING. He obtained some limited welding training, and his 6 guys, with no formal training, earn about \$100 per month doing piecework for customers of the shop. This \$100 per month is on the low end of the \$100 to \$300 per month welder earnings in Malawi. I've visited dozens of roadside welding shops across Africa like this one and the conditions at KASEMBI WELDING are typical. No eye, skin protection or other safety gear; low pay; little to no job security; working in the open air; substandard equipment.

We can change this! A certified and skilled industrial welder in Africa can make as much as a medical doctor. He or she can help build a real economy.



Dinner meeting with the Honorable Timothy Mtambo, human rights advocate and member of the Malawi Parliament, and his lovely wife, Sally Mtambo, member of GFP International's Blue-Ribbon Committee and legal counsel for Malawi Electric. Two marvelous individuals and now friends.



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ZIMBABWE – 2025

At the Harare Institute of Technology, Harare, Zimbabwe



The Harare Institute of Technology (HIT) is a 3,000 student Zimbabwean university focused on science, engineering, and technology (SET) programs. It was established in 1988 as a National Vocational Training Centre and gained degree-awarding status in 2005. HIT aims to be a leader in technology-based education and research, with a focus on innovation and “technopreneurship”.



L to R: Sibusiso Mpapane, Co-Chairman, GFP International; Willard Gwarimbo, Vice Chancellor; Michael Vallez, Founder, GFP; Leo Kusema, Division of Quality Assurance.



We found the term “technopreneurship” for the first time across Africa.

Dinson Iron and Steel Plant – Phase 1



Dinson Iron and Steel in Zimbabwe is setting a new global standard in the steel making industry. A town with a population of 45,000 will soon appear, and a welding training center of excellence.

Met with Engineer Munashe Chihambakwe and Twanda Mutsvangwa of Dinson Iron and Steel to discuss a welding center of excellence.



MOZAMBIQUE – 2025

Capping off my eleven country, eight-week development and lecture tour, I had a wonderful meeting with the Mozambique Minister of Education on July 24th, Ms. Samaria Tovela, and her team. Like all African countries I've visited, Mozambique leaders are eager and ready to push the agenda for raising industrial skills to world class levels. I feel so blessed to have been called to this work where I can meet such delightful people and dedicated leaders.



After meeting with Mozambique's Minister of Education, we were afforded a visit to the Matola Institute of Technology Welding School that was created with funding from the Republic of South Korea. We applaud the generosity and good intentions of Korea. However, despite the high quality of the equipment and infrastructure the school still does not meet the needs of industrial industries. The curriculum only gives welders 10 hours of skill practice per week, for a total of 110 hours of skill practice, while experience tells us that it takes 400 hours of skill practice to prepare students to pass international skill testing standards for welder certification. This 400 hours costs money to purchase the consumable materials to gain 400 hours of skill practice. This is a common problem we have found in all African welding schools, meaning that the students at this school are not ready to gain employment on the many industrial welding projects that need these skilled welders. The answer is to provide scholarships to students to cover the added material costs, and modify the curriculum accordingly.



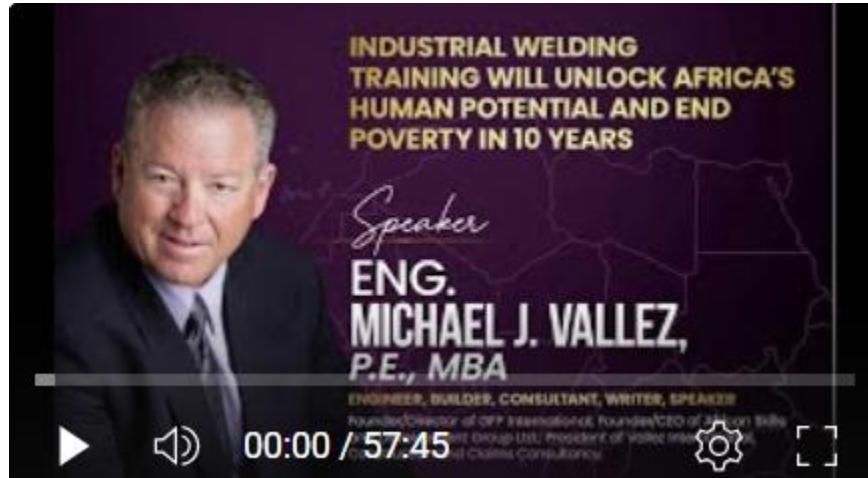
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Full Lecture

https://youtu.be/XhYbkGVE5so?si=IfF_KFn5W7GcHZTo



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