



**African Skills
and Development Group Ltd**

FROM MIKE VALLEZ™

Newsletter No. 7

October 8, 2025

REPORT OF THE TEN COUNTRY AFRICAN LECTURE TOUR Money Alone Cannot Solve This Welder / Manufacturing Skill Problem Technology Transfer is Key

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. As you may have noted in our latest newsletter, we attended the 2025 FABTECH Convention in Chicago, Illinois with 50,000 attendees:

<https://www.fabtechexpo.com/>

The theme of this year's convention was:

THE FUTURE OF MANUFACTURING IS HERE TODAY

We will be initiating an effort to gather more African leaders from the education and training space to attend the 2026 FABTECH Convention.

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, barring any unexpected interruptions, I will be relocating to Africa in September.

Below find an updated history of our work 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



History in Photos

Raising African Skills to World Class Standards

Trade School Technology Transfer

Welding School Centers of Excellence

Centers for Manufacturing Skills and Technologies

African Skills and Development Group Ltd. was established in 2024 as a sister organization to GFP International to serve as a project management implementation team for welding school modernization projects across Africa and provide a conduit to good jobs for graduates of industrial welding schools who have been taught the skills for an industrial work force. Current practices in welding schools outside of South Africa only teach ornamental welding skills, which do not prepare students to meet the needs of the coming industrialization boom in Africa.

GFP International is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support the upgrading of trade skill education in Africa as described on its website found at this link:

<https://www.gfp-intl.org/>

This page provides a brief history of GFP International and African Skills and Development Group Ltd.

GFP International has a history that dates to 2005 when its founder visited Matamba Tanzania, a small village located in the southern highlands of Tanzania in the Njombe District.

2005



In 2005, it was the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic when our founder first visited Africa. Feeling grateful after recovering from a life-threatening illness, Mike Vallez reached out to various faiths in Minnesota where he lived and found a group of like-minded people to join hands and work together. Meeting every month, this coalition became known as Global Faith Partners. One thing led to another, and GFP became involved in working with Father Augustine Mbiche, a Catholic Priest in the town of Matamba, Tanzania. During a visit to Tanzania in 2005,

Father Mbiche showed Mike Vallez a piece of land where he hoped to build an elementary school. Saint Monica's Elementary School is now thriving, teaching subjects in English, with students scoring in the top 3% of nationally administered tests.

2019



St. Monica's is now a thriving k-7 elementary school, but the students do not have an equivalent high quality secondary school to attend in the Matamba area. Global Faith Partners was asked to help raise funds for a secondary boarding school, when the decision was made to create a formal non-profit NGO, now called GFP International.



Google Earth Image of St. Monica's Secondary School

2022 - 2023

Beginning with a small idea to install some welding machines in St. Monica's Secondary school, GFP International has expanded its mission to support existing vocational schools across Africa to raise skill standards to world class levels, starting with the welding trade.



After a 2022 meeting with the Honorable January Makamba, Tanzania's Minister of Energy, GFP came to understand the depth of the skill gap problem in Africa and decided to embrace the challenge. The rest is history.



January 2023

GFP leaders and advisors with welding students at the VETA School in Linde, Tanzania



January 2023

GFP International Chairman and Welding Advisory Team with Dr. Noel Mbonde, Tanzanian Director of Technical Education. From left to right: Nick Price, Director of Welding Training at Davis County Technical School, Ogden, Utah; Ryan Eubank, welding consultant and trainer, Cleveland, Ohio; Dr. Noel Mbonde, Director of Technical Training, Dodoma Tanzania; Michael Vallez, Chairman/CEO of GFP International, Salt Lake City, Utah; Subu Mpapane, South African metallurgical engineer, industrial contractor, welding expert.



Special Partnering Meeting with Dr. Noel Mbonde, Director of Technical Education and Hon Adolf Mkenda, Member of Parliament, and Minister of Education, Republic of Tanzania.



January 2023

With Mr. Fihili Challenge, DAB Coordinator, and Ms. Anna Nyoni, Curriculum Developer,
Vocational Training and Education Authority (VETA)



January 2023

With Mr. Anthony Kasore, Director General of VETA
(Oversees 43 existing training centers with 23 under construction)



October 2022

Michael Vallez and Dunford Mpelumbe meeting with Father Boniface Mchami, Principal of Don Bosco Technical School and his instructors in Dodoma, Tanzania.



August 2023

Michael Vallez, GFP Chairman/CEO with Tanzanian Ambassador to the U.S., H.E. Elise Kanza



June 2022

Michael Vallez, Chairman/CEO of GFP International meeting with Father Waldemar Jonatowski, Principal of Don Bosco Vocational School, Dar es Salaam



June 2022

Michael Vallez, Chairman/CEO of GFP International meeting with Mr. Joseph Mwanda, Principal of VETA Vocational School, Dar es Salaam.



January 2023

With Mr. Khalid Songoro, President, Songoro Marine and Shipbuilding, the largest employer of welders in Tanzania.



June 2022

Michael Vallez, Chairman/CEO of GFP International, meeting with Mr. Khalid Songoro, President of Songoro Marine shipbuilders in Dar es Salaam.



January 2023

Ryan Eubank, GFP Advisor, doing some coaching with one of the welding students.



January 2023

GFP International leadership and advisory team with VETA Principal Harry Mmari and his team at VETA school in Lindi Tanzania.



January 2023

Ryan Eubank enjoying the camaraderie with future welders in Lindi, Tanzania.



January 2023

With Mr. Ally Msaki, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Employment and Skills Development, Republic of Tanzania



January 2023

With Father Waldemar Jonatowski, Principal of Don Bosco Trade School, Dar es Salaam



January 2023

Enjoying an evening over dinner with a Tanzanian Welders Association (Sadly, none of these men or their welder friends could get hired on the EACOP Pipeline Project)



October 2022

Michael Vallez accepting the walking stick gift from Matambile Mgema, Massai leader near Ruaha National Park.



October 2022

Michael Vallez, Chairman/CEO of GFP International meeting with Mr. Stanslaus Mtibara, Principal of VETA Dodoma.



The next opportunity, Electrical.

January 2023

With Father Waldemar Jonatowski, Principal of Don Bosco Trade School, Dar es Salaam



September 2023

With Dr. Violet Kajubiri Froelich and Uganda's Education Service Commission she Chairs.



September 2023

Nakawa Technical Training Center, Kampala Uganda



September 2023

With the Leadership of the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Authority in Kenya



September 2023

At the Don Bosco St. Joseph Vocational Training Center, Kamuli, Uganda



September 2023

At the Morendat Institute of Oil and Gas,
Kenya Pipeline Company, Nairobi, Kenya



September 2023

Lugogo Vocational Training Institute,
Kampala, Uganda



October 2023

Mike Vallez, Hilu Bura and Nancy Halden, at
the African Investment Conference London,
England



September 2023

Mkokotoni Vocational Training Center
Zanzibar Vocational Training Authority



September 2023

At the Karume Institute of Science and Technology (KIST)
Republic of Zanzibar



November 2023

With Engineer Zena Said, First Secretary,
United Republic of Zanzibar



November 2023

With Hon Lela Mussa, Zanzibar Minister of
Education and Vocational Training



November 2023

With the Rwanda TVET Board, Kigali,
Rwanda



September 2023

At Don Bosco Gatenga Vocational School,
Kigali, Rwanda



November 2023

At Don Bosco Boys Town Vocational Training
Center, Nairobi, Kenya



November 2023

At the South African Institute of Welding
(SAIW) in Johannesburg, S. Africa



January 2024

With Leaders at the American Welding Society

Back Row. Left to Right

Left to Right, (unknown), Richard Arn, V.P., Welding and Technology; Michael Vallez, Founder, GFP International; Cassandra Scheffer, Director of Accreditation; Efram Abrams, Senior Sales Executive; Nathan Carter,

Front Row, Left to Right

Brenda Boddiger, Program Manager, Qualification & Certification; Stephen Snyder, Regional Director, Welding Technology Services-Asia, Africa, Oceania

May 2024

East African Lecture Tour

Currently, there are no trade schools in East Africa that are sufficiently equipped or staffed to teach modern industrial welding.

In May 2024, an East African lecture tour was conducted by GFP International Founder Michael Vallez and project manager Brian Masicha. AWS executives, Steve Snyder and Ramesh Shankaran joined for the Nairobi Kenya portion of the tour, as well as Dr. Kipikirui, Director General/CEO of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority; Dr. Paul Wanyeki, Deputy Director of the Kenya TVET, and Mr. Ruto Lyoba, Director of the East African Institute of Welding. The group visited and spoke with technical and vocational schools. Speaking to nearly 1,000 students, these young men and women learned about the key role of welding in an industrial economy. It is hoped that they will become advocates for positive changes in the quality of trade skill training, and industrial welding.

Kenya Portion

- Kenya School of TVET
- Kabete National Polytechnic
- Kiambui Institute of Science and Technology
- Technical University of Mombasa
- The Kenya Coast National Polytechnic
- Bandari Marine Technology

Rwanda Tour

- St. Charles de Jesus Trade School
- ADEF TVET School
- Gacuriro Technical School

Zanzibar Tour

- Karume Institute of Science and Technology

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Tour

- Don Bosco Oyster Bay Vocational School
- University of Dar es Salaam, School of Engineering and Technology


**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING AUTHORITY**
Education and Training for a Competitive Workforce

Utalii House, Utalii Street
P. O. BOX 35625 – 00100
NAIROBI

Tel.: +254 20 2392140
Email: info@tveta.go.ke
Website: www.tveta.go.ke

When replying please quote:
REF: TVETA/CONF/1/35 Vol.II

29th April 2024

The Principal
The Kiambu National Polytechnic
P.O Box 414-00900
KIAMBU

PUBLIC LECTURE BY ENG. MICHAEL J VALLEZ, P.E OF GFP INTERNATIONAL

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) is a Public Corporate Agency established under the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act No. 29 of 2013 to regulate and coordinate training in the country through licensing, registration and accreditation of programs, institutions, and trainers.

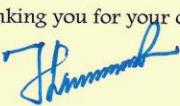
The Authority is in the process of formalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with GFP International with the main objective of establishing an American Welding Society (AWS) certification center in East Africa.

Furtherance to this, GFP has conducted a welding gap analysis on the welding profession in East Africa and wishes to decimate the same through public lectures in selected institutions. The purpose of this letter is to request your institution to accept to host the lecture as per the schedule:

a) Kenya School of TVET	May 16, 2024 at 01:30 PM EAT
b) Kibete National Polytechnic	May 17, 2024 at 10:00 AM EAT
c) Kiambu Institute of Science & Techn	May 17, 2024 at 02:00 PM EAT
d) Technical University of Mombasa	May 20, 2024 at 10:00 AM EAT
e) The Kenya Coast National Polytechnic	May 20, 2024 at 10:00 AM EAT
f) Bandari Maritime Academy	May 21, 2024 at 10:00 AM EAT

The Kenya Coast National Polytechnic and the Technical University of Mombasa lecture will take place in a common venue at a place of their convenience. The lectures are fully sponsored by GFP International and The American Welding Society. There is no fee for attendance at the lecture or welding school design workshop.

Thanking you for your continued cooperation.



Dr. Kipkirui Langat, PhD, FIETK, MBS
DIRECTOR GENERAL/CEO

Encl (1): Concept Note


worldskills Kenya







Mike Vallez lecture about industrial welding skills to vocational trainers at the Kenya School of TVET



Steve Snyder, American Welding Society, lecturing at the Kenya School of TVET



Lecture at the Bandari Maritime Academy, Mombasa, Kenya



Integrated Polytechnic Regional College, Kigali, Rwanda



**With trade school students at the Karume Institute of Science and Technology.
Zanzibar**



Welding and Industrial Students at Don Bosco School, Oyster Bay, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



African Skills and Development Group Ltd

Upon completion of the East African lecture tour, and consultation with legal counsel in the U.S. and East African countries, GFP International learned of the complexities of forming, registering and operating a non-profit organization in multiple jurisdictions with different and cumbersome rules and regulations regarding non-profit entities. Every school visited would require modern equipment and more space to graduate the same number of students, but with internationally recognized skills. Fund managers need on-site observation to provide assurance and auditability to donors. Welding school graduates need access to good paying jobs, both in and outside of Africa. The founder of GFP International decided to form a regular US corporate shell with the intent to form subsidiaries in multiple African countries with local shareholders to help build a sustainable enterprise that would help achieve the goals and objectives of GFP International. The idea of African Skills and Development Ltd. was born, doing business as African Skills and Development Group Ltd.

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. Kasembi, 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.

ZIMBABWE – 2025

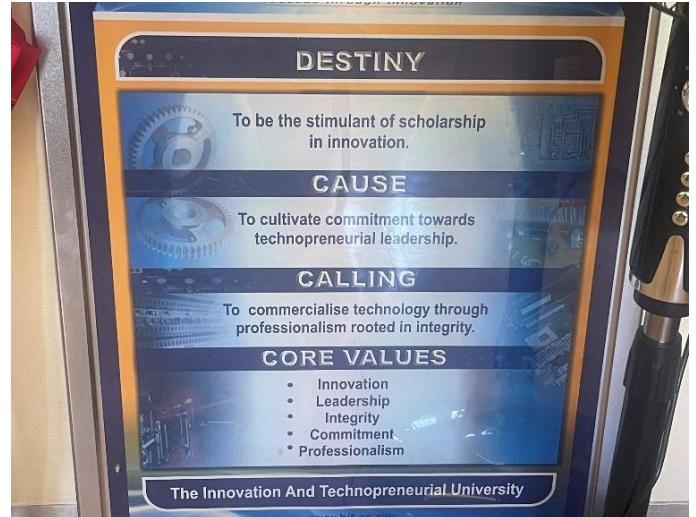
At the Harare Institute of Technology, Harare, Zimbabwe



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.



End