



BACK-TO-OFFICE REPORT ON

COMESA/LLPI SPONSORED ADVANCED

SHOEMAKING TRAINING PROGRAMME AT TCFC

KAMPALA, UGANDA

FROM 27TH NOVEMBER 2013

BY: ZEWDU KEBEDE

PROGRAMMES COORDINATOR

DECEMBER 2013

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

1. INTRODUCTION

- The Training and Common Facility Centre (TCFC) was established by the Uganda Leather and Allied Industries Association (ULAIA) in 1977 with the aim of offering training, provide skills, improved physical and technical facilities and extension services to entrepreneurs, producers and manufacturers of footwear and leather goods, and also serve as an outlet for their products.
- Technical support was provided by UNIDO, and TCFC became operational on 15th February 1997. In 2001, it was taken over by Footwear and Leather Goods Manufacturers who registered it as an NGO to foster development of the leather sector by training more youth and women.
- The Centre is headed by a Board of Directors instituted of a 4-Person Executive Committee, a Finance and Administration, a Stores and Production, and an Education and Training Committees and a 5-Person Management and Staff Team headed by an Executive Manager.

2. OBJECTIVES OF CURRENT MISSION

TCFC is the Country Unit for COMESA/LLPI in Uganda. The objective of this Mission is to attend the opening and beginnings of the 2nd COMESA/LLPI-sponsored Technical Shoe Making Training for Uganda, provided at the Centre starting from 27th November 2013.

3. PROCEEDINGS OF THE TRAINING

Opening of the Training

- According to the communication from TCFC to COMESA/LLPI, it was understood that the Training would be officially opened by H.E. The Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives.
- But this had not been communicated to the concerned Focal Person at the Ministry, let alone the Minister, which as it turned out, was for the best, because, citing the non-arrival of the first half of the training fund, the training could not have, and had not, started as planned.
- It was, therefore, agreed that arrangements would be made for the Minister to close the Training at the end of the Programme which will be at the end of January 2014.

- The TCFC Management requested me to open the meeting and, although the training had already started, I agreed and made the quasi-official opening on Thursday afternoon at 03:00 PM at the TCFC Workshop, which is the Venue of the Training Programme.

Proceeding of the Training

- TCFC could not start the training on Wednesday, 27th November 2013 morning, according to the set programme, because, reportedly, required materials had not been purchased for lack of funds.

It was decided to start with theoretical topics that would not require material items, which can come in later in the week.

4. VISITS TO SMEs

- Arrangements were, therefore, made for me to go around and visit the workshops of those SMEs that have sent participants to the training programme, which included the following:-

First Day (27/11/2013)

1. TCFC
2. Agaba Shoe Makers
3. Shoe Warehouse
4. Dembery Enterprises
5. Bobbie Leathers Ltd.
6. Shuk Leather Products

Second Day (28/11/2013)

7. Big Leather Goods Ltd.
8. Jeff Leather Products
9. Ba Ishaka Shoe Centre

Third Day (29/11/2013)

10. OB Shoes

5. ASSESSMENT OF SMEs VISITED

- I was taken on these SMEs visits by Mr. Dembe Naboth on the first day, Mr. Agaba Moses on the Second day, and only incidentally, by Messers Bam Musisi and John Byabashaija on the third day.
- As TCFC's adopted visit programmes is to drop in without advance warning to proprietors or managers of the enterprises, we followed the same procedure and

dropped in on the enterprises unannounced. I met some of the proprietors or managers, and even where only employees were present, they were able to explain the production, raw material acquisition, product sales as well as problems encountered, which were actually similar in most SMEs, and included:

- Unavailability of leather; because of export at wetblue stage,
 - Low quality of the leather available,
 - Lack of essential tools and machinery,
 - Electric power interruption,
 - Increasing cost of labour,
 - Need of advanced training.
- The SMEs are mostly small, with minimum tools and machines, but have staff, including the proprietors, that have received basic or advanced training in shoe and leather goods production at TCFC.
 - TCFC has an “after training” policy of:
 - a) Making follow-ups on the trainees to assess their post training activities where, in most cases, they have formed groups and opened workshops to make shoes and leather goods and repairs,
 - b) Accepting former trainees to become members of the Centre by paying membership contribution and thus contributing to the running of the Centre to promote the leather sector as a whole.

6. MEETINGS CONDUCTED

- The first meeting was with the TCFC office staff, including the Executive Manager, Mr. Mukiibi Tom Walujjo, Technical and Training Manager, Mr. Dembe Naboth and Sales and Technical Manager, Mr. Agaba Moses, who gave briefings on TCFC establishment, past and present activities, future plans and challenges facing the Institute. This was followed by an overview of the workshop, equipped with old machinery and tools, small store and spacious show room.
- Three meetings were also held at the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives. The first was with the Principal Engineer and LLPI Focal Point, Mr. Odong Francis Gimoro, who together with the TCFC Manager, discussed the organization of the training in session at TCFC, and adjustments to be made to ensure success. The second meeting, included former TCFC Managers and current Board Members, Mr. John Byabashaija and Mr. Bam Musisi, in addition to Mr. Odong. They reiterated the organization and status of the Training as well as their suggestion to hold the closing programme of the Training together with the planned Core Team Meeting, in order to have the Minister and COMESA/LLPI officials present at the combined events.

- The third and final meeting was a curtsy call to the Permanent Secretary (PS), Ambassador Julius B. Onen, and briefing him on the Training in progress, the purpose of the visit and the assistance being provided by COMESA/LLPI to enhance Uganda's leather sector development, which he recognized positively.

7. CONCLUSION

- The organizers of the Training Programme did not get the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives to open the Training as planned. But the Training started and was officially opened on Day 2 by the COMESA/LLPI representative, as indicated under Section 3 above.
- **I submit that the Director consider the suggestion of combining the Core Team Meeting and the closing programme of the Training, so that we can forward an appropriate date for consideration of the TCFC Management and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Co-operatives for the forthcoming two events.**