



Execution Plan for the African Welding School and Training Program

(Updated February 9, 2025)

Introduction

This document will introduce the reader to the current execution plan for implementing the **African Welding School and Training Program (The Program)**. This plan has been under development and revision since early 2022. The reader is strongly encouraged to review the contents of the GFP International website, as well as the website of its sister organization, African Skills and Development (Group) Ltd.

Upon completion of **The Program**, there will be between 20-30 welding centers of excellence created in strategic locations across Africa. These schools will produce students who can be certified by internationally recognized bodies such as the American Welding Society, the International Institute of Welding, or the Canadian Welding Bureau. We estimate the cost of this program to be approximately \$100 Million USD. This is a very early conceptual cost estimate. It will be highly subject to the number of schools which may require completely new buildings for their welding schools or can largely use existing spaces that already exist within their facilities. We expect that in all cases, the welding training spaces will need to be at least expanded.

GFP International Website:

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

African Skills and Development Website:

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

Accomplishments to Date

GFP International has achieved a state of readiness to launch the final stages to prepare for the implementation of **The Program**. To reach this stage, the following activities have been completed, and milestones have been met.

- Conducted multiple trips to East Africa by the founder of GFP International, with participation of executives of the American Welding Society, and several world renowned well-known experts in welding and welding training.
- Held multiple meetings with ministers of energy, education and directors of national TVET governmental ministries in four East African countries, including Tanzania and its Republic of Zanzibar; Kenya; Uganda; and Rwanda.
- Inspected and evaluated 23 existing welding schools across the five countries noted above. Based on these evaluations, it is determined that every existing welding school will require modernization, equipping with new machines, physical expansion of existing spaces or completely new additions or buildings to house the modern welding schools of excellence.
- Established design and cost criteria for the necessary expansions and modernizations or new construction as found on our website page here:

<https://www.gfp-intl.org/welding-school-design-guide/>

- Assembled a board of directors and a team of highly competent technical advisors with expertise in welding and training.
- Assembled a Blue-ribbon Committee that currently consists of 20 leaders in Academia, Business, Government and Civil Society organizations, including the American Welding Society, the Canadian Welding Bureau, and the International Institute of Welding.
- Established a sister company called **African Skills and Development (Group) Ltd. (ASDG)** with subsidiaries currently in Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda with current plans to establish presence in a growing number of other countries where we have current connections including Nigeria, Ghana, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. ASDG will be involved in supporting existing schools with bulk and discounted procurement of equipment, design, construction monitoring and administration, project cost and schedule controls, and other tasks.

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

- To carry out the functions to be performed by ASDG, we recruited about 100 African engineers and project manager consultants including 35 Nigerians who have signed preliminary consulting agreements, and posted their profiles on the website of African Skills and Development (Group) Ltd.

<https://www.africanskillsanddevelopment.com/people/>

- Opened discussions with three global accounting firms for consideration to provide program and project audits, financial transparency, and other assurance services. This is necessary to meet the requirements of all funding organizations we have opened dialogue with. (It might be that each major donor will want its own accounting firm to provide these functions, therefore, we have not formalized an agreement with any one firm.)
- Engaged with the American Welding Society (AWS), the International Institute of Welding (IIW) and Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) who will assist with testing and certification of welding students as they graduate from the welding training. Each one of these organizations is represented on our Blue-ribbon Committee. We will continue to expand this Committee with other key leaders from across Africa.



American Welding Society



**International Institute of
Welding**



Canadian Welding Bureau

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

- Again, a system to measure outcomes is a near universal requirement of every donor organization we have connected with to date, including the African Development Bank, World Bank, Foundations and corporate donors.
- Developed a database of 4,000 leaders in Banking, Academia, Industry, Government, Philanthropic Foundations, and Civil Society organizations who have and will be engaged to participate in and support **The Program**.
- Distributed the first four of an ongoing series of newsletters to these organizations to raise awareness and continuously expanded the coalition of constituents to become engaged in **The Program** and its mission.
- Conducted a lecture tour across the four East African countries mentioned above where our founder, Eng. Michael J. Vallez, MBA, presented his lecture titled: **Industrial Welding Training Will Unlock African Human Potential and End Poverty in 10 Years**.

https://youtu.be/NPqMqi_vm0?si=HUmADq0IZhWR7ZgN

- During the East African lecture tour, Eng. Michael Vallez, MBA presented his lecture to about 1,500 students at 11 schools and met with school administrators and continued to meet again with education ministers, chambers of commerce leaders and others.
- Recently prepared a shorter presentation titled: **African Welding School Deficiencies Explained by Eng. Michael Vallez, P.E., MBA**

<https://youtu.be/eKhkCfpRBaw?si=md2C3qAliQ2rs6IX>

- Developed the attached process flow diagram and structure to describe the roles of all parties involved in **The Program**.

Description of the Attached Process Flow Diagram

The attached newsletter and flow diagram are intended to represent the interrelationships of the parties involved in the execution of **The Program**.

The immediate and ongoing activities that are to proceed in parallel now include:

1. Solicit grant applications from top public and private or public-private institutions of vocational training. The grant application format is currently under development and will be prepared prior to arrival in Nigeria.
2. Continuing to court major governmental, corporate, and philanthropic organizations while the grant applications are gathered from across Africa.

Upon collection of a critical number of grant applications, the Blue-ribbon Committee of African leaders will be engaged to evaluate the applications, considering the administrative management capability of the schools; the flexibility to adopt skill-based welding training versus welding theory-based training; the adherence to design guidelines provided by GFP on the above-mentioned webpage; and other aspects of the grantee's proposals. GFP International and its volunteer advisors will provide technical input to the Blue-ribbon Committee in raising the best grant applications to the top of the list. Special consideration will be given to some donors who may have special preferences for funding schools that help meet their objectives, such as schools located in proximity to their upcoming corporate projects with high needs for skilled welders.

Other Immediate Priorities

As of the date of this document update, February 9, 2025, GFP is focused on expanding its network of connections to West Africa, in particular Nigeria and Ghana as the next priorities. Working with the 35 Nigerian Associates of African Skills and Development, and others who might be interested in supporting

us with logistics and scheduling, we plan to visit Nigeria in March 2025 to continue our lecture tours and networking with key stakeholders to expand the coalition.

We have also had meetings with the members and board members of the **Association of Professional Project Managers of Nigeria**, and the Nigerian associates of **ASDG** who are helping coordinate the lecture tour. We have also opened communication with Ambassador Timothy Chukwuma Nwachukwu from the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on Students Engagement to assist us with our Nigeria visit. We have also engaged Dr. Olusola Odusanya, the Director General of Nigerias National Center for Technology Management (NACETEM). This entity is the point agency in Nigeria for advancing technology and skills advancement in the Country.

For further questions about our current progress and strategic plan, please contact one of the following:

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bmasicha@gfp-intl.org
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Attachments

- Newsletter No. 3 with program process flow chart
- DRAFT Blue-Ribbon Committee Charter dated February 9, 2025.

End



**African Skills
and Development Group Ltd**



American Welding Society
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION MEMBER

FROM MIKE VALLEZ™

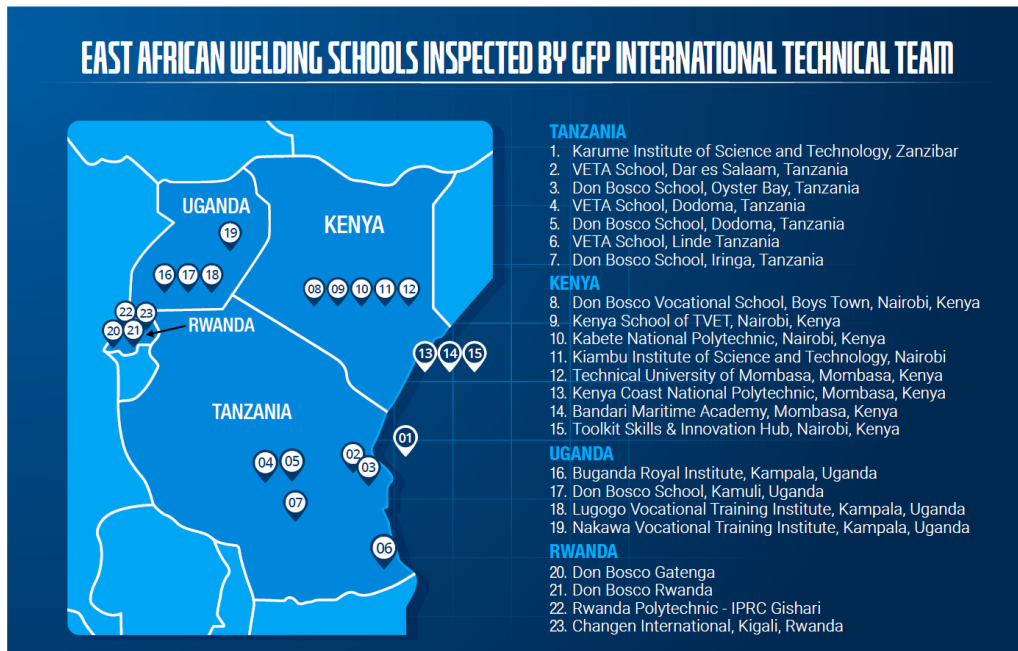
Issue No. 3, December 2024 - Circulation: Digital, 2,392; Print 3,419

Announcing the \$100 million USD African Welding School and Training Fund

Seeking Donors and Blue-ribbon Committee Members

GFP International is preparing to launch the planned \$100 million USD African Welding School and Training Fund. As a final preparatory step, we are assembling a Blue-ribbon Committee to play a key role in the program, and we ask you or someone you may know to join this important Committee to assist with the execution of this program. The ideal Committee members will have an interest in this mission and be in an influential position to expand our growing coalition. Membership on the Committee will be for a one-year minimum term, extendable by mutual interest. Participation in one monthly meeting will be requested. Deeper involvement will be welcome for those with an interest.

Throughout human history, societies with the secrets of metalworking have thrived. From the copper age to the bronze age, and now the iron age, the connection between metalworking and human prosperity is unmistakable. After three years of analysis, and twenty years of engagement with African education, my colleagues and I have identified the African skills gap in the realm of metalworking and industrial welding and have developed a program to address this urgent need. In 2023, our technical team inspected the East African welding schools listed on the map below.



to support the execution of the planned \$100 Million African Welding School and Training Fund program.

8. Commenced engagement with **Accounting Firm to be Announced** with the intent to bring them on the team to provide fund management and assurance services. Audit services will be provided by another third party to be selected.

The upcoming activities are planned for completion by the end of February 2025

1. Conduct a lecture tour and school evaluations in West Africa in a similar manner that was conducted in East Africa.
2. Meet with key leaders in banking, business, education, and training in West Africa.
3. Continue to recruit members of the Blue Ribbon Committee.
4. Meet with African Skills and Development Consultants Group Ltd. in West Africa.
5. Meet with African Skills and Development Consultants Group Ltd. in East Africa.

THE TEAM MEMBERS

GFP International is a US based non-profit organization with a twenty-year background working in the African education sector.

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

The Blue-Ribbon Committee is currently being formed with a group of 25+ leaders from industry, academia, banking, government and other constituents including donor organizations.

Accounting Firm to be Announced

African Skills and Development Group Ltd. is a corporation established to source skilled trades, project advisory, project management, project development, and industrial development services, and currently has branches in a growing number of African countries.

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

See the reverse side for a flow diagram and details of the African Welding School and Training Fund

Our founder, Mike Vallez, also conducted a lecture tour during which he visited eleven schools and talked with over 1,000 students about the important role of industrial welding in an industrial economy. In February 2025, we will continue the school visits and lectures in West Africa.

We need to expand our sound leadership team. We are currently forming a **Blue-Ribbon Committee** of known leaders in industry, government, academia and international agencies, including representatives from donor organizations. The initial role of this committee will be to:

1. Confirm our findings for the need and positive impact of modernizing / creating 20-30 welding schools of excellence.
2. Review grant applications submitted by trade and polytechnic schools and recommend which schools should receive grants. Help identify which schools and locations would be most impactful for the first 20-30 welding schools.
3. Provide high level oversight for the \$100 million USD program to assure transparency and good governance.
4. Help build a coalition to support government policy changes, appeal to banks, industry, foundations and aid agencies to fund the program.

If you or someone in your sphere of influence are interested in participating in this Blue-Ribbon committee, please contact:

Eng Michael Vallez, P.E., MBA / mjvallez@gfp-intl.org

This space is reserved to place the logos of individuals, companies or other organizations who choose to support this newsletter and the mission of GFP International. It will also help us expand the current digital circulation of 2839 and print circulation of 2,937 which includes hundreds of top executives of global and domestic energy and mining companies; African power companies; African bank executives; global foundations active in Africa; NGO's; international development organizations; educators; students; government ministers and staff, and many others. To inquire about this opportunity to support this newsletter and our work, please contact Founder and Executive Director Eng. Michael J. Vallez at mjvallez@gfp-intl.org.

See the reverse side for a flow diagram and details of the African Welding School and Training Fund

Mike Vallez is the Founder and Executive Director of GFP International, and the Founder and Managing Director of African Skills and Development Group Ltd.

GFP International, (a U.S. 501(c)(3) non-profit organization)
Salt Lake City, Utah
<https://www.gfp-intl.org/>

African Skills and Development Group Ltd:
Delaware USA, Nairobi Kenya, Dar es Salaam Tanzania, Kigali Rwanda, Lagos Nigeria, Accra Ghana
<https://www.africanskillsanddevelopment.com/>

THE \$100 MILLION AFRICAN WELDING SCHOOL & TRAINING FUND

THE TEAM MEMBERS

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International Accounting Firm with a deep footprint in Africa with its assurance, tax and advisory services:

(To be determined)

African Skills and Development Group Ltd. is a corporation established to source skilled trades, project advisory, project management, project development, and industrial development services, and currently has branches in a growing number of African countries.

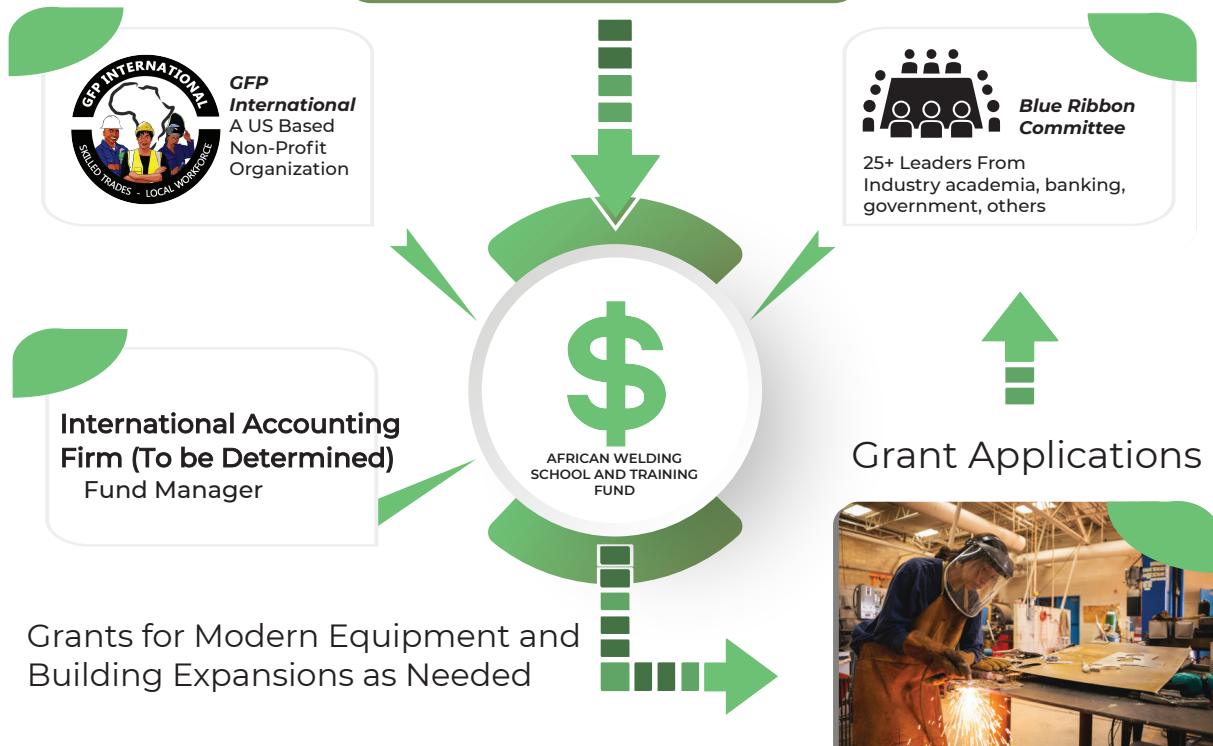
<https://www.africanskillsanddevelopment.com/>

THE GRANT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

MAJOR DONORS

Energy and Mining Corps., Foundations, African Development Bank, Governmental Entities, Sovereign Aid Agencies, Others

Donor Financial Pledges



Project Management, Controls, and Technology Transfer

Responsible oversight and management of grants will be provided by a team consisting of the Blue Ribbon Committee, GFP International, an International Accounting Firm, and African Skills and Development



MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES

- Creation of 20-30 welding schools of excellence through modernization, expansion, and training the trainers.
- Students completing the training programs will be tested in accordance with American Welding Society (AWS) and/or IIW standards, and each school will have a pass/fail rate and other outcome measurements against world standards.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Due to the high cost of welding training consumables (steel plate, pipe, welding rod, gases, etc.) a scholarship fund will be created from donations.

ONGOING SUPPORT

- GFP International / African Skills and Development will provide up to three years of support with bulk purchasing of consumables, equipment maintenance support, technical support, facility management advisory, train the trainers, and other services as needed or requested.
- Outcomes, (pass/fail rates) from the various schools will be monitored and a spirit of positive competition between the schools maintained, with the World Skills welding competition. Best practices will be shared among the welding schools of excellence.



UPDATED DRAFT - February 9, 2025

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE CHARTER

\$100 Million African Welding School And Training Fund

Blue-Ribbon Committee

A Blue-Ribbon Committee is being assembled with 25 or more leaders from sectors including education and training, banking, business, NGO's, foundations, and other individuals. The roles of this Committee will include but not be limited to the following:

1. Review and validate the concept note for the African Welding School and Training Fund program (writing in progress) including the statement of need, feasibility analysis, and project execution plans and intended outcomes for the program.
2. Help identify existing high quality welding schools to submit grant applications to receive funding for welding school modernization, or expansions or new construction.
3. Help coordinate existing welding schools with their grant applications. The grant application procedure will be provided by GFP International.
4. Assist with fund raising by providing connections to funding sources for the program.
5. Provide independent overview of the program.
6. Assist with review and approval of grant applications from trade schools, making selection of grants to be awarded based on objective criteria.
7. Receive and review periodic progress reports, financial reports, school performance reports and other data.

Other Considerations

The Blue-Ribbon Committee members may change over time. Donors will be given an option to assign a member of their choosing to the Committee to enhance visibility on the use of their donated funds.

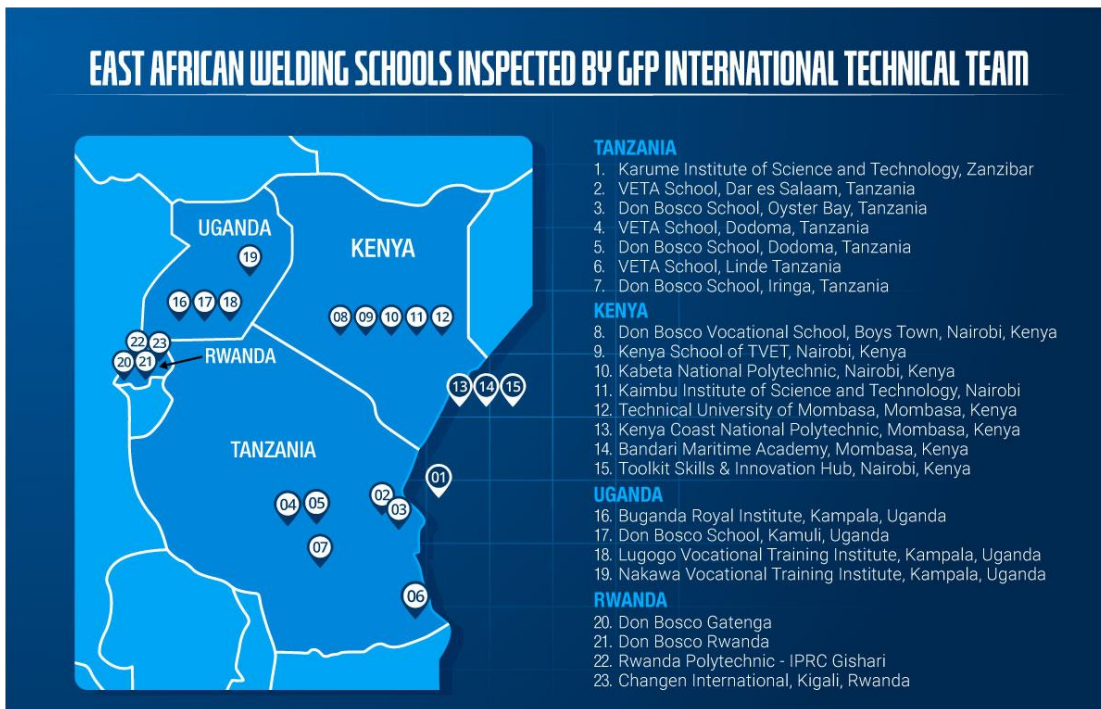
Accommodations will be made for donors to target their funds to specific projects for the purpose of advancing their strategic goals or objectives, if any.

Background

GFP International has completed an assessment of the need for and scope of a major program to upgrade a group of existing welding schools in Africa with new equipment and building modernizations and expansions as needed to create between 20 to 30 welding schools of excellence.

To date, the following activities have been completed.

1. A group of 23 existing welding schools across the East African countries of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda have been inspected for evaluation of equipment, curriculum and other aspects required for training welders to international standards.



2. Standard schematic designs and cost estimates for 20 and 60 booth welding schools have been prepared. See <https://www.gfp-intl.org/welding-school-design-guide/>
3. Preliminary costs of equipment and local construction cost estimates have been performed. See <https://www.gfp-intl.org/welding-school-design-guide/>
4. A team of internationally recognized industrial welding training school experts have been assembled.
5. An overall program execution plan and process has been established by GFP International including team members **Accounting Firm to be Announced**, African Skills and Development Group Ltd., the American Welding Society (AWS) and/or the International Institute of Welding (IIW).
6. Other key subject matter experts have been identified to play all the key roles necessary.

7. A special purpose corporation has been established called African Skills and Development Group Ltd. To date, this entity has registered branches in Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda to date. About 100 African engineers, architects and project managers have been recruited to become prepared to support the execution of the planned \$100 Million African Welding School and Training Fund program.
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