

25 November 2017

Dear friends of UPLIFT!

Last week we received news from 2 sources – a recurrent one, this time of year, and a one-of-a-kind piece, regardless of season.

The former was an update from UPLIFT – a brief status report after this year's exams have been successfully held and the papers assessed. 1.515 villagers in 10 sub-counties (four in Nebbi District and six in Zombo District) have sat for exams, with a pass rate of 9 out of 10 learners.

Mentors and learners are already well into preparations for the upcoming graduation celebration, six weeks from now. Time goes fast when logistics are more demanding than our own preparations for Christmas; to rehearse dances, songs and plays, secure a number of speakers, and prepare to feed learners and guests of a four-digit number. The ceremony is a joint enterprise by UPLIFT, the graduates and local authorities. To meet this year's budget, we are still short of USD 1.500 but trust that is within reach. *It just has to be*, in order for each graduate to receive the coveted 'certificate', to be printed in December.

The one-time piece of news (once again, at this latitude) pertains to Friends of UPLIFT as an organization. Referring to our August newsletter, there was a discussion at the annual general meeting in June whether to seek membership in FOKUS, a Norwegian umbrella organization focusing on women – i.e. equality, rights and empowerment. On November 22nd, at the FOKUS annual meeting and on recommendation by its board, following a 10-minute presentation of UPLIFT and FUP by chairman Michael Vitols and Liv Vitols (now on our recently appointed women's committee), *Friends of UPLIFT (Norway)* was unanimously 'voted in'.

Now we can safely say that FUP is in FOKUS!



Today (!) on 25th November, we observe UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and FOKUS is running a 16-days campaign on its website (<https://www.fokuskvinner.no/en/>).

As Friends of UPLIFT, however, our own focus must be to support adult literacy education, as a *foundation* for development in UPLIFT's corner of the world. Six weeks from now, four FUP members will join UPLIFT in West Nile at the celebrations!

Happy greetings, Friends of UPLIFT (Board)