

Dear friends,

The Norwegian summer is drawing to an end after the warmest and driest summer months in southern Norway in 100 years! While most were on vacation, the farmers were fretting. Now, being the last day of August, time has come to remind ourselves of the many women – and men, in minority! – who have been ‘at school’ under big trees in West Nile.

In late June I participated at a Bahá’í summer school. One main theme was the application of spiritual principles in the ethic and practice of social development. A guest speaker from Washington DC talked about ‘social action’ and ‘service to humanity’. In this context, translated to local participation and selfless service for the betterment of the community; active empowerment rather than ‘soupkitchen handout’. To the extent external support is needed, besides financially, it requires humility and commitment rather than ‘parachuting in’.

To those who were also friends of UPLIFT the talk was especially inspiring; a point-by-point confirmation of the principles guiding the work of UPLIFT since its inception in 2001. And so, at the dinner table I had opportunity to ask the speaker if she had heard of a small organization named UPLIFT Uganda. Being herself the director of a renowned NGO, the *Tahirih Justice Center* (google it), she said she was unaware of UPLIFT (and friends!) Whereupon we exchanged website addresses...

Last week UPLIFT held its quarterly refresher training, in Nebbi District. This gathering of mentors, coordinators and UPLIFT director and officer is among the high points of the year. Each year some new mentors are being trained while former trainees are certified, to teach learners in new areas – normally 32 mentors teaching in village clusters in 4 sub-counties. Already, four months before the graduation, most learners can read *Alur*...

To quote from Dr. Hizzaya’s mail last week:

The fever for graduation preparation has already started and it will be held at Erussi town, Nebbi. The graduation will be held on 10 January 2019. This year it seems the graduation will be more colourful than that of last year.



January: In our eyes, any group of learners is colourful!

Our annual general meeting in June saw a lively group of 15 members in high spirits. Looking at the photo just now (and counting) I realize that 10 of us have visited Uganda and taken part in UPLIFT’s graduation ceremony!



Annual meeting June 16, 2018: No lack of motivation!

Over the past years our contribution ‘pledge’ from the Norwegian Friends of UPLIFT (incl. some generous Canadians) towards the UPLIFT annual budget has been USD 10.000. This year we aim to reach USD 11.000 – not because of budget increase but due to the fact that with a decrease in local funding, FUP will need to cover more than the initial 2/3 budget ratio.

Comments were shared with the AGM about our concept note to FOKUS women (umbrella organization) for a Norad funding application. Alas, shortly after the annual meeting the FUP Board received the answer that our initiative had been unsuccessful. FOKUS argued that the concept (– hence, UPLIFT itself) “did not sufficiently fulfil the project criterion that – *‘the overriding goal must be to contribute to change those societal conditions which foster discrimination’* – as no concrete plans for such change seem to exist.” Furthermore, there was “insufficient documentation to show how UPLIFT training will help lifting the women out of poverty.”

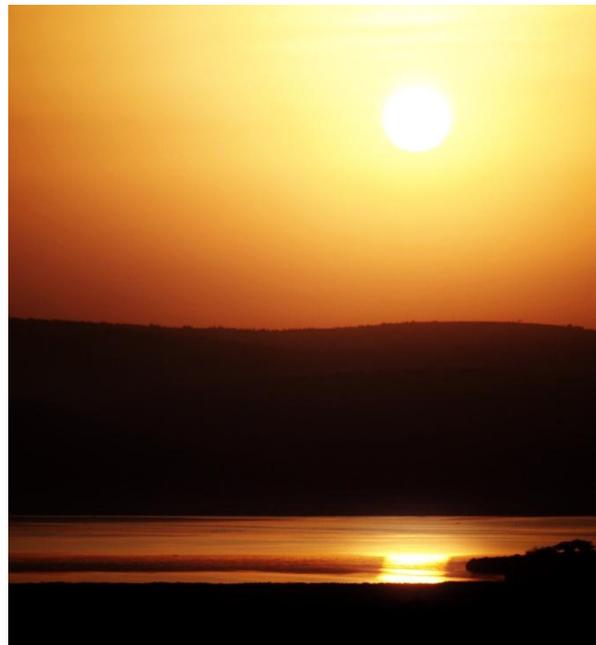
After a combined effort to draft an application that Norad itself might view favourably, we – UPLIFT with friends – shall have to give the FOKUS response some thought. As ‘exercise’, the endeavour has been a useful experience, helping to understand the connection between the *training provided* by UPLIFT and *benefits achieved* by the learners after completion. Both UPLIFT and *friends* will need to improve our documentation. In the meantime, we shall all proceed with ‘business as usual’!

A final word about the economy – which after all is where we may chiefly contribute, to help make the UPLIFT wheels go round. Thanks to an increased number of regular, monthly contributions, a major gift this summer, and some income from the sale of ceramic women figurines by a FUP artist at the annual meeting, we were able to transfer USD 3.000 in August.

A big thank you from UPLIFT, and from us on the Board as well!

Warm regards, on behalf of
the Board of Friends of UPLIFT (Norway)
Gunnar Lange-Nielsen

PS: In mid-September Michael will make the ‘crossing’ to Canada to meet his oldtimer classmates, of which (some) 17 are also supporting friends of UPLIFT! (and to those 17+: If you cross the continent to Vancouver Island, you might meet the *original* uplifters!)



*Rich or poor, high or low, – each day the sun rises anew.
Like here, over Uganda, in early January 2017,*