

30 Oct. 2022 | October letter to friends of UPLIFT

Dear friend of UPLIFT!

We hope you are all well and happy, in whichever corner of the world you may reside.

In the past six months Friends of UPLIFT and UPLIFT-Uganda have been working on a major funding application, parallel to the process of a reorganization of UPLIFT.

As we wrote in the 'April letter', at the time of the graduation ceremony in March a concept note was approved by the UPLIFT Board and forwarded to FOKUS (Forum for Women and Development), as a first step in applying for government funding for a large UPLIFT project in 2023 – 2027. In addition to literacy training, the proposed new project will include a course on sexual and reproductive health, a FOKUS target area in line with the UN goals. UPLIFT has signed a partnership agreement with the Ugandan Nurses and Midwives Union (UNMU) who will provide midwives to work with the UPLIFT Board and tutor coordinators and mentors.

About the same time, UPLIFT-Uganda became aware that the official permit under their NGO registration had not been renewed after 2018, resulting in a monthly penalty fee. The national NGO Bureau never sent a notification about the oversight of the expiry date. The resulting accumulated fine (twice the annual budget!) was simply impossible for UPLIFT to pay.

As a consequence, UPLIFT will be dissolved as an NGO at national level, while re-establishing itself as a *community-based organization* (CBO) at District level in West Nile. As it happens, this reorientation not only represents the mission of UPLIFT as a regional grassroots organization, but turns out to facilitate more directly the design of a decentralized project with UNMU participation and local level support under the District authorities.

Agreements have been signed with each of the four target districts in the region, and "UPLIFT-Uganda Ltd" has become "UPLIFT West Nile".



In the meantime, the submitted concept note was approved by FOKUS, whereupon UPLIFT and Friends of UPLIFT were invited to write a full-scale proposal. It has been an extensive process (to put it mildly), in which UPLIFT's organizational documents underwent serious updating or additions, and audited financial statements were prepared; all to be scrutinized as part of two evaluation visits to Uganda by FOKUS consultants to see if UPLIFT had the institutional capacity to receive major funding.

This new project proposal – if successful – would increase the scope of UPLIFT activities, both by expansion of project content (adding «sexual and reproductive health and rights») and by geographic extension. It is expected that 4,000 women can be trained annually, and 1,200 younger girls are offered UNMU-led seminars on sexual health and behaviour.



So – where are we today? (Well, listen to this):

* Under a collective name «UPLIFT West Nile», UPLIFT has been locally registered in 4 Districts – Nebbi, Pacwach, Zombo, and Madi Okollo – each having signed documents of cooperation.

* Equally, agreements have been made with the UNMU West Nile regional coordinator and directly with midwives to work with UPLIFT in the training on women's health and rights.

(FOKUS was especially happy about this collaborative arrangement.)

* The Board of UPLIFT has signed a document for dissolution of the NGO (UPLIFT-Uganda) and prepared other documentation required for the formal process, to take place next week.

* The FOCUS application was submitted at the end of July and, after follow-up improvements, accepted by FOKUS and forwarded with recommendation to Norad on October 1st. Their decision will be known in February 2023.

Stepping up the traditional literacy programme with a project of this nature requires resources, human as well as financial. While dependent on Norad *funding*, the UPLIFT *foundation*, in spirit as well as practice, remains unchanged; voluntary service at the grassroots of society.

But for now, while still in the middle of another 'ordinary' (though Covid-delayed) UPLIFT year, may we 'request you' (worded in the fashion of a hopeful Ugandan woman) that once again another contribution be made to UPLIFT for its continued efforts at this time of transition.

Warm regards, on behalf of
the board of Friends of UPLIFT,
Gunnar Lange-Nielsen,
Secretary



UPLIFT in Uganda: Board, coordinators and 'Norway vis'tor'



UPLIFT in Norway: Board and friends, 12 of us gathered for the Annual General Meeting – exactly 10 years after FUP formation