

15. 12. 2020 | 'Desemberbrev' til venner av UPLIFT

Dear friends, – farther away than usual!

For on this December 19 day 'in the age of' the Covid-19 it is not only time, but distance, which seems to be extended. 'Stay at home', 'Don't travel' and 'Minimize the number of contacts' have become the new slogans of the day – and members of our extended UPLIFT family also seem to be farther away. For one, this Norwegian brother (or 'cousin' at least?) will not be visiting Uganda and West Nile, come January.

For that matter, nor will there be an UPLIFT Graduation to visit. With the training having stopped short, less than two months after it started, and with a hiatus of five months before gradually resuming class sessions, the 2020 literacy and health courses are expected to run up to next summer. A week ago we were told by UPLIFT officer (Ssemukasa Mark) that most likely – as long as there is no new lockdown (to be enforced even into remote village areas) – graduation may still delay up to August or September.

The recent decision by Government to have face masks distributed to citizens throughout the country has equally made the modest UPLIFT project of face mask production come to a standstill. With no 'competition', by early December 1.000 masks had been sewn. But this might pick up again. (See attached field report from Mark).



A group of learners at a health book training session – making an effort to observe 'distancing' at the same time.

A more weighty piece of news is the status of the ongoing core programme. UPLIFT is now back with all 16 classes in Nebbi, comprising some 600 learners, and 16 classes in Zombo, – with the guidelines for curbing the corona infection as an obvious, added component.

In keeping with the principle of integrating daily life and village development in literacy training this relevant addition is equally an incentive to learn to read and write.

As you will also find in Mark's report, and revealing a measure of pride, the purchase of two second-hand light motor cycles was made possible due to a particular opportunity. With the wear of the old ones and the coordinators' continued need for safe transport over long distances, the Friends of UPLIFT board agreed to shuffle some items in the budget. Thanks to sustained contributions from FUP members through this special year, it looks like we shall still fulfil our pledge of USD 12.000 by the end of the year.

To return briefly to the coronavirus situation: An issue of rising concern – no less voiced by the press in 'rich' countries – is the question of who gets the vaccines first. Or rather, will poor countries have to wait at the end of the queue – again? According to the WHO, Latin America represents 3/4 of the world's Covid-19 infections. In this connection, it is worth noting that Uganda, though parallel to a slow spread of the disease, has put concerted effort into research and developing its own vaccine.



Ivan Musabe's team testing family members and friends in Uganda. In this family 6 of the 7 tested were infected. [From BistandsAktuelt (Norad), Photo: Sofi Lundin]

Let us end this letter on an optimistic note, both for UPLIFT learners and the world to learn – that 2021 may testify, once again, to the resilience of men and women and the undeniable reality of ONE human family.

With gratitude on behalf of UPLIFT, and warm greetings for a new year, from the Board of Friends of UPLIFT (Norway)
Gunnar Lange-Nielsen (secretary)