

4 July 2016

Dear friends of UPLIFT!

Four weeks have passed since Friends of UPLIFT gathered for their Annual General Meeting in Lillehammer. An inspiring summer get-together, with Victoria's appetizing African lunch buffet. A total of 19 of the 50 Friends of UPLIFT members showed up, breaking previous attendance records!

The AGM opened with a greeting from a recent UPLIFT gathering in Paidha. Here is an excerpt from their email:

*"We had very successful refresher courses both in Nebbi and Zombo, and the spirit of service and volunteerism exhibited this time by both coordinators and mentors during the refreshers was never seen before. Each one of them was participating voluntarily with a smile on the face."*

This set the tone for the AGM consultations, together with a separate UPLIFT Annual Report received and distributed the week before. Judging from the positive spirit of consultation during the AGM, Friends of UPLIFT are still enthusiastic about the work being done by UPLIFT. This is most welcome, seeing as the need is still great.

Once again, an excerpt from their email:

*"Both mentors and coordinators are very grateful for the money that you sent which came at the right time when it was most needed."*

Also, an excerpt from an UPLIFT status report of 1 June:

*"There are other expenses that we have postponed, like purchase of footballs and netballs, for fear that we might not get enough funds to meet all budgeted items."*

Accordingly, as part of consultations on the 2016 budget, it was recommended to set a goal of USD 10.000, matching our contributions in 2013 and 2014 regardless of the present, low value of the NOK.

Activities and contributions will be discussed at the next Friends of UPLIFT board meeting, albeit without Inger-Johanne Sveen who was replaced by Liss Hegge as newly-elected board member. A warm THANK YOU to Inger-Johanne for three years as member of the board.



*AGM participants gathered at Gunnar's photo exhibition (minus Michael who took the picture, and Victoria who stayed home to clean up after the AGM).*

Upon conclusion of the AGM, participants visited Line's Art Gallery to see Gunnar's photo exhibition FOTOGRAFRIKA. Of its two main themes, the focus of the larger segment was on the work of UPLIFT, with amazing portraits of UPLIFT women taken during this year's graduation ceremony.



The exhibition was seen by more than 150 visitors of 'above-average' interest, during the three weeks it was open for viewing. Being presently retired (but not as 'Friends of UPLIFT' secretary), the photographer was able to contribute with numerous impromptu talks, both about UPLIFT and the work being done by its Friends. In addition to posters and flyers all around town, attention was drawn through social media and fine newspaper coverage.

If sales were not quite proportional to the local initiative and its broad propagation of the programme, profits from the sale of pictures were donated, as intended, to Friends of UPLIFT – and so, to UPLIFT.

On that optimistic note we would like to wish all faithful Friends of UPLIFT members a very good summer!

*Warmest greetings from the board of Friends of UPLIFT*



*Zombo learners, - with reasons to be happy!*