

Dear friends,

To pick up from the geometeorology (!) of the September letter: As most Northerners are now entering the darkest week of the year and will put behind us, quite arguably, the darkest year of this young century, we may well remind each other that in Uganda, the sun gets up and goes to bed 12 hours later, every day. Everyone knows that. Well, at my latitude of snowy lands up North, we shall compensate for the 5-hour sunlight by brightening our existence with electric light as well as candles, outdoors as inside. But in six months' time we can look forward to 19-hour days of sunlight. Everything evens out...

And while Uganda was in a Covid lockdown six months ago, at this time of writing it is Norway (pop 6 mil) which has a rate of 6.000 new cases daily. One hundred times Uganda's (pop 48 mil) 100 per day. So it all evens out?

For UPLIFT it's good news. Training has continued throughout, after lockdown was lifted. As witnessed, recently, by Friends of UPLIFT chairman, Michael Vitols, during a week's visit to Nebbi in mid-November. With classes now of half size, Covid regulations can be observed. According to Michael's report, local authority officials agree that the new UPLIFT Health and Hygiene training has, in part, contributed to the low spreading of the virus in the villages.



*Empowerment # 2: Making your own face mask (2020)*

Under the conditions, the hope of arranging exams in late November was too optimistic. As it now looks, short of any new lockdown, we may look forward to graduation in March.

With Michael's prolonged stay, a joint Board meeting of UPLIFT/Friends of UPLIFT in Nebbi (which we normally hold in January each year) was made possible. Hizzaya was not chairing in person, but in mobile contact from Nairobi.



*Empowerment # 1: Buying an outfit; with bar code! (2019)*

The consultation this time was focussed on women's empowerment [after 50 years, still a catchphrase!] Women were an UPLIFT priority from the very beginning, but after the NORAD funding period (2007-2010<sup>\*</sup>), when 80 % were women) the proportion dropped to 3/4 and a few years even to 2/3. As a future guideline, 75% should be a minimum, with the average learner enrolment being upheld at 1.500. [*Find Statistics: <https://upliftvenner.no/articles-and-reports>*]

Consequently, it was suggested that the composition of the UPLIFT Board should reflect a gender profile; out of 5 members, 3 females. One, maybe, to 'double' by representing youth.

This could better match our participation in FOKUS (Forum for women and development). Friends of UPLIFT have been invited to apply to take part in a joint application for Norad cooperation projects next year.

[*\* For the benefit of newer members: During the period 2007-2010 the Norwegian Bahá'í Community cooperated with Norad to boost the development of UPLIFT. As 'heir' to that collaboration Friends of UPLIFT was established in 2012.*]

With this focus at heart, we have once again encouraged members to keep a new 'info'/'business' card at hand – for the positively curious! Always grateful for your support, a last minute reminder: Christmas (or not) gift cards are available to download, print + fold: <https://upliftvenner.no/contributions>

Warmest Christmas greetings, on behalf of the Board of Friends of UPLIFT (Norway)  
Gunnar Lange-Nielsen, secretary



*Empowerment # 3: Consulting about the way forward. Note: Only the coordinators are wearing face masks! (2021)*