

24. november, 2014

Dear friends of UPLIFT!

It has been a busy autumn, so this year's «October Letter» has turned into a «November letter». I sincerely hope no one has missed receiving an UPLIFT letter every other month, a rhythm I have managed to keep for these past two years! Regardless, the UPLIFT work is progressing smoothly. Like clockwork judging from recent emails from Hizzaya. After a successful visit to Norway, Hissaya travelled directly to Nebbi to conduct new refresher courses for this year's mentors.

Let us, this time, reflect briefly on this year's Norwegian TV fund-raiser for "Clean Water", globally (- which collected close to 40 mill. USD). There are some obvious parallels between projects for "Clean Water" and our own UPLIFT activities. Clean water is an essential need for humans. Knowledge is also an essential need – albeit of a different nature. The ability to read and write is a minimum requirement, needed to ensure individuals' progress just clean water ensures continuing health and life.

If we regard a lack of both – clean water and knowledge – as the absence of health, then we are in reality looking at a joint cause of illness and poverty, as well as the effect thereof: the poverty of body and mind. It is our privilege, therefore – we who are so fortunate to live in the "land of plenty", with access to both water and knowledge, to help provide UPLIFT with the means to continue its important work. We can work as one, pulling a load together with UPLIFT, in the Norwegian vernacular *dúgnad*, or in Swahili, *harámbe*.



It is commonly the young ones who must fetch water -



- while the old ones must teach them cleanliness

Even though our letters to the members of "Friends of UPLIFT" often mention UPLIFT's successes, there are naturally other stories to tell. For example a story about too much water and an increasing need for food security. At the same time as the TV fundraiser was going on, I received a letter from one of the previous mentors. He is one of those few with a formal education, but is still struggling to find work. In October his village was flooded, destroying crops and houses – essentials for his family, largely extended due to other misfortunes. While waiting for the land to be once again arable, and in

order to somehow survive, he has been buying and selling fish, going door-to-door in nearby villages. A meagre income is generated and used to feed his family of twelve.

This is not uncommon in Africa.

Flooding has affected not only him and his family, but many local communities. They help each other as best they can, seeing as there is no guarantee that the local or national authorities will provide relief aid.

My friend, who has served several times as Master of Ceremonies at the UPLIFT graduation ceremony, has assured me that things will be straightened out by January so that he, once again, can help out if required at the upcoming January graduation.



Thanks to a continuing stream of contributions from the Norwegian friends of UPLIFT, the FUP board were able to send another sum of Norwegian Crowns 10.000 (USD 1.500) to UPLIFT in October, toward meeting expenses for examination of this year's learners. In a very recent communication from the UPLIFT coordinators, some 1.700 learners sat for exams; or to be quite exact, 820 in Nebbi District and 858 in Zombo District. The process of marking the exam papers has already begun, soon to be followed by preparations for the graduation ceremony in mid-January. A particular component of which is the printing (at a cost) of the individual graduation certificates, a tangible token of newly-acquired knowledge.

To conclude let us mention that "Friends of UPLIFT" is continuing to attract attention. After the annual board meeting in September, two gatherings were held: one in Ré sub-county (close to the ancient town of Tønsberg) and another in Lillehammer – as part of Inger Middelthon's birthday celebration in South Park! We hope that more FUP members use their birthdays and anniversaries as fund-raisers for UPLIFT. As late as yesterday we heard about an event where the performing artist, though being a friend, was offered a fee for services but instead said: "Rather give something to UPLIFT!"

So, to each and every one of you, whether living in Tromsø or Arendal, or in between, or on Facebook – talk with friends and relatives about the fantastic work being done by our indefatigable friends in Uganda.

Warmest greetings
Gunnar Lange-Nielsen
on behalf of
Friends of UPLIFT, Norway