

1st June 2014

Dear friends of UPLIFT!

Some Norwegians have some ideas of what it is like in Uganda – the same way some Ugandans have their own ideas of Norway! With “African” temperatures across most of the country, Norway is quickly turning as green as “the pearl of Africa”!

For “Friends of UPLIFT” June is the month for our annual general meeting. Time passes quickly, is it really a year since we last met in Lillehammer? Yes, on June 15th we shall be holding our second annual meeting, not counting the inaugural meeting to form “Friends of UPLIFT” in September 2012. This year our annual meeting will be held in Oslo, where the inaugural meeting was held, with Liv and Michael Vitols in Akersbakken 35^D. A detailed description of how to get there will be sent together with documents for the annual meeting.

UPLIFT sent a status report just prior to 17th May [bicentennial of Norway’s Constitution] showing that the teaching work and other activities are well under way – and that we also played a role:

- ❖ UPLIFT received a request from Congo just after the annual graduation ceremony. A group of 90 Congolese women sent a delegation to Ndeu (this year’s new Sub-county for training), asking UPLIFT to arrange classes for them as well, near the Congo border. They said that the fact that people came all the way from Europe to attend the graduation ceremony showed how important the literacy classes are.
- ❖ A woman in Omoyo village stands to thank UPLIFT. Tears roll down her cheeks as she tells the 160 villagers attending the meeting that three months ago she was so shy that she didn’t dare speak in public. After just three months of training she could write to her husband, lead group discussions and was elected chairperson in her local council (LC1).



The interim UPLIFT report is attached. Read Dr. Hizzaya’s text and be inspired!

[To our newer members: Hizzaya Hissani is UPLIFT’s Director. Those who know him will say that rather than being a «director» he is a true servant, who through his training of coordinators and mentors generously sows the seeds of literacy to thousands.]

When we asked him about a sentence in the recent report (in the paragraph about Learners), concerning the “delivery” of syllables and Mentors as “midwives” for the birth of words and language, in his e-mail response we were given a detailed description of the teaching method used by UPLIFT. Quite a number people have wondered about this approach, finding it difficult to explain what makes the UPLIFT training so special.

Quoted below is a graphic explanation from Hizzaya:

I would like to answer the question on Delivery by 3 examples.

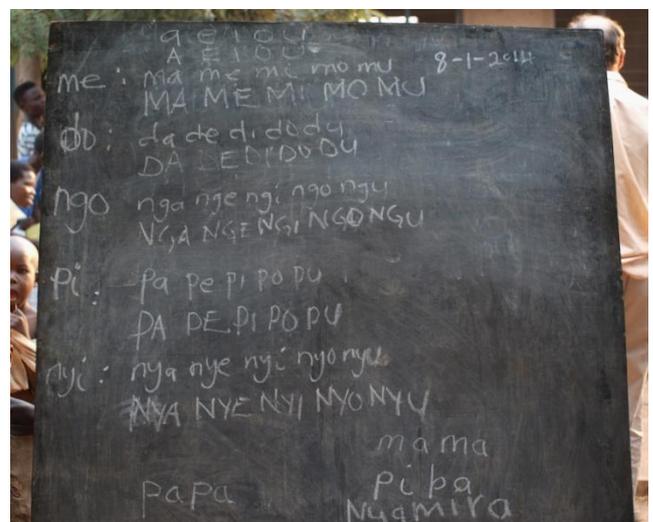
First, the sounds of all Bantu languages such as Luganda are the same in both writing (orthography) and pronunciation (phonetics). The Swahili sounds of the word father, "ta-ta" or "ba-ba", for example, are the same in both orthography and phonetics. These same sounds, moreover, are already in the mind of the adult learner. One can even hear a very young Bantu child "delivering" them: ta-ta, ba-ba. So the only work that a mentor does for the adult learner is to help him deliver the sounds: identify them, pronounce them, and write them himself (a role similar to that of a midwife).

Secondly, the syllables in the UPLIFT book serve as models for the learner to produce ("deliver") her own syllables ("children"). The learner is not expected to learn the syllables by heart as in the Spelling (ABC) literacy model. From the syllables *ma-la-ri-a*, for example, the learner can deliver the following children with the help of a mentor (midwife): mother "*mama*", sleep "*lala*", lament "*lalama*", nurture "*lea*" or "*ama*", yogurt "*mala*" and be careful "*halahala*".

Third, it is easier to recognize words through syllables such as brother "ka-ka" and produce new words from them, than through the alphabet k-a-k-a (in English "kay-ay-kay-ay"). The syllabic approach, moreover, awakens the sleeping syllables in the mind of a learner which makes it easier to form new words. It is the syllables *ma-la-ri-a*, for example, that enable the learner to recognize the word malaria and form the new words above using its syllables. The role of the mentor is that of a midwife: assist the learner to produce "deliver" the words himself by the Questioning method: How many sounds can you hear from the word *ma-la-ri-a* ? Which words can you form from the sounds *ma-la-ri-a* ? (Consonants in Bantu languages, incidentally, have no sounds without vowels. That is to say, it is the vowels that produce sounds).



Formulating the words 'me'do'ngo pi'nyi'



– with syllables picked from this list.

Observation: Learning a language by an adult learner is a creative "delivery" thing, not merely a repetitive "reproductive" exercise.

There, literacy training in villages! Complicated? No, just complex! This is UPLIFT's key to combat poverty, an initiative a handful of people far north have chosen to support.

To those of you who are not able to attend the annual meeting – best wishes from the board of the Friends of UPLIFT, for a warm and sunny summer in Norway!

Appendix

UPLIFT PROGRAM DIRECTOR GENERAL REPORT ON THE ORGANISATION'S ACTIVITIES OF 12/5/2014

After almost 2 months since I wrote about the status of the goals I thought I should write generally about the progress of UPLIFT work in West Nile.

Literacy Classes: The last graduation seems to have inspired many women to start literacy classes in Uganda and Congo. They thought people could not come as far as Europe to attend a village graduation if literacy was not valuable. A group of 90 Congolese women sent a delegation to Ndeu, the new Sub-county, to request UPLIFT to start a literacy class near the border, which we did. It is one of the best classes in numbers and attendance. It has some of the best dancers and actors in the area. They have promised to act and dance for the friends of UPLIFT at this year's graduation.

Mentors Work: This year both the new and old mentors are more effective in their work than the previous years. Most of them have been given positions of authority in the government and the churches due to their good work. Notable among the mentors in position of authority are:

Mentor Alimundo Florence, Parombo Sub-county court and CBOs Chairperson; Margret Ayenyo, Kucwiny Sub-county councillor, LC 1, District CBOs chairperson, Church secretary; Mentor Kayenyi Joice (Iame), Kucwiny Sub-county secretary, Peoples rights chairperson, Padyere County Women Secretary; Mentor Acan Joice, Councillor Atego Sub-county and CBOs chairperson; Mentor Umyer Christopher, FAL and LC1 Chairperson; Mentor Kumakech Ukwera, Parish Development Committee chairperson, KARITAS facilitator and Sub-county Team leader. These are mentors whose work has been highly appreciated by the authorities: There are many mentors in positions of authority this year.

Learners : It is rare that a learner sheds tears and stands up to appreciate UPLIFT literacy work. In Omoyo village where I was yesterday as many as 50 learners stood up on their own wish to appreciate UPLIFT work. Ayenya Elizabeth emotionally moved me when she broke into tears while appreciating the work of UPLIFT. She told the audience of over 160 learners that only 3 months ago she was very shy and could not speak before the public and that within 3 months she could now write a letter to her husband "mzee", lead groups, and become LC1 chairman. I believe this is very possible because mentors in UPLIFT do not just deliver syllables, the basic literacy unit. They are midwives to the delivery of syllables and words, by the learners.

Tailoring Course: Last week I met both the Zombo and Nebbi district tailoring learners. Though we train only 6 learners per year the tailoring course is the most appreciated by both the people and the government. This year the learners have learnt much faster than last one. They are now able to make children dresses and repair clothes. Every Sunday they go to markets to repair villagers' clothes for little money.

CBOs: This year Zombo has formed 6 Community Based Organization (CBOs), Nebbi 14. One of the new CBOs in Nebbi, namely Atego was the best in performance. The government gave them 22 goats for their good work.

Conclusion: I believe there is nothing that can equal the value of giving a person education.