

Dear friends,

At this time of writing (to Norwegian friends Sept 22nd) day and night have exactly the same length no matter where we live on the globe. It is autumnal equinox, a half year after spring equinox (this year, that was on 20th March) – or conversely for those living south of Equator. As such, arguably, Ugandans could celebrate spring and autumn equinox at the same time! With the equator circle 'dividing' the country, why not arrange a Biannual Equinox Festival, 20th through 22nd of March and September!

Why this rather trivial observation, in an early autumn letter to the Friends of UPLIFT? Could it be that since our recent FUP annual general meeting (a mere 13 souls) – opening as always with an amusing UPLIFT training video snippet and sharing fresh greetings from UPLIFT – our hearts are drawn to the Equator? Specifically, to the West Nile region in Uganda and yet another *January Festival* – a term appropriate for the UPLIFT graduation ceremony.

In the latest Update from UPLIFT officer Mark Ssemukasa, it was confirmed that the entire UPLIFT family are now looking optimistically forward to exams in late November and to the festivities when North visits South, in January.



Before Covid. From the UPLIFT graduation, January 2020

Two major issues in the AGM were a realistic assessment of the role and capacity of the Friends of UPLIFT (as primary funder), and the question of a more active 'recruiting' of new FUP members.

The latter continues to be a matter of drawing the attention of new acquaintances to the very existence of our humble organization! Let's be reminded of the principle, however, asserted nine years ago at the establishment of FUP; that as a friends' society we should share our knowledge of and about UPLIFT on a personal level, heart to heart, as opportunities arise. The fact that, shortly after, we developed an attractive website and, to follow up, the info-card carrying the website address, remain a continual reminder to share.

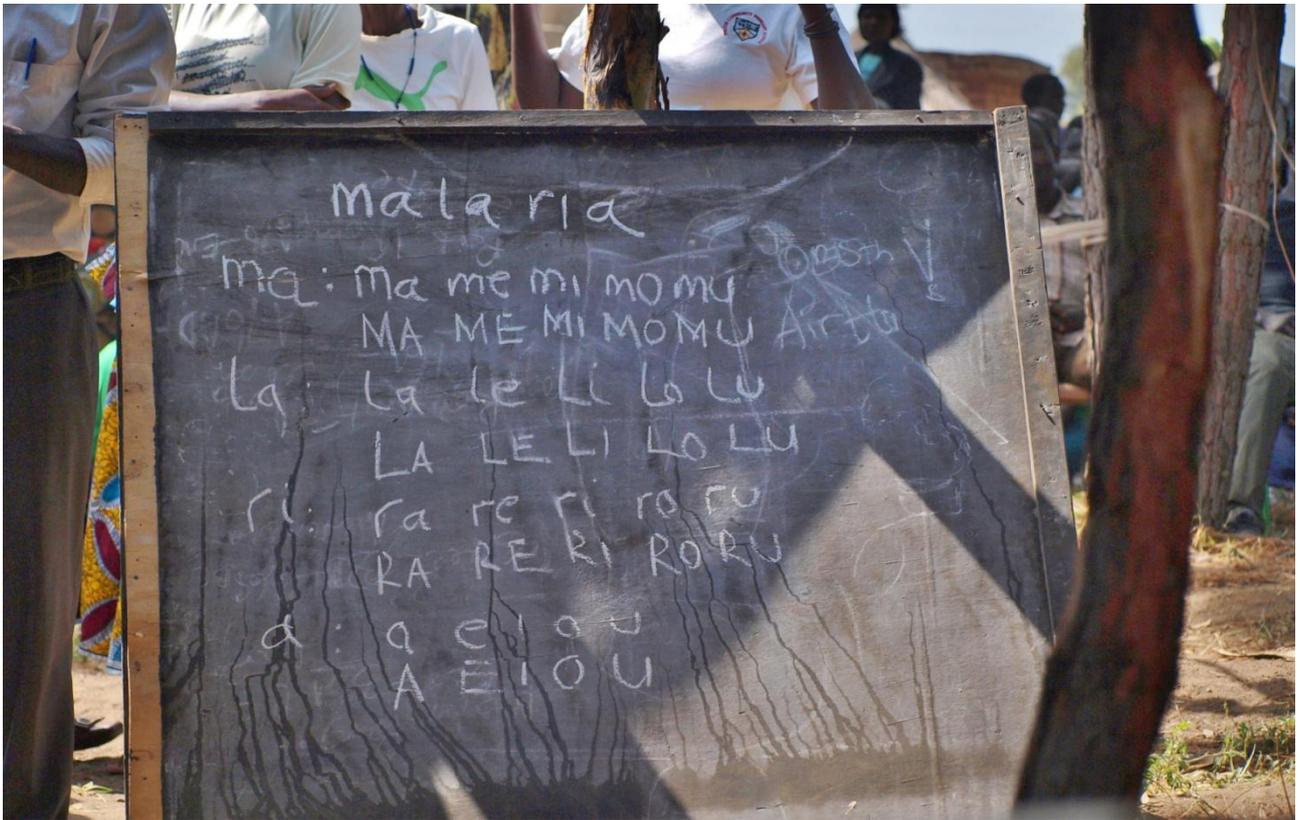
Some members expressed concern that it can be difficult, for those interested, to find the website on the internet. UPLIFT and Uganda are no longer sufficient search words, after other 'UPLIFT' organizations have popped up in Uganda. When 'our' UPLIFT was formed and registered as an NGO 20 years ago, legal protection of the name was not considered – (not that it would have held up today?) So, it's important to include the word *friends* (venner, in Norwegian); www.upliftvenner.no (*english*)

As Friends of UPLIFT has not had the capacity to administer a separate Facebook account, a general tip is to encourage friends to refer to UPLIFT on their individual Facebook pages.

The former issue, regarding financial capability to uphold UPLIFT activities, was discussed at length on the basis of our annual report. Last year, we were not able to fulfil our optimistic pledge of 12,000 USD (successful in 2019). About ¾ of that, 8,500 USD, were transferred in 2020. Regrettably, in the first 8 months this year, average contributions have dropped by 15%. So, the AGM recommended, prudently, to set our contribution goal at 9,000 USD.

To quote Hizzaya's message to the AGM: "Acknowledge with much gratitude and excitement the receipt of 7M Ugshs [2,000 \$] for UPLIFT. Excitement because the funding is an assurance that UPLIFT, our dear child, will continue to live and the mentors to work with greater effort. —Hizzaya, UPLIFT great lover!"

Best regards, Gunnar (for Friends of UPLIFT)



Literacy: To UPLIFT the quality of life through knowledge and skills.

Knowledge and skills have many dimensions!

