

Annual Report UECD Switzerland 2020/1

Dear sponsors, members, patrons, and friends,

Since the annual General Meeting on May 3, 2020, the Board has met three times, and has also continuously exchanged information bilaterally. We even accomplished more than our goal in finding a successor for Lenzy Rimensberger; we have immediately accepted Alex Borer and Ursula Baumgartner into the Board, thereby making it complete with five members. Alex is currently a project manager, freelancing with businesses and municipalities to guide mandated relationships as they relate to ecology, green space management, sustainability and business management. He is taking over from Lenzy the function of handling finances. Alex has already finished with the annual accounting, together with our new auditor Dirk Stingelin from Examina AG, Küsnacht. Thank you, Alex!

Ursula Baumgartner has recently joined her partner's transport company, having previously worked in the financial sector for twenty five years. She decided to leave finance full-time in 2020, in order to have more time to do volunteer work and serve on a Board where she could use her wealth of experience as leader and manager. She will support us both in fundraising and—like all Board members—in strategy building. Alex has African experience in Tanzania, Ursula in Uganda. Both Alex and Ursula see support in vocational training as essential and as an ideal way to come out of poverty. So both of our new Board members actively support our ideology. Ursula has also become the sponsor of a “next” student. We thank both of you for your decision to commit to our NGO, and welcome you!

We have collected CHF 3750 this year in donations. Many thanks to our donors, as well!

Lenzy Rimensberger has agreed to continue working for us in the capacity of intercultural consultant. We are very grateful to you, Lenzy.

In the association year 2020/1 we have not admitted any new students. The “youngest”, (i.e. most recent) students, Brenda and Faith, began their studies in January, 2020.

Our six students, Patience K, Monica, Andrew, Bridget, Faith, and Brenda, were blocked from studying after the March 2020 lock-down. They quickly had to return to their home villages, as transportation by mini-bus had also ceased. Universities remained closed until November, 2020, after which the students had to take exams—an enormous challenge! The exam period and the completion of the last interrupted semester lasted until March, 2021. At the same time, the new semester started, which meant great stress for all. Material for three semesters is now packed into 2021—an ambitious goal for all! However, this was not the case for Patience and Monica, who, as near graduates, were able at least to go to the university on site from December on. The closing of the universities also was connected to the presidential elections, meaning that student riots were feared. Our students accepted, and rose to these challenges. An extra thanks go to our sponsors, who took on the extra expenses regarding room rent and internet as unanticipated costs. We are uncertain what will happen next, but the plan is for students to graduate at the scheduled time. Finally, during the long interruption, Andrew completed an extensive internship at Luwera General Hospital.

News of other students: graduating with Bachelor's degrees, (B.A.) are Catherine as Social Worker, Jacqueline in Business Administration and Logistic, and Patience K, with Logistic/Procurement. Cathy, after being employed in a managerial position with a company, now has a full-time annual scholarship, (so described as the following: “Commonwealth scholarships are given only to talented people to make changes on the global stage.”) She plans to pursue her Master's Degree in “Gender and International

Development” at the University of Warwick in England. Jacqueline married a classmate in Kitgum in the Fall of 2020. They were friends back in 2009, and he wanted to marry her even then, (she was seventeen). However, she wished to complete her vocational training first, and not be expelled from school due to pregnancy. She kept her distance until after A levels were completed. Both then realized that they still loved each other. She told us what a kind and generous person her husband is. He was studying Education at Makerere University. Our female students are choosing educated men after they graduate, and that is gratifying. Kevin and Adah attended the wedding on behalf of UECD. Patience, sponsored by Ronald, is also graduating at the end of 2021; she now awaits her diploma.

To enrich the contact between students and sponsors we have initiated Zoom meetings where students and sponsors can ask each other questions, both to get to know each other better, and to have the cultural experience. The first meeting was on February 21st, the second in March, and the third will be in May. We will put the recordings on our website as Youtube, during one month, so that everyone can watch it. There are very personal and moving statements, resulting in an interesting dynamic on both sides. From the UECD Board Uganda, Adah, Vice, and Obed (President) are participating. From the UECD Board Switzerland, Isabella and I facilitate together. The goal of these meetings is to establish a forum that will continue with further meetings, using ZOOM as a means to maintain and extend the exchange.

The trip to Uganda is postponed to Christmas/January of 2021/2, or possibly February 2022. The necessary condition is that borders be open again, and that all participants be vaccinated. This also pertains to drivers and family members.

Brigit and Isabelle continue to make requests to foundations. So far none have accepted, but some bright possibilities are in the works. Brigit has made very moving testimonials with students, and these will be sent to the foundations.

We can accept three new students for the association year 2021/2. Ursula Baumgartner will take over a scholarship. Gisela Vincenz and I will take over another one together, and we can accept one student on our capital. We are still looking for a mentor who does not pay, but will maintain contact with a student. This is an important part of our program. Who would like to play this role? If we can find a fourth sponsor, the mentoring from the Board of UECD Uganda would be manageable. If anyone knows someone who would enjoy accompanying a student as mentor, please give them your new business card.

The alumni on the UECD Uganda Board are also doing their meetings via Zoom. They have taken on the task of finding new students and doing the selection process. Close contact is continued among them, as they give each other tips in the job search, looking for companies that advertise positions. Those who are struggling with a job search or start-up can take advantage of three sessions with our job coach, Leo Henges. This has been proved helpful time and time again.

Big thanks go to our current sponsors Philip Herzog, Elisabeth Greber, Annemarie Vogt, Marianne Madörin, and Mirjam Wyrsh. Without you, we would be without students in UECD.

Also big thanks go to our two webmasters, Hannes Studer and Peter Wyss, who always keep our website up to date. It is very professional in its layout, attractive and well arranged.

Another thanks to our translator, Dorrie Iten-Gilden. She is always ready to do professional text translations when the need arises. This year, she translated the excellent article by Fabian Urech, former

Board member and member of the foreign editorial staff of the NZZ, as well as our Statutes. Both can be downloaded under NEWS.

Many thanks also to the supporters and companions of Innovage, Peter Angehrn and Ruedi Schmid, who continue to support us as needed. Finally, our great appreciation and thanks to Daniela Erb, who is our companion in fundraising.

That's it! Thank you all for your continued commitment. Let's keep it up!

With heartfelt regards,

Eva Winizki, President UECD Switzerland, www.uecd.ch
Zürich, 4.4, 2021