

Yearly Report for 2011–2012

Ugandan Empowerment and Career Development (UECD)

www.uecd.ch

Dear UECD Supporters

We have had three Board meetings this business year. Our themes were: the acceptance and guidance procedures of our students, a quest for new sponsors, our English web-site, gifts for our graduates, PR for UECD, strengthening the UECD Uganda Board, the successor to MB on the Board, and finances.

We have accepted two new students during this business year

I would like to greet **Elisabeth Wafula** (birth year 1991) as a new student in UECD. We can thank Robert Okware, for bringing her into our midst. Her mother had been raped as a high school student and decided to keep the child: the father disappeared. Because of the circumstances around this pregnancy, the mother was so badly treated by her family, that she attempted to bring up the child entirely on her own. However, for this teen-age mother, the responsibility and financial burden was too much, so she fled to an older sister in Uganda, and left the infant Elisabeth with her. Only two months later—via radio--, the sister learned of the death of Elisabeth's mother. Thus, Elisabeth took on the name of her uncle, Wafula. At first she was lovingly treated, and sent to primary school. But one day this uncle threw her out of the house, along with the aunt, not wanting to have any child out of wedlock living in his home. This was the first little Elisabeth learned, that these people were not her biological parents. The aunt, however, could not leave her family, and therefore brought Elisabeth to a friend living in Kenya, who was able to send her to school. How she returned to Uganda, and managed to get through middle school, is a touching story you can read in her biography on our web-page. Today Elisabeth is on her way to a diploma in Tourism and Travel Management at the YWCA Institute in Kampala.

I would also like to welcome **Jimmy Mukalazi** (born in 1989) as a new student. Gloria Seruwagi, a close friend of Doreen, first met Jimmy in 2007, while Jimmy was under the care of Mr. Sseruwaji Tadeo. This man had taken six street children under his wing. Jimmy was the one who so excelled in school that Mr. Sseruwaji Tadeo did whatever he could to foster Jimmy scholastically. Jimmy's father, a farmer, died when Jimmy was two years old. His mother owned no land and had to work in the villagers' fields. She died when Jimmy was five. He remained a single child, living in a chaotic situation, since he knew no other family members. How he managed to find work as a house boy (shamba boy), how he was taken in and helped by sympathetic adults, supported by some, deserted by others; how he landed on the streets of Kampala, despite his highly evolved strategies for survival, and then managed, with his vision and commitment, to get himself through high school, is a story which you can read on our website under the biography section. Jimmy has begun his studies in telecommunication engineering at the Makerere University in Kampala.

Both of these students have earned our greatest respect, through demonstrating creativity and the ability to stick with it; mustering strength to succeed in such difficult life circumstances.

We have **two new sponsors** from Zürich: **Simone Kriesemer** and **Annamarie Michel**, we would like to welcome you! Both new sponsors were recruited thanks to Monique Bircher, and together they will jointly guide and support Jimmy. Last December, they started their engagement by traveling to Uganda, staying overnight at Ronald's place, meeting some of our students, and taking Jimmy and Elisabeth for a trip into the Southwest. They invited them on a safari in Lake Mburo and N.P. Elisabeth. And according to the photos, they had a wonderful time !

We are looking for two new sponsors for the year 2012.

We would be most grateful if you would consider who you know with a “flair for Africa and cultural exchange”; someone who is open, and would like to give a young woman and her family in Uganda an opportunity for self sufficiency.

Donations

We have received a donation for between six and eight students. This is fantastic! The donor would like to remain anonymous. We thus have the beautiful task of finding young people here, who would enter into an intercultural exchange with young Africans. We are looking for empowerment on an emotional level: at the moment we feel financially secure.

Public Relations with UECD

This year we have put essential texts on our website in English, primarily so that our potential sponsors in Uganda can also read our news.

In addition, we thank Hanspeter Spalinger, who has introduced UECD to a larger readership through Bank Vontobel's journal *Blue*. Although it has not so far brought us new sponsors, members, or donations, it was positively greeted by in-house staff at the bank.

Claude has prepared a PowerPoint Presentation of UECD. This presentation can be used where or whenever desired, and modified to suit specific situations. We are thankful to all members who see an opportunity to present this introductory talk, be it in a Lions or Rotary club, or in any other organization. We are always looking for new members!

Finances

At each open member meeting, we also discuss finances. Donations have come in small dribbles this year. However, we are in a good situation, being able to continue operations with the funds from our trusts. There are always donations which are on a continual basis, and for these, we would like to once again give thanks. We have decided to make a standard monetary gift for each Bachelor graduate, regardless of whether that student is paid through a trust or a sponsor. Each student receives USH 100,00 upon graduation, which corresponds to about CHF40. With this present, our graduate can invite a round of friends and colleagues to a congratulatory drink.

Board Members

Markus Boller has committed to further manage finances, including the payment to students who are supported through the trust: Patricia, Jane, Roberto, and Elisabeth. Claude Herzog has returned from his civil service in Tansania, and is fully present and active with us. Hanspeter Spalinger is also fully engaged with UECD. And I declare myself ready to continue as President.

Our Outlook

Our track record is excellent: we have been successful. Each year we have been able to take on two new students. This number seems to be working for us. As we have so far accepted seven young women and five young men into the program - including the three that have already completed their program - we would like to concentrate on women for our next four candidates.

To this end, we are seeking two new sponsors in German speaking part of Europe, although the sponsors can certainly be English speakers. To find these sponsors, we need your help. Because of the donation we have been given, we can already send a

signal to Uganda that two new places are free to be filled. Already, Roberto has told us of a young woman from Makerere University, who very much needs financial support.

The NGO is growing - it is still a family - but one which is growing. One suggestion from the Board is that each year someone from UECD Switzerland flies to Kampala in order to work together with the Board in Uganda. This would be both to lend strength and help coordinate the NGO, as well as to conduct conferences with each student over his/her study plan. For this recommendation, however, there is a ceiling to what the budget allows. The preparation is in place: that we can guarantee.. We feel, however, that further development requires additional support.

The Board would like to suggest that we initiate a drive this year to double our membership. New members would also give us fresh wind and new ideas. Especially for you younger members who want to help our NGO in Black Africa grow and develop, this speaks to you...We are convinced that we offer a real possibility for those both interested and committed, to engage in intercultural contact with Africa. And thanks to the generous contribution we have received, we would also be eager to meet committed members who don't possess the financial means (yet)!, but would be interested in supporting a student.

Something else is that we would like to strengthen the Board of UECD Uganda through a friend of Dorreen Tusingwire. We approached Gloria Seruwagi, (Bsc, MPH, Dr. Ph Candidate), and she has accepted. The details of her involvement must still be discussed. We were also able to connect with Ronald for this teamwork. Gloria came directly in contact with us last June of 2011, when she helped Jimmy to apply to UECD for sponsorship. She lived recently in London, but has now returned to Uganda. She knows both cultures.

An English teacher in a secondary school in Zürich would like to read and discuss the biographies of our students in her class. We find that this is an excellent idea to

encourage cultural exchange and to show our upper level high school students here a sense of lives so different from their own.

The Board of UECD calls upon all of our members to do their best to make our work known, to help recruit new members, to keep eyes open for new sponsors, especially in Uganda itself, to travel themselves to an incredibly beautiful Uganda, and to visit our students. The attention and the concern that we show our students works as empowerment every time. Despite occasional setbacks and difficulties, we need to move forward.

I thank all of you heartily for your engagement in UECD.

Eva Winizki
President, UECD
April 2012.