

+++ annual Vuga meet-up +++ the new board +++ south-north-exchange +++ mats from Trina +++

Dear members, partners & friends of Vuga,

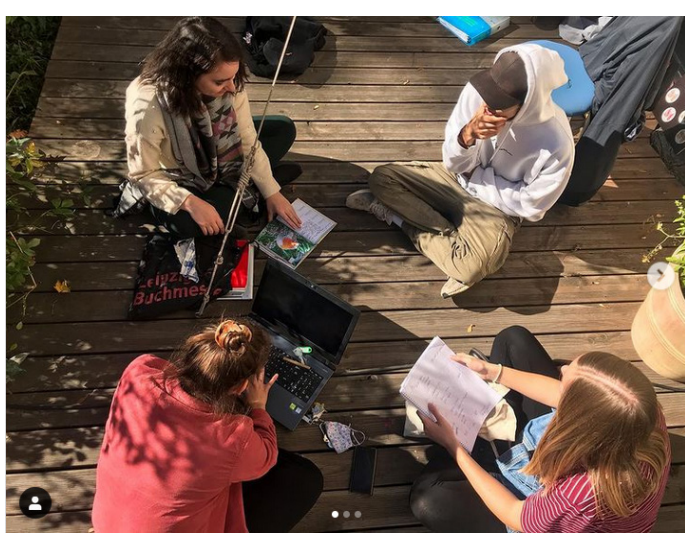
you might expect, what comes next: 2020 was, politely said, not a good year. This fact hold also true for our little NGO. We had to evacuate our volunteers, no outgoing volunteers 2020. The pandemic didn't stop in Uganda. Especially the lockdown measures hit some of our friends and partners there hard. Anyway, to give all this post-2020 lamenting a positive edge and to induce you with a heavy portion of optimism for the upcoming year, we've decided to present you a special edition of our newsletter: the positive-newletter! Yes you've heard right, only good news from now on.

First of all: There will be a new generation of volunteers in 2021! We've already received the first applications. However, the more the merrier. Many of our partner organizations wish to host a Vuga-volunteer next year again. So, spread the word! Next up, the change of generations at Vuga was successful. After the election of the new board, the last Vugas founding members abdicated. This is important, since especially small NGOs like Vugas can only remain healthy if responsibility and knowledge is constantly circulating among its members. Johannes still remains active at Vuga.

We've made good use of the corona-induced brake by focussing on other projects: the planned south-north exchange made a huge leap forward. Maybe we can already start in 2022. We have also a few projects with our partners beyond the weltwärts program in the making. Once it's official, we keep you updated!

Annual Vuga meet-up and general assembly (by Jelena)

In October we took the chance and organised our yearly Vuga meet-up – in person and with certain Covid rules. Over the span of a year we review and organise many things concerning Vuga, projects and volunteers with online meetings (mostly because Vuga members are incredibly wide spread out over Germany – and beyond). But in the past years we have also experienced how great and productive personal meetings are. That's the reason we try to organise an annual Vuga meet-up. Its always great to see each others commitment, motivation, meet great people again and have interesting talks and discussions. Moreover it brings Vuga always a big step forward!



Before the start of the Vuga meet-up and our general assembly the seminar for our returning volunteers took place in Leipzig. Pia, Finja, Philipp and I had some interesting and informative days together and I hope the three had the chance to reflect again on their (shortened) volunteer service and enjoyed each other's company and our conversations.

A major shift that took place during this year's general assembly was the wish from Johannes and me to "retire" from the work on the board. The "old" executive board was discharged and a new one successfully elected. We are glad that a new board with many new members was formed and are excited what is to come for Vuga!

During the general assembly we had the chance to have a look back at a difficult year for us – a premature departure of the volunteers, many uncertainties for our partner organisations and Vuga. But at the same time we tried and want to look forward with optimism and are motivated to get things working again. There are many ideas and projects in the planning: So keep your eyes and ears peeled!

At this point I want to thank everyone who took the time in October to join us in Leipzig, despite the existing challenges of this year. As well to all of you to make a safe meet-up happening!

The new Vuga board presents themselves



Our board members from left to right: Hye-Seon, Eva, Anna, Jule & Jana

Anna Dippel, chairperson of the board: was a volunteer with Vuga in 2017-2018 and since then has been an observer of the board.

Jana Bauer, co-chairperson: she was from 2017-18 volunteer in Uganda and has been member of the board since 2018 as an observer. Since 2019 she the co-chairperson.

Hye-Seon Rhee, treasurer: finished her volunteer service with Vuga in 2019 and is new to the board.

Jule Trebeljahr, observer: finished her volunteer service with Vuga in 2018 and is new to the board.

Eva Greif, observer: was a Vuga-volunteer of the 2018-2019 generation and is new to the board

We sincerely thank Thea Kleinrath for her work in the board in 2019 und special thanks go out to Johannes Wanger, who was member of the board since Vuga founding in 2013. Special thanks to Jelena as well, who worked many years in the board influenced Vuga in a positive way due to her engagement. Thea, Johannes and Jelena provide their positions to allocate time for new tasks ahead, but will stay Vuga members and will continue to support us in the future.

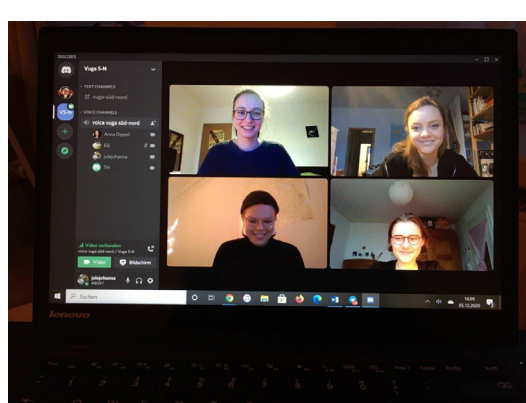
South-North exchange with Vuga (by Jule)

A long-term goal of Vuga was always not only in the North-South-program of weltwärts, but in the south-north program as well.

North-South, South-North, North-South?! What does it mean?

At the time being, Vuga only sends volunteers from Germany to Uganda. In order to realize a truly equal intercultural exchange, we founded a south-north working group back in 2019. We hope at some point in the not-so-distant future Ugandan volunteers can come to Germany.

The working group progressed at times only slowly, but is now active again. In the beginning of December, we initially planned a south-north seminar with the members of the group. Our goal was to work intensively and to determine the next steps. But Alas, corona made a physical meeting impossible. Therefore we held the meeting virtually. Despite this everything-than-perfect conditions, the seminar was a success. The first step is developing a concept: What do we want to achieve with the exchange? How do we select the volunteers? Who chooses them? Where do the volunteers stay in Germany, where they will be working and many more questions had to be discussed. The concept will finally submitted to the official weltwärts organization. As soon as we are satisfied in our group of four, the concept will be presented and discussed with all Vuga members. If everything goes smoothly, we might be able to receive 2022 our first Ugandan volunteers in Germany.



Mats against covid (by Trina)

Our dear coordinator Trina in Uganda started making and selling mats. We asked her to tell us a bit about it, how she learned it and how it developed from there:

"Greetings to you all from Uganda. It's a rainy season at the moment and grasshopper time. During this covid 19 lockdown, I was invited for a skills training in June by a friend which was organised by her women friends. Among the items they taught, I picked much interest in the mats. I imagined many designs so I decided to go with that. I paid for the training but came home happy. I taught all my children and some neighbours. I started selling some already and producing more. It takes alot of time to complete. Some people here use them as table mats, door mats, bed side mats and wall hangings depending on the size and shape plus design. Am still looking for market. Price depends on the design and size."

If you want to order a mat yourself, please contact us!

