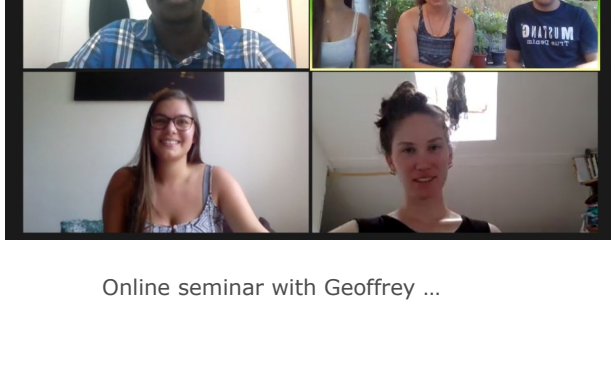


Dear members, partners and friends of the Vuga community — by the board

During the past few months, we were mostly busy with the preparations for the departure of our two volunteers for the coming year, Lara and Nils. At the beginning of July, we already had an online weekend seminar with a short introduction to Vuga and Uganda, during which we could also clarify some administrative things already. At the end of July, the second part of the preparation seminar took place in Leipzig. During the seminar many of our members were present and used the time also for the exchange in the respective working groups. There were many interesting contributions, thanks a lot to all who helped with the design and organization of the seminar!



Online seminar with Geoffrey ...



and the preparation seminar in Leipzig

Lara and Nils arrived well in Uganda last Friday and will attend their orientation seminar next week and then travel to Fort Portal and Kasese to join their partner organisations and host families. We wish them both an exciting volunteer service in Uganda and hope they settle in well.

Report project coordinator — by Trina

About volunteers

I thank God that we managed to get the two volunteers who are coming this September. It has been a while since we last had volunteers. I am looking forward to receiving them on 24th September 2021. Nils will go to Kiima Foods in Kasese while Lara will go to Jese in Fort Portal.

Overview of the evolution of the Covid-19-situation

It was on a sad note when the volunteers left Uganda earlier than their volunteer ship end due to the deadly covid. Uganda got the first covid case on 21st March 2020 the day the volunteers left Uganda. The president declared a lock down with curfew which people observed for some time. Food was distributed but some people did not get so people demanded to go back and work to feed their families. Since then, we have gone through several lockdowns. The first wave of covid, many Ugandans did not mind so much because they knew it was killing old and sick people but this second wave everyone is trying to follow the SOPs. This is because they seen young people dying including the rich.

Currently, the schools, churches and bars are still closed due to covid. Some schools are studying online while others cannot afford. The children are tired of staying at home including mine though some are studying online as well. It is believed that time will come when we have to just get used to the covid and do things normally. This is likely to happen when we all get vaccinated. At the moment the government wants to open the schools but wants all the teachers to have completed vaccination.

The Bamboo project

The project is moving on well and we hope for best results. They planted several seedlings and they have grown, and some have already been planted along the riverbanks. I went to Kasese in May this year to check on the area where the nursery bed was to be established and also toured the riverbank where the grown seedlings were to be transplanted to. I went there again in August and found when planting along the riverbanks had already taken place. They also had several seedlings in the nursery bed.

Jana visited the project earlier this year and in this month of August, Thea has also visited the project. They can also give their opinion. The prime minister of Uganda also visited the project. Nayode has concentrated on one big river which makes more destructions, but it is on record that they are more than seven rivers which destroy lives, livestock, and farms. Yasin the director of Nayode says the bamboo project will be producing seedlings which will be distributed to different farmers along the riverbanks. He also said when the bamboo is grown, they can do some craft items for income generation.



Seedlings have been planted along riverbanks



Yasin and his colleague explain to Thea all about the project

Our new volunteers

Lara

My name is Lara, I am 19 years old and last year I completed my Abitur, which is what the secondary school leaving examination is called in Germany. Since then, all I wanted was to do a voluntary service abroad. I love exploring nature, learning new languages, cooking (especially the eating part of it), being creative and experiencing fashion as a way for people to express themselves. I feel like all of these things get even more interesting if you do them in an environment that is different to the one you are used to. That is why I was extremely excited about the possibility of living in a new country.

But due to coronavirus, the departure for my initial voluntary service had to be cancelled. At first, I thought that I would have to change my plans against my wishes, but I didn't. And now I get to go to Uganda through Vuga! I will be living in Fort Portal where I will be working with Jese. The main reason why I am doing a voluntary service instead of travelling is because I want to gather work experience in the ecological field, which is where I want to work in the future. I think that Jese is the perfect organisation to help me do that, and I can't wait to learn about all their different projects and how to make those work. Another thing I am really excited about is learning Rutooro, I think it's great that I will be able to make use of it right away.

I am very thankful for the preparation seminar that Nils and I attended, because first of all, I do not know if I would be able to prepare for living in Uganda at the moment without the tons and tons of tips about what clothing to pack, what documents I need and how to stay physically and mentally healthy. Then of course, it was really nice to get to know so many active members of Vuga. Learning from them about colonialism, racism and the facets and consequences of it made me gain a new perspective. The importance of respect and self-reflection is now clearer to me than ever.



Lara and Nils are happy to be able to start their voluntary time in Fort Portal and Kasese

Seminar session with Lexi



Nils

My name is Nils and I come from a small village in the southwest of Germany. I have a B.Sc. in Economics and Finance and am currently studying for an M.Sc. in Economics with a focus on sustainable resource economics – especially with regard to the agricultural sector. I will soon be volunteering for Vuga's partner organizations in Kasese. Here I am looking forward to combining and enriching the theoretical knowledge from my studies with the experiences of the Ugandan colleagues and their partners. Since the preparatory seminar in July, which took place partly online and partly on site in Leipzig, I have kept one piece of advice from former Vuga volunteers close to my heart: "Don't judge but approach the experience with an open mind." With this tip in mind, I am looking forward to experiencing a new daily routine in a new environment and to meeting new colleagues, new friends, and a new family.

Small scale projects – by Thea

Since this year, our partner organisations have the opportunity to apply for support for small projects at the North-South Bridges Foundation through Vuga. For example, Nayode finances the bamboo planting project in Kasese in that way.

Two other small organisations from Fort Portal have now expressed interest in implementing a cooperation project with the partner organisations Yawe and Jese.

Trina and the chairpersons of the organisations met in August to discuss the details.

Huvucso (Humura Vulnerable Children & Youth Support Organisation) works in the Humura community and wants to improve access to clean drinking water for the local population by building "protected springs" with the help of Jese. Huvucso and Jese have already worked together in previous projects. The second organisation, "Rwenzori young mother's skills empowerment", wants to teach disadvantaged girls and women, together with Yawe, various handicrafts such as tailoring, knitting or weaving baskets. This can help them to generate a daily income.

Both organisations will submit a project application by early 2022. We are looking forward to it.

Snippets from Ugandan Press (19.06.2021) – by Philipp

At the 25 August a chartered flight with 51 refugees from Afghanistan, landed at the airport in Entebbe. The Ugandan government is willing to host them at least 3 months, while they are applying for asylum in other countries. (independent.co.ug)

At the Olympics 2021 in Tokyo, Uganda won in total 4 Medals (2Gold/1Silver/1Bronze). Silver for 10000m Men's run, Gold for 3000m Women's obstacle run and 5000m Men's run, Bronze for 10000m Men's run. (Olympics.com)

250 hectares in five central forests across the country, will be reforested with new trees. Ugandan government works with the business community hand in hand to do something about the climate change and to prevent his effects. (dailymonitor.co.ug)

Uganda and South Sudan have agreed to patrol the Nimule-Juba highway. Around 1000 lorry drivers stopped at the main crossing point on the highway and protested. An unknown militia had been attacking lorry drivers and bus travellers. Several traders and lorry drivers have been killed so far. The agreement follows the events and the protest, and the police will have checks every 10km. South Sudan is recovering from a civil war and is dependent on their neighbours for essential supplies. (bbc.com)