

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

We hope you had a great start into 2022! We begin the new year with a change in the board: While Jana stepped down as the Second chair on Vuga's General Assembly in December, Eva took over her position. Anna remains as the First Chair while Hye-Seon is in charge of the finances and Jule together with the new board member Alexandra (Lexi) assist the board. Thank you, Jana, and welcome Lexi!

The new board met at the end of December to talk about upcoming topics like the mid-seminar. On 24th September, Trina welcomed our two volunteers Lara and Nils in Uganda and since then, Lara has worked with Jese in Fort Portal and Nils with Kiima Foods and Nayode in Kasese.



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## Greetings and report from the project coordinator — by Trina

Happy new year to everyone. I thank God that we all made it to 2022 amidst all challenges. I take this opportunity to thank all our stakeholders both in Germany and Uganda for the effort put to see that Vuga moves forward.

There is omicron in Uganda, but people have learned to live with it. Many people are falling sick, but few go for testing. So, when one in the community with the same symptoms tests positive, the rest just treat themselves coz they believe they also have covid. Schools have opened today officially, and children have gone back to school. Many people have been vaccinated and the process is still ongoing. Some bus companies don't allow passengers who haven't been vaccinated. I wish everyone a healthy blessed 2022. Let us continue to keep safe.

The volunteers arrived on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. The seminar started well on 26<sup>th</sup>. During the seminar we covered many topics. The following is a little excerpt of contents of the seminar.

Throughout the following days of the seminar, we had contributions from our partners. Mr. Kabonge Daniel of Potters Heart took the volunteers through security, social life, nature, and travel as well as the Ugandan culture. Day three was about the NGOs in Uganda, politics in Uganda by Mr. Matovu Moses and the education system in Uganda by Kirabo Joanna. Mwesigwa Michael, a male nurse, facilitated information about common diseases, epidemics, and pandemics. Signs and symptoms of diseases, prevention, and treatment. Topics like growing up as a child in Uganda was facilitated by Kirabo Joanna, growing up as a girl child by Kisakye and being a woman in Uganda by

Mulungi. During our last seminar day Patricia talked about crisis management. I closed the seminar with information about networking and a recap of the seminar. Lastly, we visited the zoo.

I completed my bachelors' degree studies. I am now doing my research report. Graduation is likely to take place next year in April. Moreover, Churches were opened officially on 26<sup>th</sup> September. People are very happy to go back to churches again.

On 1<sup>st</sup> October we travelled with the volunteers to meet the partners and host family in Fort Portal who were happy to see Lara and looked forward to staying and working with her. We proceeded to Kasese where we dropped Nils at his host family. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October, we picked Nils from his host family and went to Kiima Foods where the volunteers were briefed about Kiima Foods and what they do. We later went to Kilembe mines and to places that were affected by the floods. From there, we went to Nayode where the volunteers were briefed about what Nayode does. We later had lunch with the partners and later travelled back to Fort Portal to drop Lara at her host family.

The volunteers were well introduced to their workplaces and assignments according to their supervisors. They have gone to the field as well as working at the offices. Nils also works at Nayode some of the days of the week.



Lara, Nils and Trina visit Kilembe mines and other places that were affected by the floods

## Lara's experience of her first months

Starting the work at Jese felt very abrupt. Suddenly I was seated in an office filled with people whose names I had heard once and already forgotten again. In the first weeks, I didn't have much to do. I tried to get familiar with the project I am currently working under: The programme is called Skill Up, and its objective is to decrease youth unemployment by teaching technical, business and life skills in different trades to an age group of 18-30. The focus is on vulnerable people, e.g. young mothers or adolescents who lost a parent. In the three months that I have worked

with Jese, I could take part in the selection process, the preparing meetings with youth and parents, the start of the life skills training and finally the monitoring of the actual enterprise-based training!

There was a lot of paperwork involved, and I eventually started to be very busy making lists, editing contracts, taking pictures, printing, filing, and writing reports. I have gotten to know many of my colleagues, and I enjoy working with them.



Trainees in carpentry show their work



Unexpectedly, a second project came up for me to join. Its main objective is to construct 15 drinking water points in Fort Portal City. They are supposed to decrease people's walking distances when fetching water and help prevent waterborne diseases. At the moment my work mostly includes helping to write them down. Seeing the whole process of a project from the start is very exciting, and I am looking forward to taking part in the implementation.

This traditional water point will be turned into a protected spring

## Nils' experience of his first months

I now feel familiar and generally comfortable with life in Kasese. I feel that I have finally arrived: The neighbor children greet me as "Uncle"; the neighbor peers greet me as "Brother"; I have my favorite food; I have my favorite places; I know what to do in my spare time.

I am also familiar with the working habits of Kiima Foods, my host NGO. Primarily, I am involved in a recently launched long-term project focused on promoting and implementing nature-based solutions in rural areas. The large amount of time I spend in the field makes the work even more interesting and provides space for exchange. The main involvement in a specific project offers me constructive tasks and I can follow its development, progress, and impact throughout my stay in Uganda.

Since Lara's and my arrival in September, I have experienced many highlights in Uganda, both inside and outside of work. My social network has grown to the point where I regularly receive invitations to house hospitalities and other forms of gatherings. I even had the opportunity to attend my first Ugandan wedding as a guest. I always appreciate to be invited, socialize, and learn about Ugandan ways of life.

## Snippets from Ugandan Press – by Jelena

Ugandan schools reopen! Almost two years after the Corona virus outbreak schools in Uganda are fully reopening on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Stakeholders such as Jimmy Lutaaya, the head teacher of St. Noa Girls Secondary School predict tough times ahead before the situation returns to normal. Many students worry they fell back during the time of the pandemic. According to the National Planning Authority (NPA), pp to 30% of students are not expected to return, due to teen pregnancy, early marriage, and child labor.

(aljazeera.com & monitor.co.ug. /10.01.2022)

Since the partial lifting of the lockdown in July 2021 the numbers of tourists in several national parks in Uganda have increased. Amusa Chemonges, tourism warden at the Murchison Falls National Park, reveals that statistic show that the steep rising in domestic tourists is striking. "The biggest number of tourists that we receive here in Murchison Falls are local tourists and the numbers increasing steadily every month," he said. He reasons the growth with the travel restrictions for international tourists and the focus on domestic tourists, where the outdoor experience in national parks provides a short refuge from the pandemic.

(monitor.co.ug. /06.01.2022)

Vivian Ddambya and Rowena Turinawe, two Ugandan ICT (information and communications technology) professionals have been recognized as being among the 35 most influential women in technology in Africa. They have been named before by the Vison Group's under the "Top 40 Under 40" project for driving transformation in the ICT and technology arena. Due to the pandemic the adoption and implementation of many technologies has been accelerated. Ddambya and Turinawe have been vital forces in driving this transformation.

(newvision.co.ug. /30.11.2021)