

Travel Report: The Wedding of Ronald and Phiona, and the Workshop 1.5-8.5.2013
Eva Winizki, President, UECD July 2013

Dear UECD sponsors, benefactors, members, and interested friends,

On May 1st, 2013, I flew to Uganda. As always, when European visitors travel to this region, I was met by an entire crew: Ronald's brother, Obed, along with other friends, came to bid me welcome at Entebbe. Together we drove to Gloria's house in Kampala, where I was to find shelter for the week. It is a very beautiful, large home, where she lives along with her husband and their small daughter, Pearl.

Ronald's wedding was quite special, a blend of the modern and the traditional. In addition to the many family members were friends of Phiona, town and country and friends of all ages, and almost all UECD students, who also helped with the planning of this occasion. What is more, three white CEOs from Capetown, accompanied by their wives, honored Ronald by traveling to Kampala. They were from the law office ensAfrica in Capetown, which had just fused with Synergetics Uganda, Ronald's law firm. Their wives arrived in the most elegant Afro/European gowns, Haut Couture whose provenance looked more like London than Capetown.

The Give-Away Party was on Friday, and went from 2 pm until 9 at night. It was held in a garden with perhaps 200 or more visitors. On one side sat family members of Phiona, and on the other side sat those of Ronald. All the rituals, speeches and gifts were exchanged and performed, in preparation for the greatest gift, that of Fiona to Ronald's family. Phiona's family organized special dance groups (please see the pictures enclosed). I could only catch the first glimpse of the bride after some hours, (see the picture of Phiona in the foreground). Of the 14 Friesch cows, (black and white, like our Waadtländer version) which Ronald—as a “bridal price”—had to herd into the pen belonging to Phiona's parents, 14 cows were repaid to him by various uncles and aunts, as a sign of their generosity. Phiona's family stems from a comfortably situated farming clan in the southeast of Uganda.

On Saturday morning, the official church ceremony was held with a contemporary sermon given by an open minded female priest. The music that accompanied the ceremony went directly into the heart...and the feet!

That evening was the wedding party: 400 guests in a tent filled with large round tables. Outside, a buffet stood, loaded with the wedding dinner. Ronald and Phiona sat in front, bedecked with enormous bouquets. There were many speeches, but I will mention two in particular. The newly fused law firm, Ronald's Synergetic law, together with ensAfrica, (520 lawyers in Capetown, were represented by 3 CEOs with their wives. The top CEO, a white SA, was as impressive as his title. He began with a toast to the bridal pair, and continued with a second toast to that other wedding—the fusion of the two law firms. All the SAs came up on the stage, and at this point, the legal “wedding” seemed even bigger than that of Ronald and Phiona. He explained how the Ugandans use the first

three years to acquire cases, during which time everything would be paid: salaries, infrastructure, and expenses. After this period, as these things are run, they need to become an independent branch firm.

I was the next speaker at this event. I congratulated the bridal pair once more, wishing them in both my name and the name of UECD much happiness with each other, and in the outside world. And then, I spoke of another marriage to which Ronald had committed, with UECD. I introduced the project, inviting him onto the stage, and introducing him as the first student who had been able to complete his career training through UECD, and what is more—today serves as Uganda's UECD President. Ronald appeared both humble and proud to have played this important role. Next, I called each of the students onto the stage, one by one. Almost all were present: Hilda, Obed, Adah, Patricia, Fiona, Robert Okware, Robert Nangoli, Elisabeth, Jimmy, Susan, Florence. The women wore lovely African dresses: the men looked equally elegant. Jane, unfortunately was ill, Doreen not able to take time off in London. All of the students were introduced by profession, and I offered still another wedding possibility: the fusion of UECD with their legal chancellery. It is said that our students have considerable competition today in the job market, and are looking for employment after finishing their programs. Obed was introduced as a new MA, who soon will be an attorney looking for work. Our two HR ladies, Patricia and Fiona, will be seeking something in the HR Department, Adah as a PC maintenance specialist etc. There was also an indication that these students are able to engage socially. Social engagement led to a lively discussion that resounded with a positive echo by the Ugandans. It was clear that our students were proud to be part of UECD.

The SA promised to make contact with us, and it was clear that they were impressed with our organization. The ball is in our court., and we're carrying the ball! My vision: members of the legal chancellery, possibly these CEOs from Africa, will become future sponsors, patrons, and employers.

Photos of the wedding will soon be viewable on our website.

On Monday we held the Workshop in Gloria's home. All students, with the exception of Doreen, were present. I gave some input concerning the development from our pioneer phase to our present phase of differentiation, and the changes that growth has involved (see enclosed flip) in our leadership, structure, and goals. The result: all students who have completed a Bachelor degree, whether they continue in a Master/Postgraduate program, or find employment, will become VS members for a period of five years. They will have the following functions, according to the resources they bring:

Hilda: to recruit students from the northern region and pass them on to Robert O

Obed: to mentor Florence and Susan

Adah: to maintain our two new laptops, (a gift from Labdoo), to give lessons to the new students in the use of the PCs, to create a file on the PCs for the students with private codes, to make a logo for UECD.

Patricia: as HR specialist, to help new students with career planning, and to document these proceedings.

Fiona: as HR specialist, to lend support to Patricia, and to mentor Elisabeth and Jane

Robert O: to function as the first contact with Gloria for new students, to create a workflow management system (flowchart) for the selection process, (see attachment) and to mentor Elisabeth.

Gloria: to be responsible for the entire coordination and communication system, to open a UECD bank account, to manage this with Ronald as the official signer, to organize VS meetings, to do career planning of new students together with Patricia, to keep UECD Switzerland informed whenever necessary.

Ronald: as President, to be responsible for strategy building and leadership for UECD Uganda. Moreover, with Gloria's support and the support of UECD Switzerland, to conduct meetings, to be held accountable for the identification, contact, and continued smooth relationship with Ugandan sponsors: to make available his private office in Kampala for the upkeep of the new PCs, the running of PC courses with Adah, and using them with the students, and finally, to have official signing power, authorize, and inform UECD Switzerland, whenever it is deemed necessary.

We now have a Board with seven members, including Ronald and Gloria, (see photo), with separate departments of responsibility. These Board members are leading UECD Uganda.

The ethnic conflict which Fabian formulated in his analysis, was laid openly on the table between Ronald and and Robert O. It was clear that Ronald reacted strongly to the accusation which Robert had indirectly made: namely, that Ronald was choosing people from the southwest. Ronald made it clear that he did not favor any ethnic prioritizing, but rather that these students had presented themselves to him. This had more to do with his relationship networking than with his choosing, and that he also favored that the students should come from all areas of the land, as stipulated in the regulations. I explained to them that following our organization's phases, we are looking to solve conflicts primarily through having transparent structures, and holding to the agreements we have made. This differs from our pioneer phase, where conflicts were often handled on a personal level.

The suggestion came from the new VS members that we institute a quota system for the near future, , whereby students are sought from the northern and eastern regions. All of us became increasingly sensitized to the problem of ethnic privilege, without bruising personal feelings.

Ronald then made it clear that he also would like all students not to immediately send letters to Switzerland, as soon as conflicts occur, but rather that they would use the structures provided by UECD Uganda, to solve these problems. Only when these

conflicts could not be solved in Uganda, would it be appropriate to turn to the VS Switzerland for guidance.

I also find it important to hold fast to the functions which we in the Swiss VS have determined for ourselves:

Eva: responsible for contact with VS UECD Uganda, is the representative for third parties, conducts meetings in Switzerland, manages the website and PR material alongside of Markus Naepflin.

Markus B. substitutes for the President in her absence, manages legal situations, the financial/, administrative archive, and distributes funds which are not handled by sponsors.

Claude: keeps the minutes of meetings, serves as actuary and event manager.

Fabian: maintains contact with members, sponsors, and patrons, and sees that a good relationship is continued, plans and leads events together with Claude

Markus N: inspects finances, gives support to Eva for the website.

We closed the workshop in Uganda by all going out to a Chinese restaurant.