

PROJECTS

The fact that adults or children with corrective glasses or sunglasses are rarely seen in the streets unfortunately do not mean that humans' eyesight near the equator is better than elsewhere or that the eye gets used to the intensive light. To the contrary, the strong sunlight plays a significant role in the physiological ageing process of the crystalline lens, it damages the eye already very early. Eye cataract for example is a widespread disease in Uganda and already occurs at an early age – during childhood.



Child with cataract

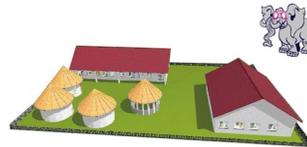
Visual disorders and eye diseases are widespread in Uganda, but visually impaired people rarely get the right and efficient treatment.

Uganda being one of the poorest African countries has about 80 % of its population living at or below the poverty line. The average life expectancy is 51 years for women and 48 years for men. The medical care is insufficient, especially in the rural. Uganda does not have a public health insurance system as we know it in Germany. Thus, the expenses for treatments in hospitals have to be fully covered by the patients and their families. To pay for the doctors and the hospitals is a problem, not only for the poor. For 1 million inhabitants there is one doctor (in Germany the relation is one doctor for 16000 patients). Paying an optician or paying for spectacles is impossible for many people.

Working on this evidence Hanfred Spirgatis is trying to bring any relief already since 1995. With the foundation of the independent non-profit association "Bazungu e.V." in 2004 Hanfred Spirgatis started his first project: The vocational training of young Ugandans in the craft of opticians in Germany and directly on-site in Uganda (about 16 young Ugandans – male and female – have been trained so far). This project was followed by the purchase of land and the building of an Eye Care Centre in Kayunga – fully sponsored by Hanfred Spirgatis himself.



Eye Care Centre Kayunga



In the new-built Kayunga Eye Care Centre, which was completed in 2005, treatment rooms for vision tests and ophthalmological examinations have been arisen as well as workshops for the production of eyeglasses. Everything was well equipped. Even small accommodation facilities for eye doctors existed and still exist.

2007 our Ugandan partner organization UHECA Uganda Health & Eye Care Association has been founded by Hanfred Spirgatis which should be the responsible body of our projects in Uganda. Two new Health and Eye Care Centres could be opened in Mpigi District:



Health and Eyecare Centre Buwama

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The equipment of the Health & Eyecare Centre Buwama was fully funded by the Ministry for Generations, Families, Women Affairs and Integration of North Rhine-Westphalia.



Health and Eyecare Centre Mpenja

All projects focus on the principle "help for self-help" or Community capacity building (CCB), also referred to as capacity development that focuses on understanding the obstacles that inhibit people, governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations from realizing their development goals while enhancing the abilities that will allow them to achieve measurable and **sustainable results**. A lot of requests from Uganda could be answered, an Ugandan ophthalmologist was trained to carry out operations with a phaco-device (device to carry out cataract operations), now he can pass his knowledge and skills to his Ugandan colleagues. Further training in modern surgery methods and examination methods followed.

Further projects could be managed successfully, for example in Nkokonjeru. The focus of Bazungu e.V. was always the training of young Ugandans in the craft of opticians and the treatment of uncorrected eye diseases. The establishing of sustainable structures in Uganda in the field of Health has always been an important aim of our association.

We do not want to hide the less positive aspects of our work. The practical problems arising in the cooperation with the local authorities and our claim of **sustainable structures** still seem to be insurmountable.



Eye Clinic Kasana

From 2010 until 2016 Bazungu e.V.' priorities have been the support of the Team Ahaus by building up the Eye Clinic in Kasana. We are still waiting for the local authorities to accept certain conditions in our future cooperation. They have already been written down and discussed in a MOU between the local authorities of Kasana and Luwero District and Bazungu e.V.

In the meantime we have been busy in Northern Uganda. In Bukedea District at the Hospital Angels of Charity promoted by the friendly NGO Kumi Freunde e.V. we equipped an operation theatre and Eye Care Centre with the necessary devices. Another project in Northern Uganda is the establishment of a school for opticians nearby a school for blind promoted by a German foundation. In Guinea and Ghana we are going to build up so called "Robin Hood"-Clinics.

[Text and Layout: Monika Feierabend]



Hanfred Spirgatis

My attention was concentrated to Uganda and the problems of the people living there via lens production – soon the initial passive Sponsoring became an active personal engagement which is fulfilled by the wishes to help viscous projects to the necessary sustainable success. The first step was the training of young Ugandans in the optical craft, the next project purpose the building of the Eye Care Centre Kayunga. The continuous advancement of the project is very important for me personally. I thank all who have contributed up to now to the success of this project and would be pleased to win more new friends for Uganda.

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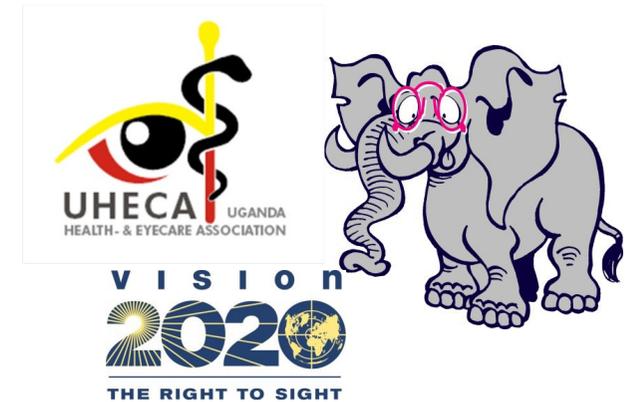
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