

Africa - Uganda / Camp Leader Interview

TITLE: A TRANSCRIPTION OF AN INTERVIEW

ORGANISATION: UGANDA PIONEERS ASSOCIATION.

LANGUAGE OF THE INTERVIEW: LUGANDA.

INTERVIEWER: SAMUEL ZZIWA

TRANSLATION/TRANSCRIPTION LANGUAGE: ENGLISH.

INTERVIEWEE: KYEYUNE BENEDICT (CAMP LEADER)

COUNTRY: UGANDA.

TRANSLATOR: MUTUMBA MICHEAL.

1 **KEY:**

2 **Q: question, statement by the interviewer**

3 **Q2: question /statement by interviewer two.**

4 **A: answer/ response by the interviewee.**

5 **T: additional translation to add more light by the translator.**

6 1. Q-1 : we are very happy to see you sir.

7 2. A-1: Thank you my brother, am happy to meet you too.

8 3. Q-2: my name is Zziwa Sam; i work with Uganda Pioneers Association. Ummmm, we are going
9 to have a conversation with you about the voluntary works putting much emphasis on
10 achievements arrived to, most especially during the time with international volunteer. We
11 know very well that you have been a leader in many work camps, and we believe you are the
12 right person to talk to about the leadership in these work camps, we therefore ask you to
13 share with us some of your personal details, what is your name?

14 4. A-2: My name is Kyeyune Benedict, i am 26 years old, i live in Nansana, i am a photographer,
15 but, i am also a volunteer at Uganda Pioneers Association, for seven years now.

16 5. Q-3: thank you very much. We beg you to allow us record this conversation!

17 6. A-3: there is no problem with that.

18 7. Q-4: thank you very much. Mr. Ben Kyeyune, are you a Ugandan?

19 8. A-4: (sighs), yes, i am a Ugandan.

20 9. Laughter from both.

21 10. Q-5: As we mentioned earlier that you have been leader of a number of work camps, would
22 you be kind to inform us of the various locations of the work camps you have been part of?

23 11. A-5: i have been to work camps in Kampala, in villages, but i have mostly been here when i
24 talk about Kampala, I've been in luweero, kiboga, Apach, i have also been to..... Kikooba.

25 12. Q-6: eheee, that show that you have truly performed well in these activities. At first, as we go
26 back to the work camps (coughing), we would like to emphasizes on the camp, umm, the first
27 camp. When was your first work camp with international volunteers?

28 13. A-6: hmmm i remember, the year was 2010, I had finished school, high school. During those
29 days, when one finished high school they could get six months of holiday. But, one couldn't
30 work, get employed by someone and that meant, one should just stay home. Yet when one
31 stayed home, temptations would always come in, to join up with peers who might be drug

32 users, smokers, or even alcoholics, all anti-social conducts you could think of. That's when i
33 got in touch with a brother of mine, a volunteer too, Working with an organisation in
34 kawempe then. About the same time i joined him, his organisation had partnered with UPA,
35 and that is how i started voluntary work.

36 14. Q-7: what was the name of the organisation your brother worked with?

37 15. A-7: it was called Kawempe caring support centre. As i was still saying, UPA had a project called
38 'SHAKING UP THE WORLD'. Now from there, i was coming from Kawempe, a place a little far
39 from here, to work with kawempe caring support centre together in partnership with UPA.
40 And therefore, that was the first time i participated in voluntary work and worked for the
41 community, and with international volunteers too.

42 16. Q-8: do you remember when you first participated as a camp leader, in a camp involving
43 international volunteers?

44 17. A-8: when i fished the shaking up the world project, kawempe caring support centre closed.
45 Given the fact that i had six months then, so much time doing nothing, yet i had also seen the
46 location of UPA, that when i decided to come here, participated in my next camp, in 2010,
47 whose theme was construction of this building (a structure at Uganda Pioneers Association).
48 At the end of that camp, UPA availed an opportunity to train aspiring camp leaders, in January
49 2011. I enrolled and got trained for two months, working with international volunteers. And
50 that same year i got an opportunity to go to Luweero, Kibira, as a camp leader.

51 18. Q-9: How many international volunteers were involved in this work camp?

52 19. A-9: the luweero camp, in Kibira!

53 20. Q-10: yes.

54 21. A-11: there were six international volunteers, and us the local volunteers, we were six,
55 together making twelve people. All local volunteers were coming from Uganda. Among the
56 international volunteers, 2 from Denmark, 2 were coming from German; the other two were
57 coming from Ireland.

58 22. Q-12: what were you doing in this work camp?

59 23. T-12: what was the theme of the camp?

60 24. A-12: we were harvesting coffee, maize, and constructing a spring well. The spring well in the
61 village was in a poor condition. So they were not getting safe water.

62 25. Q-13: how long did it take for you to finish all this work?

63 26. A-13: it took us three weeks.

64 27. Q-14: while in Kibira with your team, which challenges did you face?

65 28. A-14-1: um, the very first challenge that we faced was the language. As i mentioned earlier,
66 we had people from Denmark, German, and Ireland, added to the locals.

67 29. T-14:1: we lacked a common language due to the presence of people from different countries
68 with different languages.

69 30. A-14-2...but, the good thing was, that us the local volunteers knew English. However, the
70 community and some people we used to work with knew little or no English at all. In the work
71 camps, we used to have a way with the language, which we choose to have a general language
72 that we call a 'common language'. In this camp the common language was English. But the
73 people from the community did not speak it well.

74 31. Another challenge was the food. Us the volunteers from Uganda knew our food, because it's
75 the food that has raised us. But then the problem was affecting the international volunteers,

76 because they did not know the food. However much we used to spice it up with spaghetti and
77 rice that they know, but our cooking style was not known to them.

78 32. Sometimes we face challenges based on the way we used to execute our work within the work
79 camp, in that the international volunteers had a focused and steady pace something the local
80 volunteers did not have.

81 33. T-14-2: Some local volunteers were working at a proportionately slower pace/ speed
82 compared to the international volunteer.

83 34. A-14-2...it gave us hard time for three to four days.

84 35. Q-15: how did you overcome these challenges?, like the language related issue!

85 36. A-15: we decided to get an interpreter. But then before we did that, we first talked about it
86 over a camp fire that we normally had every evening after dinner. During the camp fire, we
87 have a review of the world day, talked about what went wrong, appreciate the achievements,
88 and also forge a way forward about those that went wrong. Now one of the solutions we came
89 up with in one of the work camps was to get an interpreter with an aim of helping the
90 international volunteers. We basically advised them to seek for help from this interpreter (the
91 local volunteers from UPA) whenever they wanted to communicate something to the people
92 from the community and vice versa. In fact, this helped us so much in that the days before,
93 the community's engagement in our activities was limited, but after getting the interpreter(s),
94 the community became active, they even participated in the harvesting, and many other
95 things. And this is why it took us only three week to finish all the work we did, due to
96 availability of enough or extra manpower.

97 37. Q-16: as you mention earlier that you have been to Kikooba, and now in Kibira, how would
98 you relate these work camps, what similarities and differences can spot out between these
99 two work camps?

100 38. A-16: aaam, the similarity is, both of these work camps are voluntary projects. We should not
101 forget that. And all participants, come to work, to work such that those communities, say
102 Kikooba and Kibira are helped, in things they are rather not able help themselves. While in
103 Kibira, we constructed a well, we constructed a structure, and when i was in Kikooba, we
104 constructed (he estates), we finished a toilet and a classroom block. All the things we
105 constructed help the community. A well helps the community, so dose a toilet and a class
106 room. The same applies to the challenges, the challenges we encountered in Kikooba are
107 similar to the ones in Kibira, and language barrier was always a problem at the beginning until
108 we established a common language. But the fact still stands that, at that time, we're all
109 volunteers with a purpose of helping a community.

110 39. Q-17: what would you say about the relationship between the international volunteers and
111 the locals of the communities in the picture during these work camps you have been to?

112 40. A-17: Now about the relationship, at first, the international volunteers come totally green
113 about the real set up of the communities they are coming to. They know nothing about
114 Kikooba, they just hear about these places. We the local volunteers are in the middle, at the
115 centre of it all, the mediators. Upa as our organisation usually teaches how to be good people
116 in the community, and through this, we are able to attract and call the locals in those
117 communities to get loser to us so that they could also coordinate with the international
118 volunteers. In that when we are removed from the equation, there will be no ordination
119 between the locals and the international volunteers. But because we are around, the
120 communities and the international volunteers start relating. Of which, by the end of the work

121 camp, the international volunteers speak the local language (luganda), they could cook, they
122 an handle domestic chores, of those communities. The relationships grow so strong that some
123 volunteers even find time after the camps are done to go back. For example gets some two
124 days before they travel back and goes back to say Kikooba to see this person, or that thing, in
125 that they no longer have that fear of these villages.

126 41. Q-18: thank you very much. Still in the host villages for the work camps, there are local leaders,
127 how have you been coordinating with these local leaders, especially in Kikooba?

128 42. A-18: i remember, when i was going to Kikooba as a camp leader, UPA secretariat gave me
129 three letters, one addressed to the chairman lc1, another to the chairman lc2, and the third
130 one to the town council. These letters were meant to introduce us to the local leaders and the
131 purpose of our stay. When we arrived in Kikooba, we cooked, prepared sleeping places and
132 rested, then in the morning, because we had gave a letter to the chairman lc1, he came in
133 person to officially open the camp. And he was the first to dig the foundation of the toilet. In
134 the three weeks' time, the town council leaders came and brought us some drinking water,
135 and also the chairman lc2 came during the cultural night of the camp and even bought us food.
136 This show how the local leaders too contribute towards the camp. And this helps to avoid
137 communities asking questions of who are these people, what they are doing here. The fact
138 that UPA also writes letters, to these leaders, it makes our work easy, also to make sure that
139 the local leaders contributes.

140 43. Q-19: thank you very much sir. Am, about voluntary work, in these camps that you have
141 participated, ones where you have been a leader, what are those thing that you would say
142 have been achieved?, thing that you think are really great that you could point out one by
143 one, like we got that, we achieved that, even that.

144 44. A-19: like when i talk about Kibira, we constructed the well, i even went back after two years,
145 and people were still using that well. When we're in Kikooba, we constructed a school, it is
146 still there and it still helps the people. And now when you asked me about the members of
147 the community, i normally look at the image i get from the community on arrival and then the
148 image as we finish the camp. Like in Kibira, it was our first camp, and on reaching the
149 community with the international volunteers, the community looked surprised to see a big
150 number of white people in the same place, and that actually they were there to stay, for three
151 weeks, and then at the end construct a well for them, and they are like why?, they would have
152 expected it should be the government to do this, but white people!. At first they had fear i
153 would say, but then in the end they understood, that white people are actually normal people
154 and they could even talk to them. And then by the time we leave, even the children could try
155 to talk to them and try to start a conversation like, hallo, my name is so and so, and they are
156 confidante now. It so happens that the locals could ask questions like, are you paid?, why are
157 you doing this?, and then we could explain to them, we are volunteers, they buy the idea,
158 some even join UPA from those villages, now they know the value of voluntary work. And
159 when i talk about the volunteers who joined us from these communities, some have improved
160 on their self-esteem, that they can express themselves, the English is better, some have
161 developed new skills. For example, i for one didn't know construction work, painting, but now
162 am good at all this, and honestly am a good painter, all because i joined UPA.

163 45. Q-20: thank you very much.

- 164 46. Q2-21: just because you have mentioned it, this was your first camp, in that community, but
165 in Kikooba they had had many, many camps, did you see any difference with the way the local
166 community was interacting with the international volunteers?
- 167 47. A-21: yes, there was a difference, one could clearly see that these people were used to the
168 presence of international volunteers. Only that they wanted us to stay a little longer, say three
169 more weeks. When time for farewell came, they could cry, asking us to stay for at least two
170 or more days, but our time was up, but we normally promise to go back. But one could see
171 the difference clearly. Even on arrival the communities are directly active to involve
172 themselves into the activities. Our work was to ask them to leave some work to us, direct
173 them of where to place the tools, but, they were really active.
- 174 48. Q-22: thank you very much. As in have witnessed in many camps, there are times of
175 misunderstanding for example between you the volunteers, or with the local community, in
176 these work camps, do you remember having any misunderstanding either amongst you the
177 participants or between the local communities and the participants?, moments where you did
178 not agree on something!, and if they were there, how did you manage them?
- 179 49. A-22: getting misunderstandings with the community, i never saw that. May be because we
180 leave UPA offices with those letters i told you about, the leaders are normally expecting us
181 and also informed of our purpose in the area, and if the local communities see their leaders
182 say the chairman come to open the work camp, they also quite being scared or worried of us.
183 Now amongst us, because we're human, you can't fail to find a few misunderstandings, we
184 always had a few misunderstandings about this or that, what normally causes the
185 misunderstandings is that, we often make time tables, to guide us on how we are to execute
186 out activities in the camp. And we normally form three working groups that is; the cooking
187 group, cleaning group, and the water collecting group. The cooking group is in what we call
188 'the power house'. We usually change the chef on a daily basis, but Saturdays and Sundays
189 are resting days. So people always don't want to cook on those days, because they are resting
190 yet they are supposed to cook implying that there is no free day for people in the power house.
191 So that is where the misunderstanding arise from. For example, you could find a group that
192 was in the kitchen last weekend, in the kitchen even this weekend, and then this group would
193 be like, no, we cooked last weekend, not again.
- 194 50. Q-23: so how do you handle that issue then?
- 195 51. A-23: now this is sorted by the camp leader. Actually the camp leader has no group. You are
196 supposed to be everywhere. Even when you are given a group say A, when C needs help, you
197 avail yourself. Amidst this misunderstanding, i come in as the camp leader and fill the gap, and
198 give them an extra hand. We cook together. But if we see it earlier that the group that cooked
199 the previous Sunday is to cook again the following Sunday, we talk about it over the camp fire.
200 And we select volunteers with the volunteers who would like to help cook the following day.
201 To give chance to the former group to rest. And it works for us. As a camp leader that challenge
202 is the one i would say has occurred in most of the camps. If there are other misunderstandings,
203 they normally sort them out amongst themselves.
- 204 52. Q-24: these work camps, they normally have broad themes. Do you remember some of these
205 themes, that you have had and they have greatly helped members of the host communities?
- 206 53. A-24: here i will talk about my very first work camp, however much i was not a camp leader.
207 Its theme was 'shaking up the world'. But when you look at this theme shaking up the world,
208 you might fail to understand it totally.

- 209 54. Q-25: what was it about?
210 55. T-25: what was the meaning/ content of this theme?
211 56. A-25: that project was carried out in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. And us in Uganda we
212 understood it in a way that, when one says, shaking – up – the – world, some looks at it in way
213 of winnowing maize flour. So here in Uganda we were dealing with sanitation. Handling
214 garbage and waste in our areas. It was really a wide project, in that we first did weekend work
215 camps, for three weeks and then a full time workcamp. Meaning that at first we're working
216 only on weekends and then daily for three weeks.
217 57. Q-26: what did you say were the activities in that project?
218 58. A-26: we're educating people about garbage management and disposal . So that they should
219 not just drop garbage everywhere, in trenches. Because when they drop it in trenches or water
220 channels, it might cause floods. In that we did not just clean these communities we worked.
221 We even trained people. And by the time we finished that project, people had changed the
222 way they handle their garbage. They normally kept their garbage in disposable bags, and
223 waited for the collection trucks. We taught people to be each other's watchdog, in the way
224 we handled it. During this project, i was staying in Kawempe; others were from Nansana, in
225 Mulago. So, we came from different areas, no one came from Bwaise. But we come from
226 elsewhere and did work in Bwaise. And we asked them to be each other's police, because
227 people have come from far to come and help that community, it means they safer with us.
228 Asked them to watch over each other, "when you see me drop garbage, ask me to pick it up".
229 In fact even until now, when you go back to Bwaise, however much they are going back to
230 their old ways, you can spot change. They now even have days when the collection truck goes
231 through to pick up the garbage. And that is Tuesday and Thursday. Given that people work so
232 much on weekend, it goes through on Tuesday and then Thursday.
233 59. Q2-27: the garbage is something also in Kikooba, the people told us they changed because of
234 the work camps. Even though that was not the main theme of the camps, so do you think
235 when you were in Kikooba, there were other changes related to you stay there?
236 60. A-27: yes it was there. As i told you earlier, when we go there, we form groups, and we have
237 a cleaning group. The cleaning group, its work is to clean the whole day. And because most of
238 the time the camp leader does not want idle people around the camp, in that after they finish
239 cleaning the camp site, they end up cleaning the community too. **And when people see them
240 cleaning, they are like ha!, lets also clean. And normally when we are finishing the work
241 camp we clean our camp site. But because we work with passion, we overreach in that we
242 could start from the camp site, then the school and then you find the entire community is
243 cleaning. And some of the things we do on arrival is to find a place we shall dispose our
244 garbage to, and there we dig a ditch. And the community usually also uses the same ditch,
245 it is always their responsibility to burn the garbage too. And because we set a trend for three
246 weeks, it becomes a habit.**
247 61. Q-28: Thank you very much. Just because you been part of many work camps, you might have
248 *spotted something that you think, UPA, the communities, or the sending organisations of*
249 *our international volunteer could improve, what do you think should be improved?*
250 62. A-28: As UPA, what i would ask them to improve or add is, to train more local volunteers how
251 work camps are run and also train more camp leaders. That we are growing and we have
252 started getting more responsibilities apart from these work camps, it so happens that us the
253 camp leaders with certificate are phasing out of the system. Although Upa trained a little more

254 camp leaders about three years ago, it should train some more. For example me i go to quite
255 many camps as a participant, not as a camp leader even when am qualified for that, it could
256 be good to be in a camp where we have at least three potential camp leaders even though we
257 have only one in control of the camp. Such that in case of any emergency, one would step up
258 and replace the camp leader, and if not so , they could help the camp leaders with some issues
259 given that they know how to run these camps. Another issue is that, to me, i think three weeks,
260 is not really enough time for a camp. Because we should consider the fact that this is Africa,
261 the pace or speed at which people respond is low. For example when i was in Apach, we were
262 moving around the community telling people that we were going to sensitize them on malaria,
263 immunise them of Hepatitis B, and male circumcision on a set date plus educating then on
264 ways of prevention of HIV/AIDs. But because their responding pace was low, we did not get
265 the number we expected to turn up even though we got a few. When we finished the camp,
266 came back to Kampala and then did a fellow up only to find respondents saying “people said
267 you should have given them three more days”, that the D day of the activity (which was a
268 Saturday) some people had to go farming, some had to go to church, and the ones whose
269 parents had gone to garden had to stay home and watch over the young ones. And therefore
270 they were suggesting that if we had given them a few more days, they could have turned up
271 in bigger numbers. But the work camp was set to last for three weeks. So am saying, we should
272 be given at least a month so that we are able to even handle those few half baked issues.

273 63. Q2-29: you mentioned that your generation of camp leaders is phasing away, to something
274 else, is there something you learnt through being a camp leader that you will still use in your
275 walk of life?

276 64. A-29: yes. You know when you are a camp leader, you have responsibility, responsibility for
277 not only three or four people, but one for at least twelve people, i actually had responsibility
278 over fifty people. (He laughs). When you are a camp leader you learn of how you are going to
279 run your work, you have to plan that when i finish this, i do that, from that then to this. And
280 because we have three or four groups, you do follow up in all of them, is the group in the
281 kitchen doing well!, are the builders mixing the motor right!, is concrete properly mixed?,
282 because they could put less cement and the building collapses. Therefore that why you have
283 to check everywhere, the power house, the construction site and when something is not
284 moving the way it should, you involve yourself in it too so that it is fixed. It so happens that
285 even when it comes to go to bed, by the time the camp leader goes to sleep, he or she is
286 supposed to be sure that everything is exactly where it is supposed to be, most especially the
287 equipment. So that i do not risk finishing the workcamp with tools lost.. For example i have to
288 make sure that i am a good custodian of the equipment entrusted in my keeps, if i was given
289 four spades, i have to take back four spades at UPA. This helps me in many ways, like i told
290 you earlier that i am a photographer, i might go to the field with four cameras with only one
291 extra person, making us two people operating four cameras. It means as a team leader, i must
292 follow up nearly all of them, make sure my colleague is shooting from the right angle, but
293 because i have been doing this for the last seven years, i do not spot a problem in my work. I
294 am flexible and my work is easy because of the experience in the work camps.

295 65. Q-30: thank you very much, though we have not heard about your life abroad.

296 66. A-30: as i told you that i left this place. I came to UPA in 2010, as a student who had just
297 finished high school. Was green, all i wanted was to get a simple job that could pay around
298 five thousand Uganda shillings every day, enough to buy me a soda and a chapatti. When i

299 came here i knew nothing, not cooking, painting, i did not know how to do construction work,
300 because me i was a mummy's boy. My mom used to do everything for me. When i came here,
301 i began with garbage, in trenches, dirty work in other words. When i came to UPA i established
302 a profile that I build step by step. That time came when i graduated from a normal participant
303 from kawempe to a trusted camp leader, and because i worked, worked in many projects, for
304 kids, construction, an opportunity was availed in 2015 to do voluntary work in another country
305 and we were given different projects that included one for kids, girls, to work on the train, but
306 because i was always part of the UPA annual children's work camp, that UPA does every
307 December, and the years 2013 and 2014 i was the camp leader, because of this experience, i
308 applied for a project that involved with kids and i was granted the opportunity for it.

309 67. Q-31: Which country did you go to?

310 68. A-32: i went to German.

311 69. Q-33: how long did you stay there?

312 70. A-34: i spent there one year. I was working in a primary school in Cologne.

313 71. Q-35: thank you very much. You have achieved quite a lot i voluntary work. Do you have any
314 question for us?

315 72. All the participants laugh.

316 73. A-36: ha, no, i do not have any questions, because you told me you just wanted to have a
317 conversation with me, and that is all i was able to do with you, unless you have any other
318 questions!

319 74. Q-36: thank you very much for your contribution.

320 End. Participants continue to get along.

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