

# Compact

Newsletter for Friends and Supporters

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Dear friends  
and supporters

It's becoming increasingly clear – to educate young people and to help them leap into a successful life, that's "our cup of tea". The first African graduates of Nehemiah Gateway University have returned to their home countries and are in the process of building up their own existence. They dream of bringing positive change to their countries. An approach to development aid that does not need huge investment in infrastructure and big money, but which is promising sustainable change. Whether in Uganda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Mexico or Cuba – and not to forget Albania!

A scholarship for Nehemiah Gateway University is worth every Euro, as we place high value on quality. It's worth the effort. Read more in this issue of Compact on the topics of higher education and development aid.

Have fun reading!  
Your Compact team



Johannes Selle at the German Bundestag

"The world is actually sufficiently equipped" – Johannes Selle (Member of Parliament) on development cooperation

**Nehemiah Gateway (N.G.):** Dear Johannes Selle, you are a Member of the German Bundestag, where you are an Ordinary Member of the "Economic Cooperation and Development"-Committee. How can we imagine this work?

**Johannes Selle (J.S.):** Our topics are very obvious, because very few countries can offer their citizens what should be natural: the provision of education, health, food and security. Therefore, we are thinking about how to improve the situation in the world. The successful SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) are being put into practice targeting an elimination of extreme poverty by 2030.

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The committee is intensively involved in the work on this and in detailed discussions, what we, together with our partners, have to do. First, we revise the priorities within the party. Then we negotiate in the committee, where we finally vote on the budget planning. Our budget is 8 billion Euro right now. We consider how much money we give to which fund or which special initiative, if we need more money, e.g. for programs like "cash for work" – that is, what we do every day.

**N.G.: What issues are currently high on the development agenda of the Bundestag?**

**J.S.:** Very important is for example the question: how we can help the countries next to crisis regions that have a lot of refugees, so that no pressure of displacement arises from the camps there. Another big issue is the fight against the causes of escape and migration. We think about what we can do in the long term to create perspectives. Because leaving home is a difficult decision – when made, people have already let go. But if they still see something to hold on to, they will remain and that's what we want to support.

**N.G.: What do you personally see as main priorities in development cooperation?**

**J.S.:** It's the creation of jobs, because then people earn money and can pay for the services that we would otherwise have to provide for them, for example, health care. If the citizens of a country earn no money, we have to provide health services for them again and again. But if we can create a job for them, they can insure themselves and the system pays for itself. If we always have to subsidize, we will quickly reach our limits. Governments must also take responsibility of their own. Otherwise, a hospital is built with development money, but once the tank with Diesel is empty, no one can buy new fuel and the hospital goes to ruin. Some countries have to start at the bottom to build an administration, to consider how to generate their own tax revenues, gain investors or create a land register to provide investors with security. There is still a lot to do in order to trigger an economic cycle as it works here.

**N.G.: Would the worlds' resources ever be sufficient, if all countries were to have the state of development of industrialized countries, considering our energy and land use?**

**J.S.:** If everyone lived like we do, we would be at our limits, but the realization that we just can't simply pipe toxic waste into the water or air, has grown over a long time now. We are increasingly relying on circular economies, the re-use of materials and on renewable energy. If one worked cautiously and perhaps restricted our requirements to an extent of wealth which is pleasant but not excessive, then it would work. The world is actually sufficiently equipped.

**N.G.: Why are we or the international community just not able to eliminate hunger and extreme poverty?**

**J.S.:** The Millennium Development Goals of 2000 have brought great progress and some figures were cut by half others were not. The bottom line is that people have recognized: Something has to happen! To eliminate extreme poverty by 2030 is a challenge, but at least now a consensus has been achieved and contracts have been signed, which, of course, has repercussions on their budgets. We fail to achieve our goals whenever conflicts prevail. Conflicts and natural disasters can set us back by decades. The goals are also not achieved if the leaders simply aren't willing or they distribute the country's resources amongst themselves and their own people.

Therefore, we are fighting for democracy because it restricts the amount of power and the term in office. The democratization process is indeed under way – and that gives us hope – but as long as old regimen and tribal conflicts exist, there is no progress. Consequently, there is pressure to migrate, because young people look for perspectives. It is important that these countries have access to the market so they can produce, otherwise there will be no jobs. The economic cycle has to support itself and develop to include ever larger segments of the population. You have to start with agriculture or in the energy sector, for example, where there is great potential. A relatively rapid development would be possible if one proceeded systematically. It is always emphasized: Africa is a rich continent – and that's true! The wealth is there; you just have to use it.

Interview continued on page 7 »



Street scenery in Havana



Future N.G. students: Susana Castillo and Moises Saavedra

## Cuba – young people want to bring change to their country

This winter, Nehemiah Gateway University will welcome its first two students from the island nation of Cuba. Cuba, a product of decades of communist rule and social and economic engineering, is opening to the world. And, as Cuba opens, new opportunities emerge for its citizens to prosper in ways unimaginable only a few short years ago.

The chance for an education outside of Cuba is just one of the many new opportunities now possible for Cuba's youth. While Cuba places a high value on education for its citizens, the availability of jobs upon graduation has made most of Cuba's university graduates over-qualified shopkeepers and factory workers. This all-too-normal occurrence of trained engineers and scientists working in ice cream parlors or bread factories, makes Cuba's youth hungry for new opportunities to put their talents and hard-earned education to use.

In December, when Cuban students, Susana Castillo and Moises Saavedra, join the other Nehemiah Gateway University undergraduate scholars studying business in Albania, they will do so with not only an excitement for learning, but also a heart for future service directed toward their home country. That's because Nehemiah Gateway's goal in educating these young, upcoming leaders is not only directed toward their individual future development and success, but also toward the economic and social development of their homeland as well.

The price tag for three years of study at N.G. University is approximately thirty thousand dollars per student – an amount that is awarded to both Susana and Moises through a full, all expenses paid scholarship made possible by you, our generous donors. Additionally, each student has a sponsoring home church or civic organization that partners with them back in Cuba for this educational process. Upon completion of their studies, Susi and Moises will return home to their partnering agency to begin two years of service with that group as an employee, building capacity through business in their sponsor's ministry and work, and in the community at large.

Self-sufficiency through capacity-building, business training and investment is the goal – and what better tool to accomplish this than the newly-minted and educated N.G. University graduates helping their own people and nation. To support these students' efforts in addition to funding, Nehemiah Gateway also provides business mentors to walk and work with them as these students become "business incubators" in a land desperately in need of exactly these types of opportunities.

This forward-thinking, holistic approach at development aid through business training is exciting and groundbreaking because of its people-centered approach. Will you join us in investing in the lives of young men and women committed to using their education to change the lives of others? Give a person a fish, and you feed him or her for the day. Teach a person to fish, and you might just change the nation....





The international students Loice, Butele, Sandra, Enock, Markus, Robert, Haleluya, Juliet und Brenda

## Scholarships for an Independent Life

They come from Mexico, Uganda, Tanzania and South Sudan – the twelve international students currently enrolled at the Nehemiah Gateway University in Albania. Their names are Abner, Sandra, Juliet, Brenda, Daniel, William Enock, Haleluya, Markus, Loice, Robert and Butele. During their three-year study program, Nehemiah Gateway covers all necessary costs for them by means of a scholarship.

**But how do they actually come to this university? What obstacles do they have to overcome and how are they supported by Nehemiah Gateway?**

Arlinda Merdani is Head of Global Operations at Nehemiah Gateway and responsible for the project coordination. She explains the scholarship program: "We specifically address young people from developing countries whom we feel can assume responsibility or a leadership role within their society. We invest in them to sustainably strengthen the community as a whole, and later they will pass on their knowledge and become multipliers. Thereby we want to help people to create opportunities for themselves and others in their home countries."

### The Selection of Students

The way to the university is not easy for potential scholarship recipients. Nehemiah Gateway works with partner organizations in the project countries, such as the American organization "Cornerstone Uganda", which has been active in Uganda for over 30 years.

All young people who are interested initially apply to the partner organization which preselects. Thereafter, it is checked whether the candidates meet the requirements of the Albanian Ministry of Education and of the Nehemiah Gateway University – for example, whether they have a certificate corresponding to university entrance level, and have sufficient English language skills to study in English. Last year alone, more than 100 young people applied to Cornerstone in Uganda. Six of them were invited for an interview after the pre-selection and in the end, three received a scholarship.

### The Decisive Interviews

The candidates who have made it into the pre-selection, are invited to a personal interview with Nehemiah Gateway. "In individual and group interviews we ask them about their motivation, their plans for the future, where they see their place in their society and what ideas they have to develop their country and their community. The decisive factor is the potential we see in the individual person" says Arlinda. Finally, the selection committee comes to a decision, using a transparent points system.

### The Hunt for the Visa

Once the decision is made, the real challenge begins: the procurement of a visa and the necessary documents for the residence permit in Albania. There is only one Albanian embassy in Africa, located

in Cairo. The biggest problem is the notarization showing that the students have committed no crimes in their home countries. First, the criminal record certificates must be notarized by the Foreign Ministry of the country, then they go to the embassy of the country in Cairo, then to a branch of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Egypt, and finally to the Embassy of Albania, where they are notarized for the fourth time. For this process, Arlinda needs to find volunteers in Cairo who drive to each of these authorities personally to obtain a notary legalization of the documents: "By mail, it would be way too expensive and would take too long. Fortunately, I have always found friends, acquaintances and supporters who have taken on this task. I also want to express my gratitude to the Albanian Embassy in Cairo for all their cooperation."

### In Albania

When the students arrive in Albania, an orientation week takes place in which they get to know each other as well as the campus and get a first impression of the study-program. They live in pairs or threes in shared accommodation: "We try to mix nationalities, so that someone from Uganda lives with a Mexican or Tanzanian to promote intercultural skills and friendships," says Arlinda. She hardly ever experienced that the international students got homesick or had problems with living in Albania: "We have great staff who do their best to support the students in everything they need. There are also mentors with whom personal issues can be discussed". So, students feel very happy in Albania – it's even a bit like home. The conditions and lifestyle there are closer than for example in Germany. Germany would be overwhelming for many – a cultural shock. "Albania is now regarded as an emerging country and is thus also a role model in terms of progress and development – it is on the right track and that gives the students from developing countries hope" says Arlinda. The courses are dual program – that means, alongside theory sections, internships are mandatory. For the internships, Nehemiah Gateway works with companies from the project countries.

### The Path to Independence – „Project Empowerment“

While studying, students develop their own business or project ideas. In a study module called "Entrepreneurship" they work in-depth on it and finally write a tangible business plan. "When they return to their home country after studying, we accompany and assist them to implement their business concepts and make them reality" says Arlinda. Nehemiah Gateway grants interest-free loans of up to 5,000 € to their graduates who have to pay it back after 3 to 5 years according to their business plan. This is an important start. Arlinda says: "We now have the first two students who are on a good way to build a life with the help of the Project Empowerment program! One is going to start a small pig farm and another plans to open a training laboratory in Kampala."

One scholarship costs almost 10.000 € annually. To be able to grant scholarships to our international students and thus give them the opportunity to study and build a life for themselves, our greatest thanks go out to all donors. Without them, Abner, Sandra, Juliet, Brenda, Daniel, William Enock, Haleluya, Markus, Loice, Robert and Butele would probably not look into such a bright future. Any support for financing these scholarships is always needed and highly appreciated.



For information on the programs or the application process at the Nehemiah Gateway University, please visit [www.ng-university.org](http://www.ng-university.org)



Innovative farming – on tour with Dr. Nakimbugwe



Arnold Geiger inspecting a pig farm

## Reunion in Uganda

„The air smelled like smoke and dust – so typical for Africa!“. This was Anke Stamminger's first impression on leaving the airplane in Entebbe, Uganda together with Arlinda Merdani, Head of Global Operations and Managing Director Arnold Geiger in September 2016. Anke Stamminger is responsible for marketing at Nehemiah Gateway and wanted to see for herself the first projects of Nehemiah Gateway in Uganda, which are gradually forming.

The trip had three targets: selecting new candidates for scholarships at Nehemiah Gateway University, establishing contacts and finding firms and organizations where students can complete their internships and, most of all, to meet our Bachelor graduates who returned to Uganda in January.

### Our Alumni

Joshua, Ahmed, Doka and Geoffrey were overjoyed to welcome the group. In January they received their Bachelor's degree at Nehemiah Gateway University in Albania and have returned to their home countries, Uganda and South Sudan. Two N.G. students joined them who are presently completing their internships in Uganda.

Joshua is not only working as sales manager for a renowned car dealership, but also as the assistant to the leader of our partner organization Cornerstone Uganda. He is happy to be their contact person for Nehemiah Gateway. He is excited: "The three years I spent in Nehemiah Gateway, Albania, greatly influenced me and when I came back down here, I was so unique, I was given opportunities of different

kinds of jobs and tasks to do. I tell you the truth, the influence of Nehemiah Gateway and how it changed me means I can now influence and help people down here in Uganda. I guarantee you: Nehemiah Gateway University is the best university, because my life was changed."

Geoffrey has great plans, too. During his practical terms he made preparations for his own pig farm and planned to start right away after graduation. However, he had problems. He had put the animals in the care of a farmer during his absence, and all of them died. He is starting all over again, has rented a suitable plot of land, registered his own firm and is going to establish his farm.

Ahmed has different plans. He is looking for suitable premises for a small internet café near Makerere University, the biggest university in Uganda. He already managed to register his own firm.

Just as warm, but more subdued was the meeting with Doka from South Sudan, where civil war is raging. Read more below.

### Partners and Practice

The group visited several projects that could be good places for the students' practical terms. Whether a water processing plant, electronics or food retail in Kampala, well-known organizations like Cornerstone or the impressive work of Maria Prean, founder of "Vision for Africa". Naturally, our friend Dr. Helen Nakimbugwe took part, too, and took the group to interesting and innovative agricultural projects. Among them two pig farms, where our young people could learn a lot.





Graduates, students and visitors

Geoffrey was delighted. Dr. Nakimbugwe also presented her own research project in the National Animal Genetic Resources Centre and Data Bank where she works as a head of department.

### Interviews for Scholarships

Scholarships for Nehemiah Gateway University are very popular, therefore a thorough selection process is mandatory. The group took their time to question three of the best from many applicants. It's not an easy task finding out who is best suited, as all of them are highly motivated and adequately qualified. We hope to present one or more of the lucky ones soon, as the next Bachelor course for Economy and Businesses will start in January 2017.

### Alarming News from South Sudan

Bachelor graduate Doka just about made it! He managed to flee to a safer region close to the border to Uganda with members of his family. Civil war is raging in his country. Twelve hours of tedious travel didn't prevent him from meeting the group from Germany in Kampala/Uganda. Founding a business or even a regular job is out of the question for him as a displaced person. Even the plan to bring humanitarian aid to his country is not working due to the general chaos and immense safety risks. However, with faith in God and great courage he will also take these hurdles. He is thankful for our sympathy and Nehemiah Gateway's offers to help.

His friend Martin in Yei had to go underground, we haven't heard from him for quite a long time. The last signs of life we got amidst combats and fighting. Food was scarce, too. We dearly hope that he managed to escape together with all his family!

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**N.G.:** Can economic developments, like free trade agreements, e.g. with the EU, also have negative impacts as the poorer countries lose out?

**J.S.:** We have a very strong interest that these countries are developing economically, because we want to avoid conflicts caused by the different distribution of goods: some regions feel marginalized and fight for equality and independence or radical Islamic movements arise.

We are not interested in this. The previous export subsidies that were rightly criticized because they made food from Europe cheaper than domestic products no longer exist. The better the countries develop, the better it is for Europe, because then they buy our products, which currently cannot be offered to them yet.

**N.G.:** Is your work also frustrating at times? If so, how do you deal with that?

**J.S.:** Sometimes you don't reach the goals the way you'd like to. Frustration also comes through the political confrontation with other parties. There are arguments and analyzes which I do not agree with. But you have to check repeatedly: is my position right? It is part of this work that you don't lose courage, but you have to remain calm and also have other power sources.

**N.G.:** What does your task on the advisory board of Nehemiah Gateway look like?

**J.S.:** The board accompanies all goals and projects of Nehemiah Gateway and meets once or twice a year, discusses the priorities and does consulting work. I think it's great that Nehemiah Gateway not only works in one region, but supports most meaningful projects worldwide – in particular in the field of education, because that is the prerequisite for development. Education, especially for the various administrative authorities in the countries, so they can organize their own affairs in a responsible way.

## New Faces in Nuremberg



Elis and Irmela Tarelli

### A New Head of our Headquarters

After five years with us Caroline Schütz moved on to a new place of work. We are happy that she could hand her responsibilities into capable hands: Elis Tarelli has moved with his family to Nuremberg. In addition to his tasks as Head of Legal Issues (and many other responsibilities, too) he is now also Head of the Headquarters' office. He was born and raised in Pogradec/Albania, a part of our aid organization from the very start. We are happy that his wife Irmela will also join our team. Her specialty is education and research – there is a wide range of tasks for her at our university and educational work in Albania. Their little daughter Marlene, too, has settled in Franconia.

### Only the Best for our Guests

Caroline Schütz also set standards regarding hospitality. For this important area of responsibility, we found a perfect solution, too: Luisa, daughter of Esther and Arnold Geiger. She grew up in the middle of our aid organization, speaks German, Albanian and English fluently and knows our projects in Albania inside out.



Elvira Zeitler and Luisa Geiger

### Human Resources in Good Hands

We would like to present one further new team member: Elvira Zeitler took over the Human Resources Management in our headquarters. She is an expert in this field and acquired profound experience as a leader in human resource management in large corporate firms which we can now take advantage of.

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