

Compact

Newsletter for Friends and Supporters

Edition August 2019

Dear friends
and supporters!

We love to tell you about the people and projects of NG all over the world. However, not everything happens abroad. After all, the strong NG structures in Germany and the USA make our efforts possible. This is where we receive and manage the funding for NG's ongoing activities. In this issue of Compact you'll learn more about how the NG Team is organized and how we are striving to work even more efficiently, setting the course for the future.

After all, NG is about caring for people - especially those who can often suffer discrimination: women, refugees or children from marginalized groups. Find out more about the diverse people in the NG family in Albania, Southern Sudan and Uganda, about their lives and dreams, and the steps they took with NG's help towards a better future.

Have fun reading
Your Compact team



Arnold Geiger

Make Two Into One: NG merged into NGS

After almost ten years of expansion, it is time for the Nehemiah Gateway Team to streamline complex structures and simplify processes. Right now, our focus is on the work of NG in Germany - the basis and platform for the international work of the NG organizations.

We decided to merge our two German NG organizations Nehemiah Gateway gGmbH (NG) and Nehemiah Gateway Services gGmbH (NGS) into one.

Read our interview with Managing Director, Arnold Geiger, on „how and why“ on the following pages.

Arnold, there's been some change in the organizational structure. What exactly is new?

The two organizations, NG and NGS, have grown out of different backgrounds and have served different functions. It's like two people - you get to know, appreciate and love each other and then you get married. That's what has happened now with NG and NGS. In the medium term this has always been an option. The past differences between the organizations have adapted and adjusted in the course of time.

Initially, we harmonized the statutes, rules of procedure and the coordination of the different tasks. We then registered the merger of the gGmbHs (non-profit limited companies). There is now only one NG organization in Germany: NG Services gGmbH.

All of this change has involved some personnel changes. Kai Uellendahl, who until lately led the Advisory Board on an honorary basis, is now available as a partner at NGS. Anke Neuzerling became the Chair of the Advisory Board. Elvira Zeidler, who was responsible for NG together with Elis Tarelli and Arlinda Merdani as managing directors, will continue to help us with individual projects. Elis Tarelli concentrates on the management and handover of NG University in Albania. Arlinda Merdani will continue to coordinate the international projects.

What prompted you to make these changes?

On the one hand, complexity has increased significantly in recent years. Especially the common „family name“ of Nehemiah Gateway and staff overlaps made communication a challenge - internally and externally. For example, invoices were often issued in the name of the wrong organization, which had to be explained and corrected.

Initially, the separate organizations were meant to provide mutual protection and assistance, but that is no longer necessary. That's why we decided to merge the two entities into one.

With these changes, we are already experiencing streamlined communication internally and a better grasp and understanding of our true purpose, the reason why we exist: to help people - and not to administer ourselves.

Where do you see potential for improvement? What new opportunities?

As I said before, many things have become easier. We no longer have to explain who is whom. The NG Team has its own clear focus on international projects. All our additional activities, e.g. the „MoHab GmbH“ and the hotel „Lindenhof Resorts & Events GmbH“, belong 100% to the non-profit organization NGS and serve exclusively to co-finance the projects, in addition to donation income, and to train, accompany and lead people into independence.

We will also considerably increase our efficiency with our premises in Nuremberg. For example, we moved to the smaller office on the ground floor, optimized the use of the seminar rooms in the basement (NG Forum) by transferring the management to Hotel Lindenhof, and we relocated employees to the hotel in Hubmersberg.

In this way, our budgeted expenditures will shift substantially in the coming years - in favor of the operative work abroad. We can still promise that all donations will flow into the projects without deductions - and we can continue to help with additional funds. All our costs for personnel, rent, transportation, etc., are covered by the income generated by NGS.

Are there also new challenges?

For sure - in particular the extra work to implement all these changes. However, this also gives us a greater sense of responsibility and forces us to shorten "circular communication" internally. Our employees are being encouraged to assume more responsibility and take decisions on their own, in line with NG's identity.

What is your personal experience during this phase?

Well ... my hope once was to build two strong organizations with strong leadership teams. Some of the responsibility has now fallen back on me. However, we always tried to transfer responsibility at an early stage - so there is still time, if necessary, to readjust.

When I think of our team in Albania, I'm impressed by the passion and commitment of the leadership team who



Kai Uellendahl



Anke Neuzerling



Herolinda Shkullaku



Dr. Peter C. Makiriyado

have been faithfully serving there for years, and I'm grateful for the fact that we have to "interfere" less and less. This shows that we have chosen the right path.

The management of our small and precious university has recently been reconfirmed by the Board of Partners and we will continue to establish the university according to the motto "quality before quantity". Since December 2012, Herolinda Shkullaku has been the permanent administrative director of the NG Albania Foundation and the NG University (NGU) in Albania. We were also able to find a solution for the academic leadership on site with the students. Dr. Peter Makiriyado will take over the academic management from Dr. Elis Tarelli in October and continue to develop the university academically.

Where do you see the NG team in 10 years? What do you wish for?

My dream is that many more children and students from developing and emerging countries will be able to receive a solid professional and academic education in order to live their lives in independence and dignity ... especially our target groups - the socially weak, women and orphans. This includes having sustainable management for the entire NG Team as well as sustainable funding, supplemented by funds generated within the project countries themselves. Furthermore, I hope that the processes within the organization will be as simple and transparent as possible.

Thank you, Arnold, for this interesting glimpse behind the scenes of NG.

At a Glance

The name

The two German organizations „Nehemiah Gateway“ and „Nehemiah Gateway Services“ were merged into one. From now on it's:

**Nehemiah Gateway Services gGmbH
(short: NGS)**

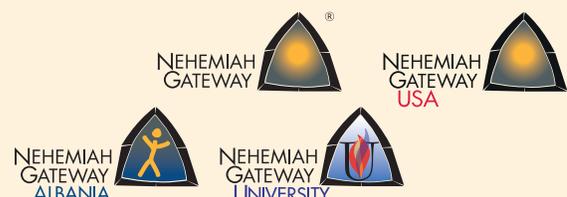
The contact details

Address, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses have not changed. Only the office in Nuremberg is two floors down, on the ground floor Kontumazgarten 3, 90429 Nuremberg.

The Nehemiah Gateway Team

The NG Team is a group of legally independent organizations linked by a common history and working very closely together:

**Nehemiah Gateway Services
NG Albania with NG University
NG USA**





New parents - Doka with his wife Anne and son



These refugee children now have the chance to go to school.

New Beginnings - And a New Gateway!

Doka Cosmas studied at NG University in Buçimas from 2013 to 2016. After returning to his home country, South Sudan, he soon had to flee the raging civil war and found refuge in Northern Uganda, where he opened up two small businesses with the support of NG's Project Empowerment Program. In 2018, Doka's life took a big turn again: He became the father of a son and moved to the German town of Bahlingen am Kaiserstuhl with his wife Anne, who grew up there. Bahlingen, an idyllic little town, where people traditionally produce wine, has a population of 4,200 and lies on edge of the Kaiserstuhl mountains, directly on the Rhine and not far from the border to France.

This new stage of life has presented Doka with lots of challenges and opportunities, for example to create a new "gateway" to help his people back in East Africa. He and his wife founded "Arise Gateway Friends", an association that helps South Sudanese refugee children from precarious families to visit a school again. This is the personal report from Doka about the new developments in his life.

First and foremost, I am very grateful how my life has evolved for the past few years, after many ups and downs. Since I moved to Bahlingen, Germany last year, I feel as if I have been immersed in a big pool with numerous opportunities, but it also takes courage and motivation to adapt to a completely new cultural environment.

In Germany, everybody seems to be busy and committed to following their schedules with zero tolerance to external distractions. Here, you hardly see a doctor or visit any office without prior appointment. It's even uncommon to pay spontaneous visits to friends or a family member. But the spirit of love for humanity also resonates in most people I meet here, through their hospitality.

Although I love to be in Germany, my wife and I are very much focused on South Sudan. The unprecedented political turmoil has inflicted inexpressible misery to all segments of the population, particularly women and children. Because of the war, over 70% of the children are out of school according to UNICEF. Therefore, we founded the association "Arise Gateway Friends", which is officially registered in Germany, and funds refugee children who are within our reach, to go back to school by paying their fees, transportation and clothing. I strongly believe that education is by far the best approach to give hope to the marginalized and underprivileged. My life has been a living testimony of this through the scholarship I got from Nehemiah Gateway. I am so inspired by the life-changing work of NG, and I aspire to give hope to the hopeless in the same way it has been given to me: A gateway to hope. Nothing is more sustainable and empowering than imparting knowledge to those who are weak.

We currently support 14 children with the help of donations, of whom five are in secondary school and nine in primary school.

Our plan as a family is to go back in the next one to two years and serve the people there. We are using our time in Germany as preparation for this return. We believe that many lives will be transformed through Arise Gateway.



The daily sprint to the soup kitchen

A Daily Feast

NG in Gjirokaštër - more than a soup kitchen

Every weekday afternoon, twenty boys and girls come running through the gates of the new Nehemiah Gateway compound in Gjirokaštër, laughing and greeting Center Director Arjan Kociu and his team as they race to get their lunch in the new soup kitchen. The children range in age from about five to fourteen years old. They come from Roma and Balkan Egyptian families, which make up about 25% of the total population in Gjirokaštër. All of them come from poor families; some of them are homeless or living in tents. At Gjirokaštër Local Center, they are getting the support they need to begin improving their situation.

This June, a team of NG coworkers, as well as five volunteers from the US, visited Gjirokaštër to see the new soup kitchen and help serve lunch. The road from Pogradec is a long one, traveling through the mountains and along the Vjosë river, passing through Fir of Hotova National Park, and traveling within less than a mile of the Greek border. This beautiful but winding route takes over seven hours in good weather, and the team arrived just in time to help with the children's lunch.

The new soup kitchen was completed in 2018 with major support from the Protestant Church of Winterswijk in the Netherlands. It is a beautiful facility, with a professional kitchen and a dining hall that seats about twenty people at once. Refije Gjini, a trained professional cook, prepares fresh, nutritious meals for over forty-three people a day, with two seatings of adults followed by the children. Additionally, NG provides daily home delivery of meals to people who are too old or too ill to come to the hall.

The children sing and say grace before their meal, eagerly devouring seconds of their favorite dishes. Afterwards, they go to the adjacent building for after-school classes, tutoring, and Bible study with NG's social worker and staff. On the day of the visit, social worker Suela Llukaj led the children through hilarious skits based on Bible stories that had everyone entertained. The classroom building is a rough, temporary structure, hot in the summer and cold in the winter, but it provides enough shelter to support year-round activities.

The children who come to the Gjirokaštër soup kitchen attend public schools—if they attend school at all. Roma and Balkan Egyptian children face many obstacles to accessing this basic need, including lack of parental support, lack of necessary school supplies and clothing, discrimination in the classroom, and difficulty with schoolwork.

This year, The Gjirokaštër Local Center will help these children to succeed in the Albanian educational system, and you can be part of that effort. When school starts in the fall, your donations can provide Gjirokaštër children with the school supplies they need, transport to and from school, after-school food and activities at the soup kitchen, and food aid for their families.

\$25 will pay for school supplies for a year for one child, including books, backpacks, and registration documents.

A donation of \$30 will pay for one family food parcel.

A donation of \$50 will pay for new shoes, clothing, and coats for one child for one year.

You can contribute at: <https://goto.gg/41178>, or using the envelope enclosed.



Top students of their course: NG University students on a study trip to Nuremberg (from left): Joshua, Mesina, Chris and Ekleva

In Albania and Uganda

Equal Opportunities for Women - Dream or Reality?

Less income and lower quota within the upper echelon in German companies - that's still the reality when we talk about "equal opportunities for women" as far as job offers and working places are concerned.

But let's take a look beyond our national horizon at two of the countries where our NG University students come from. We asked the four participants of this year's study trip to Germany about their personal experiences and perspectives on this topic in Albania and Uganda.

MESINA, what educational and work opportunities did your grandmother and mother have in Albania?

To answer this question, I must first tell her childhood story. My mother comes from an Albanian village near Korça. She is already over 60 years old.

My mother has five siblings. She went to school during the time of communism as the youngest in her family. Two of her sisters received scholarships and the opportunity to attend university. There was a selection procedure for scholarships. Because she was the third girl in the family who wanted to study, her school's director tore up my mother's high school diploma and said: „Should your father send all his children to study? In spite of her good grades, good behavior and all prerequisites fulfilled, he didn't allow my mother enter university. My mother couldn't do anything about it without her certificates. This influenced her whole future in terms of job opportunities. During the communist

era, she worked in agricultural cooperatives, like many others. After that she had only limited job opportunities, for example caring for elderly people and children, domestic help and as a cleaning woman. She has never worked in professions with higher responsibilities due to her past history.

MESINA, where do you see a need for improvement in equality of opportunities for women in jobs and education?

I would say in general a need for empowerment for people to realize that they are equal. And that they are to be offered the same opportunities. Specifically, in Albania there is a need for empowerment of women living in the villages, especially women from minorities. Much has already been done for them, but there is still a lot to do. But this shift of perspective, takes time and does not happen overnight. There is a real need for more empowerment for women.

EKLEVA, what do you think has changed in the field of education and job opportunities for women in Albania in the last ten or twenty years?

Our parents know from their own experience that it is difficult to get a job without education. That's why they supported my sister and me to get a higher education. My first school was Amaro Tan. The children who go to this school have parents who don't normally have a university degree and often haven't even gone to school. But a lot has changed. Before, they didn't let girls go to high school, let alone to university. Also, the girls have often been married young. Now they want education.

But it was different for me. I love to learn. My parents helped me to study so that I wouldn't have any trouble taking care of my needs in life. I finished primary and secondary school at Amaro Tan School. Since I had good grades, I got the chance to go to Nehemiah High School. I was also able to graduate successfully with good grades. I am very grateful to Nehemiah Gateway for this opportunity to receive a good school education.

EKLEVA, how would you describe the value of education for you personally?

It is the best thing that ever happened to me! Because of these possibilities a lot has changed in my life. Now I see the world from a different perspective than my parents or the rest of my family. In the future I would like to support girls and families of the Amaro Tan school and enable them to continue to go to school respectively to have their children go to school and university.

JOSHUA, what's the situation like for women in Uganda?

I grew up in a generation where things were slowly beginning to change, especially the attitude towards women. I remember stories told to me by my mother about the beginnings of initiatives aimed at encouraging women for education. In the beginning, women did not go to school to acquire education and knowledge, but because it increased their value as brides. This attitude disappears more and more. Education is now increasingly seen as an opportunity for the future. I have the impression that the number of women in public institutions and in government is steadily increasing.

CHRISIS, do you know of women from your family or community who have received a good education and are now changing the situation of women in terms of equal opportunities?

I know of women who have had great influence and brought real change to their communities. In this context, I would like to mention the female Members of Parliament who have promoted the education and development opportunities of women. There are cooperatives, such as the rural Saving and Credit Cooperatives (SACCO). There, women can save and borrow money for start-ups and to boost their business. In addition, the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) provide support for women in the agricultural sector. They receive things like good animal breeds, high-quality seeds, credit and advice with the aim of fighting poverty by creating income opportunities - not only for women but also for young people in Uganda.

Thank you very much for your insights on the topic.



At a Glance



Summer camp for kids with special needs

For two weeks in July our annual summer camp for kids with special needs was bustling on the NG campus in Buçimas, Albania. The different activities during the camp are designed to help the 25 participating children to improve their physical or mental abilities, learn new skills or to better engage with their surroundings. But above all, it's about having lots of fun! The program includes finger-painting, dancing, working puzzles, playing hide and seek or using special didactic toys, as well as hygiene training and enjoying nutritious meals.

Renato (picture), for example, definitely enjoys the time. He was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder when he was two-years-old. After six years of regular therapy twice a week with NG, he can speak very well, knows how to read and write and is much more social with other children. In fact, Renato is now able to go to a normal school and is in 3rd grade!

A group of volunteers from NG USA traveled all the way to Albania to help and provide support during the camp. Their help was more than welcome, both from the children and the staff.

Nehemiah Gateway USA, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization according to section 501 (c)(3) of the federal IRS tax code. Gifts are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law and contributions are solicited with the understanding that Nehemiah Gateway USA, Inc. has authorization for the distribution of all donated funds. Donations to Nehemiah Gateway USA programs represent a contribution to the entire global mission of Nehemiah Gateway USA and may be used where most needed.



A great place for camps and retreats

NG Albania's spacious campus is a great place to spend the summer! Many groups seized the opportunity while the school is recessed for summer vacation. Not only our Nehemia School and Royal Rangers enjoyed programs on campus, but also groups from different organizations and churches in Albania with up to 100 participants. They appreciate the nice and spacious facilities, enjoy delicious food, have fun at the sports field and, naturally, love to spend time at the nearby beach of beautiful Lake Ohrid.

Nehemiah Gateway USA
1630 30th St Suite A #345
Boulder, CO 80301-1045

T/F (855) 683-6769 or
855-68-Empower

infoUSA@nehemiah-gateway.org
www.ng-usa.org

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