

Compact

Newsletter for Friends and Supporters

Edition June 2019

Dear friends
and supporters!

An organization like NG is not a fixed structure but a living organism characterized by growth and change. This is why the support of experienced and competent consultants is vitally important.

We present two of them in this issue of Compact - they occupy key positions and give valuable impulses for current developments in the structure of NG. They can draw on a wealth of experience from their professional lives: Anke Neuzerling, the new Chairwoman of the Advisory Board, and Kai Uellendahl, the fourth member to turn the shareholders' meeting into a quartet in July.

You will also learn more about our road safety training for children and receive fresh impressions of Albania in a travel report.

Have fun reading!
Your Compact team



Kai Uellendahl

A Familiar Face in a New Function

In his new role, Kai Uellendahl will steer the future of NG together with Arnold Geiger, Helmut Hauser and Gerd Seitz in the Board of Partners.

**Kai - how long have you known NG?
Why did you take on this responsibility right now?**

Our active relationship has been in place for 18 years, so NG and I are just 'coming of age'. Just the right time to kick off together.

Jokes aside: after almost 30 years in management positions in business and culture, I quit my job as the financial director of a concert organizer in 2018. Christian faith is the essential foundation of life for me and my wife.



The whole family backs the commitment of Kai and Anne.

This was not a spontaneous decision but arose from the desire to reorient. We were certain that this step was the right one. But we didn't yet know exactly where it was going.

In the first step, my wife and I founded our own consulting firm. Since autumn 2018, I have accompanied and advised NG and the whole NG Team on a number of questions. And then something happened to me. The NG virus, which has been permanently dormant in me since 2002, has grown exponentially. More precisely, the certainty has grown in me and my wife that we should integrate ourselves with all our experience completely into the work of NG.

When, if not now?

It didn't really matter to me or to us what the involvement might look like. The offer to join the Board of Partners came from the current partners, Arnold Geiger, Helmut Hauser, and Gerd Seitz. In the last six months, I was allowed to travel intensively with them and got to know them well. For me, it was a great gain, both in human terms and in terms of our shared convictions, which I would not want to miss.

What does your family have to say about this?

For my wife and me, family is (almost) the top priority. We are lucky to share the same values as a married couple with our children and sons-in-law. So, when I announced my intention, I looked into enthusiastic faces. If that had not been the case, I would have become insecure.

What fascinates you about NG?

What do you dream of?

As far as I know,
NG is absolutely unique.

NG is based on Christian values, not only by name but as a fact. The focus is on love for people, regardless of skin colour, origin, gender, conviction, lifestyle or religion. NG simply wants to help and does not aim at any other purpose, does not want to get paid. These are values that I also find in the Bible. And it is this openness and the absence of prejudices that infect me. We help people to live their lives in dignity and self-responsibility and we do not dictate anything to them. I think this works much better than "you have to".

What has always
appealed to me is
NG's far-sightedness.

One example is the development of the educational chain from kindergarten to university. In the years to come, we will see more and more what this means, because our pupils and students influence their societies, in Albania and wherever they go.

What contributions do you hope to make for NG?

In these 18 years, I have been able to observe the essential steps of NG's development. NG has achieved a lot and you could say: we have made it! But, actually, I hope that NG is only just taking off. This will only be possible together with all the NG Team, the employees, with healthy finances, with structures and team development far beyond the time span of our own involvement. This is a great task and it is a privilege that NG also has such a huge network of experts and helpers who are involved on a voluntary basis, which is also reflected in our Advisory Board. That's what I like to do.



Kai and Anne Uellendahl

What might be difficult? Where do you think the biggest challenge lies?

It's easy to ponder big ideas, but
important is to get the
horsepower on the ground.

Strategy and daily routines are a challenge, especially for employees who work for our goals on a daily basis. To keep an eye on the big picture is what motivates us. Our motivated work is what the projects depend on. We have to shape this circle well.

One last thought

I have always tried to deal responsibly with resources like finances, personnel and time. And I certainly also have a credo: "simplicity" and "transparency" in the sense of maximum impact for those whom we are concerned with - the people whom we are allowed to accompany on their journey.

Kai Uellendahl

...at work

In the course of my professional life, I was able to take on responsibility for HR, IT, marketing, sales and sponsoring in addition to my core topic, finance; in positions like member of executive boards, management groups and as a managing director.

It was and is a constant matter of concern to me to think outside the box and to gain broad experience. My portfolio includes the classic production company, the sports industry, high-tech industry, high culture and non-profit organizations. In 2018 my wife and I founded our own consulting company (www.spero-consulting.ch).

... in private

I've been married to Anne for 30 years. We have three grown children, two sons-in-law and a granddaughter.

Twenty years ago I was sent by adidas to Switzerland, where we still live today and are citizens (in addition to our German citizenship). The breathtaking view of the Swiss mountains still amazes us every day.

Kai Uellendahl and NG

I met Arnold in 2002 through mutual friends. Shortly afterwards I was in Albania for the first time: I arrived - caught fire - and couldn't get away any more.

Since then I have supported NG with know-how, as much as I could spare the time as someone who is working in a leading management position. From 2009 on, I was a member of the NG Albania Supervisory Board as part of my voluntary support and Chairman of the NG Advisory Board from 2012-2019.

In the future, as the fourth shareholder of Nehemiah Gateway Services, I will be able to contribute more intensively and assume greater responsibility. I'm looking forward to it.



Photo: Jutta Benzenberg

Anke Neuzerling gives the finishing touches to NG events with professional moderation.

With Heart and Expertise for NG

An interview with Anke Neuzerling, the new Chairwoman of the NG Advisory Board

Dear Anke, you are a TV journalist and presenter who works for SWR (a public TV channel in Germany), both in front of and behind the camera and as a communications trainer, if your time permits. You are also a member of the NG Advisory Board.

What motivates you to get involved?

My heart opens when I see how young people develop and make something out of themselves and their lives. How they are motivated to reach their full potential, perhaps against many odds. Some students at NG University in Albania come from the poorest backgrounds or from war zones. NG has the goal to make them strong and to give them ideas and impulses they can use for their own lives and pass on to others. I often have the privilege to personally meet students of NG University. This is always a great joy and inspiration for me. Education can open up a completely new world for people. I think of African

students like Sandra, Brenda or Juliet who implement projects for and with girls and women in Africa to improve their living conditions. Education is not just an accumulation of knowledge. Education also means living values and motivating others to discover these values for themselves. NG conveys a foundation of values that feeds on Christianity. In my opinion, these values are universal and include all people, no matter which religion or culture they come from. From this, students can draw strength for a lifetime.

How did you get to know NG?

I got to know NG when I did a report on Albania for the German TV channel ZDF's morning program "Volle Kanne". The trip to Pogradec and the contact to NG were interesting and profound experiences, both for me and for the whole television crew - because we arrived there with many prejudices about Albania. This immediate experience of human misery on one hand and loving willingness



Anke during a NG project trip in Tanzania.

to help on the other hand was formative for me and very emotional. In the evenings I was often completely taken away by the impressions of the day: I remember a boy who suffered from a severe muscle weakness and sat small and crouched in a kind of carriage - in the middle of the Albanian mountains, completely isolated, in poor conditions and beyond any possibility to receive qualified medical care. But his mind was awake, curious, and very intelligent. NG staff came once a week to care for him, massage him, and do physiotherapy with him. From our Western point of view, it may be a drop in the ocean, but for the boy, it was an eagerly awaited appointment. That has burned into my mind. The boy has unfortunately died in the meantime, but I have his picture very clearly before my eyes.

This has shown me what a difference an aid organisation can make for a single person.

You have been a member of NG's Advisory Board since 2012, also act as spokesperson for the organization and support NG with your expertise. What is important to you?

For me, communication between people is the most important thing. To bring people together, no matter where they come from or what their background is. My credo is that above all, the direct encounter can bring understanding and connection - for other cultures, for other religions, for other points of view. NG can be a platform for such encounters. And humor is also important for me because it can build bridges and break down prejudices. Humor

can also protect you from a certain arrogance when you happen to believe (as sometimes happens) you have a monopoly on truth.

Last May you have taken over the chairmanship of the NG Advisory Board from Kai Uellendahl. What will change in your involvement?

As always, I will work in the background and support the team in presenting the work of NG in the media. I would like to strengthen the Advisory Board even more and put its strength and expertise to work: the respective knowledge, ideas and rich professional experience of the individual members should be bundled and enrich the work of NG more and more. Also, networks could be used to a greater extent. Each individual member of the Advisory Board has achieved great things in his or her field of expertise and can offer many valuable impulses for NG.

What ideas do you have to bring NG forward in the next years?

It would be great to inspire companies to support students at NG University. This is lived solidarity and help for self-help. A full scholarship for one international student costs less than 700€ per month. But when these young people return to their home countries, they can make a difference in their communities: they can set up businesses, create jobs and pass on core values.

Thank you very much for the interview, Anke!



The old Roman bridge near the mountain villages is always worth a visit.



Formative Experiences in Albania

Alketa and Kai tell about their first visit in the small Southeast-European country.

In the course of private research, we came across an interview with Mr. Arnold Geiger. His enthusiasm and dedication made us curious and we decided to volunteer. Since we are both newcomers in this field, we decided to just write to NG in Germany and ask whether it would be possible to let us help for a few days in April. We promptly received their confirmation and, after sending NG our CVs and letters of motivation, a detailed program tailored to us personally.

On the first day a friendly driver picked us up in Tirana in the evening and after about two hours we reached the NG campus in Buçimas. We got a spacious, bright room with a wonderful view of the mountains and the lake.

The next morning we were shown the campus by Arba. Arba is a competent and always helpful employee of NG, who also completed school and university there. The campus has a variety of functions: kindergarten, school and university as well as an outpatient clinic and a speech therapy practice. Guests find accommodation in the modern guesthouse, and meals are taken in the Mission House together with employees from a wide variety of fields and cultural backgrounds, which makes for good conversation.

Afterward, we visited Amaro Tan in nearby Pogradec. The school is attended by children from socially disadvantaged families, as they do not have to pay school fees

and, in addition to education, also receive a warm meal as well as much love and care. Every Friday the children are examined by a volunteer dentist from Pogradec.

At Amaro Tan, there is also a soup kitchen for old and poor people who get the additional possibility to take a hot shower and wash and dry their clothes. Others are provided with food at home. We accompanied such food delivery and were shocked by what we saw. For example, we visited two women living in a remote valley in an abandoned barracks alone with their young children, without electricity and running water.

Back at Amaro Tan, we helped Mimoza with the English lessons. Mimoza is a blind teacher with an impressive life story and even more impressive courage, who is highly valued by students and colleagues for her dedication and dear personality. She impressed us very much!

Unfortunately on Saturday, after a trip to the surrounding villages, we were caught by severe flu which made further activities impossible. However, during these three days, we made many formative experiences and got to know admirable people. Arnold Geiger has a warm and loving family. We were able to spend two nice evenings with wine and entertaining conversations with Arnold and Esther in their „museum“ (a room fully equipped with „artifacts“ from the communist era), when both told funny but also moving stories from almost thirty years life and work in Pogradec. Amazing!

We would like to thank everyone who took such good care of our well-being during this trip. We felt very comfortable and hope to be able to do a lot more for NG in the future.



The children have fun during traffic safety training.



The center of the roundabout in honor of a great supporter.

Traffic Safety Training for Children

First-time visitors to the Nehemiah Gateway campus in Buçimas may be surprised by the well-labeled and signed, paved segments of a street between the buildings that house NG operations. Why would a mostly pedestrian area surrounded by walls need a roundabout, lane dividers, crosswalks, traffic signs, and even traffic lights, all slightly smaller than in real life?

This is Nehemiah Gateway Albania's traffic safety program, and every year up to 600 children from 12 Pogradec-area schools visit to take part in traffic safety training. Under the careful eye of NG staff, children of different ages practice walking and riding bicycles safely on the road—with no cars around. They learn how to handle themselves safely in situations that they could encounter on real streets, in a setting that is safe and positive.

The training ground was built in 2014 in response to a real need for traffic safety education for Albanian children. Albania is a country with a relatively short history of vehicle ownership. Under communism, private car ownership was illegal, and there were only 5,000 cars in the entire country, which has a population of 3 million people. After the fall of communism in 1991, many embraced car ownership as a sign of freedom. According to the World Bank, there are about 125 cars per thousand people in Albania today. This is well below Germany (572 cars per 1000 people) or the United States (797 cars per 1000 people) but substantially above the Communist era.

Vehicle safety education has not kept up with growth in car ownership and an expanding road network. Albania has a high traffic fatality rate, with 2.04% of all deaths from car accidents. This number is accompanied by a rising rate of non-fatal accidents—just shy of 70 accidents per 100,000 people per year. Over 35% of Albania traffic deaths are pedestrians and cyclists, and children are particularly vulnerable. In Pogradec, many schools are located on or near high-traffic roads, which makes it critical for children to know how to safely share the road with drivers.

Nehemiah Gateway's Buçimas traffic practice circuit was designed based on one in Weilheim-Schongau, Germany. An NG donor in Weilheim connected Arnold Geiger with Werner Hoyer of the Weilheim Police Department. Mr. Hoyer has taught thousands of children in the Weilheim area the rules of the road. He adopted the Buçimas traffic safety project, finding donors to support construction, personally donating the yellow practice bikes we use today, and training Albanian staff on the use of the facility. There is a small plaque in the roundabout bearing his name to honor his contribution.

Says Sam Geiger, Vice President of NG-Albania, "In Pogradec and surrounding areas, many houses are connected directly to the main roads, so pedestrians and playing children are always close to fast-driving cars. The traffic safety program is how we hope to raise children's awareness of this risk—so that we will have safer drivers someday when they are old enough to drive."



At a Glance



Farewell

Roy and Beverlee Atwood, NG University's Vice Rector and Head of the University's Exam Office, respectively, returned to the USA in mid-May to seek medical treatment for the two herniated discs in Roy's back. "Regrettably, we have to return to our US home and to leave our posts at NGU, the students and colleagues we love, our dear Albanian Christian brothers and sisters, and the beautiful Pogradec community. We already miss them all," Roy said.

Prof. Atwood first came to Albania and NGU in 2014 as the chair of the University's first TRACS accreditation site visiting team from the USA. He and Beverlee then came together for guest lecturing and in January 2017, they moved to Albania to take up their full-time administrative posts with the University.

"We hope we can return to NG someday, once my health permits," Roy said. "In the meantime, we'll try to serve the University's students, especially with thesis advising, and to manage the University's academic records as best we can online for as long as we can from our home in Moscow, Idaho."



Estes Park Duck Race

Nehemiah Gateway USA participated in the Estes Park Duck Race again this year. The Duck Race, sponsored by Estes Park's Noon Rotary Club since 1989, is a fundraiser for Estes Park 140+ nonprofits. May 4 was race day, and Sarah Pita of NG-USA and her son Zach sold tickets at the finish line at NG's booth. Wooden cars from Amaro Tan were especially popular among the younger visitors. We sold at least two prize-winning tickets this year, and met many interesting people!

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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