

Why do Austrians Celebrate an Event which Happened 25 Years Ago and Concerns Ugandan Politics?

1. 1985 some Ugandans were refugees in Austria where they were warmly welcomed in a village in which Africans had been hardly ever seen. The local people did not behave in a racist manner to the Ugandans who were here and so it is very important to commemorate everybody who is not racist and doesn't value people on the basis of colour or any displaying of other prejudices. Therefore we celebrated with Mrs. Leopoldine Baier and her family especially at this particular time when many Europeans are afraid of immigrants and asylum seekers and vote for parties which try to stir animosity and hatred against foreigners.
2. After 1985 when Uganda was still in a civil war and was experiencing a catastrophic situation with a broken down infrastructure and thousands of its citizens dead, Museveni was a hope for Uganda and a new Africa worldwide. The Platform Austria-Uganda at that time was founded to lobby in Austria for funds and projects to rehabilitate this wonderful country Uganda and to help its people to recover from the war. Out of this a stable connection between Austria and Uganda developed, hundreds of projects which helped individuals and groups of people in Uganda materialized since then. Therefore we celebrated that a rich country like Austria took its responsibility to share and helped and still helps Ugandan people to get back on their feet and help themselves.
3. Unterolberndorf was an important step in the history of Uganda. The NEC (National Executive Committee) of NRM was able to discuss and finalise a document, the **"10 point programme"** which later formed the basis for the long-term development of this country. The inner circle of the NRM leadership was able to meet in a free, but clandestine and safe environment in a neutral country. In addition to this development a shadow cabinet of the future government of Uganda was also nominated in Unterolberndorf.
4. Many Ugandans since then have come to Austria to study here or to exchange ideas and share the experiences too. Many Austrians have worked in Uganda in development projects or in official positions and have learned to love this country with its extremely friendly and hospitable people. Friendships and long lasting relationships between individuals evolved and therefore we celebrated that friendship. As a symbol for this friendship which was founded in the small village Unterolberndorf a very simple monument reminds us that Austria is not alone in this world but connected with other people in the global village. In this global world respect, friendship and responsibility are the main values we have to support and to observe.