

Welcome to the German Information Centre Africa

German lecture series continues in Kampala

Jan 30, 2014

On January 20th, German language teachers and students attended the Fourth German Lecture at the Uganda German Cultural Society in Kampala. The theme of the lecture was 'Kampala Gestern, Kampala Heute - Zum Alltag in der Boda Boda Stadt ("Kampala Yesterday, Kampala Today – Daily life in the Boda Boda City"). The lecture was delivered by Dr. William Wagaba, head of the German Department at Makerere University.



Boda boda transporting passenger in Kampala (© Solomon Butandwa)

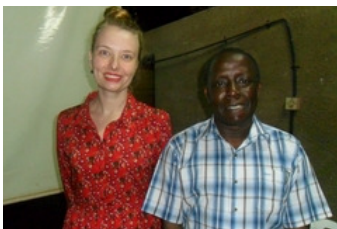
'Boda Boda' is a word used for motorcycles that transport people. The word Boda Boda, originated from the border towns of Uganda, especially in Eastern Uganda, and referred mainly to bicycles.

Dr. William spoke about what makes daily life in Kampala challenging and interesting. He provided insight into the historic "townscape" of Kampala, as well as giving an impression of current changes in modern Kampala. The Boda Boda drivers and their influence on not only the daily life and traffic, but also the dynamics and businesses in Kampala was the centre of attention. A discussion followed after.

"Boda Boda is one of the key developments as a result of modernization and is a characteristic of the city. In Kampala it is amazing with almost everyone using them to do various things like carrying people and goods. Some people even prefer to use them on their wedding day! They are a uniting factor - even people from other countries enjoy riding on them."

He said, however, that they are also dangerous and many people have been injured or killed due to reckless driving. Some of the riders are not experienced and end up causing accidents. "The bodas bodas do not follow traffic rules and there are roughly 100,000 motorcycles in the city alone."

He suggested that boda bodas have a political role in that any politician can use them during campaigns as they are quick to mobilize people in large numbers. They are found on almost every street in the city and there are even tour companies which use boda bodas to transport people.



Dr. Gille and Dr. Wagaba following his lecture (© Solomon Butandwa)

Dr. William started teaching German in 1990. He finished his Master's degree at the University of Heidelberg (German as foreign language philology). He earned his PhD at the University of Bayreuth, Germany.

The Germany Lecture series began last year after Dr. Manuel Muranga, one of the first German language teachers in Uganda held a German Lecture in February. Dr. Manuel is a lecturer at the Mbarara University.

The second German Lecture was held in September 2013 by Nico Nassenstein about 'Linguistic Field Research in Uganda'. The third lecture was in November 2013 by Dr. Mirjam Gille on 'The Role of Women in the Fairytale of the Brothers of Grimm.'

Dr. Mirjam Gille is the Country Representative of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and a lecturer at Makerere University (teaching German in the Department of Oriental and European Languages). She is also the focal point person for the DAAD Alumni in Uganda.

The Cultural Coordinator at the Ugandan German Cultural Society (UGCS) Ms. Katharina Neidhardt explained that the aim of the lectures is to encourage German language teachers, students and the Germany community to meet on specific topics.

"We decided with Dr. Mirjam Gille that we should have these lectures every two months." The idea is to provide German experts an opportunity to discuss topics related to the German language in Uganda. It is nice for them to share."

The next lecture is scheduled to take place in two months time.

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