

GoldenWagon

Succeeding in the Digital Age

Why AI-First
Leadership is
Essential



Thriving in the Knowledge Economy

Rotaract Club of Upper Kololo Hosts “Mama UK” for a Homecoming Keynote

On Wednesday, September 17, 2026, the Rotaract Club of Upper Kololo welcomed Rtn. Christine Mugerwa – affectionately known to members as “Mama UK” back to the club she helped found, for a keynote address that left Rotaractors rethinking what it truly means to stay relevant.

Speaking on the theme **“Thriving in the Knowledge Economy,”** Mugerwa challenged the young professionals in the room to shift how they define their own value. In a world once measured by appearance, possessions, or position, she argued, worth is increasingly determined by one thing: what you can do with your mind.

For the club, the day carried extra weight. Mugerwa is not just an accomplished professional – she played a defining role in mentoring the Rotaract Club of Upper Kololo itself. Her return to address the very Rotaractors she helped bring together made it, for many in the room, a full-circle moment.

A Different Kind of Economy

Mugerwa opened by defining the knowledge economy as simply a system built on creating and trading ideas, where information itself is the most valuable currency. “The most valuable resource,” she told the audience, *“is sitting right between our ears.”* But she added a caveat: in an economy that moves at the speed of thought, knowledge is a perishable good. What was learned at university, she noted, is already growing outdated. The only way to survive and thrive is to become a lifelong learner.

Three Truths for a New World of Work

Mugerwa built her address around three key realities facing today’s professionals.

First, knowledge doesn’t keep. The skills and facts that once guaranteed a competitive edge fade fast, making continuous learning—and—unlearning non-negotiable.



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Knowledge economy is simply a system built on creating and trading ideas, where information itself is the most valuable currency”.

Rtn. Christine Mugerwa

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What are you doing today to remain relevant tomorrow?”

Rtr. Emmanuel Poggo

Second, in an AI-driven world, it's human-centric skills that endure. Technical know-how alone no longer sets anyone apart; interpersonal competencies do. As Mugerwa put it, artificial intelligence cannot replicate human wisdom.

Third, thriving demands a culture of experimentation – a willingness to embrace failure and feedback in the spirit of kaizen, continuous improvement. Setbacks, she suggested, are not the opposite of success but part of its process.

Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving, Creativity

Asked how rotaractors could put this into practice, Mugerwa pointed to a different way of thinking and adapting altogether – anchored in critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. Credentials, she noted, may unlock opportunities in today's marketplace, but it is skills that keep you in it. Closing the skills gap, she said, starts with deliberately acquiring soft skills.

Candid Answers in the Q&A

The keynote's question-and-answer segment brought out some of Mugerwa's most practical advice.

On navigating a delicate dynamic – knowledge that might outpace a superior's, she counselled emotional intelligence and humility: *“Learn to influence as opposed to ‘bitala.’”*

On whether to specialize or diversify, she noted that while deep expertise in one area has value, having multiple skills makes a person invaluable. Knowledge, she added, can be sourced “anywhere and everywhere” – books, mentors, formal education, online tutorials, and even Rotary fellowships themselves.

Perhaps her most memorable line came in response to a question about burnout: *“Burnout happens when ambition exceeds sustainability. Long-term success comes from matching ambition with discipline, rest, and patience.”* Career and skills development, she reminded the room, are a marathon — not a race won by speed alone, but by the distance covered.

If the keynote could be distilled into a single charge, it was this: **acquire skills, enhance yourself •**



A Rotaractor's Take To Thriving In The Knowledge Economy

The session facilitated by Mama UK was one of those conversations that was one of a kind.

What stood out to me most was the shift in how we understand value and relevance in today's world. We are increasingly moving away from a world where relevance is determined by what you look like, what you have, or simply the position you hold — and more towards what you are able to do with your mind.

Mama UK challenged us to recognise that our knowledge and abilities are some of our greatest assets, but they only remain valuable if we continue to develop them. Her emphasis on **learning, unlearning and collaboration** was particularly powerful. In a rapidly changing environment, what worked yesterday may not necessarily work tomorrow.

Another key takeaway for me was the importance of deliberately working on the mind. Wisdom cannot be replaced, and neither can the ability to think critically, solve problems and create. These are skills that require continuous development. We cannot afford to become comfortable with what we already know.

I also appreciated the conversation around failure. Thriving does not mean having a journey without setbacks. What matters is our ability to reflect, learn from the experience and keep moving forward.

For me, the session ultimately came down to two simple but powerful actions: **acquire skills, enhance yourself.**

As young professionals and leaders, we have to take responsibility for our own relevance. We cannot wait for opportunities to make us ready – we have to continuously equip ourselves to recognise and create those opportunities.

I left asking myself a simple question: **“What am I doing today to remain relevant tomorrow?”** That, for me, was the real value of the session •

UK-Kampala Metropolitan



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The foundation upon which rotary is built is friendship; on no less firm foundation could it stand.”

Paul P. Harris

Pictorial



Succeeding in the Digital Age



Why AI-First Leadership Is Essential

A Call to Rotarians in Public and Private Leadership

Across boardrooms, ministries, hospitals, schools, and enterprises, a quiet but urgent shift is underway. The organizations pulling ahead are not simply the ones adopting artificial intelligence as a tool – they are the ones being led by people who have made AI part of how they think, decide, and serve. For Rotarians who sit at the helm of institutions across Kampala and beyond, this is not a distant trend to observe. It is a leadership test to answer.

Service Above Self, Powered by Insight

Rotary has always asked its members to lead with purpose; to put service above self in the boardroom as much as in the community. That same spirit of service now demands a new kind of fluency. As one Harvard Business School professor memorably put it, “AI won’t replace humans – but humans with AI will replace humans without AI”. The point isn’t that machines will take our place – it’s that leaders who refuse to engage with this technology risk being left behind by those who do.

For a Rotarian running a bank, a hospital, a ministry department, or a family enterprise, this is a call to humility as much as ambition. None of us were trained for this moment. But all of us are capable of rising to it.

AI Doesn’t Replace Judgment, It Sharpens It

There’s a reassuring truth beneath the disruption: AI cannot replicate human creativity, contextual wisdom, or the ability to read a room, a community, or a crisis. What AI offers instead is amplification – a partnership some scholars call “augmented intelligence,” where technology extends human insight rather than substituting for it. The leader’s job is not to compete with the machine, but to become the bridge between what the organization is trying to achieve and what the technology makes possible – and then to bring their people along with confidence rather than fear.

This is deeply Rotarian work. We have always been bridge-builders between communities, generations, and ideas. AI leadership simply asks us to build one more bridge: between where our institutions stand today and where they need to be tomorrow.

You Don’t Need to Be an Expert; You Need to Be Fluent

Perhaps the most liberating insight for busy leaders is this: nobody is asking you to become a data scientist. The goal is modest but non-negotiable – enough working fluency in AI, data, and digital tools to lead with confidence rather than delegate the thinking entirely to others. Three things anchor that fluency: staying open to constant change, collaborating across boundaries, and building comfort with the computational tools reshaping every sector.

Whether you lead a directorate in the public service or a private enterprise, this modest but deliberate fluency is now as essential to leadership as financial literacy or public speaking once was.

The Middle Is Where Transformation Really Happens

It’s tempting to think this responsibility belongs only at the top – to CEOs, permanent secretaries, and boards. But some of the most compelling evidence says otherwise. Change that lasts tends to be driven not just from the top down, but from the middle out – by department heads, branch managers, program directors, and team leaders who are close enough to daily operations to see where AI can genuinely help, and trusted enough by their teams to lead the change without resistance.

For Rotary, this is an encouraging message. Many of our members are exactly these leaders; not always the most senior name on the letterhead, but the ones who make transformation real on the ground. You do not need a corner office to lead this shift. You need curiosity, credibility with your people, and the will to start.

A Path, Not a Leap

Becoming an AI-ready leader isn’t a single decision, it’s a journey with clear stages: building basic knowledge of what AI can and cannot do; cultivating a mindset of curiosity rather than fear; developing practical skill in using the tools available; and ultimately, leading strategically – embedding AI into how your institution plans, decides, and grows.

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“AI-first” mindset is treating AI not as a side project for the IT department, but as something woven into how an organization thinks, decides and grows.

None of this requires leaping to the top of the pyramid overnight. It requires taking the next honest step from wherever you currently stand.

The Rotary Charge

Rotarians are, by nature and by creed, people who choose to lead where others hesitate. We have led health campaigns, built schools, dug boreholes, and shaped policy – often without waiting for perfect conditions or complete expertise. The AI-first leadership challenge asks nothing more of us than that same willingness to step forward and learn by doing.

The institutions our members lead – public and private, large and small, do not need us to have all the answers about artificial intelligence. They need us to have the courage to start asking the right questions, and the humility to keep learning alongside our teams.

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The time to begin is now. Delay is not neutral. Every season of hesitation widens the gap between institutions that harness this moment and those it quietly leaves behind. As Rotarians, we have never been leaders who wait on the sidelines of history. This is simply the next place service calls us to lead.”

Inspired by ideas from Harvard Business Impact’s Perspective, “Why AI-First Leadership Is Essential” (© 2025 Harvard Business School Publishing)

“AI won’t replace humans, but humans with AI will replace humans without AI.”

Professor Karim Lakhani – Harvard Business School





UPPER KOLOLO SAVINGS
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TO END.**

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and follow the prompts to make your deposit.



OPTION 2

CENTENARY BANK

- Visit an agent and ask them to deposit through **Sasula** on Centenary.
- Submit your **NV5**** number.
- Ensure you get a **Sasula** receipt.



ENSURE YOU GET A **SASULA** RECEIPT



Let's stay consistent. Every deposit counts.

Thank you for being part of our growth!

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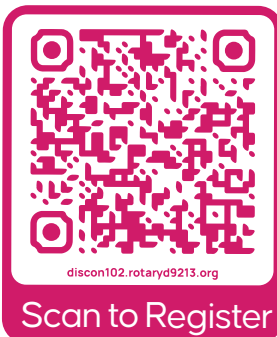
Registration Rates

Early bird Rate ending November 31st

- A. 102 Rotaractors - \$130
- B. 102 Rotarians - \$200

Regular Registration ending January 31st 2027

- A. 102 Rotaractors - \$150
- B. 102 Rotarians - \$250



29th APRIL TO
1st MAY 2027



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