



# THE WAVE

ISSUE 03 | SEPTEMBER 2025



Golden Voice, Legendary Service

**Rtn. Moses Matovu**

*Afrigo's 50-Year Overture*





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Rotary



PEOPLE OF ACTION



## Editor's Note

# Literacy Beyond the Classroom



Upon my return from the Cancer Run on Sunday, 31st August, my five-year-old daughter, Kara, asked me what the run meant. Later, I scrolled through countless social media posts showing who ran, why they ran, and the stories behind each step. That, right there, is the power of literacy. Kara now understands, and I am certain she will proudly show off her kit to her playmates and narrate why Mommy had to wake up early to join the cause.

What I am saying, dear readers, is that basic education and literacy extend far beyond classrooms or textbooks. No. They unfold right on our verandas, in conversations like the one I had with Kara. Do you have a Kara in your life; someone you can teach, inform, or inspire? Small strides, baby steps; and the whole world becomes more literate, more informed, more empowered.

This is our third edition, and our confidence has taken root. We are grounded, and deeply privileged to highlight what many of our Rotary Clubs have accomplished in advancing basic education and literacy, both internally and within communities.

We feature Afrigo Band, a cultural icon. In 50 years of music, their songs have carried love, education, social commentary, and the heartbeat of Uganda. Songs like Jim, Obangaina,

and Oswadde Nnyo are more than melodies; they are lessons because through them is literacy delivered through rhythm and story.

The Rotary Clubs of Kasangati, Sonde, Buloba, Kira, Kabarole, Jinja and Kampala South made us proud through their impactful interventions.

RC Sonde's Pink Basket project, which ensures that young girls are never stigmatized in schools, moved me to tears.

Beyond our borders, a Brazilian scholar from IHE Delft, a renowned institute for water education, shared her invaluable insights, a poignant reminder that literacy is a bridge that spans the globe. Thanks to our Scholarships Chair, Rtn. Mary Kiconco, The Wave will continue to engage with these inspiring young minds and amplify their remarkable journeys.. The membership docket also is reminding us to bring one more member- so that we enhance the impact.

Friends, there is so much more we can do to ensure everyone around us gains not just literacy in letters, but literacy in life; especially about community needs and their surroundings. And it begins where you are. Start at home.

Happy reading, folks!

**Rtn Sheila Naturinda**  
RC-Kampala Central

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## RI President's message:

# Peace through education



When I stepped into the role of Rotary International president, the moment came swiftly and unexpectedly. It got me thinking how the world can change in an instant, and how Rotary has the power to be a steady force for good in that change. This month, Rotary's Basic Education and Literacy Month, we have a clear call to action: to strengthen the foundation of learning in every community we serve.

Millions of people worldwide remain unable to read. Millions of children lack access to basic education. And yet, we know the solution: sustainable, inclusive, and equitable education, especially for girls and marginalized youths. Literacy is more than the ability to read and write. It is the key to human dignity, economic mobility, and peace. Every book opened, every classroom supported, and every teacher trained becomes a building block of peace.

This year, our message is Unite for Good. "Unite" speaks to the strength we find in each other. When we unite our talents and

resources — not only among our clubs but across partners, organizations, and communities — we expand our reach. And when we do so consistently over time, we create lasting change. Rotary service cannot be measured only in annual goals. Our work in education must extend beyond a single year. Literacy projects take time to take root, grow, and bear fruit.

Now is the time to think boldly and creatively. New types of clubs can help us engage educators, students, and advocates in new ways. Let us use this month to welcome new members with a passion for education and empower existing ones to lead service projects that reflect local needs. Whether you're building libraries, distributing textbooks, or mentoring students, your actions matter.

Education is also peacebuilding. Every scholarship we provide, every early childhood program we support, every adult literacy class we fund is an act of peace. And Rotary has been building

peace in this way for more than a century.

Let us not forget that the fight for literacy is not only about access, it's about equity. It is about ensuring every learner, regardless of background, has the opportunity to reach their potential. And it is about standing together — across borders, languages, and generations — to say that education is a right, not a privilege.

Let's Unite for Good by committing to literacy that lasts. Let's dream of a world where every child learns to read. And then, as people of action, let's work together to make that dream a reality.

Together, we can change lives, starting with the power of education.

Together, we Unite for Good.

**FRANCESCO AREZZO**  
President, Rotary International

## District Governor's message:

# Yes, We Can Bridge The Gap



Education is the cornerstone of development; a pathway through which individuals and communities rise above poverty and create sustainable futures. In Uganda, significant progress has been made in expanding access to education through initiatives such as Universal Primary Education (UPE). Yet, challenges remain; making it evident that our continued support for basic education and literacy is both urgent and necessary.

### Statistics remind us of the task before us, as 36% of Ugandans are still illiterate.

While enrollment rates are high, many children do not complete primary school. Some leave early due to poverty, child labor, lack of access to proper menstrual hygiene or early marriages. Others attend school but struggle with poor learning outcomes - too often sitting in overcrowded or no classrooms, lacking textbooks, pencils, exercise books or being taught by overstretched teachers. According to recent reports, literacy and numeracy levels among Ugandan learners remain below the desired standards, threatening the nation's aspirations for growth and progress.

Rotarians in Uganda have witnessed these realities firsthand. Across our communities, we meet children

eager to learn but held back by limited resources. We encounter adults who long to read, write and count but have never been given the chance. Literacy is more than the ability to decode or read words on a page - it is the ability to access opportunities, participate in civic life, and support families with dignity. Without it, cycles of poverty, unemployment and inequality persist. This inequality is worsened when one talks about digital literacy in a world that is becoming so digital. A survey presented at the, "Building the Future of Fair and Inclusive Digital Work in Uganda," Workshop held in 2024, highlighted Uganda's low ICT skills and literacy levels, revealing that a lack of knowledge or digital skills prevents 75% of Ugandans from accessing the internet.

An illiterate population is not an empowered population. This is why Rotary continues to place basic education and literacy at the heart of its service. Rotary clubs in Uganda have built classrooms, equipped schools with books and learning materials, provided scholarships to vulnerable children and organized adult literacy programs. These initiatives change lives - a book in a child's hands sparks imagination; a girl who stays in school delays early marriage; and an adult

who learns to read opens new opportunities for work and self-reliance.

Yet our work must go further. We need to champion teacher training, strengthen partnerships with government and civil society and explore innovative solutions like digital learning to bridge the Digital Divide. We must ensure that education is inclusive, reaching the rural child, the girl child, the refugee and the adult learner alike.

As Rotarians, we are uniquely positioned to make a lasting difference. Through our networks, resources and commitment to service, we can help build a Uganda where every child can read with understanding and every adult can write their own future. Supporting basic education and literacy is not charity; it is an investment in peace, progress and prosperity for our nation.

Let us, therefore, renew our commitment to this vital cause. Together, United for Good, we can light the lamp of knowledge in every corner of Uganda, ensuring that no child or adult is left behind.

#RotaryEyamba

**Geoffrey Martin Kitakule,**  
District Governor - Rotary District 9213



# Moses Matovu: Crafting the Beat of a Nation

By Rtn Robert Walakira

In the story of Ugandan music, few figures loom as large as Moses Matovu, the legendary band leader of The Afrigo Band. For more than five decades, his smooth vocals and soulful saxophone have been the heartbeat of a sound that helped shape what we now know as Ugandan pop.

Born in Kawempe in 1949, Moses' childhood straddled tradition and modernity. He began his education at Namirembe Primary School before moving on to Pillai's Secondary School, with part of his studies funded by a Buganda Kingdom scholarship. But, it was in Namirembe Cathedral, where he sang as a young chorister, that the music bug truly took hold, igniting in him a passion that would shape the course of his life.

By the age of 18, Moses had already made his first recording. Soon after came stints with the Thunderbirds and the Cranes Bands respectively, before he co-founded Afrigo Band in 1975, a group that would go on to become the longest running and most loved band in Uganda's history. Their music has not only entertained but also educated, and narrated Uganda's story, becoming a soundtrack etched into the nation's collective history.

However, beyond the spotlight and the sax riffs, Moses is also a proud Rotarian of the Rotary Club of Kasubi. In this exclusive interview with Robert Walakira, he opens up about his journey, shares his wisdom with the youth, and finally reveals the inspiration behind his timeless hit, *Ekkazi Ekkadde*.

**The Wave:** Thank you for carving out time for this interview, Rtn. Moses. I know you have got a wedding gig in a few hours and a European trip coming up next week, so I will be terse. Could you walk us through the story behind the name Afrigo, and what prompted the change from The Cranes?

**Rtn. Moses:** Thank you very much, CP Walakira. The Cranes Band split in 1974, and the name had already been registered by the group's original owners. We therefore couldn't continue with it, even though

most of us had been members of the band. So, Jesse Gitta, Charles Ssekyanzi, Jeff Ssewava, Tony Ssenkebeje, and I gave ourselves the task of coming up with a new name.

When we reconvened, I threw two names on the table: Afri Raha (raha meaning "pleasure" in Kiswahili) and Africa Go Forward, which was all about Africa pushing ahead musically.

The team preferred the second one, which we later trimmed down to Afrigo, and just like that, the name was born. Five decades on, it is still here.

**The Wave** Brilliant. That is crystal, and revolutionary too. Rotary comes up with a new theme every year, and this time it is Unite for Good. Since music brings people together, how have you used your talent to plug into Rotary's mission of making the world a better place?

**Rtn. Moses:** For close to two decades, we in The Afrigo Band have had the privilege of working alongside Rotary clubs. We have partnered with RC Mityana and several others across the country. We



**As I mentioned before I have always been proud to associate with and work with Rotarians, I admire the ideals they espouse; mainly service above self, integrity and accountability**



Photo Credit: Monitor Publications

even hold an annual fundraising event with the RC Kampala Ssesse Islands aptly named Cheza na Afrigo. To support such initiatives, when it comes to charging, I don't go heavy on them. We only ask that they cover the band's costs, and nothing more.

I admire the fact that Rotary is not driven by profit. People come together, identify needs, and extend support to those in challenging circumstances – to people they do not necessarily know, in areas they would never have associated with. That spirit of service above self is something I am proud to associate with and to be a part of. I am, indeed, proud to be a Rotarian.

**The Wave:** That's noble, Rtn. Moses. Now, we all agree that The Afrigo Band's sound is instantly recognisable. From the very first blow of that sax, people just nod in unison, "Yep, that's Afrigo." They don't bother placing bets on it. How have you managed to keep your brand intact for 50 years?

**Rtn. Moses:** That is what we call originality. Through composing our own songs, we created a distinct signature sound. Even if the names of Moses Matovu or Charles Ssekyanzi are not mentioned, one will identify the Afrigo Band sound, once the beat kicks in. That kind of identity doesn't come overnight; it takes years of hard work.

For me, as a saxophonist and singer, the vocals can sometimes be easy to identify, but with instruments, it is a different story. Still, when people hear me play the saxophone, they say, "That is Moses Matovu," but trust me, it is not a one day hustle. It takes time, patience, and consistency.

**The Wave:** What advice would you give to young people who want to pursue a music career??

**Rtn. Moses:** One should have passion, commitment, and above all, discipline. That is the standard. Perhaps one more thing I would

say to young musicians is to be patient. If you truly love what you do, you will create great music.

Personally, no one asks me to write songs. The pieces I compose all come from within me. I sit down, gather my thoughts, and then create the music.

**The Wave:** As a band leader, how do you keep your members motivated and always get the best out of them?

**Rtn. Moses:** Being a band leader is much like a Rotary Club President or a football coach. Through experience, a coach is able to polish a player to shine through proper guidance. I give advice to the band members, and I give credit where it is due. That keeps everyone motivated. When someone feels appreciated, they put in their very best.

**The Wave:** In many organisations, people hold different opinions on how things should be done. How do you handle conflicts or disagreements in the band?



Picture: Afrigo Band



### **Rtn. Moses:**

First, we respect one another. The Afrigo Band has a culture and a certain standard of quality that we uphold. We all follow the band's principles in order to achieve our goals. For instance, if someone wishes to join the band, we hold auditions to assess both their musical standard and their level of discipline. You might be a talented drummer or singer, but you must also show respect to the others.

That is how we avoid unnecessary conflict, by being clear about what our standards and expectations are, right from the outset.

### **The Wave:**

**Reflecting on your remarkable career, what stands out as one of your proudest moments?**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

There are numerous memorable events, but what stands out is the 1999 performance at the Kabaka's wedding. It was massive, the crowd was buzzing, the sound was on point, and even the Kabaka threw us a thumbs up. Truly a good one!

### **The Wave:**

**What is your favourite composition? The one you listen to and think, "This is an inspiration from outer space"?**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

I have many songs that I hold close, like Emiziro and Jimmy Saasira from back in the day when

I was starting out. But then, songs are like children; you love them all.

### **The Wave:**

**During Afrigo's 50th anniversary celebrations, you performed Batuuse I for the first time in years. From Tondeka Awaka to Batuuse II, and now to the now super danceable Olimujjawa, which got Koffi Olomide on his feet. How has Afrigo's creative vibe evolved over the years, especially with new tech and AI coming into play?**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

It is all about experience. When I recorded my first song, Jimmy Saasira, on the tenor sax, I was so proud of it. Looking back, it was done on a chromatic scale, and is pretty basic, but lovable. That was the learning curve. Experience is everything; that is how you grow as musicians. Honestly, when I listen to Jimmy Saasira now, I just laugh at myself. Today, I don't play the same way, I have grown and matured.

### **The Wave:**

**You are a highly respected saxophone player. Which musicians inspired you, and how did they shape your style?**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

When I first picked up the sax, it wasn't about copying a particular person. Back in 1970, in The White

Nile days, , when I was still playing with The Cranes Band, we played songs of all sorts of musicians, but there wasn't a dedicated saxophonist I could really follow. There are a number of talented sax players out there, and the best way to learn is by listening to as many of them as one can and then finding your own path.

### **The Wave:**

**Rotary has seven areas of focus, and you have previously composed songs that beautifully resonate with them. Your song Speed Controle, for instance, speaks to disease prevention; Obutonde bw'Ensi champions the environment; Genda Osome addresses education and literacy; and Jim reflects on conflict prevention. Why then, did it take you so long to join Rotary?**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

Honestly, I do not know. Perhaps the timing simply was not right. Maybe the Rotarians I came across earlier did not take the time to introduce me to the Rotary ethos. However, when a member from RC Kasubi came through and dropped the Rotary gospel, I was like, why not?

As I mentioned before I have always been proud to associate with and work with Rotarians, I admire the ideals they espouse; mainly service above self, integrity and accountability. I feel that if all of us as Ugandans embrace these principles, the world would be a much better place.

Rotarians have positively impacted communities and all of us have lessons to learn from them. I also admire the fact that they have fun as they work...a very large percentage of our fan base are Rotarians.

### **The Wave:**

**Rotary places emphasis on mentoring young people, which is why we have Interact and Rotaract clubs. The youth**

**are essentially regarded as the future custodians of this great organisation. Our District Governor Geoffrey Kitakule is a former Rotaractor himself. Looking ahead, what are your aspirations for the future of The Afrigo Band?**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

I am 76 now, and while my love for music will never fade, I am not as energetic as I used to be. I need to scale back a bit, though not entirely. We have therefore started to plan for the future of Afrigo by recruiting and building the capacity of young musicians. Those who attended our 50 years celebrations saw the young lads playing in the brass section. Afrigo's future is young and very bright.

### **The Wave**

**You are a humble man, yet you have been in the spotlight since you were 18. How come all that fame has never gotten to your head like it does with most of today's artists?**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

It depends a lot on the environment in which you grow, and how you start out as a musician. For me, music was never just a side hustle, it was a calling. Back in our time, we were surrounded by great musicians like Elly Wamala, Eclas Kawalya, Fred Masagazi and many others. Their presence kept us humble, grounded, and respectful. These days, however, many young musicians don't seem to have courtesy and discipline. . They are in their own bubble, making bubble gum music for a quick buck and stepping on everyone's toes. In our time, we were wired differently.

### **The Wave:**

**At 76, what is the biggest life lesson you have picked?**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

Many lessons, but the one that

truly stands out is resilience, and I will tell you why.

After the fall of Gen. Idi Amin, all our band equipment was looted. We were left with absolutely nothing, no drum kit, no guitar, not even a microphone. It was a crushing setback. However, with the support of friends, we slowly got our equipment back, one piece at a time, some from even from the very people who had looted us. Gradually, we rebuilt everything and got back on stage.

That experience taught me that resilience and building quality networks is everything.

### **The Wave**

**You have written so many good songs over your legendary career. Are any of your tunes based on your own life experiences? I am asking because Ekazzi Ekadde was on repeat while I was driving here.**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

[Laughs] Many people ask if my lyrics come from personal experiences. The truth is, they don't. It is just creativity, that's all.

Take Nantongo or Maria, for example. People assume those are real women I know. However, I just picked names that fit the rhythm and mood. "Maria" worked perfectly, so I used it.

As for Ekkazzi Ekkadde, I borrowed the idea from a traditional singer. His work piqued my interest and inspired me to create my own version.

So, to answer your question, there isn't always a hidden love story in my songs. It is pure art, plain, and simple.

### **The Wave**

**How will you use your music talent to support Rotary?**

### **Rtn. Moses**

I am grateful to the talent I have and for life. These are largely God-given. This has enabled me to

reach out to communities across the globe and spread positive messages that we have already talked about. I have also worked with Rotarians, they are good people. As a Rotarian, I commit to further spread this message of 'Rotary Eyamba' and Service Above Self through our music as Afrigo Band. We have fans of all ages and varieties, who are just waiting to hear and act on these messages. Music is a very strong communication tool. Afrigo Band is a willing partner in transmitting these messages to those who may otherwise not get them.

Additionally, most of the messages in our songs resonate with the themes of Rotary, this makes us worthy and credible partners in service. The bond can only grow stronger.

### **The Wave:**

**Beyond music, what do you do for fun?**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

I play soccer. Football has always been my greatest passion. When I am not watching it, I am playing it.

Before music fully claimed me, I was a footballer. I played for Express FC, Lint Marketing Board, Nakivubo Boys, and Fiat FC. In fact, I even joined the Uganda Police Force through football before eventually dedicating myself entirely to music. Football remains my game, and I ride high for both SC Villa and Manchester United.

### **The Wave:**

**And with that, I wish United a fantastic season. Thank you so much for your time.**

### **Rtn. Moses:**

My pleasure.

**The interviewer is the founding editor of The Amasiro Post and a member of RC Kasubi.**



**As a Rotarian, I commit to further spread this message of 'Rotary Eyamba' and Service Above Self through our music as Afrigo Band.**



# Basic Education & Literacy: Making a Case for A Qualifications Framework in Uganda



By Rtn Wangi Francis

Mr. Mwanja enrolled for a four-year Engineering degree programme at Makerere University. He failed in his fourth year and decided to enrol at a Uganda Technical College (UTC) for a technical diploma. He spent two years at the UTC because what he had studied at Makerere could not be recognised. After the diploma, he enrolled at a National Teachers College (NTC) for a Diploma in Education. He spent two full years at the NTC because what he had studied at Makerere University and at the UTC could not be recognised.

After one year of teaching in a secondary school, he enrolled for a three-year Bachelor of Education degree to teach technical subjects. Despite his earlier studies, he still had to spend the mandatory three years to graduate. It took Mr. Mwanja 25 years to get his first degree, twelve (12) of those years spent in the higher education sub-sector.

In an ideal situation, all prior knowledge and skills acquired by an individual should be recognised, and if they fall within the course units of the new course, then the student should be exempted from taking some course units of the new course on account of what they studied earlier. In Uganda today, this cannot be effected because of the absence

of an approved qualifications framework. Since such earlier learning cannot be graded and equated, it becomes very hard to recognise it.

A Qualifications Framework (QF) is a structured system that classifies, describes, and organizes qualifications based on a set of criteria, such as learning outcomes (what a person knows, understands, and can do), levels of difficulty or complexity, routes to achieving qualifications (formal, informal, or non-formal education). The qualifications framework spells out levels (e.g. foundational or school-level) to advanced (e.g. PhDs or professional qualifications), descriptors that define the knowledge, skills, and competencies required, recognition of prior learning (RPL), including informal or work-based learning as well as standardization which ensures consistency across institutions, sectors, and regions.

- The QF Provides clear benchmarks for education and training programs. It makes qualifications more understandable and comparable nationally and internationally.
- It also encourages learning at all stages of life and facilitates transitions between different education levels and career paths.
- The QF helps people to move between jobs or educational institutions, both within the country and internationally.
- It also aligns with global frameworks (e.g., European Qualifications Framework, ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework), aiding cross-border recognition.

- It further enhances employability by linking qualifications to labour market needs while helping employers understand what a qualification holder can do.
- The QF recognizes informal learning. It values skills acquired through work experience, community service, or self-study thereby promoting inclusivity by recognizing non-traditional learning paths.
- At the national level, the QF guides policy and planning by informing national education and skills development policies while identifying gaps in the workforce or education system.

A Qualifications Framework is vital for a country because it creates a transparent, consistent, and flexible structure for recognizing learning achievements. It empowers individuals, supports workforce development, and enhances the overall quality and coherence of education and training systems. For developing countries especially, it can be a key driver for economic growth, social inclusion, and global competitiveness.

Reports indicate that the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda is in advanced stages of developing and approving a qualifications framework which will serve the purposes mentioned above and enable the population to operate within an approved system to facilitate proper skills training and career development. This is a step in the right direction and all efforts aimed at facilitating this process should be fully supported.

# RC Kasangati and the Shared Love schools: The Story of Makukuba- Mukono district

By Rtn Sophie Bamwoyeraki

In 2008, AG Moses Ssebaggala, a social worker, together with members of his organisation, *Shared Love*, was invited to Makukuba Village in Nabbale, Mukono District to speak about parenting and to share the word of God. Through door-to-door visits and interaction with parents, the team uncovered a troubling reality: girls, some as young as thirteen, were being married off to much older men. Shocked and deeply disturbed, they decided to carry out a survey across more than 200 homes, focusing on family structure, health, marriage, education, and income.

The findings were devastating. The illiteracy rate stood at over 86%, largely because the community lacked a nearby school.

Later, while away in Kapchorwa on a working trip, Moses received tragic news. Two children from Makukuba Village had drowned in a flash flood while walking six kilometres to the nearest school in Nakifuma. The incident ignited a wave of grief and determination. The community resolved to act.

With the support of *Shared Love*, friends, village leaders, and parents, they rallied resources to build a school. Using papyrus reeds and eucalyptus poles, they constructed a shelter that housed two classrooms. On opening day, the sight was overwhelming: 300 children turned up, eager to learn. The school began with nursery and primary one classes — a humble beginning, but a powerful step toward transforming Makukuba's future.

## Growth of the Shared Love School

The school would gradually expand, with a new classroom built each year, and was later upgraded to a tin shelter. Despite these humble beginnings, the Shared Love School was officially registered with the Ministry of Education and Sports. The school became a symbol of hope, inspiring the community and drawing more children each day to its doors.

As it flourished, the number of child marriages declined, and families began to appreciate the value of education. The teaching staff served with dedication and commitment,

giving themselves fully to the children despite the financial challenges Shared Love faced in paying teachers' salaries and securing essential school resources. When the community saw their children learning to read and write, they were inspired to dream even bigger — and soon began laying bricks for the construction of a permanent structure.

## Enter the Rotary Club of Kasangati

In 2014, Moses joined the Rotary Club of Kasangati. His story of Shared Love in Makukuba touched hearts and inspired three members —

his mentor Fredrick Kakaire, Elizabeth Ssempebwa, and John Kizza Ssali — to visit the village and explore partnership opportunities with the school.

The following year, 2015, under the leadership of President Florence Kanyike, the club constructed its first classroom. In 2016, with President Julie Kamuzze Musoke at the helm, two additional classrooms were built, gradually moving students out of makeshift shelters and into permanent buildings. President Julie, together with other World Class Presidents, went further to install a 10,000-liter rainwater harvesting tank





 **Gonve School before and after rehabilitation**

after realizing students were losing valuable learning hours fetching water for school activities.

### Continued Expansion and Support

The momentum only grew. In the 2016–2017 Rotary Year, President Sophie Nuwagira Bamwoyeraki, with support from Hariss International, oversaw the addition of a

second block comprising three large classrooms, offices, and a bookstore. Around the same time, the school received textbooks from the Second Wind Foundation in Texas. The following year (2017–2018), Dr. Jennifer Baluka continued the collaboration with Hariss International to complete the first classroom block by finishing floor screeding and fitting shutters. With

two modern blocks now in place, the school's appeal and enrollment rose even further.

In 2018–2019, under President Mildred Bahemuka, the club partnered with the Rotary Club of San Luis Obispo, USA, to construct a third block with two large classrooms. That same year, a global grant with RC Brynmawr brought six boreholes to the community, enhancing access to clean water. In 2019–2020, under President Elizabeth Ssempebwa, the club added a multi-purpose classroom block that doubled as a meeting hall, while Hariss International boosted student comfort by donating shoes and sports uniforms.

By this time, the school stood on four strong classroom blocks, well-equipped to serve its growing student population. With Makukuba steadily transformed, attention turned to Gonve, a neighboring village. During the Change Maker year, under President Paul Nampala, the club, in partnership with Rotary Club Jayhawk (USA) and Hariss International, built two classroom blocks — transforming the Gonve school into a spacious and well-structured learning facility.

### Planning for the Future

Recognizing that many children could not continue to secondary school due to financial difficulties, Shared Love laid plans for a secondary school and vocational institution to bridge the gap. Today, that vision is taking shape.



 **Makukuba School before and after rehabilitation**

Shared Love Primary School has now hosted the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) for three consecutive years, with about 40 pupils sitting each year. The secondary school has grown to a population of 85 students, while the primary school accommodates 353 pupils. Together with the Rotary Club of Kasangati, Shared Love has also constructed a health centre to serve children who fall ill during school hours, as well as a labour ward that supports more than ten mothers daily in a community that once had no health facility nearby.

As permanent classrooms in Makukuba and Gonve — under the stewardship of Rotarians Fredrick Kitandwe and Arthur Kizito — continue to fill with eager learners, the ripple effect of progressive education in the area has become undeniable. It stands as proof that Rotary can change lives and transform communities.

Local government officials now regularly visit the schools, recognizing Shared Love Schools as a model of Rotary, corporate, and grassroots partnership in action. What began with papyrus shelters, later tin structures, has grown into a lasting legacy of hope, posterity, and opportunity.

Education has become the foundation for change — reducing child marriage, inspiring families to invest in their children's futures, and proving that investing in children yields endless rewards. The cycle of possibility continues, promising brighter generations to come.



# RC Sonde Transforms Ngora Through Early Childhood Education



By Rtn Dianah Kagere

In the heart of Kapir Sub-County, Ngora District, a new chapter in education has begun. Standing tall amidst the gentle fields of Eastern Uganda is the Agirigiroi Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD), a beacon of hope and learning for the youngest minds.

Opened in Rotary Year 2022/23, the Centre today bustles with the energy of 165 pupils—76 boys and 89 girls—who arrive each morning eager to learn, play, and dream. Behind their progress are five dedicated teachers and three support staff, quietly shaping the foundation upon which these children’s futures will be built.

**Education in Context**

While Uganda has made notable strides in literacy, with 74% of Ugandans aged 10 and above able to read and write, in some rural areas like Ngora, the story is different because their children face daunting challenges like limited infrastructure, a scarcity of learning materials, and too few trained teachers. For years, these gaps have placed rural children at a disadvantage compared to their peers in urbanised areas.

It was in this context that the Agirigiroi Early Childhood Development Centre was born—not merely as a school building, but as a promise.

**Ngora ECD Impact at a Glance.**

**Children Enrolled:** 165 (76 boys, 89 girls)

**Staff:** 5 teachers + 3 support staff.

**Infrastructure Investment:** UGX 340 million (UGX 60M from RC Sonde)

**Community Impact:**

First formal learning environment for children in Kapir Sub-County

Safe, structured classrooms

Creates jobs and strengthens local teaching capacity

Improved access to Early Childhood Development programs

Lays foundation for lifelong learning

**Sustainability:**

Donated land + Local government takeover ensures long-term operations.

Model of partnership between community, RC Sonde, and Ngora Local government.



**A Partnership That Sparked Change**

In partnership with the IREAD Canada, the Rotary Club of Sonde, worked with the local community, and an investment of UGX 340 million, including UGX 60 million contributed by RC Sonde was realised. That dream of a modern ECD facility eventually became a reality. Built on land generously donated by the community, the Centre is a testament to what is possible when global partnerships meet true local commitment.

Management of the school was entrusted to the Ngora District Education Department, ensuring not just its continuity, but also community ownership. In doing so, the project set a model of sustainable development—where investments in infrastructure are matched with accountability, responsibility, and shared pride.

**A Brighter Tomorrow**

Inside the classrooms, brightly painted walls and

simple furniture create an environment where children can thrive. Here, literacy is not just about letters on a page—it is about nurturing curiosity, sparking imagination, and opening doors to opportunities that stretch far beyond Ngora’s borders.

Teachers report that enrolment and attendance are steadily rising, a reflection of the trust parents have placed in the new Centre. Mothers and fathers, once doubtful about the future of education in their village, now watch with pride as their children take confident steps toward a brighter tomorrow. They envisage doctors, nurses, engineers and teachers in the making.

**Beyond the Numbers**

Behind the statistics lies something even greater—the renewed belief that every child, no matter where they are born, deserves a strong start in life. With each song sung, story read, and lesson taught, the Agirigiroi ECD Centre is doing more than teaching children

to read and write. It is building confidence, dignity, and the hope of a new generation. And among many others, the centre offers numerous benefits to the children and community:

- Children have developed foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and social interactions, better preparing them for primary education.
- Early learning experiences stimulate brain development, leading to better academic performance later in life.
- The centre has created employment opportunities for teachers and support staff, contributing to the local economy.
- Parents are more involved in their children’s education, fostering a culture of learning within the community.

By prioritizing early childhood education, the district is laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning, reducing dropout rates, and enhancing overall educational outcomes.

The partnership between the community, RC Sonde, and the Ngora District Education Department demonstrates how collaboration can deliver transformative solutions. The success of this centre has already inspired other sub-counties to explore similar initiatives, proving the potential for scalable and replicable models in advancing rural education.



# Leaving No One Behind: Sonde's Pink Basket Project Keeps Girls in School

By Rtn Dianah Kagere  
Mugerwa

In 2021, during a community assessment by the Rotary Club of Sonde, one story silenced the room. Hajat Hadijah Nakitto, Headteacher of Kiwango UMEA Primary School in Bukerere, spoke of a ten-year-old girl forced to drop out of school after becoming pregnant.

Her struggle began with something as ordinary as her first menstrual period. Without access to sanitary pads, she missed classes often. In desperation, she sought money to buy them—only to be exploited. Soon after, her education ended abruptly.

Today, she is a teen mother.

Sadly, her story is not unique. In Uganda, **1 in 4 girls aged 15–19 is already pregnant or a mother, and 34% are married before 18** (UBOS, 2022). Menstrual hygiene challenges—lack of pads, stigma, and silence—are hidden drivers of this cycle. Statistics reveal that **1 in 10 girls misses school during her period**, and some never return.

Headteachers like Hajat Nakitto witness the toll daily.

“When a girl misses three to five days of school every month, she falls behind. By the end of the term, she is at risk of repeating or dropping out.

It starts with absenteeism, but before long, some never come back,” she explains.

This is the gap the Rotary Club of Sonde stepped in to close with the **Pink Basket Initiative**—a simple but powerful mission: *no girl should have her education cut short because of her period.*

Since its launch, the initiative has distributed reusable sanitary pads across 12 schools in Goma Division, Mukono District. In July of Rotary Year 2025/26 alone, more than **600 reusable pads** were distributed, bringing the total to **over 7,200 pads**, valued at UGX 76 million, since the Club's charter.



Each Pink Basket pack is carefully assembled with dignity in mind. For only UGX 10,500, a girl receives:

- Two cotton panties
- A cake of soap
- Two reusable sanitary towels

Beyond the items lies a message of hope: that girls deserve uninterrupted education, free from the silent barrier of menstrual stigma.

The campaign goes beyond pad distribution, integrating Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) education, male role modelling for boys, and Gender-Based Violence awareness. It is implemented in collaboration with partners including the Girl Initiative for Better Education and Health (GIBEH), Rwenzori Center for Research and Advocacy (RCRA), and Mischana Uganda, the producers of the reusable pads.

## List of schools supported.

1. St.Charles Lwanga P/S,
2. Kyasereka P/S,
3. Kiwango Umea P/s,
4. Nakiwate CoU P/S,
5. Kiwango Umea P/S,
6. Misindye CoU P/S,
7. Nakiwate Islamic P/S,
8. Nakagere P/S,
9. St. Beatrice P/S,
10. St. Mary's P/S
11. Law & Joy P/S.
12. Buwava Primary school



## Distribution over the years:

Rotary Year	Sanitary Packs
2025/2026	654 (in progress)
2024/2025	3000
2023/2024	2000
RFEW 2024/2023	200
2022/2023	1000
2022/2021	400
Total	7,254

  
**600**

More than **600 reusable pads** were distributed, bringing the total to **over 7,200 pads**, valued at UGX 76 million, since the Club's charter.



For the girls who receive them, these are not just pads; they are tickets back to the classroom, shields against stigma, and stepping stones to brighter futures. Teachers report visible change: fewer girls dropping out, more attending consistently, and a renewed confidence that shows even in classroom participation.

*"No girl should ever feel ashamed or be forced out of school simply because of a biological process, "her period". When we give a girl pads through the club's Pink Basket, we are telling her: you belong in that classroom, your dreams matter, and nothing should stand in your way. We are not only protecting her dignity but giving hope to her and her parents, and reminding the whole community that an educated girl is an empowered future."* says President Christine Alupo.

The initiative also tackles the silence around menstruation. In schools, teachers are beginning to have open conversations with girls about their bodies, reproductive health, and self-worth. Boys, too, are learning to support their female peers instead of mocking them, reducing stigma.

To sustain the impact of the Pink Basket initiative, RC Sonde has committed to funding it annually through member contributions. The club has also forged partnerships with NGOs supporting teenage mothers, including the Rwenzori Center for Research and Advocacy (RCRA), which has pledged a steady supply of reusable sanitary towels.

The club's vision is even bolder, empowering girls with hands-on skills to produce their own reusable pads.

*"Our dream is not just to distribute pads, but to create a system where girls and young women can make them for themselves and for others. Plans are underway to establish a reusable pad production facility in Sonde, with feasibility studies already in progress this Rotary year,"* says President Christine Alupo.



### Pink Basket at a Glance

**Mission:** No girl should miss school because of her period.

**What is in a Pink Basket Pack?**

- 2 cotton panties
- 2 reusable sanitary pads
- 1 bar of soap

**Impact:**

- 12 schools in Mukono District
- 7,254 reusable pad packs distributed (worth UGX 76, 167,000).

**Beyond Pads:**

- Adolescent Sexual & Reproductive Health (ASRH) awareness
- Male role modelling for boys
- Gender-Based Violence awareness
- Teacher and community sensitisation

**Partners:**

- Girl Initiative for Better Education & Health (GIBEH)
- Rwenzori Center for Research and Advocacy (RCRA)
- Mischana Uganda

**Future Vision:**

- Establish a reusable pad production facility in Sonde to empower girls with skills and sustainability.



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# RC Kabarole's BELEP Digitises Sprawling Karambi Primary School -A Pictorial



Hosting international exchange visitors and potential partners. As well as networking and resource mobilization for the Basic Education and Literacy Enhancement Program (BELEP)



Celebrating 'Drop Everything and Read' (DEAR) day at Karambi Primary School.



Rotary extending digital learning to students through the provision of computers to primary schools. The digital package was secured through international partnership with the Rotary Club of Kokomo, USA.



Inspiring children to develop a sense of learning through reading beyond the class.



The Karambi Primary School Basic Education and Literacy Enhancement Program (BELEP) Signature project to enhance digital computer science for the new generation.



Community Sensitization on child protection, hygiene and sanitation; and environmental protection.



# DROP EVERYTHING AND READ: RC Kira Illuminates Community through Literacy

By Rtn Eva Kintu

In 2022, the Rotary Club of Kira embarked on a journey with Kira Church of Uganda Primary School to spark a culture of reading among pupils. What began as a simple meeting soon grew into a movement that transformed classrooms into hubs of curiosity and joy.

The partnership was first sealed in a discussion between President Moses Mubiru and the school authorities, where they agreed to dedicate two days every month to Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) sessions. The idea was simple but powerful: Rotarians would read with the children, interact with teachers, and donate books to nurture a generation of readers.

## The First Pages Turned

The very first DEAR session set the tone. Pupils in Primary Three—88 in total, with 59% girls and 41% boys—were handed copies of the children's story *I Know an Old Mzee Who Swallowed a Fly*. For 15 minutes, the classroom fell into a rare silence as every child read intently. Soon after, **the chief reader brought the story to life aloud**, while Teacher Juliet guided a lively question-and-answer session. The pupils responded eagerly, many grasping the story's characters and message with ease. A few who struggled found

encouragement from their peers and teachers.

That day, the President of the Club handed over 200 brand-new readers—books raised through a partnership with the Rotary Club of Malborough (USA). The moment was unforgettable. The Head Teacher, Mrs. Agnes Ssendagala, broke into a spontaneous dance, while pupils, alone and in pairs, dove straight into their new books. The room buzzed with excitement as literacy became a gift they could now hold in their hands.



## Growing the Connection

Two years later, in February 2024, the reading culture had taken firm root. The first DEAR Day of the year brought together 119 Primary Four pupils (56 girls and 63 boys). With curiosity written all over their faces, the children explored a story about why cats eat rats. Teachers joined actively: one focused on pronunciation, another on audibility, and yet another shared with the pupils the story of Rotary itself and what it had already done for their school.

Each session became more than just reading time. It was a bridge—linking children, teachers, and Rotarians in a common purpose. The school now plans its DEAR days at the start of each term, ensuring at least one dedicated reading moment every month.

## Beyond Books

The DEAR connection has inspired even bigger dreams. Through the partnership, plans were drawn to renovate and furnish one classroom into a school library, a project that

was completed in 2024. The library finally gave pupils a space to go beyond academic textbooks and dive into the world of imagination and discovery. While parents had not yet attended any sessions, the Rotary Club of Kira and the school resolved to invite them to the upcoming DEAR moments. The goal remains clear: to build not just a school-based activity, but a community-wide culture of reading.





# Drop Everything & Read: RC Sonde Powers 10 Bukerere Community Schools through Teacher Training & Book Donations

By Rtn Dianah Kagere

In Bukerere, the Rotary Club of Sonde is proving that literacy is more than a skill, it is a lifeline. Through its Basic Education and Literacy Enhancement Program (BELEP), the club is not only equipping children with the ability to read, but also nurturing a culture where books are central to growth, imagination, and opportunity.

So far, BELEP has placed 5,000 readers into the hands of children across 10 schools, opening up the world of stories, ideas, and knowledge to more than 8,411 pupils over three years period. For many of these learners, these books are the very first step in discovering that reading is not just about passing exams but about seeing beyond the walls

of their classroom.

Every week, the familiar rhythm of “Drop Everything and Read” (DEAR) sweeps through these schools. Classrooms pause. Books open. Silence settles as pupils disappear into stories that challenge, inspire, and amuse.

The effect is already visible. Teachers report that children are not only reading faster but also understanding more, expressing themselves with newfound confidence, and even showing leadership as they read aloud to peers.



But BELEP has gone beyond the classroom. Recognizing that many children and youth in the community are out of school but still hungry for knowledge, the Rotary Club of Sonde commissioned a community library at St. Charles Lwanga Primary School. Stocked with reading materials, the library is a hub where both pupils and community youth gather to borrow books, read

together, and strengthen their reading skill. Teachers, too, have been empowered. 125 lower primary teachers have completed retooling workshops under BELEP, gaining practical techniques to make reading engaging and accessible. “The children’s comprehension has improved tremendously,” one teacher at a partner school

shares. “They no longer just read words; they understand, interpret, and even explain stories in their own words. That has boosted their confidence in class and beyond.” The investment has been deliberate and significant. To date, the club has directed over UGX 45 million into books, teacher training, DEAR sessions, and the establishment of the library.



Rotary Year	Readers donated	Pupils Reached (DEAR moments)	Teachers Trained	Investment UGX
2022/2023	1000	1,204	35	16,800,000
2024/2025	4000	4,393	90	24,500,000
2025/2026	0	2814	30	4,000,000
Total	5000	8,411	155	45,300,000

But more than the numbers, it is the ripple effect that matters. Parents are seeing children read at home. Teachers are seeing classroom participation rise. And children, in turn, are beginning to believe that they, too, can write their own stories of success. “When a child learns to read, the doors of opportunity swing wide open,” says Club President Christine Alupo. “BELEP is about giving our children the key to their future. It is not just a project; it is a movement to make reading a way of life in Sonde.”

## BELEP at a Glance

**5,000** readers distributed across **10** schools

**8,411** pupils reached over 3 years

Weekly “Drop Everything and Read” (DEAR) moments transforming classrooms into hubs of curiosity

**125** lower primary teachers retooled with modern literacy techniques

Community Library commissioned at St. Charles Lwanga Primary School to serve in- and out-of-school youth

**UGX 45 million** invested in readers, training, DEAR sessions, and the library

In Bukerere, BELEP is turning reading into a way of life—opening doors of imagination, opportunity, and confidence.



# A BELEP BLUEPRINT IN ACTION: Nurturing Leaders & Transforming Communities



By Rtn Emmanuel Mukwenda Mugisa

For the RC Kampala South, the journey to Kabale has never been about projects alone; it has always been about people. It has been a long-term investment in a community, and just as importantly, in the young leaders of the Rotaract Club of Kampala South. The historic handover of a five-classroom block on August 23rd, 2025, was not merely the conclusion of a construction effort—it was the blossoming of a seed of service planted and carefully nurtured over years.

In Rotary District 9213, the Basic Education and Literacy Enhancement Program (BELEP) was more than a directive. It was a call to action—a vision for sustainable and transformative change. For the Rotary Club of Kampala South, answering this call meant embracing a holistic approach: recognizing that true education cannot thrive without good health, stable incomes, and a safe environment. Their multi-faceted outreach in Kabale District became a living blueprint of this philosophy, weaving together service, mentorship, and sustainability.

## Building Health, Hope, and Opportunity

Under the leadership of President Faridah Namutebi, members of Kampala South poured their energy into Kabale with a wide-reaching outreach:

- **At Kamuganguzi Health Centre III**, they built on an earlier MCH Global Grant by organizing a medical camp. In one day, 119 patients were treated, 28 expectant mothers received antenatal care and mama kits, while 70 adolescent girls and 26 women were given sanitary pads—ensuring dignity and reinforcing maternal and child health. These are the very children who will now fill the new classrooms, healthier and ready to learn.
- **In Nyaconga Village**, 50 women of the Rotary Community Corps were empowered through the gift of 100 ducks—an innovative project projected to generate UGX 375,000 per household over two years. Within that same timeframe, the flock is expected to multiply into a revolving asset worth UGX 15 million, anchoring household income and strengthening families to support their children’s education.



- **Across three schools, including Nyakijumba Primary School**, 200 fruit trees were planted in partnership with the community, ensuring not only nutrition but also lessons in environmental stewardship for the pupils.

Yet the pinnacle of the day came with the commissioning of the new classroom block at Nyakijumba Primary School—a project driven to completion by the Rotaract Club of Kampala South.

## A Testament to Mentorship

This moment was more than a ribbon-cutting. It symbolized the essence of the Rotary–Rotaract bond. Guided and mentored by their Rotary family, the Rotaractors, under the leadership of President Rashidah Nassanga, mobilized resources through their ambitious #20KForNyakijumba campaign, securing major

support from sponsors like Athena Hotel. Their success reflected not just youthful energy but also the guiding hand of Rotary.

From a simple dream of repainting walls, the Rotaractors grew into champions who quadrupled enrolment at Nyakijumba—from 60 to 300 pupils. As the African proverb reminds us, *“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”*

### A Legacy of Shared Leadership

This outreach was service delivery, yes—but it was also mentorship in motion. The Rotaractors led boldly, while Rotary provided the guidance and steady support. As Past RI President John F. Germ once said, *“Rotary has always been about building leaders. When we mentor young people, we invest in a future of service.”*

The classrooms at Nyakijumba Primary School are more than brick and mortar. They are

a monument to partnership across generations, and proof that the spirit of “Service Above Self” thrives when youth are empowered.

## A Celebration of Impact

The day ended at Hawks Eye Lodge, where Rotarians and Rotaractors reflected—not as separate clubs but as one family—on lives touched and futures secured. Together, they had delivered healthcare, boosted incomes, planted hope, and built classrooms. Most importantly, they had cultivated a generation of leaders who will continue to carry forward BELEP’s vision.

As Kofi Annan once said, *“Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.”* In Kabale, Rotary Kampala South demonstrated that progress is built not just with classrooms, but also with healthcare, economic empowerment, and mentorship.

And as Rotary’s founder Paul Harris declared, *“Rotary changes us and those we serve. I believe we can change the world one life at a time.”* In Nyakijumba, that change came alive—and will echo through the voices of the children and the leaders who will shape Uganda’s tomorrow.



# From Survivor to Advocate: Christine's Smile Defied the Odds Against Cerebral Palsy



By Rtn Dianah Kagere

It is often said that a smile can tell a thousand stories. When you meet Christine Kirungi, her smile does exactly that—inviting you in, softening the weight of years of struggle, and revealing the courage of a woman who refused to be

defined by circumstance.

Christine is not just another face in the crowd. She is the Chairperson of the Uganda National Cerebral Palsy Association (UNCPA), a graduate of Makerere University, and an outspoken champion for children with cerebral palsy (CP). Yet her journey to these achievements was anything but simple.

At five years old, Christine's carefree childhood came to a sudden halt when cerebral malaria left her with cerebral palsy. For many children in Uganda, that diagnosis would have meant the end of schooling, the beginning of stigma, and a life on the

margins. But Christine's story is different—because her family chose education as her lifeline.

"My mother fought for me and ensured I continued with school," Christine recalls. "I went to an ordinary school because it was what my parents could afford."

That decision changed everything. With determination and the relentless support of her family, Christine navigated classrooms not designed for children like her, overcame whispered doubts, and rose above a system that too often excludes. She went on to graduate from Makerere University with a degree in Social Work and

Social Administration—an achievement that not only redefined her own future but also sparked a mission larger than herself

In Uganda, many children with disabilities are sometimes hidden, fearing judgment or cultural beliefs that disability is a curse. In schools, infrastructure is often inaccessible, teachers lack specialised training in inclusive methods, learning materials are scarce and assistive devices are expensive. Many parents are left with no choice but to keep their children at home.

"When we did an assessment in Bukerere Community, we discovered that many families had children with disabilities. But due to poverty and the lack of specialised schools, parents would keep these children at home. Often, they were locked in the houses because parents had no one to watch over them, yet they still had to go to work to earn money for daily needs.

I wanted to create a space where the children could study, and also provide parents with a day-care option—a place where they could safely leave their children, take a break, and go to work," Christine explains.

And that is how the Uganda National Cerebral Palsy Association (UNCPA) — an umbrella organisation under the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) — was born. With the vision firmly in her heart, Christine began reaching out to partners who shared her dream of building a school dedicated to children with cerebral palsy.



## The Birth of St. Charles Lwanga School for Children with Cerebral Palsy.

With support from the Bukerere Catholic Church, Christine secured land in Bukerere, Goma Division in Mukono District. Other well-wishers helped her begin construction of classrooms. But as with many community-led initiatives, resources soon ran out. The structures stood incomplete, and the dream threatened to fade. Then came a turning point: the Rotary Club of Sonde.

### Rotary Steps In

RC Sonde took on the project with vigour. The club completed the classroom block, renovated the old structure, and breathed life back into Christine's vision. The project costed UGX 30m, transforming the infrastructural outlook of the school. The school now provides a safe learning environment for over 100 children with disabilities and their caregivers.

The club established a long-term partnership with UNCPA that has seen the following developments;

- The club in RY 2025/2026 is the process of completing a shade and play area funded with UGX 11 million donated by President Christine Alupo's friends from the Bank of Uganda. This new space will allow children with Cerebral Palsy to play and interact with peers from St. Charles Lwanga Primary School.

On an ongoing basis, RC Sonde also donates assorted items annually including food, scholastic materials, and hygiene products to sustain the school's day-to-day operations.

- Teachers and caregivers retooling sessions by special needs specialist from Kyambogo University.

"At Sonde, our Cerebral Palsy project is more than an initiative, it is a lifeline for children whose dreams often go unseen. In partnership with UNCPA, we are planning another community school where children with disabilities





can learn, play, and grow just like any other child. Every child deserves the chance to reach their full potential, and we are committed to making that a reality," says President Christine Alupo.

The project has also touched leaders beyond the local community. During his visit, District Governor Martin Kitakule launched the shade and shared how deeply moved he was, recalling his late niece Kirabo who succumbed to Cerebral Palsy despite years of treatment. Through GK Foods, he donated food items worth UGX 1 million to support the children.

"When you took me to those projects, I knew firsthand what those mothers were going through. To have child who can't talk, turn and know that so many of these children are locked up in houses we don't see. That is a major impactful project and I would like to thank RC Sonde. Worse still

the lady who started this who is also a victim are stories we need to talk about as stories of Rotary. We gave them food but imagine the joy of the mother seeing Rotarians," DG Kitakule shared.

For Christine, the transformation is deeply personal. What started as a childhood setback has become her life's calling. For the community, Rotary has become a lifeline and a beacon of hope.

"We are so grateful to RC Sonde. Since they came here, they have transformed the school. We now have more space and we are able to support more children than ever before," Sarah-aka Mama Paul, caretaker of one of the children.

Christine's journey reveals a larger truth: when Rotarians invest in communities they invest in dignity, inclusion, hope and transform lives.



### St. Charles Lwanga CP School – Impact at a Glance

Children Benefiting:  
100+ children with cerebral palsy and other disabilities

#### Infrastructure:

- Completed classrooms
- Renovated old structures
- Shade & play area

#### Project Costs:

- UGX 30 million – classrooms & renovation
- UGX 11 million – shade & play area
- UGX 10 million- In-kind donations by the club.
- UGX 1 million – food donations from District Governor

#### Benefits:

- Teacher & caregiver retooling sessions
- Provision of learning & hygiene materials
- Daycare services for children
- Reduces stigma & promotes inclusion
- Enables parents to work while children are cared for
- Safe, inclusive environment for learning and play
- Model for community-driven disability inclusion.



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# RC Jinja's Bright Gift: Lighting the Path for Visually Impaired Children in Balitwegomba



By Rtn. David Katenderi

In the bustling city of Jinja, within the quiet grounds of Spire Road Primary School, stands a place where hope shines brightest for those born without sight. For more than three decades, the Balitwegomba Home for the Blind has nurtured, educated, and empowered children with visual impairment—ensuring that they, too, can dream, learn, and thrive in a world that often overlooks them.

Balitwegomba is not just a home. It is a beacon of resilience, a safe haven where children with visual

impairment are given the dignity and opportunity to build their futures.

The story of the home traces back to 1989, when three children—Namulondo Doreen, Nalukenge, and Woira Mohammed—became its first residents. Their care was initially managed by the Victoria Centre and Workshop for the Blind, a group of visually impaired adults determined to uplift children facing the same struggles they once endured. At that time, the conditions were dire. The children slept in grass-thatched, dilapidated shelters with no separation between boys and girls and without even basic sanitation.

It was during a Rotary Club of Jinja charity event in 1992 that Rotarians first witnessed these heartbreaking living conditions. Deeply moved, they resolved to act. That moment marked the beginning of a remarkable journey of transformation.

Through sustained effort and partnerships, the Rotary Club

of Jinja secured land from the municipal council and, in 1992, financed the construction of dormitories to provide safe and separate accommodation for the children. What began as an urgent intervention grew into a comprehensive program of support, and over the years the home has been steadily transformed.

Today, with the support of local and international partners, Balitwegomba Home stands as a model of care and inclusion. Its facilities now include:

- Dormitories with proper sanitation
- A modern kitchen with an energy-saving stove
- Water harvesting and piped water systems
- Solar lighting for safety and sustainability
- Secure fencing and a protective gate
- A resource centre equipped with desks, low-vision aids, and Braille machines

From its humble beginnings, Balitwegomba Home has become a sanctuary where children once forgotten by society are now empowered to pursue education, independence, and dignity—proof that when compassion meets action, transformation follows

By 2010, the Ministry of Defence added a new dormitory block, further improving the living conditions for the children. Today, Balitwegomba operates as a unit of Spire Road Primary School, where children with visual



impairment study side by side with their sighted peers. This inclusive approach not only equips them academically but also fosters confidence and belonging.

Currently, the home accommodates 63 pupils with visual impairment, supported by six teachers (three on government payroll and three volunteers), along with a matron, a cook, and a security guard. Of these learners, 49 reside at Balitwegomba (22 girls and 29 boys), while others pursue their studies in secondary and tertiary institutions—11 students at Namasagali College (8 boys, 3 girls) and 1 at St. Francis Madera in Soroti. Since 2016, the home has been under the stewardship of Mr. Kyalimpa Kenneth, whose dedication has ensured continuity and stability.

“Education here at Balitwegomba is more than learning—it is liberation,” says President Tomson Ofwono of the Rotary Club of Jinja. “For the children of Balitwegomba, education opens doors that once seemed permanently closed.”

Since its inception, the home has nurtured over 200 children, many of whom are now living impactful lives. The alumni continue to

make everyone proud through their diverse contributions to society. Esther Ndagire is a practicing lawyer in Kampala, passionately advocating for justice and inclusion. Musa Mayanda and Peter Musenze are dedicated graduate teachers shaping young minds in Kamuli and beyond. Meanwhile, Solomon Walusimbi serves patients with compassion at Kampala International Hospital, embodying the spirit of care and excellence. “When compassion meets action, lives are transformed one child at a time,” reflects Musenze, himself a beneficiary.

Supporting the learners goes far beyond tuition. For primary pupils alone, the annual cost of education and welfare stands at UGX 36.7 million—broken down as UGX 5.4 million for tuition and UGX 31.3 million for welfare needs such as feeding, utilities, and personal effects. Sponsorship for tertiary institutions averages UGX 5 million annually.

Day-to-day running costs remain constant; between July 1st and August 2025, Rotary covered essentials such as firewood (UGX 500,000), beans (UGX 1,200,000), posho (UGX 1,500,000), sugar (UGX 125,000), cooking oil (UGX

80,000), water bills (UGX 100,000), electricity (UGX 100,000), compound maintenance (UGX 100,000), and plumbing repairs (UGX 150,000). These figures illustrate the ongoing commitment required to keep Balitwegomba running and its children cared for.

Though Rotary remains the home's primary sponsor, countless partners have joined the journey. These include the Ministry of Education, Jinja Municipal Council, Spire Road Primary School Management Committee, the Indian Community in Jinja, Excel Construction, Jinja Hardware Point, Kakira Sugar Works, Nile Breweries, Brisk Recreation Hotel, and many generous well-wishers. Together, they have contributed not just resources, but dignity, opportunity, and hope.

Still, challenges remain. Essential tools such as Braille machines are in short supply—only 16 are functional for more than 60 learners, forcing children to share these vital resources. To ensure long-term sustainability, the Rotary Club of Jinja has unveiled plans for the Balitwegomba Home for the Blind Complex, a commercial building projected to cost UGX 3 billion. Once complete, it will provide a steady income stream to sustain the home's operations.

Balitwegomba is far more than a boarding facility. It is a living symbol of inclusion, resilience, and community service. Its story is a reminder that when people come together with compassion and commitment, they can turn despair into hope, and disability into ability. As Uganda continues its journey toward greater inclusion, Balitwegomba Home for the Blind stands as proof of what is possible when society refuses to leave anyone behind.





# The Little Hearts Project: Giving Children a Stronger Heartbeat



By Rtn James Sserugo

Seven-month-old Kadenya Harmony from Kigumba District, one-and-a-half-year-old Okileng Aphluis from Bukedea, and fourteen-year-old Mwesigwa Rahim from Wakiso may come from different parts of Uganda, but they share one painful reality: congenital heart disease. Together with 22 other children across the country, they needed lifesaving heart surgery—treatment they could not access locally. Thanks to Rotary’s

intervention, these children are now able to receive the much-needed surgeries at Amrita Hospital in Kochin, India.

The Little Hearts Project, being implemented this Rotary year in District 9213, seeks to reduce the alarming rates of heart disease in Uganda by addressing the backlog of children awaiting heart surgery at the Uganda Heart Institute (UHI). While some cases can be handled at UHI, others must be referred abroad due to various limitations. District Governor Geoffrey Kitakule has called on Rotary Clubs to unite and rally partners for a multi-pronged approach in the fight against heart disease.

### Four Avenues of Impact

Assisting children who cannot afford surgery is just one part of the initiative. The Little Hearts Project has identified four practical and impactful avenues to make a difference:

1. Sponsoring Surgeries – Supporting children who cannot afford lifesaving operations.
2. Promoting Preventive Health – Creating awareness about healthy living to reduce risks linked to heart disease. Issues such as obesity, poor diet, lack of exercise, and untreated infections like coughs are preventable when the public is well-informed.
3. Equipping Regional Referral Hospitals – Establishing heart screening centres to make checkups like ECGs and echocardiograms affordable and accessible, reducing the need for long trips to Kampala.
4. Training Health Workers – Building local capacity by training medical personnel in referral hospitals to manage the centres, supported through fellowships at UHI or sponsored Vocational Training Teams.

### Cohorts in Action

So far, three cohorts have been formed under the Little Hearts Project:

- **Western Cohort:** Led by the Rotary Club of Upper Kololo, working with partner clubs to establish a Heart Screening and Treatment Centre at Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital.
- **Northern Cohort:** Led by the Rotary Club of Kampala South, covering all Regional Referral Hospitals in Greater Northern Uganda. Partners

include RC Kiwatule, RC Arua, RC Arua Echo City, RC Adjumani, RC Yumbe, RC Moyo, and RC Nebbi, alongside Rotaract Clubs of Arua, Arua School of Nursing, Maracha, and Muni University.

- **Eastern Cohort:** Led by the Rotary Club of Kampala, in partnership with RC Kasangati, RC Sonde, RC Ngora, RC Soroti Central,

RC Mbale, RC Busia, plus the Rotaract Clubs of Soroti University and Kampala City.

Each cohort is working towards implementing Global Grants and mobilizing local partners to sustain project activities over the next two to three years. The Uganda Heart Institute has welcomed the initiative and pledged full technical support.

### Project Contacts

- James Serugo (RC Kampala) – 0782 822208
- Rtn. Adeka Boniface (RC Kampala) – 0704 604486
- Rtn. Jane Langoya (RC Kampala South) – 0782 747007
- Rtn. Wendy (RC Kampala South) – 0772 422278
- Rtn. Filbert Kinyanda (RC Upper Kololo) – 0702 007070

## Teaching begins with learning



By Rtn Evelyn Akello

Since its chartering in December 2021, the Rotary Club of Kirinya Bukasa has remained steadfast in its mission to build fellowship and serve the community. On August 16th, 2025, the club held its annual retreat in Mukono—not just as a time to recharge, but as a purposeful learning space. The retreat highlighted that before Rotarians can effectively teach, mentor, or transform lives through Basic Education and Literacy projects, among other areas of focus for rotary, they must first invest in their own growth and knowledge.

With 14 members in attendance (a 66.7% turnout), the retreat became a classroom of its own. Guided by Assistant Governor Rtn. Francis Lubulwa,

members engaged in reflection, strategic planning, and honest dialogue. Discussions centred on strengthening membership, reviving buddy groups, ensuring timely contributions, and enhancing financial transparency. These were more than administrative issues; they were lessons in accountability, leadership, and teamwork—the very skills that empower Rotarians to deliver literacy and education programs with excellence.

The AG reminded members that knowing one another deeply is the first step to building a learning culture. “Kimeeza time,” he emphasized, is not just for casual networking but a moment of exchange, where diverse personalities learn from each other and grow stronger together. In many ways, these interactions mirror what Rotary seeks to achieve in classrooms across Uganda—safe, respectful spaces where learning flourishes.

The retreat also underscored the value of experiential learning. Through activities like sack races, board games, and dance, members discovered the power of play as a tool for bonding,

creative thinking, and lifelong learning. Just as children learn literacy through play, Rotarians too found joy in simple activities that sharpen collaboration and problem-solving.

Concrete commitments emerged: each member pledged to recruit new members, contribute at least UGX 110,000 towards the Rotary Foundation and Polio, and uphold financial accountability. These action points are not just club resolutions; they are building blocks for a sustainable service. By educating themselves—through discipline, planning, and shared responsibility—members are better equipped to educate others in the wider community.

In Mukono, the Rotary Club of Kirinya Bukasa demonstrated that growth begins within. The retreat was a reminder that literacy and education do not only happen in schools, but also in every space where people come together to learn, unlearn, and relearn. In nurturing themselves as learners, they are preparing to nurture others as teachers, mentors, and champions of Rotary’s vision for a more literate world.





# Arming Rotarians with Knowledge: A Worthwhile Investment



By Rtn Maureen K. Tumwebaze.

In August 2025, District 9213 once again demonstrated its commitment to building capacity among Rotarians, ensuring that knowledge

remains the foundation for sustainable service. Across Mbale, Gulu, and Kampala, Rotarians gathered for two sets of transformative trainings—on **Global Grants management and Polio eradication**—both underlining Rotary’s DNA of service, accountability, and education.

### Equipping Clubs Through Grants Training

On 23rd August, simultaneous Grants Management Seminars were held in Mbale (Eastern Region) and Gulu (Northern Region), drawing over 85 Rotarians and Rotaractors from 24 clubs. Facilitated by members of the District Rotary Foundation Committee,

the sessions focused on **qualification, application, stewardship, reporting processes**, and practical navigation of Rotary’s online Grant Centre.

From Mbale View Courts to Gulu’s regional convening, the discussions revolved around **community needs assessments**, club qualification, and the stewardship required to transform Rotary Foundation funds into life-changing projects. Participants called for the inclusion of Presidents-Elect and incoming leaders in future sessions, affirming that grant knowledge is vital across leadership portfolios.

“These trainings are about more than compliance,” one participant reflected. “They are about learning how to translate resources into service projects that truly change lives.”

### Reaffirming the Promise to End Polio

Earlier in the month, over 250 Rotarians from Districts 9213 and 9214 (both physically and online) had taken part in a high-level Polio Training organized in partnership with UNICEF, WHO, and the Ministry of Health. The sessions re-energized leaders—Polio Officers, Presidents, Assistant Governors, and TRF Chairs—towards Rotary’s number one external goal: **ending polio for good**.

Technical sessions guided by Rotary’s District Polio Officers, alongside UNICEF and Ministry of Health experts, highlighted the urgency of reaching underserved communities and integrating polio immunization

with routine child health services. “Polio is not over and we are not safe,” warned Dr. Annet Kisakye, underscoring the need for relentless advocacy.

District Governor Geoffrey Kitakule rallied clubs to accountability: “Every dollar pledged must be remitted, and every story told. Even \$10 can make a difference in protecting a child.”

### Education as the Common Thread

Though focused on different areas, both trainings echoed one truth: **education is empowerment**. Whether equipping clubs to access and manage grants, or preparing officers to champion the fight against polio, these sessions build knowledge that multiplies Rotary’s impact in communities.

For District 9213, the link to **Basic Education and**

**Literacy** is clear. By investing in the education of Rotarians themselves—on stewardship, on project design, and on public health advocacy—Rotary ensures that service projects in schools, health centres, and villages are not only funded but also sustained with integrity and knowledge.

As UNICEF’s Dr. Fabrizio Cavalletti reminded participants, “Rotarians are powerful advocates. With access to information and community trust, you can be the generation that protects children and ends polio.”

When Rotarians invest in their own learning, they extend that gift of knowledge outward—multiplying the impact in classrooms, homes, and entire communities.

The writer is an Assistant Governor, Area 21, D9213



WORLD

POLIO DAY

There

ONE DAY. ONE FOCUS: ENDING POLIO

24TH OCT. 2025

FOR MORE INFORMATION

+256773633942, +256772427916

POLIO CHAMPIONS

SOURCE: RCC AS OF 2ND SEPTEMBER

1

Kampala-Central

\$2,900.00

2

Gayaza

\$2,233.91

3

Upper Kololo

\$1,829.40

4

Kampala City

\$1,811.75

5

Kampala-North

\$1,517.50

6

Naalya States

\$1,400.00

7

Kisaasi-Kyanja-Kampala

\$1,380

8

Kampala

\$1,208.00

9

Wakiso

\$1,179.00

10

Kampala South

\$1,135.00

FOR MORE INFORMATION

+256773633942, +256704113175

The Wave  
Issue 3 | September 2025

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# Membership Engagement: What it Means & Strategies to get it Moving



**By Rtn Paul Nampala**

Membership engagement in Rotary Clubs is about more than just attendance; it's about actively involving members in meaningful activities, leadership, service projects, and fellowship in ways that foster a sense of purpose, belonging, and impact.

Effective engagement helps retain members, enhances their satisfaction, and supports long-term growth by nurturing deep connections, value, and a shared sense of mission. When members are genuinely engaged, they lead, serve, and inspire others, making the Rotary community vibrant and purpose-driven.

Effective member engagement in Rotary begins with a strong onboarding process that includes mentorship and orientation to share values, clarify expectations, and introduce service opportunities. Creating a nurturing environment helps new members transition from curiosity to commitment.

To adapt to today's diverse lifestyles, clubs should embrace hybrid meeting formats—combining in-person, virtual, and asynchronous options—making participation more accessible and inclusive. Community-centered service projects, such as water, literacy, or youth programs, are vital for engagement, as they demonstrate the tangible impact of collective efforts. Collaborations with local organizations amplify this impact, fostering a sense of purpose, visibility, and lasting member involvement.

Beyond service, Rotary offers a platform for professional and personal development. Clubs that invest in leadership

training, workshops, and networking events empower members to grow within and beyond Rotary. Aligning club activities with members' career aspirations and personal goals reinforces the relevance of Rotary in their lives, making engagement a natural extension of their journey.

Recognition plays a vital role in sustaining engagement. Celebrating contributions—whether through awards, public acknowledgments, or storytelling—validates members' efforts and fosters a culture of appreciation. Highlighting member stories in newsletters, social media, and club bulletins not only boosts morale but also strengthens the club's narrative and identity.

A truly engaged club is one that reflects the diversity of its community. Proactive onboarding of members from varied backgrounds, professions, and age groups enriches the club's perspectives and capabilities. Inclusion must go beyond demographics—it must be embedded in the club's culture, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued.

Communication is the thread that binds engagement together. Regular updates through newsletters, emails, and digital platforms keep members informed and connected. More importantly, creating feedback loops—where members can

share ideas, concerns, and aspirations—ensures that engagement is reciprocal and responsive.

Finally, long-term members are a reservoir of wisdom and legacy. Their continued engagement can be deepened by involving them in mentorship, strategic planning, and storytelling. Recognizing their contributions and inviting them to shape the club's future honors their journey and reinforces the intergenerational strength of Rotary. In essence, membership engagement is a living narrative—one that evolves with each member's story, each project's impact, and each club's vision. When nurtured with intention, it transforms Rotary from an organization into a movement, where service, fellowship, and leadership converge to create lasting change.

Club Qualification is a key "Barometer" of effective membership engagement, though many clubs overlook its significance. It should be seen as a platform for excellence in Membership Experience, Club Administration, and Community Service. Compliance is more than a requirement; it's a benchmark of excellence that demonstrates accountability, transparency, and quality service. Many clubs view it as routine and can ignore it, but it actually indicates club health

and engagement. When clubs meet qualification standards, it ensures members have a great experience, with their rights protected, fostering trust, loyalty, and satisfaction.

It also implies that the club strives to promote good governance, financial management, and operational efficiency, enabling the club to achieve her objectives with less risk, and providence of quality services.

Given the importance of club qualification, the Rotary District 9213 strives to among other (a) develop and communicate clear policies and procedures that outline compliance expectations; (b) offer regular learning sessions and support to ensure that members and club officers understand compliance and or club qualification requirements; and, (c) regularly assess compliance practices to identify areas for improvement and ensure ongoing excellence.

By embracing club qualification as a core aspect of their operations, Rotary Clubs can elevate their membership experience, club administration, and service delivery. This, in turn, drives long-term success and sustainability of the club.

***The writer is the Chair, District Membership Committee.***

**Club Qualification is a key "Barometer" of effective membership engagement, though many clubs overlook its significance.**



# Multiplying Hands, Multiplying Impact: The Membership Expansion Story of Rotary Club of Gayaza



By Rtn. Dan Kibuuka Kiguli

In Rotary, growth and extension is not just a numbers game — it is a commitment to multiplying hope, deepening service, and building sustainable structures that outlive individual members. As we continue to “Unite for Good” in District 9213, the experience of the Rotary Club (RC) of Gayaza is living proof that with purpose, vision, and partnerships, exponential impact is not just possible — it’s inevitable.

RC Gayaza was chartered on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021, sponsored Jointly by RC Kasangati and RC Kampala Kisaasi-Kyanja, in response to the need for deeper Rotary reach across the peripheral areas served by these clubs. In just 42 months, what began as a strategic extension has blossomed into a powerhouse of impactful service, youth engagement, and community mobilization.

The goal was simple: extend Rotary to more corners of our communities. The result has been extraordinary.

- Today, RC Gayaza proudly boasts of which 52 Active members (27 Female, 25 Male) and 2 Male Honorary Members. This gender-balanced and active membership is not just a statistic — it’s a sign of

inclusive leadership, vibrant participation, and a strong internal culture that retains and empowers members. RC Gayaza’s real magic lies in its comprehensive approach to Rotary’s 4 arms of service and leadership development:

- 13 active Interact clubs, the highest number of sponsored and the first cause-based Interact clubs (Gayaza Football, Uganda and Manyangwa Soccer Academy) in the district.
- 5 active Rotaract clubs, including the first-ever football-themed (Cause-based) Rotaract Clubs (Gayaza Football, Uganda and Manyangwa Football, Uganda) in District 9213
- Rotary Community Corps (RCCs): 4 RCCs, including the district’s first talent-development RCC (Gayaza Football and Manyangwa Football).
- A thriving Rotary Club: The umbrella from which all this energy flows

These four categories represent diversity in age groups, geographic spread, passions and talents — but together, they form a Complete Rotary Ecosystem that multiplies both impact and continuity.

RC Gayaza’s approach to cause-based clubs is a trailblazer’s story. From the first football-themed Interact and Rotaract clubs to a Rotary Community Corps centered on talent development through sports, the club has taken Rotary beyond the boardroom into communities, playgrounds, and talent fields.

This not only widens Rotary’s relevance but also brings together in none Rotarians and

community stakeholders who are passionate about service through action, creativity, and local empowerment.

The Power of Multiplication, each new club means: More people being served, more leaders being raised, groomed, more innovations coming to life and More visibility for Rotary values. RC Gayaza’s intentional and responsible expansion is a clear message to us all: intentional growth breeds impact.

Call to action

As Chair of Membership Attraction in District 9213, I urge clubs and leaders across our district to reimagine growth, look beyond their club borders and ask yourselves: Are there unreached communities around us? Can we sponsor a new cause-based club? Are we building the full Rotary family — from Interact to RCC?

If we are serious about growing Rotary, we must be intentional about growing club membership and extending the Rotary family. Let us learn from RC Gayaza’s model and dare to extend Rotary’s reach. Whether it’s through education, sports, agriculture, innovation, or community action. let’s plant the seeds of service everywhere we can. Let’s multiply hands. Multiply clubs. Multiply service. Multiply Rotary.

Members of Interact Gayaza Football and Manyagwa Soccer Academy pose for a photo with District 9213 Officials at the sidelines of Interact Rotaract Youth Leadership Awards 2025 in Kyambogo College School

**The Writer is the Chair, Membership Attraction & Mobilisation Committee**

# RC Buloba: Solar Lights & Greening breathe life into Sentema Community



By Rtn Justus Muhangi

Demonstrating service above self, the Rotary Club of Buloba, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Moorestown and Let There Be Light International, has lit lives across some underserved communities in Sentema- Wakiso district. Working through Solar Health Uganda, and Kyosiga Community Christian Association for Development, the collaboration brought reading light for the children, safety for the community, and hope to families.

At the heart of the initiative was the distribution of solar lights to children from poor households with no access to electricity, and to the elderly and widowed women living in darkness. The joy and gratitude from the beneficiaries told a moving story: children now have the chance to read and do homework at night, while vulnerable women feel safer

and more secure in their homes.

Education was given a further boost with the distribution of over 200 literacy books. Carefully selected to build foundational reading and comprehension skills, these books—once a luxury—are now treasured possessions. In homes where books were rare, they have become stepping stones toward a brighter and more informed future.

Environmental stewardship also took centre stage. Together with parents, children, and teachers, the Club spearheaded a community tree-planting campaign. This was more than a greening effort—it was a symbol of unity, collective responsibility, and the community’s commitment to nurturing the planet for generations to come.

Recognizing that family well-being goes beyond books and lights, the Club also engaged parents in a dialogue around boy child empowerment. Through interactive sessions, parents explored ways of nurturing resilience, positive masculinity, emotional well-being, and academic achievement among boys—an often overlooked yet vital part of community development. These conversations ignited a renewed commitment to raising responsible,

empowered young men.

Dignity in the Workplace

In another impactful intervention, the Club launched a staff toilet project to improve hygiene and safety for female staff members. Previously, women had to walk long distances to use student toilets—a situation that caused inconvenience and discomfort. The new facility restores dignity, privacy, and accessibility, creating a healthier and more supportive working environment.

From lighting homes and minds, to restoring nature and nurturing the next generation, this holistic intervention is a shining example of what is possible when communities come together to serve. The ripple effects of this work will be felt for years to come.

The Rotary Club of Buloba extends its heartfelt appreciation to the Rotary Club of Moorestown and Let There Be Light International for their generous support, and to Solar Health Uganda and Kyosiga Community Christian Association for Development for their partnership in delivering these life-changing resources. Special thanks also go to the Sentema community, the school management, Rotarians of Buloba, and the Baby Rotaractors whose teamwork and dedication made this success possible.

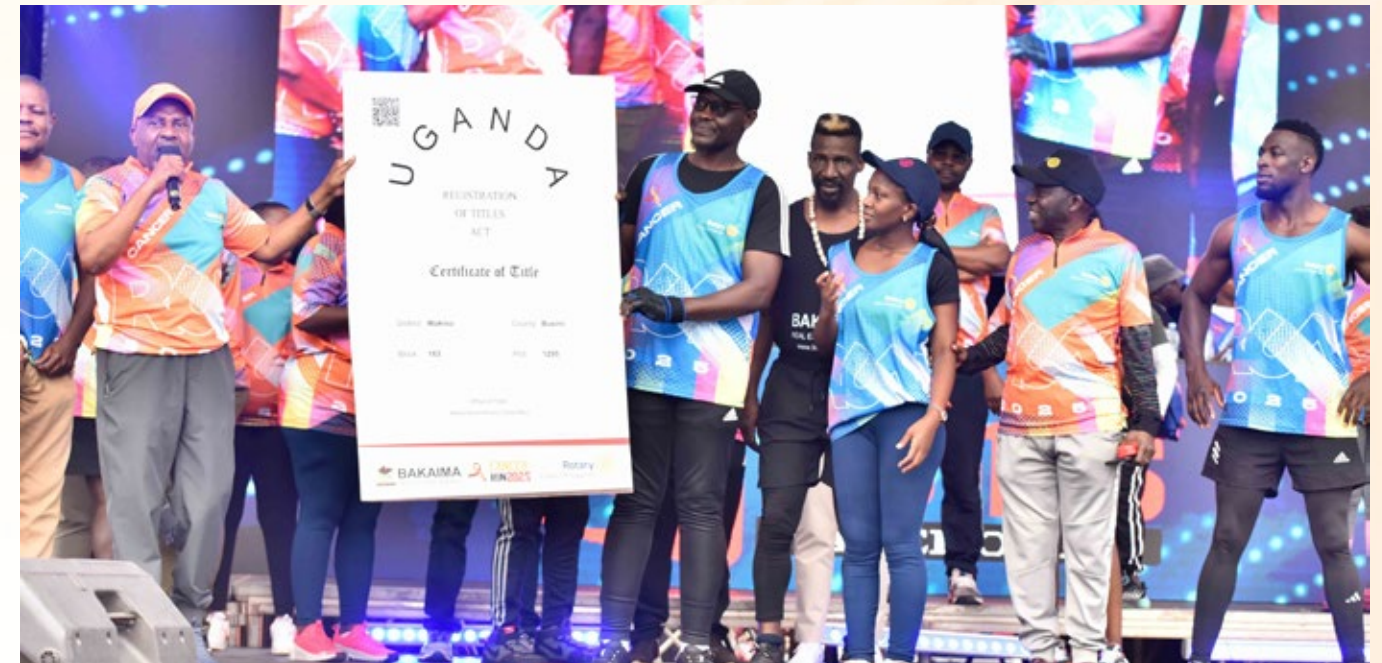


# Rotary Cancer Run

## A worthy cause

Fourteen years on, the Rotary Uganda Annual Cancer Run has grown into one of the country's most impactful signature events. What started as a Kampala-based charity run has steadily evolved into a national movement, uniting thousands of Ugandans from all walks of life. Families, corporate teams, schools, and community groups lace up their running shoes every year, driven by a common purpose—to raise awareness and mobilize resources for the fight against cancer. The event has become a fixture on Uganda's social and health calendar, inspiring conversations about prevention, treatment, and support for those affected.

Today, the Cancer Run is no longer confined to the streets of Kampala. It is spreading across the country, bringing together communities in towns and districts nationwide. Beyond Uganda's borders, regional neighbours and friends overseas have joined in solidarity, proving that cancer knows no boundaries and requires collective effort. From the hills of Kabale to the coasts of Mombasa, and even in diaspora communities abroad, the Cancer Run has transformed into a global wave of compassion and action. Together, these united steps continue to make strides toward a future free from the burden of cancer.





# How the World Run One Race Against Many Cancers



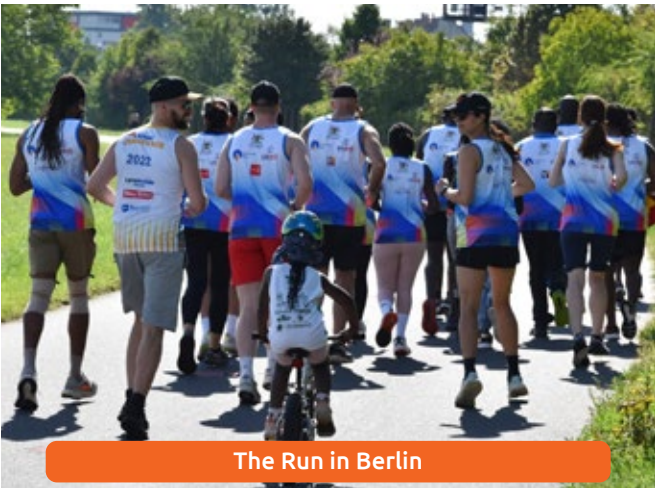
Cancer Run in the Burundian capital - Bujumbura



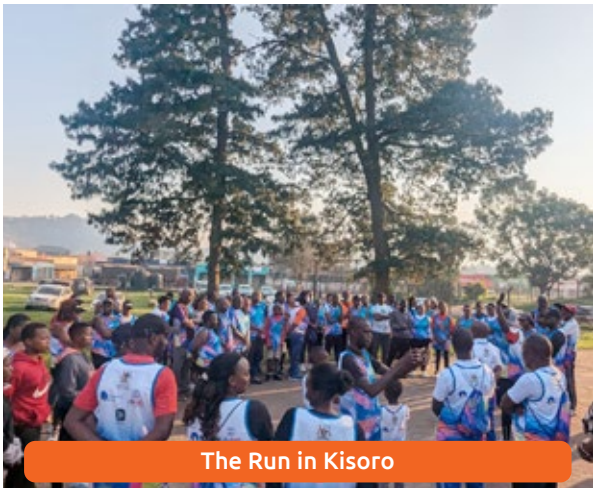
The Run in Gulu city



The Run in Arua city



The Run in Berlin



The Run in Kisoro

@CancerRunUg  
@UgRotaryCancerP  
#CancerRun25  
www.rotaryugandacancer.org

## ROTARY CANCER RUN MILESTONES



### WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR?



36  
Beds  
↓  
UGX  
1.5  
BILLION

- Constructed a 36-bed cancer treatment centre at Nsambya Hospital.
- Fitted the center with equipment worth over USD 150,000 including staff training that was acquired through two Global Grants.



- Contributed 200M to construction of the Rotary Blood Bank at Mengo Hospital.



- Commenced the construction of 2 bunkers that will house the 2 LINAC cancer testing and treatment machines.
- 3.8 billion so far spent on the planned Cancer Centre towards the construction of the bunkers and superstructure

### TOTAL FUNDS REQUIRED TO CONSTRUCT THE CANCER CENTER

USD **3.6M** or approximately UGX **13.8** billion to go towards the construction of the bunkers and associated spaces.

HOW MUCH HAS BEEN RAISED?

UGX  
8.071  
BILLION

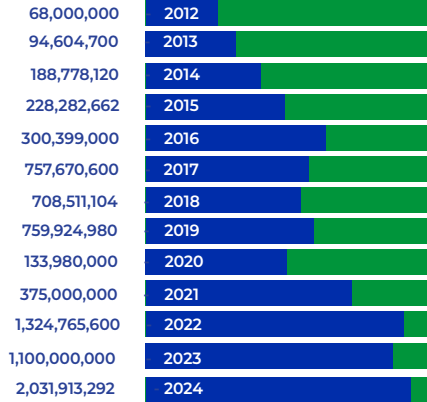
2025 RUN'S TARGET

UGX  
4  
BILLION



3D impression of the Nsambya cancer facility

### HOW HAS MONEY BEEN RAISED OVER THE YEARS?



#### Rotary Cancer Center Facilities at Nsambya Hospital include:

- 1. Treatment Facilities (Actual bunkers)**  
Two External Beam Radiotherapy (EBRT) Units that house the Linear Accelerator machines, plus one Brachytherapy Unit designed for internal radiation therapy.
- 2. Clinical Support Facilities**  
Radiation Oncology Department Offices and a Treatment Planning CT Unit.
- 3. Patient-Centric Facilities**  
Patient Reception and Waiting Area, Consultation Rooms, and Changing Rooms and Toilets
- 4. Educational and Collaborative Facilities**  
Conference Room
- 5. Specialized Care Facilities**  
Pediatric Oncology Unit providing specialized care and support for children with cancer.



# Setting the Tone for Rotary Year 2026/27: The Power of “Crazy Ideas and Little Things”

By Rtn. Meddie Lutaaya

Saturday, 9 August 2025 marked the first official engagement between District Governor-Elect (DGE) Gerald Obai and the Presidents-Elect (PEs). The meeting was convened to set the tone for their new assignments and mandate in the Rotary Year 2026/27.



The gathering brought together a strong team from the District Secretariat, including District Executive Secretary-Elect (DESE) Emily Mbabazi, District Treasurer-Elect Petra Sansa, and Vice Lieutenant Governors—Maureen Kawombe (Programs), Peter Dhamuzungu (Eastern), Lillian Ayikoru (Northern), and Milton Tusingwire (Western). From the Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (PIME) Team were Chairperson Sophie Bamwoyeraki and Charles Odaaga. District Learning Facilitator Ron Kawadwa also participated, while Past District Governors (PDGs) Francis Tusu,

Xavier Sentamu, and John Ndamira Magezi represented the Governor’s Council.

To set the tone, Rotary International Director-Elect (RIDE) Emmanuel Katongole delivered a groundbreaking keynote address on “Leading with Purpose to Create Impact.” He underscored that leaders are “dealers in hope,” chief motivators who can steer teams back on course even when plans deviate. Urging the PEs to recognise excellence and respect diversity, he remarked: “It doesn’t matter whether a cat is black, as long as it catches the mouse.”

He called on the PEs to be custodians of the Rotary Action Plan, driving participant engagement, expanding Rotary’s reach, creating greater impact, and enhancing adaptability. Inviting them to immerse themselves in service, he echoed Paul Harris’ timeless words: “If you want to discover yourself, bury yourself in the service of others.”

## Areas for Greater Impact

RIDE Katongole highlighted key programs requiring the support of incoming leaders:

- The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program of Scale, championed by PDG John Ndamira Magezi.
- The Cancer Program, which needs about UGX 6 billion to complete construction of the Radiotherapy Centre at Nsambya Hospital.
- The pipeline blood bank regional centres in Soroti and Arua.
- The Sam Owor Vocational Centre, initiated by RC Kampala.
- The Water Institute at Nkumba University.

On membership, he emphasised “the quality of quantity,” pointing out that District 9213 ranked third and District 9214 ranked first in Rotary Year 2024/25. He also explained Rotary International’s restructuring of the membership docket to include subcommittees on engagement, attraction, action

groups, and fellowships.

He applauded Rotary Uganda’s strides in diversity—highlighting clubs conducting meetings in Luganda (RC Kalisizo, RC Bulange, and RC Ssinga-Mityana) and Runyankore (RC Kazo)—and praised the formation of cause-based clubs such as RC First Aid and Emergency Response, RC Kyadondo Rugby, and RC Kigo 7 Lakes Golf.

Encouraging support for The Rotary Foundation, he urged leaders to identify potential donors, categorise them by capacity, and follow through with engagement. His challenge was simple but powerful: “Leave a legacy. Be purpose-driven.” He closed with a rousing quote from Martin Luther King Jr.:

**“If you can’t fly, then run. If you can’t run, then walk. If you can’t walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.”**

## A Shared Mission

In his remarks, DGE Obai lauded RIDE Katongole’s keynote and reminded the PEs that serving as Club President is a test of commitment developed over time. The road ahead, he noted, will have obstacles, diversions, and roadblocks—yet no one will walk alone. “This journey is a shared mission,” he said, “and Rotary, together with the people we serve, will be the ultimate winners.”

He reminded leaders that each PE brings something unique to the table. He challenged them to believe in themselves, focus on their strengths, and pursue passions as part of self-discovery.

Centred on the theme of “crazy ideas and little things,” DGE Obai emphasised putting members at the heart of the campaign. *“A happy membership is the foundation for success. It’s the little things that matter. Members should feel valued, appreciated, and recognised. Well-executed crazy ideas, enriched with small touches of little things, will be the game-changer.”*

He reassured the PEs that the Learning, PIME, and Secretariat Teams stood ready to provide full support as they embarked on their leadership journey.

## Nuggets from the Governor’s Council



**PDG Francis Tusu**

“When you think short-term, you achieve targets. When you think long-term, you build people. Focus on building people, not just meeting short-term goals.”



**PDG Xavier Sentamu**

“Every success depends on how you relate to your people. Their aspirations are as important as your goals. Treasure, nurture, and respect them, and they will, in turn, support your success.”



**PDG John Ndamira Magezi**

“Select a team committed to and consistent in service. Build relationships beyond names but dig deeper get to know their families. Create an enabling environment that unlocks the potential of your team”.



# From Recife-Brazil to the World: A Rotary Scholar's Mission for Resilient Cities



Every year, the Rotary IHE Delft Scholarships open doors for passionate professionals committed to solving global challenges. In this interview, **District Scholarships Officer Rtn. Kiconco Mary Kwesiga** sits down with Ms. Mila Avellar Montezuma from Recife, Brazil—a city ranked among the most climate-vulnerable in the world. What follows are highlights from their inspiring conversation.

## 1. What drew you to the Rotary IHE DELFT institute for water and environment in the Netherlands Scholarship?

The Rotary IHE Delft Scholarship was more than financial support—it aligned perfectly with my professional mission. As an urbanist from Recife, one of the world’s climate hotspots threatened by sea level rise and extreme weather, I knew our challenges demanded systemic and multidisciplinary solutions. The program’s focus on Water Science, Engineering, and Climate-Resilient Cities allowed me to merge my background in architecture and urban planning with advanced water management. It became a bridge to turn adaptation challenges into research-driven, policy-based solutions for Recife and other vulnerable communities worldwide.

## 2. What are some of your fondest recollections of your time at the IHE Delft Institute?

People, place, meaning: My strongest memories go beyond academics—they come from sharing ideas and worldviews with friends and colleagues from around the world through rich, cross-disciplinary collaboration. The institute is a



vibrant hub where global experts come together to tackle pressing water challenges. I remember the intense but inspiring workshops where we designed solutions for both urban and rural contexts. Working with peers from different cultures showed me that the best technologies emerge from shared intelligence and purpose.

## 3. Is there any project or experience from your time at IHE Delft that resonated with water management challenges in Brazil?

My master’s research, and the continuity of the over a decade of bilateral cooperation between Brazil and the Netherlands Exchanges Recife “Designing for Extremes” project - in which IHE is one of the partners, directly resonated and worked on and with the challenges in Brazil. The project’s focus on integrating urban heritage strategies with water challenges in both Recife and The Hague was a groundbreaking experience for both climate hotspots. It provided a framework for how territories can adapt to sea-level rise building for with and by nature. This research-by-design approach showed that resilience is not just about building infrastructure; it’s about reimagining our urban environments to both adapt to climate threats and celebrate our heritage.

## 4. As a Rotary alumnus, how do you plan to stay connected with the Rotary network, and what opportunities for collaboration or knowledge sharing do you foresee?

The connection to the Rotary network and mission is a lifelong commitment. As a highly trained resource for the network, this expertise in urban resilience and sustainable water management are available to Rotary districts

facing similar challenges. For years, we have explored opportunities for collaboration on projects aimed at developing climate-adaptive public policies and implementing nature-driven technological solutions. By sharing the knowledge, tools and network, we hope that Rotary networks keep expanding its impact and become a leading force in climate adaptation globally, developing the capacity of multiple change makers.

## 5. What’s that one thing you have learnt from Ugandan friends- about Uganda that you would really want to be a part of?

My time at IHE Delft was profoundly enriched by my discussions with Gerald and other Ugandan friends on their country’s water challenges. For instance, the powerful concept of community-led sanitation solutions deeply resonates with me. There is an incredible resilience and ingenuity of local communities in developing decentralized, low-cost, low tech and sustainable systems. This approach integrates social empowerment with physical infrastructure, is a testament to the fact that the most effective solutions are often built from the ground up, not imposed from the top down. I would be honoured to be a part of a project in Uganda that blends this community-driven philosophy that we share, with urban best practices, co-creating solutions that are both technologically sound and culturally embedded.



As an urbanist from Recife, one of the world’s climate hotspots threatened by sea level rise and extreme weather, I knew our challenges demanded systemic and multidisciplinary solutions.





# Community Assessments and Conflict of Interest in Global Grants



By Rtn. Peter Isabirye

Conducting an effective community assessment is the first step that guarantees that your project is both required and well-designed - two important criteria that grant-making organizations consider.

Identifying and addressing your community's strength, weaknesses, needs and assets is an essential first step in planning for an effective project. It is therefore of necessity the very first "port of call," if you will, in any global grant endeavor. By taking off time to learn about our communities, we can discover the most relevant opportunities for projects and maximize our respective club abilities to make meaningful impacts. Community assessments, in essence, make us get a better understanding of the dynamics of our communities and further help both these communities and ourselves to make important decisions about our service priorities. A "unanimity of purpose" of sorts.

Even for the individuals already actively involved, different community assessments can reveal additional strengths and opportunities for growth. An effective assessment always invariably reveals a few things that we didn't know about before. Additionally, assessments also help build valuable relationships and encourage community members to actively participate in making lasting improvements. In a nutshell, community assessments are a very critical first step in creating trust, community ownership and sustainability.

Assessments should be systematic, not between one or two people. A wide variety of community stakeholders and beneficiaries should of necessity, be engaged in a meaningful way.

## Tips for conducting any assessment:

- Remain open minded. Don't presume to know what the communities need.
- Choose the participants carefully. Consider the general makeup of the communities.
- Include overlooked and marginalized groups - women, the elderly, young people, the disabled, religious and ethnic minorities, etc. Always keep the community's social dynamics in mind.
- Always consider "yourself" an outsider. Find a well-

connected organization or groups that can introduce you.

- Don't promise a project before making the right decision.

## Six commonly used Community Assessment Tools:

These are not exclusive. They can be combined or adapted to best suit your respective club resources and aspirations as well as the preferences of the people you wish to engage with.

**Community Meetings:** These are sometimes dubbed, "Town hall" or "public fora." Very informal public gatherings that bring together members of the communities to discuss issues, choice, concerns and express preferences for community priorities. A facilitator leads a discussion on issues related to community strengths and potential challenges and encourages attendees to vocally participate.

**Survey:** It's a popular method of collecting information and opinions. They can be general or targeting specific segments of the community. They can be delivered by e-mail, phone or in person.

**Interview (Key Informant):** One-on-one conversations between a facilitator (interviewer) and a community stakeholder (respondent). They allow for a greater understanding of the

respondent's ideas and feelings. Unlike surveys, 'follow ups' are deemed feasible.

**Focus groups:** This is a carefully guided discussion used to determine a target group's preferences and opinions on a particular issue or idea. Most focus groups comprise six to 12 diverse stakeholders usually asked a series of carefully worded, usually 'open ended' questions on different issues that affect a particular community. Dialogue tends to evolve and participants tend to build on each other's responses.

**Asset Inventory:** Identifies various types of resources in a community including the people, physical environment, institutions, services and events. Identification of people, places and anything of value. These are documented and the findings subsequently analyzed.

**Community Mapping:** This tool is used to reveal different perspectives about a community. A few resources and a little time are required. In this facilitated activity, individuals or groups draw a map of their community, marking certain points of importance and noting how often they visit the places.

Identifying Conflict of Interest in Global Grants - The TRF Perspective:

Consider an individual in a position to make or influence a decision about a grant or award that benefits:

- That individual (in this case a Rotarian/Rotaractor).
- An immediate family member.

- A business partner or
- An entity in which the individual, an immediate family member, or a business partner has a significant financial interest or in which the individual, an immediate family member, or a business partner is a trustee, director or an officer.

## Conflict of interest in relation to TRF Programmes:

Individual eligibility:

Individuals who can't be candidates or recipients or beneficiaries of any TRF programme:

Rotarians, Rotaractors, employees of clubs and Districts or RI, spouses, lineal descendants, and their spouses and employees of agencies, organisations or institutions partnering with The Rotary Foundation (TRF) or Rotary International (RI).

- Former Rotarians/ Rotaractors remain ineligible for 36 months after termination of membership.

## Conflict of interest-selection committees:

- These must show impartiality.
- Exercise complete transparency. Anyone with perceived conflict of interest must recuse him/herself.
- There must be a fair, open and thorough bidding process.

## Disclosure:

To the General Secretary of Rotary International.

- Rotarians/Rotaractors shall not serve on the Grants Committee for any Global Grant in which they have a conflict of interest.
- Global grants may not be financed with contributions (Directed Gifts, CSR funds etc) where a donor has a conflict of interest in relation to the grant.
- In any Global grant application, any perceived conflict of interest must be declared.

NB: Not all declared cases of "conflict of interest" are necessarily a bad thing, keyword is that they must be declared in writing though.

## Remedies in cases of failure to disclose:

- Cancellation of a current grant.
- Suspension of future TRF programme grants or awards involving:
- A particular Rotarian/ Rotaractors.
- A Rotary Club.
- A Rotary District.

*Peter Isabirye is a member of the DRFC of D9213 and a TRF cadre of technical advisors in three of Rotary's areas of focus.*





# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

**TAIPEI, TAIWAN | 13-17 JUNE 2026**



Register and pay in full by 15 December 2025,  
before prices increase, at [convention.rotary.org](https://convention.rotary.org).