Naalya Food Bulletin

26th May, 2026

Rotary Kampala - Naalya

UNITE FOR GOOD

Issue 44 | RY 2025-26



Rotarians from different clubs celebrate at the launch of Comprehensive Mental Health Camp at Acholi Quarters in October last year.

RC KAMPALA - NAALYA

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Chef's Note

Seeds We Have Planted, Bonds We Must Keep

There is a particular kind of quiet that follows a season of good work - not the quiet of emptiness, but the kind that settles when something meaningful has been done and the world, however briefly, is better for it.

That is the quiet in which we find ourselves as May draws to a close. Funding for Global Grant project finally landed on the account. Wow, what a way to conclude the Youth Service month!

To every Rotarian, Rotaractor, and Interactor across Uganda who showed up for a young person this month - who mentored, funded, coached, listened, or simply believed - this Chef's Note begins with you. You did not merely fulfil a theme. You made a deposit into the most important account any society can hold: its future.

The work has been varied and real. Vocational guidance to students at the crossroads of choice. Scholarships that turned a parent's silent prayer into a textbook. Leadership camps where shy voices found their footing. Whether your club worked in Acholi Quarters, Gulu, Mbarara, or the quieter corners of this country, the impact was lasting and the recognition deserved.

Youth Service demands patience and the conviction that investing in a young person is never wasted — even when the return is measured in years, not days. You held that conviction. Hold it still.

June brings us Rotary Fellowship - the final theme of the 2025–2026 Rotary Year. Do not let the word ***final*** suggest winding down. Fellowship is the heartbeat that keeps everything else alive. It transforms a collection of professionals into a community of purpose - the handshake that becomes a friendship, the friendship that becomes trust, and the trust that births a project changing a life.

As we get set to close the year and welcome the new Rotary Year, let's commit to invest genuinely in fellowship, which is not built merely in grand gestures but in showing up, consistently, for each other.

And then there is Taipei – barely a fortnight away.

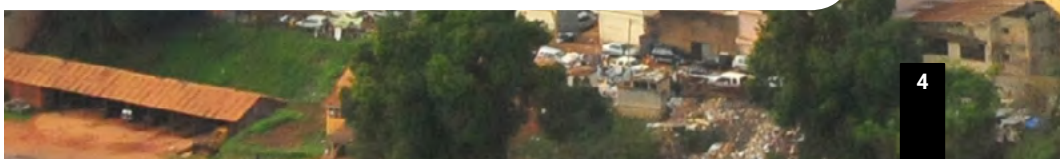
The Rotary International Convention 2026 is not merely an event; it is an invitation. To walk among tens of thousands of Rotarians from every nation is to be humbled by what ordinary people with extraordinary commitment have built, and to be quietly, stubbornly challenged to return home and do more.

Get ready to be stretched. Get ready for the conversation that reorders mindsets. May Uganda be well represented, not merely present, but participating, with energy that announces: we are here, we are committed, and we are ready.

The seeds planted this May will take their own time to grow. But it's the future of Rotary fellowship – the theme for June. Ahead of RYLA - the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards – purpose to sponsor a young person's attendance at a RYLA camp or seminar - covering registration, accommodation, and meals.

When we support RYLA, we are essentially training the next generation of community leaders - many of whom go on to become Rotarians themselves. It is Youth Service in its most direct and lasting form..

Rtn. Peter Nyanzi
Bulletin Officer



RI President's Message



By Rtn. Francesco Arezzo

MAY 2026

Shoki Wafula did not know what to expect when he was forced to leave his birth country of Uganda for South Africa. What he found was a Rotary community that welcomed him with warmth and friendship.

That experience inspired him to help create a Rotaract e-club where young leaders from around the world could connect, develop their skills, and serve together.

Today, that community includes members across multiple continents who collaborate on leadership development, peacebuilding, and service initiatives.

For Wafula, the experience reinforced the lesson that meaningful service begins with people who feel connected, valued, and empowered to lead.

His story reminds us why Youth Service Month is so important. Through Rotaract and programs like Rotary Youth Exchange, young people build leadership skills, develop global understanding, and discover the impact they can make through service.

Rotary's Action Plan calls on us to enhance participant engagement. At its heart, that goal asks a simple question: How can we ensure that participation in Rotary is meaningful and fulfilling for everyone? Youth programs and Rotaract provide a powerful answer.

When clubs mentor Rotaractors, host exchange students, or support youth leadership initiatives, they create opportunities for members to share their experience in ways that feel personal and rewarding.

> "Youth programs show us how that happens in practice — when generations come together, share ideas, and work side by side in service.

These connections deepen members' sense of purpose and strengthen the bonds within our Rotary family.

They also create lasting pathways into Rotary. Thousands of young people complete Rotary programs each year, and they carry those experiences with them throughout their lives. Many remain eager to stay connected.

Organizations such as Rotex International, an association of former Youth Exchange students, help Rotary program alumni continue serving as mentors, leaders, and advocates for our youth programs.

As Rotex co-founder Hans Lee wrote in a recent reflection on Youth Exchange alumni, "exchange doesn't end when you return home."

When we welcome these young leaders into our clubs and activities, we strengthen the continuity of Rotary across generations.

During Youth Service Month, I hope every Rotary club reflects on how youth programs can enhance engagement for new and longtime members. Collaborate on service projects and invite youth voices into your planning and decision making.

Rotary's message to the world is that we can ***Unite for Good***. Youth programs show us how that happens in practice — when generations come together, share ideas, and work side by side in service.

When we invest in young people, we are not only shaping future leaders. We are building a stronger, more connected Rotary today.

Our Youth, Our Future

DG'S MESSAGE

By Geoffrey Martin Kitakule



MAY 2026

One of the most remarkable contributions of Rotary is in leadership development. Through Rotaract and Interact clubs, young people are given the opportunity to lead, to organize, and to serve.

These platforms equip the youth with essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and decision-making. Many young leaders in Uganda today have been shaped through Rotary programs, gaining confidence and a sense of purpose.

This year through Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), we trained and empowered the young generation.

Under Interact RYLA 890 young leaders trained from 94 schools, Under RYLA Skill Up Academy - 250 Youth professionally trained in leadership, digital skills, entrepreneurship, and employability readiness.

The RYLA 3-Day Leadership Camp had 320 participants, and the Regional RYLA Wrap-Up trained 150 youth.

Rotary has played a significant role in promoting entrepreneurship and innovation among the youth. Through initiatives like business challenges and mentorship programs, young people are encouraged to think creatively and develop solutions to real-world problems. They are not only trained to seek jobs—but to create them.

The Rotary Club of Upper Kololo program with the Naguru Remand Home is a testimony of how we can transform youth that have had issues with the law into useful citizens.

> "Young people are not only trained to seek jobs—but to create them."





Rotary has also invested in skills development and vocational training. Across Uganda, young people are learning practical skills such as tailoring, carpentry, mechanics, and information technology.

The Boy Child program of Rotary Club of Hoima Kitara has transformed Ghetto Youth by giving them skills that have taken them off the street into productive citizens.

These skills open doors to employment and empower youth to build sustainable livelihoods. For many, this has been a turning point from vulnerability to independence.

Rotary encourages youth to actively participate in community service. Whether it is through health campaigns, environmental conservation, or education support programs, young people are learning the value of giving back.

It is heartwarming to see our youth involved in Rotary Health Family days, and initiatives like the Rotaract Earth Initiative.

These experiences nurture empathy, responsibility, and a strong sense of citizenship. I would like to congratulate Rotaractor Derrick Kabuye of the Rotaract Club of Kampala South for being recognized as one of the Champions of tomorrow. This shows that as a District we are naturing future leaders to drive change in our communities.

> “Rotary is not just changing individual lives—it is shaping the future of our nation.”

Through peacebuilding and social integration, Rotary brings together young people from diverse backgrounds to promote dialogue, understanding, and unity. In a world where divisions can easily arise, these efforts are crucial in building a peaceful and inclusive society.

However, while Rotary has made tremendous progress, there is still more to be done.

Many young people, especially in rural areas, have yet to benefit from these opportunities. Increasing awareness and expanding outreach will ensure that no youth is left behind.

Rotary’s impact on the youth in Uganda is both deep and lasting. It is shaping leaders, creating entrepreneurs, building skills, and inspiring a spirit of service. Rotary is not just changing individual lives—it is shaping the future of our nation.

Therefore, I ask all young people to embrace these opportunities. So that you can lead, serve, and innovate. And together, let us build a better Uganda.

President's Message

RTN CHARLES OWEKMENO
Unite For Good President
2025-2026



Dear Family of Rotary and Guests,

I trust that you and your families are keeping well. I warmly congratulate all club members on the confirmation of funds for our Mental Health Global Grant.

Special thanks go to the Service Project Team and to everyone who contributed to this achievement.

Our focus now turns to effective and impactful implementation.

I also extend heartfelt appreciation to the Katogo Buddy Group for the well-organised Rotary meeting last Tuesday on Bamboo Green Business. Your efforts continue to enrich our fellowship and inspire innovative thinking.

Looking ahead, on Tuesday, 26th May 2026, we shall join the Tuesday Club for the Homecoming of DGN Jane Kabugo, organised by the Rotary Club of Sunset Kampala at Protea Hotel, starting at 6:00 PM.

Let us turn out in large numbers to celebrate this special occasion.

I also invite all Naalyakos to attend our Annual Club Retreat on Saturday, 30th May 2026, at Nile Resort, Jinja — a time for reflection, fellowship, and planning for greater impact.

> "...we extend our sympathies to members who are unwell, grieving, or caring for sick relatives."

We celebrate those marking birthdays and anniversaries this week, and we extend our sympathies to members who are unwell, grieving, or caring for sick relatives.

May you find comfort and strength in the fellowship of Rotary.

Wishing you all a fulfilling week of service as we continue to live out Rotary's motto: Service Above Self.

YOURS IN SERVICE ABOVE SELF,



TEAM TALK

Living Rotary Values Beyond the Meeting

BY **AG FRANCIS LUBUULWA**

Over the past few weeks, we have had some uncomfortable but necessary conversations as Rotarians. We have reflected on what it truly means for Rotary to begin at home.

We have challenged ourselves to raise children who understand service above self not merely as a slogan, but as a way of life.

We have questioned whether the Rotary Four-Way Test is genuinely shaping our decisions in business, leadership, procurement, public service, and daily conduct — or whether we have quietly grown comfortable reciting values we no longer actively pursue.

If this series has one central reminder, it is that Rotary values are not meant to remain confined to meetings, conferences, WhatsApp groups, or fellowship speeches.

They are meant to follow us into boardrooms, homes, schools, businesses, government offices, communities, and private decisions. That is where Rotary either becomes real or remains symbolic.

Society does not judge Rotary primarily by our banners, projects, or speeches.

Society judges Rotary by the conduct of Rotarians — by how we treat people, how we handle money, how we exercise leadership, whether our word can still be trusted, and whether our integrity holds even when compromise would benefit us personally.

Uganda is hungry for trustworthy leadership. Everywhere you look, people are weary of corruption, dishonesty, manipulation, selfishness, exploitation, and performative leadership.

> “If Rotarians genuinely live differently — not perfectly, but intentionally — people will notice..”

Young people are increasingly sceptical of institutions because they have witnessed too many organisations speak beautifully while living differently.

That reality presents both a challenge and an opportunity for Rotary. If Rotarians genuinely live differently — not perfectly, but intentionally — people will notice. Not because we advertise ourselves loudly, but because integrity is difficult to ignore.

- A Rotarian who pays suppliers fairly



and on time.
- A Rotarian who refuses a bribe quietly, without seeking applause.
- A Rotarian who treats staff with dignity.
- A Rotarian who remains ethical even when shortcuts are available.
- A Rotarian who serves without constantly seeking recognition.
- A Rotarian who leads transparently within their club, district, workplace, or community.

These things speak louder than any membership campaign ever could. And perhaps that is how Rotary grows sustainably — not merely through recruitment drives, but through credibility. People are drawn to authenticity.

Young professionals, entrepreneurs, students, and leaders are not necessarily looking for perfect organisations; they are looking for meaningful ones, for communities whose values still hold in real life.

The future strength of Rotary may therefore depend less on how well we market the organisation and more on how consistently we embody it.

The uncomfortable reality is that one dishonest Rotarian can damage trust far beyond themselves. But the opposite is equally true: one deeply principled Rotarian can quietly inspire an entire generation.

So where do we go from here? Not through dramatic speeches or grand declarations. The way forward is simpler — and harder. It is the daily choice to make Rotary values practical:

- Choosing honesty in small matters.
- Keeping promises.
- Respecting people regardless of status.
- Handling Rotary finances transparently.
- Avoiding favouritism.
- Mentoring younger people intentionally.
- Creating clubs where people feel genuinely welcomed and valued.
- Listening more.
- Serving quietly.
- Leading responsibly.
- Apologising when wrong.
- Acting ethically even when no one will ever know otherwise.

That is how values become culture. And culture is what ultimately defines organisations. The good news is that Rotary already possesses the framework the world most urgently needs.

The Four-Way Test remains one of the simplest yet most powerful ethical guides ever created. Rotary's emphasis on service, dignity, fairness, leadership, and goodwill is timeless. Values only matter when people are willing to live them consistently.

> “The Four-Way Test remains one of the simplest yet most powerful ethical guides ever created.”

That, perhaps, is the challenge this series leaves with every Rotarian reading it today — not whether we know the values, not whether we can quote them or display them on banners and websites, but whether the people closest to us: our families, colleagues, employees, suppliers, communities, and fellow Rotarians can genuinely experience those values through us.

Because ultimately, Rotary's greatest advertisement is not our public image. It is our personal conduct.

If more Rotarians chose to live the values courageously, consistently, and visibly in everyday life, we would not need to convince anyone to join Rotary.

They would simply see something different in us — and want to become part of it.

The author is Assistant Governor, and Past President of Rotary Club of Kampala - Naalya




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TAIPEI
2026
LAST CALL
TO THE
END OF EARLY BIRD
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
TAIPEI, TAIWAN
Registration fees:
26th June - 15th Dec 2025: 475 (Early Registration)
16th Dec 2025 - 31st Mar 2026: $575
1st Apr - 17th June 2026: $675
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#CoverStory



Global Grant Funding Secured

JOY AS ROTARY CLUB OF KAMPALA NAALYA SECURES GLOBAL FUNDING FOR ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH IN ACHOLI QUARTERS

BY **THE EDITORIAL DESK**

The WhatsApp notification arrived with the kind of brevity that belies monumental news.

"It is with great excitement that I announce that our global grant on mental health has been confirmed and funds received from TRF," wrote President Charles Owekmeno to the Rotary Club of Kampala Naalya's group chat. What followed was an eruption of congratulatory messages that captured something Rotarians understand well: years of quiet, disciplined groundwork finally breaking into the light.

Global Grant GG2570450, titled Mental Health Support for Adolescents in Ghetto Communities (MSAG) – is a $60,000 initiative that represents a landmark achievement, not only for the club but for Rotary's footprint in Uganda's public health landscape.

Past President Denis Jjuuko's response to the news said it plainly: "We have finally broken the barrier." That barrier was real. Grant applications of this magnitude demand sustained vision, technical rigour, cross-border partnerships, and meticulous documentation.



> "Rotarians understand well: years of quiet, disciplined groundwork finally breaking into the light."

The MSAG journey began during the presidency of CMP Sylvia Nankya in 2021, who seeded the vision and contributed an initial USD 1,000.

Rtn Matia Mulumba and PP Godfrey Okello Omoding helped frame the application, and it was Rtn Brian Mayanja and Dr. John Mugisa - the project's chief architect and coordinator - who carried it over the finish line. President Owekmeno was right to name each of them. In Rotary, credit must travel to where effort was invested.

Why MSAG Matters

Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world, yet its psychiatric infrastructure remains critically under-resourced, particularly for adolescents in urban informal settlements.

Acholi Quarters in Banda, Kampala - characterised by severe overcrowding, poverty, and elevated rates of trauma and displacement - will serve as the pilot community for MSAG before the model expands across Uganda.

The project, which has already seen two comprehensive health camps serving thousands so far, operates on a task-sharing model that is both pragmatic and scalable.



Rather than depending solely on scarce clinical specialists, MSAG builds capacity where adolescents actually live their lives:

- **Teachers** are trained to identify early behavioural warning signs and provide initial psychosocial support within schools.
- **Community Health Workers** receive screening tools to detect youth struggling with mental illness and connect them to appropriate care.
- **A formalised referral pathway** links community networks and schools directly to Butabika National Referral Mental Health Hospital - Uganda's foremost psychiatric institution — ensuring that severe cases receive specialist attention without falling through the cracks.

This three-pronged approach addresses what has historically paralysed community mental health efforts: identification without a clear next step. MSAG closes that gap.

Partners Worth Noting

The project was developed in formal partnership with the Rotary Club of Carlsbad Hi-Noon (USA), whose international co-sponsorship was essential to qualifying for The Rotary Foundation's Global Grant.

> "This is Rotary working precisely as it was designed to - connecting communities across borders..."

Locally, the Rotary Clubs of Bukoto and Kampala 7 Hills, alongside civil society partners such as Reach A Hand Uganda, have committed to the implementation. Butabika Hospital anchors the clinical dimension.

Other partners include KCCA, Rela Dental, and Dfcu Bank, Mental Health Uganda, Maisha Care and Space Medium Youth Initiative.

This is Rotary working precisely as it was designed to - connecting communities across borders, pooling expertise, and directing resources where they are most needed.

With funds now received, the work truly begins. Rotary's credibility with The Rotary Foundation (TRF) - and with the communities it serves - rests equally on implementation quality as on grant acquisition.

The club's membership, its international partner, and the broader Rotary District are committed to holding the implementation team to rigorous reporting, measurable outcomes, and transparent financial stewardship. Every shilling will be accounted for. Every adolescent served will be documented.

To organisations, healthcare institutions, corporations, and fellow Rotary Clubs yet to engage: the MSAG project is actively seeking partners for funding support, technical expertise, and scaling to the other ghetto communities not only in Kampala slums but also to other cities.

As Charter President Francis Lakor framed it: "Let's prepare to participate in the implementation."

That call stands. The grant is confirmed. The real work now starts.





Green Gold: Why Every Rotarian Should Be Paying Attention to Bamboo

BY **EDITORIAL DESK**

There is a quiet revolution unfolding across Uganda - one that does not announce itself with fanfare but with the steady rustle of bamboo groves growing on hillsides, in backyards, and on commercial farms from Mukono to Hoima. It is time we sat up and took notice.

Last week, members of Bamboo Uganda made their case to the RC of Kampala Naalya, and it was a compelling one. Not because it was polished advocacy, but because the facts speak for themselves.

Uganda currently has 70,000 hectares of natural bamboo - and yet, most of it sits in gazetted areas, untouched and unharnessed.

Meanwhile, the government has set a target of 375,000 hectares under cultivation. The gap between where we are and where we need to be is not a problem. It is an invitation.

The numbers matter to us as Rotarians, but so does the human story behind them. Bamboo is not simply a construction material or a cash crop.

It is, as the presenters argued persuasively, a 360-degree solution. It addresses shelter, food security, energy, income, and environmental restoration - all at once.

The bamboo shoot is classified as a superfood (malewa). The poles provide durable, low-cost construction material. Processed bamboo chips are already being exported to the Netherlands for use in biocomposite materials — the same materials that go into car dashboards and traffic signage.

In Mukono, Amabanda Uganda Limited is producing engineered bamboo boards, flooring, and laminated panels. These are not pilot projects. They are live, commercial operations seeking scale.

> “As one presenter noted with quiet conviction, you can put bamboo in your will.”

And then there is the argument that ought to resonate with every farmer, landowner, or investor in this room: permanence.

Unlike eucalyptus or pine, which you plant, harvest after seven years, and replant, bamboo establishes a permanent forest.

Plant today, harvest by year six, and continue harvesting year after year for decades - without ever clearing your plantation. One acre can yield approximately 1,000 poles annually.



As one presenter noted with quiet conviction, you can put bamboo in your will. That is not a marketing line. That is generational wealth.

The Bamboo Uganda association, with 25 active members - spanning growers, processors, architects, and builders - is steadily building the industry's spine: supply chain linkages, a farmer-tracking application, research partnerships with Makerere University, and active engagement with development funders and international buyers.

> “The infrastructure for this industry is being laid right now, which means the opportunity to shape it is also right now..”

They are also pioneering a bamboo AI platform - a knowledge hub that will make information about the crop accessible to anyone who needs it.

More participants

None of this, however, will reach its potential without broader participation. A bamboo policy framework is still being negotiated.

The export market, currently valued at under a million US dollars, is being positioned to grow tenfold.

Research into bamboo's tensile strength - with early findings suggesting it rivals steel - continues. The infrastructure for this industry is being laid right now, which means the opportunity to shape it is also right now.

For Rotarians, the entry points are multiple. You may be a farmer with idle land. You may be an architect or builder looking for sustainable certified materials.

You may be an investor interested in processing or export.

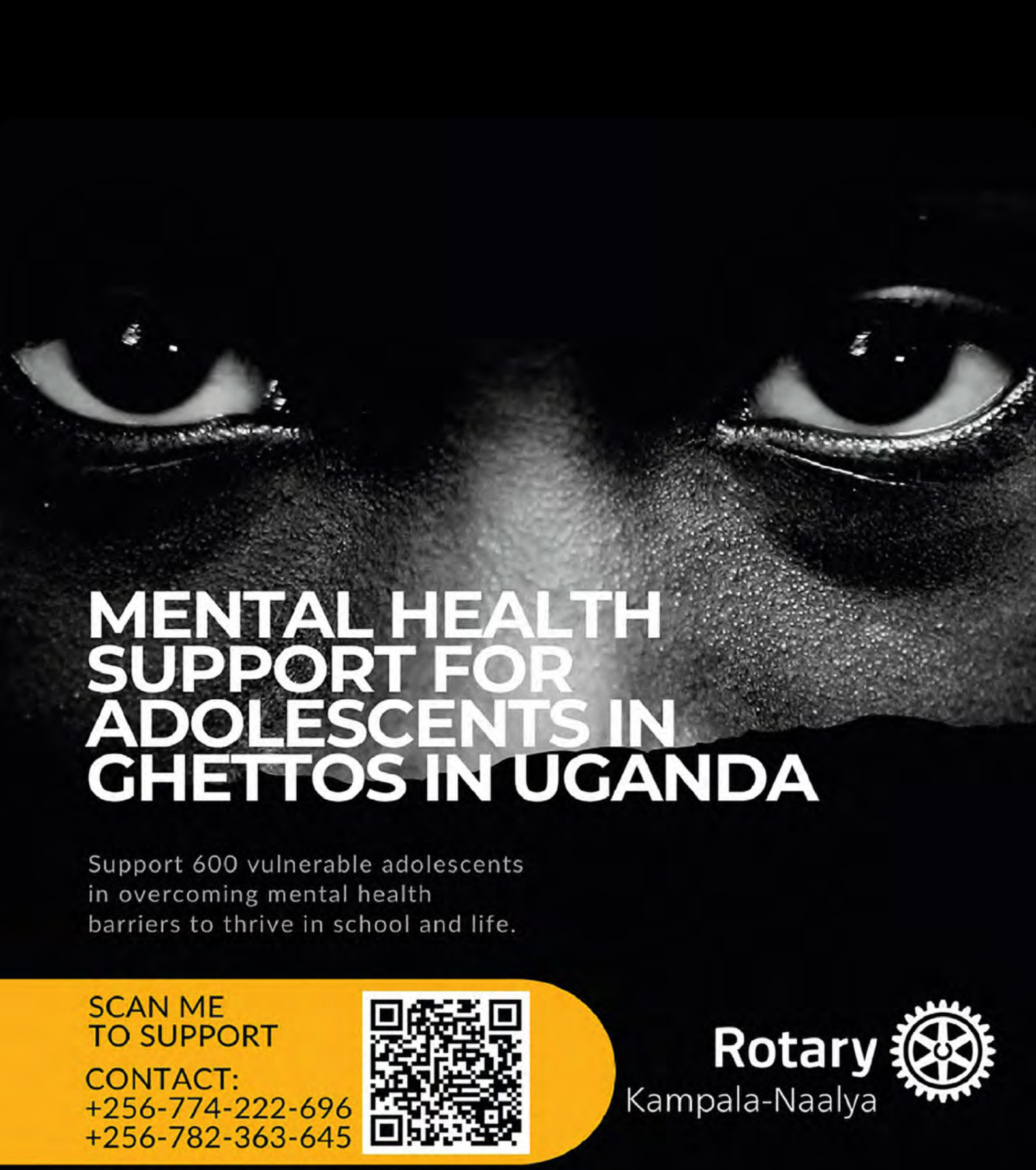
You may simply be a consumer willing to purchase a bamboo floor or a laminated bamboo panel the next time you renovate.

Membership in Bamboo Uganda begins at UGX350,000 annually - a modest commitment for a cause with generational implications.

Rotary has long championed causes that uplift communities and restore the environment. Here is one sitting right in our backyard, quietly asking us to join.

The question is not whether bamboo has a future in Uganda. It clearly does. The question is whether we will be part of building it.




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#SolRise

We Won't Build Strong Communities While Ignoring Emotional Pain

BY **RTN JACKLINE MUTIIMBA**

Communities are often judged by what can be seen—roads, buildings, businesses, projects, development plans.

But some of the most important realities in a community are invisible: stress, loneliness, fear, trauma, depression, emotional exhaustion.

Because these struggles cannot always be seen, they are often ignored until they begin destroying lives quietly from within.

Many people in our communities have mastered the art of appearing okay. They smile while overwhelmed, work while emotionally drained, and encourage others while personally falling apart.

They carry responsibilities heavy enough to break them, yet still wake up every morning because survival demands it.

> "Unfortunately, many communities still treat mental health conversations as weakness..."

But survival is not the same as living.

A community should be more than a place where people simply endure hardship. It should be a place where people feel supported enough to heal, grow, dream, and belong.

Unfortunately, many communities still treat mental health conversations as weakness. People are told: "Be strong." "Others have it



worse." "Stop overthinking." "Pray and move on."

While faith and resilience matter, emotional pain does not disappear simply because people are told to ignore it.

Unspoken pain eventually shows itself somewhere—in broken relationships, violence, addiction, anger, hopelessness, and young people giving up on themselves before life truly begins.

Mental health affects how communities function every single day. It shapes how parents raise children, how neighbors relate, how leaders respond to people, how conflict is handled, and how young people see their future.

Emotionally wounded communities struggle to sustain peace, trust, and progress. That is why healing must become part of community development—not only economic or physical development, but human development.

People are not machines designed only to survive pressure. They are human beings who need care, understanding, rest, dignity, and emotional safety.

One compassionate conversation can change someone's life. One supportive teacher can restore hope in a struggling child. One leader who truly listens can rebuild trust in an entire neighborhood.

One community that chooses empathy over judgment can begin healing generations of silent pain.

When people feel emotionally supported, they begin contributing differently to society.

They communicate better, think more clearly, cooperate more willingly, solve problems peacefully, build healthier relationships, and inspire hope instead of fear.

Communities become stronger when humanity becomes visible again.

Real strength is not pretending to be unbreakable. Real strength is creating spaces where people do not have to suffer alone.

The future of our communities will not depend only on resources or opportunities. It will also depend on whether people feel emotionally safe enough to keep believing in tomorrow.

Thriving communities are built by people whose minds, hearts, and spirits are not constantly fighting to survive..

> "While faith and resilience matter, emotional pain does not disappear simply because people are told to ignore it."





ELDER'S EYE

Interventions for Youth in Changing Times

BY PP GODFREY OKELLO-OMODING

We have come to the end of Youth Service Month, and hopefully we are ending it enriched with lessons on youth service. Whatever the case, today's youth are confronted with rapidly changing times that bring varied and sweeping dynamics.

Older people are often heard saying, "We do not understand the youth of today." The dynamics are many and fast-moving.

When older generations apply their own frames of reference to young people, the divergence is inevitable, and understandable.



Consider the former geographical barriers of location and distance, which technology has substantially eroded. Information is now immediate and portable.

Whatever is happening anywhere in the world is accessible almost instantly, without relying on one or a handful of channels. The velocity of information, filtered or unfiltered, is incomparably faster today than it was a decade ago.

In rural trading centres, young people gather to cheer on football players and teams they will never meet — just as their urban counterparts do.

That visual and entertainment distance is narrowing rapidly. In many respects, rural and urban youth are converging, regardless of their living environments. Such developments are reshaping rural youth in ways that are entirely new.

The conservatism anchored in cultural and religious values, and in traditional socialisation, is in decline.

Values once cherished and transmitted by elders or culturally designated persons are now being transmitted by those driven by reward. Emerging in

their place are hired "aunts" and "uncles" who are, in effect, commercialising and eroding these values.

When values are commodified, they lose their essence and become mere fashion. This risks distorting the entire framework of traditional learning.

Customs get adjusted to suit preference rather than tradition - and the obvious victims of this shift are the youth.

Formal education, long valued for its contribution to human development, is experiencing its own disruptions. Where commercialisation takes precedence, the instilling of values is frequently compromised — sometimes driven by a reluctance to unsettle paying clients.

Geographically, youth in urban settings tend to have greater exposure to quality teaching and learning. Meanwhile, in changing times, poverty remains more entrenched in rural settings, with direct consequences for the educational opportunities of rural youth. These disparities are widening.

Economic status undeniably influences youth development, advancement, and access to opportunity. A young person from a lower economic stratum is more likely to engage in activities driven by survival. They face considerable barriers, yet they too carry hopes and aspirations.

Their counterparts from better economic backgrounds have a wider range of choices - though they face their own distinct challenges, chief among them being the management of those choices. The burden of plenty, if poorly navigated, can lead to negative outcomes.

The key question for Rotarians today is this: are you prepared to serve youth in changing times? The growth path you experienced may hold limited relevance for today's young people.

> “Be among those who create opportunities for young people, who reclaim those who have lost hope...”

What kind of youth service are you envisioning? Are your youth programmes equipping young people for the world they actually inhabit? Is your Club flexible enough to adopt dynamic approaches to youth service? Are your members actively engaging Rotaract Clubs with changing times in mind?

As we close the month, let us remember that the youth we seek to serve are living in fast-changing times. They are youth confronting an information-saturated world, connected across different values and cultures, navigating a world that appears to offer much but provides access to little - and one in which few people offer genuine hope.

Be among those few. Be among those who create opportunities for young people, who reclaim those who have lost hope, and who build hope where it is needed most. **Continue to be hope builders.**





OUT TO LUNCH

Surging Bank Profitability Offers Critical Lessons for Small Businesses

BY **RTN DENIS JJUUKO**

It is that time of year again when commercial banks publish their financial results in the newspapers, fulfilling the regulations that govern them.

Most have registered year-on-year increases in profitability, lending, deposits, and total assets, among other metrics.

If you read only the commercial banks' results and drew conclusions about the economy, you would think Uganda's economy is in exceptionally fine shape.

All commercial banks combined made more than Shs2.1 trillion in profits, according to the figures they released—translating to nearly US$600 million. The shareholders must be smiling all the way to their banks.

Those who have not yet invested in commercial banks must be wondering how to get in. The good news is that several of these banks are listed on the stock exchange.

A large portion of the money banks reported came from their loan books. This is not entirely surprising, since the interest rates they charge are among the highest in the world. Any institution charging upwards of 16 percent annual interest should be able to grow every quarter, half-year, and full year.



> "All commercial banks combined made more than Shs2.1 trillion in profits, according to the figures they released."

That said, the steady growth in commercial bank profitability appears to come at the expense of other sectors of the economy.

Assets seized from loan defaulters were advertised on the very pages opposite many of the banks' published results. One hand gives; another takes — as the saying goes.

There is no need to begrudge the banks, however. They are not entirely responsible for the high interest rates in the country.

The capital requirements to start a commercial bank are prohibitive,



and those who recently failed to meet them were downgraded to lower tiers.

The government also borrows at high rates, effectively giving banks carte blanche to charge similar — and even higher — rates to other borrowers.

Defaults, too, are common. Banks maintain that lending to Ugandans is high risk. It probably is. Most of us know someone who borrowed money and simply never paid it back.

What, then, can businesses learn from the financial performance of commercial banks? There are many lessons. Commercial banks, like other large businesses that publish their results — telecoms, for instance — share one defining characteristic: repeat, long-term customers.

When you sign up for a loan such as a mortgage, you commit to repaying it over an extended period.

> “Small businesses would do well to observe how these institutions market themselves, what they do to retain customers, .”

Borrow for ten years and the bank is virtually assured of income from you for 120 months. Should you default, the collateral you pledged secures their recovery. Many of the costs incurred to acquire you as a customer were one-off.

For a disciplined borrower, the bank incurs almost no further cost to collect what it is owed. Long-term customers who pay regularly are a goldmine for any business.

Beyond borrowers, most people simply never change their bank accounts. Even those who do not borrow pay monthly or usage fees. A bank is therefore assured of a recurring income stream.

Telecoms operate by the same logic. How many times have you changed your telephone number? Most people keep the same line for years — effectively until death, and sometimes beyond it, as families retain a deceased person’s line to preserve continuity, especially for business contacts. That is the repeat long-term customer model at its most powerful.

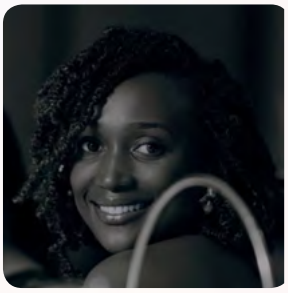
For small businesses, securing a customer for ten years or a lifetime may not be straightforward, but the principle still applies: work consistently to attract and retain repeat customers.

That means continuously improving your product and sustaining your marketing efforts so that customers have reason to return.

Commercial banks and telecoms do exactly this — because if they do not, customers will move elsewhere.

Small businesses would do well to observe how these institutions market themselves, what they do to retain customers, and adapt those strategies to fit tighter budgets. The principles are the same, even if the scale is not.

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PK's CORNER

The Moment of Bloom

BY **RTN PAMELA KAWADDWA**

There came a quiet ache
no one could see,
not loud enough to be
called suffering,
but heavy enough
to live in my chest like
unfinished rain.

I stayed folded for so long,
wrapped in safety,
tucked inside familiar
fears, telling myself
waiting is wisdom,
stillness is peace.
But inside me,
something restless
kept whispering.
you were not made to remain small.

The walls that once protected
me began to press inward.
The comfort became confinement.
The silence became loneliness.

And I realized
even safety can suffocate
a growing soul.

So I trembled.
Oh, how I trembled.
Because blooming meant exposure
sunlight touching places that
had never known warmth.

It meant risking storms,
risking judgment,
risking becoming visible.
Yet the pain of staying closed
had grown sharper
than the fear of unfolding.

And so…
petal by hesitant petal,
I opened.
Not perfectly.
Not all at once.
But enough to breathe again.

I learned that blossoming
is not a moment of beauty
alone it is an act of bravery.

A surrender to becoming.
A quiet decision to trust
life more than fear.
Now I stand in my becoming,
soft yet unafraid,
knowing this truth:
the bud never betrays itself by
blooming it finally honors what
it was always meant to be.

I will fear, fear itself!

Till again,

~pkwy

Object of Rotary

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

FIRST

The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;

SECOND

High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;

THIRD

The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business and community life;

FOURTH

The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service

Fun Facts

Bread

Bread' is a word so ancient, so stubbornly useful, so magnificently ordinary that it has survived empires, outlasted kings, and still manages to show up uninvited in nearly every sentence we use to describe money, survival, or a decent Tuesday lunch.

Let us begin, as all good food lovers must, at the beginning.

The Old English brēad did not originally mean bread. It meant fragment - a bit, a crumb, a broken-off piece. The actual word for the baked staple in early medieval England was hlāf - yes, our modern loaf. Bread was once merely a chip off the old block, linguistically speaking.

Somewhere between the 10th and 12th centuries, the fragment muscled the whole item aside. Hlāf retreated to mean a shaped mass, while bread - the little crumb - rose magnificently, like leavened dough in Ndere's kitchen, to claim dominion over the entire baked enterprise. The most successful hostile takeover in the history of the English language, and nobody even called a Board Meeting.

The deeper roots are equally entertaining. Linguists trace brēad to the Proto-Germanic brauðaz, connecting it either to breaking - early flatbreads were torn by hand, not sliced - or to fermentation, the bubbling magic of yeast doing its invisible magic.

Thus bread carries within its very name both the act of sharing and the miracle of transformation. If that is not a Rotary motto waiting to happen, I don't know what is.

Now consider what happened when hlāf left its linguistic estate to its heirs. The hlāford - the loaf-ward, guardian of the bread - became our Lord. The hl□fdige, the loaf-kneader, became our Lady. An entire aristocracy, it turns out, was named after bread management. Every duke and duchess in English history is, etymologically speaking, a glorified baker's assistant. Shhh; do not tell them.

But bread's true genius lies in its metaphorical ambition. Because bread has been humanity's primary calorie source for millennia, it became the universal shorthand for everything that sustains life. "Give us this day our daily bread" - not katogo or kitobero - bread, standing in for all nourishment and hope.

"Breadwinner." The family's provider. "Bread and butter." Your core livelihood. And because language always follows life into the alleyways, bread eventually became money - "making bread," "chasing daily bread" - the same calculus the Romans ran when their panis gave us companion: literally, one who breaks bread with you.

Which, Fellow Rotarians, brings us home. Every time we gather - whether over a club retreat or a TRF dinner - we are, in the deepest etymological sense, being companions. Bread-sharers. People who understand that what sustains us, we sustain together.

Alright, if you can please excuse so I can go figure out how to put bread on my family's table.



Jokes of the week

1.I tried to come up with a joke about bread. I kneaded more time.

2.Why did the loaf of bread break up with the butter?
It just felt like she was spreading herself too thin.

3.What's a bread's favorite music genre?
Roll and roll.



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