



Rotary 
Zone 22 & 23

Impact

Rotary News
Africa

ISSUE 2/AUG 2026

GROWING
ROTARY, THE
AFRICAN WAY

THE DISTRICT THAT
REIMAGINED
MEMBERSHIP



A LIBRARY OF
HOPE: HONOURING
PDG FRANCISCO
SSEMWANGA AT
KITALA
SECONDARY
SCHOOL

A VIBRANT LIFE STARTS WITH GUARANTEED ACCESS TO **QUALITY** AND **AFFORDABLE** HEALTHCARE



We are Quality Chemical Industries Limited (Qcil) the largest producer of World Health Organization (WHO) pre-qualified HIV/AIDS and malaria treatments in the region.

We are more than just manufacturers of quality, affordable medications. We are enablers of **Life after well.**

Visit: www.qcil.com
for more information



Contents ...

04 EDITOR'S NOTE

04 Growing Rotary, the African Way



07 My challenge to you



09 One Handshake, One Lifetime: The Rotary Story Still Being Written



11 Care without Borders

12 One RotaryFamily, One Shared Purpose

13 Our Foundation: From Confusion to Connection



14 The District That Reimagined Membership

18 Growing Rotary with Purpose

22 Heart of the Club

24 Club Spotlight When Professional Expertise Becomes Service

28 DISCOVER REGION 27 Districts 9112 and 9141

31 District 9141: Creating Lasting Impact Across Nigeria's South-South

35 Rotary in Ghana: The Heartbeat of Region 27

44 Character Must Guide the Future



47 The Night Africa Came Home

51 When Service Brings People Together, Communities Thrive

57 IMPACT ACROSS AFRICA

58 The Man who Bet on Mothers

61 Red Gold Heroes



62 District 9214 Launches a Lifesaving Movement

65 Growing a Green & Blue Generation

68 Health & Impact One Day, 3,600 Lifelines

71 A Library of Hope: Honouring PDG Francisco Ssemwanga at Kitale Secondary School

75 Saving Lives, One Drop at a Time

78 The boy who built a School

80 Sickie for Smiles: When Rotary Partnerships Cross Borders to Save Lives

84 A Race of Hope: How Uganda's Rotary Cancer Run Is Changing the Fight Against Cancer

87 Every Step Counts

88 How One Boy's Determination Became the Heart of Rotary Egypt's End Polio Marathon

91 Building Peace from the Heart of Africa

95 From the streets to purpose

98 Taste of Africa Matooke

Growing Rotary, the African Way

August is Membership and New Club Development Month, and in this edition of Rotary Impact Africa, we turn our attention to one of the most urgent questions facing our organisation: How do we grow Rotary, and how do we ensure that the people who join find compelling reasons to stay?

Our lead story takes us to District 9214, where Rotary grew by nearly 900 members. That is not

merely an impressive statistic. It is a story of intentional leadership, bold action and a clear understanding that membership growth does not happen by accident. The more important question, however, is what the rest of Africa can learn from it.

At a time when many clubs are grappling with ageing membership, declining attendance and the struggle to remain relevant, District 9214 offers a timely reminder that growth is possible when

clubs become more welcoming, flexible, visible and responsive to the communities they serve.

We also shine the spotlight on a club that is doing things differently. A corporate club redefining what service can look like. It reminds us that Rotary must continue to create new doors through which people can enter, contribute and belong. The traditional club model remains important, but the future will also belong to those who are willing to innovate without losing the soul of Rotary.

And then there is what we may rightly call the Yinka Effect.

Excitement filled the air as Rotary International President Yinka Babalola combined Africa's irrepressible can-do spirit with what can only be described as a Midas touch. Barely five days into the new Rotary year, more than one million dollars was raised in a single night for The Rotary Foundation. It was an extraordinary moment, but beyond the figures was an even more powerful message: Africa is not merely a beneficiary of Rotary's global generosity. Africa can lead. Africa can give. Africa can mobilise resources, inspire confidence and set the pace.



That energy runs through this edition. We travel across East Africa, savouring matooke one distinctive taste at a time, because Rotary's story on this continent is also the story of its people, cultures, communities and shared experiences. We celebrate the richness of the places in which Rotary serves and the humanity that gives meaning to every project. Across these pages, we celebrate our clubs and tell the story of Rotary's footprints as they reshape a continent, one community, one project and one person at a time. These are footprints left in schools where children now have better opportunities; in health centres where mothers and babies receive lifesaving care; in communities gaining access to clean water; and in the lives of young people discovering leadership, confidence and hope. Membership, therefore, is not simply about growing our numbers. It is about growing our capacity to serve.

Every new member brings a new idea, a new network, a new pair of hands and another heart willing to make a difference. But sustainable growth demands more than recruitment. It requires clubs where people are welcomed, respected, engaged and given meaningful opportunities to lead and serve. People may join Rotary because of an invitation, but they remain because they find purpose, friendship and impact. As we mark Membership Month, we must ask ourselves honestly: Are our clubs places people are eager to join? Are they places where members feel seen and valued? Are we adapting quickly enough to a changing world? And does the public clearly understand the difference Rotary is making?

The future of Rotary in Africa will not be determined by numbers alone. It will be shaped by the quality of the clubs we build, the courage with which we embrace innovation and the depth of the impact we create.

This edition shows us what is possible. Africa is growing Rotary. Africa is giving. Africa is innovating. Africa is serving. And across the continent, the footprints of Rotary are becoming deeper, broader and impossible to ignore.

Ibim Semenitari
Founding Editor
Rotary Impact Africa

CONTRIBUTING TEAM

- Emmanuel Katongole - Director
- Ibim Semenitari - Editor
- Joseph B Ssengooba- Deputy Editor
- Sonia Ifeoma Tomegah- RPIC Region 26
- Yasser Assem - RPIC region 27
- Sharmilla Bhatt - RPIC region 28
- Lawrence Okwor
- Carole Kimutai
- Ehi Braimah
- Cyril Halm
- Olalekan Otun
- Marwan Montasser
- Boubacar M. BA ARPIC Région 26
- Charnitte BASSO ARPIC Région 26
- Roselyn Kagaruki
- Veronique Tabai
- Sébastien Mariotti, ARPIC Région 26
- Peter Kagwa, ARPIC Region 28
- Fiki Gohar
- Kwame Baah - Acheamfour
- Afef HAMMAMI -ARPIC Région 26

Graphic Layout and Design

Ebiu-Erwau Benson
 (Graphics Genius)
 eebenson256@gmail.com



My challenge to you

Peace does not happen by accident. It must be pursued deliberately, built strategically, and woven intentionally into everything we do. That is the challenge I am placing before the Rotary world this year.

Rotary has long recognized peace as one of our areas of focus. But I believe peace must be more than a category of work we set aside for certain projects. It must become a lens, one we choose to look through every time we plan, every time we serve, every time we ask what kind of impact we truly want to leave behind.

As you plan your next project, whatever the focus area, I want you to pause and ask one question: **How does this create the conditions for peace?**

The Institute for Economics and Peace has identified eight Pillars of Positive Peace: well-functioning government, sound business environment, equitable distribution of resources, acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbors, free flow of information, high levels of human capital, and low levels of corruption. These pillars describe the conditions that make lasting peace possible. And when I look at them carefully, I see enormous potential for Rotary. Not because our work automatically advances peace but because it can when we are deliberate about it.

That is the key word: deliberate.

A water project does not build peace on its own. But a water project designed with the Pillars of Positive Peace in mind — one that asks how equitable access to resources strengthens community trust — can begin to lay that foundation. A vocational training program does not guarantee reconciliation. But one that intentionally brings divided communities together around shared economic opportunity can start to build it. The project does not change. The intention does.

In Colombia, Rotary's Pathways to Peace and Prosperity program shows us what this looks like in practice. Working in communities shaped by decades of armed

conflict and displacement, the program combines economic empowerment with conflict resolution training and community-led reconciliation. Peace was not a hoped-for side effect. It was central to the design. That is the standard I am calling all of us to follow.

As you plan your next project, whatever the focus area, I want you to pause and ask one question: How does this create the conditions for peace? Consult the Pillars of Positive Peace. Find where your work connects. Then, make that connection intentional. Share what you discover with your club, your district, and your community. The more we talk about peace as a practice rather than a destination, the more naturally it will shape everything we do.

This is not about doing different work. It is about doing our work differently, with greater awareness, greater purpose, and a clearer vision of the world we are trying to build. Every Rotary project carries potential. Our task is to unlock it, not by chance but by choice.

Yinka
President, Rotary International



One Handshake, One Lifetime: The Rotary Story Still Being Written

On Wednesday June 5, 1996, I walked into a small meeting room in one of Kampala's elite suburbs -Muyenga not knowing that a single handshake would reshape the rest of my life. I was young, curious, and honestly unsure of what "Service Above Self" truly meant, although my adulthood had been shaped by a Rotarian. I remember the warmth of that room — strangers who felt like family before I even said my name. That day, I didn't just sign a membership form. I stepped into a story bigger than myself, one written by millions of hands across the world, one club meeting at a time.

Thirty years later, that same spark still burns in me, perhaps even brighter. And this August, as we turn our attention to Rotary Membership and New Club Development, I find myself asking: who is waiting for their own defining moment, the one that will change the course of their life the way mine changed on that day?

Somewhere in Capetown, in Casablanca, in Mombasa, in Dakar and in a village you've never heard of, there is a teacher, a young entrepreneur, a retired nurse, a student, someone with

the heart of a Rotarian who simply hasn't been invited yet. Our greatest responsibility this month is not just to grow numbers. It is to open doors. To say, "There is a seat here for you."

This is also the season to think boldly about new club development. Every district has towns, suburbs, professional communities, or university campuses that do not yet have a Rotary presence. A new club is not merely an administrative milestone; it is a new lantern lit in a dark corner of our continent; a fresh engine of service ready to change lives that our existing clubs may never reach. I urge every Assistant Governor and club president to identify at least one opportunity for a new club this Rotary year. Do not wait for the "perfect" moment. Rotary was never built by waiting.

And let us not forget our Rotaract family. Rotaract is not a waiting room for "future Rotarians"; it is Rotary, happening right now, led by young people with energy, ideas, and courage that our movement desperately needs. Strengthening Rotaract clubs, mentoring them with respect rather than control, and inviting Rotaractors fully into District

life is one of the most important membership investments we can make this year. Some of our finest future Rotary International Directors are sitting in a Rotaract meeting today, waiting to be noticed.

Every new club we charter, every Rotaractor we champion, every member we welcome is a promise renewed that no community should suffer alone while we have hands willing to help.

I challenge every Rotarian across our districts: identify one person this month. Just one. Invite them to a meeting. Let them feel what changed my life on that June day in 1996, that unmistakable sense of belonging to something eternal.

Membership is not a statistic on a report. It is legacy.

So here is my invitation to you, my fellow Rotarians: go out and hand someone their own beginning.

Together, let us build. Together, let us grow. Together, let us serve.

Emmanuel Katongole
Rotary International Director
2026-28.



Care without Borders

As I sit beside my father in the hospital, listening to the quiet rhythm of machines that now speak more steadily than his own voice, life feels stripped down to its essentials. Serious illness has a way of doing that. It reveals what matters most, and it reminds us — sometimes gently, sometimes painfully — of what should matter to all of us.

Every person, everywhere, deserves access to care that honors their dignity. **Not just treatment but compassion. Not just medicine but the assurance that their life holds value.**

My father is facing advanced cancer. The path is uneven and often cruel, yet even in this difficult space I am struck by a simple truth: Every person, everywhere, deserves access to care that honors their dignity. Not just treatment but compassion. Not just medicine but the assurance that their life holds value.

Watching nurses move with practiced grace and doctors offer both honesty and hope, I am struck by the thought that millions will never experience this level of support. Not because their lives matter less but because access to care remains uneven across countries and communities. This is not a political argument; it is a human one.

Every family deserves the same chance at healing. Through my years in Rotary, I have come to understand that The Rotary Foundation shows us how this belief is shared across cultures and nations.

At a time when international development funding for disease prevention and treatment is contracting, vital health projects risk losing momentum. Our Foundation — and you, our members — provide the steady, community-driven support needed to keep that from happening.

We are funding vaccines in Pakistan, training health workers in Mozambique, and strengthening fragile health systems in Guatemala. Through the Foundation, international cooperation is not an abstract ideal. It is a responsibility, achievable when people choose to act with generosity, partnership, and shared humanity. I am so proud of our collective leadership.

Sitting here, holding my father's hand as he drifts in and out of sleep, I am reminded of how fragile and precious life is. The measure of a just world is not found in its wealth or its power but in how fiercely it protects the vulnerable.

My father's fight is personal. But the fight for equitable, compassionate health care that honors every life with equal value is universal. It belongs to all of us. Through your generosity and commitment to our Foundation — and through the simple act of caring across borders — we move closer to a world where no one is left behind.

JENNIFER JONES
Foundation trustee chair



Ijeoma Pearl Okoro
Trustee, The Rotary Foundation
July, 2026

One Rotary Family, One Shared Purpose

As we step into August, I greet you with the warmth and unity that define our continent. From Cape Town to Cairo, Lagos to Nairobi — we are one Rotary family.

Across Africa this past month, I've seen The Rotary Foundation's heart beating strong: Clinics equipped, midwives trained, and mothers supported in maternal health. Clean water flowing in communities that waited years. Young people receiving scholarships and peace-building training.

August is yet another reminder that The Rotary Foundation is _the heart of Rotary's Impact_ the Every dollar you give becomes \$1.50+ in action. Every project starts with one member who said 'yes'.

Membership remains our top priority because we need more hands to tackle the unending challenges of our environment.

This month, I invite each Rotarian to do three (3) things:

1. Tell your story- how Rotary membership has impacted your life, and invite someone to join
2. Tell a Foundation story in your meeting - let members see the impact
3. Give- Every Rotarian, Every Year. No gift is too small

Rotarians are resilient, creative, and full of heart. Together, through The Rotary Foundation, we are not just changing statistics — we are changing futures.

Every dollar you give becomes \$1.50+ in action. Every project starts with one member who said 'yes'.



Leaders,

I have come a long way since 1990, when my friend Abel Katahoire finally persuaded me to visit the Rotary Club of Kampala North. Back then, my classification was Construction Services, and my first opportunity came through renovating a small building in Mulago to house female anaesthesia students. I was told this was funded by a matching grant, whatever this was, from the Rotary Foundation. That was my first lesson: the Foundation provides funding where there is need.

We worked alongside Dr. Carol Fellows, a Rotarian from the USA. I learned my second lesson: grants connect clubs from different countries, creating a channel for goodwill and understanding across countries. At project's end, we bought a large Thank You card, signed by all members, and sent it to the Rotary Club of Klamath County. Carol became a lifelong friend. Some of you may know Carol and Tim through the LN-4 artificial hand. That taught me lesson three: the Foundation creates opportunities for making friends around the world.

I did not see Carol for 15 years until I ran into her at Heathrow Airport. She still remembered that Thank You card and shared the story with her fellow Rotarians. That card had made our relationship personal. It reminded me of lesson four, which we all learned as toddlers: always say Thank You—to the community, to partners, and to TRF. To any who gives a hand in a service project or contributes even \$5 to the Foundation.

I started trying to learn more about the Foundation and was completely bewildered. Talks were filled with

Our Foundation: From Confusion to Connection

words like Share and DDF and Investment, complicated diagrams, Polio and PolioPlus, grants in all shapes and exclusions, and names I could not pronounce. My engineering mind was stumped. I had finally found a subject I could not understand.

When I joined Kampala North, there was not a single Paul Harris Fellow in the club. Dominic Kavutse was a Paul Harris Sustaining Member. George Kasedde Mukasa from RC Kampala was a Triple Paul Harris Fellow. I eventually asked what all this meant: George had given \$3,000 to the Foundation. I decided he was either super rich or soft in the head. Dominic was giving \$100 per year. Eight years later, Kampala North had its first Paul Harris Fellow—Dominic. That taught me lesson five: the Foundation can fund grants only because Rotarians give, each according to their ability and generosity.

In the early nineties, Kampala North pioneered the Jaipur limb in Uganda. The Orthopaedics workshop refused to accept the plastic tubing technology. We had a container full of pipes and plastic feet, and money sitting unused. Tom Kajumba, who led the project, kept explaining to our partners in the UK (the Rotary Club of Hamble Valley and the Jaipur Limb Trust) and TRF that the funds were safe and the delay was due to challenges. They sent someone to investigate, who confirmed Tom's honesty. The project eventually succeeded.

Today, I communicate to you as a changed person. From confusion to conviction. From bewilderment to belonging. The Rotary Foundation is not a distant institution—it is us. It is our hands, our hearts, our dollars, our thank you cards, our friendships across continents.

Give. Not because you understand everything. Give because you trust. Give because you care. Give because the Foundation transforms lives—starting with your own. It captures the very essence of Service above Self.

Rtn Tusu
Rotary Club of Kampala North
(Trustee, 2026–2030)



The District That Reimagined Membership

How District 9214 Grew Rotary by Nearly 900 Members, and What the Rest of Africa Can Learn

For years, Rotary has asked one persistent question across Africa. How do we grow Rotary without losing what makes Rotary special? Rotary International District 9214 may have offered one of the continent's most compelling answers.

At the beginning of the 2025–2026 Rotary year, District Governor Christine Kyeyune Kawooya challenged her district to think beyond incremental growth. The target was bold: achieve a net membership gain of 600 members while chartering 24 new clubs across Uganda and Tanzania. Many considered it

ambitious. Few imagined the district would exceed both goals so convincingly. Twelve months later, District 9214 welcomed 898 new Rotarians, growing from 3,729 to 4,627 members, while chartering 29 new Rotary and satellite clubs. It was one of the strongest membership performances anywhere in the Rotary world during the year. Yet the numbers tell only part of the story. The real achievement was not simply adding members. It was changing the way Rotary grows. Previously, Rotary largely waited for prospective members to discover existing clubs. District 9214 reversed that

thinking. Instead of asking people to fit into Rotary, the district asked how Rotary could fit into people's lives. The strategy was simple but transformative: take Rotary into workplaces, professional associations, institutions, hospitals, universities, corporate organisations and underserved communities. Rotary would no longer be confined to traditional meeting spaces. It would meet people where they already lived, worked and served. This philosophy reshaped club development.

Alongside conventional clubs, District 9214 intentionally established corporate clubs, satellite



clubs and other flexible club models that reflected modern lifestyles. Professionals with demanding schedules could now belong to clubs built around their workplaces. Shared interests and professional identities became pathways into Rotary rather than barriers to membership. New pathways meant access while retaining the good old Rotary values, and it led to growth. Deliberate, sustained and intentional growth. Behind the remarkable results was a disciplined strategy rather than good fortune. District Membership Chair PAG Annie Ninyesiga consistently reminded members that "Membership growth must be intentional, not accidental." Her team developed a structured system that supported every new club from conception to charter and beyond.

What this meant was that every new club received, a New Club Adviser, a Charter President or Satellite Chair, at least one spon-





sor club, structured orientation for new members, club sustainability guidelines, and ongoing mentorship and leadership training. The district understood that chartering a club is not success; keeping that club vibrant is. Perhaps the year's most fascinating lesson came from the corporate club model. Traditional clubs remained the largest contributor in absolute numbers, but corporate clubs proved exceptionally efficient at attracting members. On average, each corporate club retained around 54 members, compared with approximately 27 members in newly chartered traditional clubs. The workplace became more than an employer. It became a community of service. Employees who already trusted one another professionally discovered Rotary together, creating clubs rooted in existing relationships and shared purpose. For Africa's rapidly growing professional class, this model offers enormous promise.

However, forming clubs was the easy part. The real test was in the retention of members. Rapid growth inevitably attracted scepticism. Some questioned whether creating many clubs would dilute Rotary's quality. Others worried that rapid recruitment would lead to rapid attrition. District 9214 responded with data. The district recorded an overall 90.8% retention rate among newly admitted members, while the 26 newly chartered Rotary clubs retained 88.8% of their charter membership. Still it was no walk in the park. There were lessons too. Some clubs recruited rapidly but struggled to sustain engagement. Others demonstrated that members remain where they are recognised, mentored, involved and inspired. As one report candidly concludes: "A club model may attract members, but the club culture determines whether they stay." It is a lesson every Rotary district can appreciate.

Membership remains Rotary's defining challenge worldwide. Many districts continue to focus almost exclusively on recruiting more members into existing clubs. At the Membership Summit in Zurich which held early in July, and attended by regional leaders from Africa, Middle East and Europe along with staff of Rotary International, President Yinka Babalola emphasised that to grow membership effectively, members must look inward to "allow Rotary to change us" first. He challenged leaders to focus on the long-term impact of their projects rather than just short-term numbers.

District 9214 already figured this out before the Zurich meeting by creating new pathways into Rotary. The district proved that growth accelerates when Rotary embraces flexibility without compromising its ideals, empowers local leaders, invests in mentorship and deliberately



reaches communities previously untouched by the organisation.

Remarkably, the 26 newly chartered Rotary clubs generated almost 98 percent of the district's total net membership growth, demonstrating that intentional new-club development can be one of Rotary's most powerful growth strategies.

District 9214's story is not ultimately about 898 new members

or 29 new clubs. It is about possibility. It is about believing that Rotary's future will not be secured by preserving yesterday's structures alone, but by creating opportunities for new generations, new professions and new communities to discover the joy of service. Membership growth is not merely about increasing numbers. It is about expanding Rotary's capacity to change lives. And in 2025–2026, District 9214

showed Africa and perhaps the wider Rotary world, that when Rotary intentionally goes to the people, the people come to Rotary.

The writer is the immediate Past District Governor of Rotary District 9214, Uganda and Tanzania. Christine Kyeyune Kawooya, member of the Rotary Club of Muyenga Tankhill

Growing Rotary with Purpose

Why the journey to 1.25 million members by 2030 must be about more than numbers



By Sharmila Bhatt

At the Membership Summit in Zurich, attended by regional leaders from Africa, the Middle East and Europe, along with Rotary staff, Rotary International President Yinka Babalola shared the well-known story of a frog placed in a pot of cool water. As the water is heated gradually, the frog fails to notice the slow change around it. By the time the water reaches boiling point, it is too late to escape. Whether or not the story

is scientifically accurate, its message is timeless: when we fail to recognise gradual change, we risk becoming victims of it.

Rotary faces a similar challenge. Membership trends rarely change overnight. Clubs do not suddenly become smaller or less vibrant. They gradually lose members, energy, diversity and leadership over time. When we become comfortable with the status quo, believing that

“our club is doing just fine,” we may fail to notice the warning signs until it is too late. This is why intentional growth matters. For many years, we encouraged clubs to grow their membership, often hoping that growth would happen naturally. This, some might say is wishful thinking and the Zurich meeting was not a place for simply hoping. Growth requires intention, planning and action. Recognising this, President Yinka has convened Membership Summits around the world to examine the opportunities and challenges facing Rotary membership today.

The message from this summit is clear: if Rotary is to achieve its vision of 1.25 million members by 2030, every region, district and club must intentionally contribute. We cannot assume that someone else will do it for us. When we break the vision down, it becomes both achievable and inspiring. Thousands of small, intentional actions across Rotary clubs can collectively produce extraordinary results. History has shown that clubs do not grow simply because membership is encouraged. Growth happens when leaders understand why it matters and intentionally create clubs that people want to join and remain part of.



Whether or not the story is scientifically accurate, its message is timeless: when we fail to recognise gradual change, we risk becoming victims of it.

Purpose fuels action, and action creates results. Intentional growth must never become an obsession with numbers. An equally powerful lesson comes from the famous Cobra Effect. During colonial rule in India, a bounty was reportedly offered for cobra heads in an attempt to reduce the snake population. Instead, enterprising people began breeding cobras simply to collect the reward. When the scheme ended, the cobras were released, leaving the cities with an even bigger problem than before. A well-intentioned measure had become the goal and produced the opposite of the desired outcome.

The same principle applies to Ro-

tary. Membership numbers are an important indicator of a healthy organisation, but they are not the mission. Our mission is to unite people of action to create lasting change in our communities and around the world. Membership is the means that enables us to fulfil that mission. If we focus only on achieving a numerical target, we may recruit members simply to meet a goal. But if those members do not feel welcomed, engaged, valued and inspired, they will soon leave. Recruiting ten members while losing ten others is not growth. It is simply movement. Sustainability is the key.

Sustainable growth is not measured only by how many members join Rotary this year, but by



how many choose to stay, serve and become tomorrow's leaders. Retention begins on the very first day a member walks through the door. Every new member should find friendship, purpose, opportunities to serve, leadership development and a genuine sense of belonging. Clubs that intentionally invest in the membership experience create members who naturally become ambassadors for Rotary and invite others to join. That experience must go beyond the induction ceremony. New members need to be welcomed, oriented, mentored and given meaningful opportunities to participate. They should not

be left sitting quietly at the edge of the club, trying to understand Rotary traditions and waiting for someone to notice them. Members stay where they feel valued. They stay where their ideas are respected, their abilities are recognised and their contributions matter. They stay where they can see a clear connection between their membership and Rotary's purpose.

As we pursue growth, we must therefore remember that the measure is not the mission. Membership growth is a vital indicator of Rotary's health, but our true purpose is to increase our

capacity to serve, transform lives and create lasting change. When we keep that purpose at the heart of everything we do, sustainable membership growth becomes the natural outcome. We must also tell our Rotary stories every day. Many people see the projects Rotary carries out but do not understand the organisation behind them. Others admire Rotary from a distance but have never imagined that they, too, could belong.

Every Rotarian is therefore a membership ambassador. We grow Rotary when we share why we joined, what service has



taught us and how Rotary has enriched our lives. We grow Rotary when our clubs are welcoming, our projects are relevant and our public image reflects the diversity of the communities we seek to serve. People are more likely to join when they can see themselves in Rotary. As we work towards 1.25 million members by 2030, let us avoid both the slow complacency of the frog and the unintended consequences of the cobra. Let us be intentional in growing Rotary, purposeful in welcoming new members and unwavering in creating an outstanding membership experience. Let us recruit, but let us also engage and grow with purpose. That is how we will achieve sustainable growth, strengthen Rotary for generations to come and truly create lasting impact.

Past District Governor Sharmila Bhatt is Rotary Public Image Co-ordinator for Zone 22, Region 28



Heart of the Club

The Quality of the Network – From “Airplane Mode” to “Fiber Optics”

Dear Friends,

Imagine, for a moment, the ideal member we all dream of recruiting. This is someone who is dynamic, highly skilled, and exceptionally busy. In my mind, I picture such a person as the latest-generation smartphone—arriving with a battery fully charged (their enthusiasm and expertise), an ultra-fast processor, and countless applications ready to serve.

This talented individual joins one of our Rotary clubs. They have energy. They have commitment. But the moment they walk through the door, they do what we all instinctively do in a new environment: they look for a connection. They look for the Rotary network. They want to connect with our projects, our friendships, and our impact.

As leaders, we must ask ourselves an important question:

What kind of network do our clubs offer these new talents?

Because these enthusiastic newcomers do not yet realize that behind the Rotary emblem, they may encounter very different kinds of networks.

They might arrive at a **“No Coverage Club.”**



From the outside, the Rotary sign is clearly visible, but once inside, nothing connects. There are no new projects, no engagement with young people, no meaningful connection with the wider community. The new member searches for a signal... but finds only silence.

Or perhaps they find themselves in a **“Public Wi-Fi Club.”**

The club offers a connection—but it is painfully unstable. The password is jealously guarded by two or three long-serving members who decide who deserves access to the bandwidth.

Even if you eventually manage to connect, the speed is painfully slow—bogged down by cumbersome administrative procedures and endless meetings—until, eventually, you simply give up.

Thankfully, there is another possibility.

The newcomer may discover a **“Fiber Optic Club.”**

This is the kind of club we should all aspire to be.

From the very first moment, the connection is seamless. The new member is immediately linked to meaningful service. Projects are “downloaded” instantly. They quickly become part of the action, the fellowship, and the mission.

Let us work together, my friends, to ensure that our clubs are no longer “dead zones” where talent slowly fades away, but vibrant, ultra-connected hubs where people flourish.

My friends, the greatest threat to our membership is not the member who resigns dramatically. It is the one I call the **“Airplane Mode Member.”**

This is the Rotarian who is physically present at every meeting. They faithfully pay their dues. They proudly wear their Rotary pin. But they have switched off every meaningful connection.

Why?

Because after repeatedly not being invited to serve, after watching their ideas remain permanently “sending” without ever being received, they eventually conclude that the best way to preserve their enthusiasm and energy is simply to disconnect.

They become isolated while surrounded by people. Their name remains on the membership list, but they are no longer part of the network.

And one day, quietly and without drama, they disappear—simply because their Rotary membership no longer adds value to their lives.

In our previous issue, we spoke about **the spark and the fire**. Today, let us understand that recruitment is not simply about adding another name to a membership register.

Recruitment is about increasing the bandwidth of our impact.

Every new member is a software upgrade for our clubs. They bring fresh perspectives, new frequencies, and new codes that we desperately need if we are

to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world.

Our responsibility as leaders is not to force people to become engaged. Our responsibility is to ensure that the Wi-Fi signal is strong.

Successful recruitment does not happen when someone joins Rotary. It happens when Rotary truly connects with that person’s life, aspirations, and purpose.

Let us work together, my friends, to ensure that our clubs are no longer **“dead zones”** where talent slowly fades away, but vibrant, ultra-connected hubs where people flourish.

Let us stop expecting new members to adapt to outdated access protocols. Instead, let us give them the access code from day one:

The code of action.

Let our signal become so strong that we no longer have to search for members. Instead, they will seek to connect to our network because they can already see our impact and feel the strength of our signal—wherever they are.

Until next time, as we continue our journey to the very heart of the club.

PDG Spero Hounkpe
ARMC, Region 26 – Zone 22
District 9103, Benin

Club Spotlight

WHEN PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE BECOMES SERVICE

How Uganda's Rotary Club of Medical Stars is redefining the corporate club model by transforming workplace knowledge, institutional networks and professional skills into sustainable community impact

By Sheilla Nduhukire

For four years, 55-year-old Medard Kawalya had been unable to read his Bible. A resident of Kajjansi, near Uganda's capital, Kampala, Kawalya had lived with an untreated eye condition that gradually took away one of the simple routines that mattered deeply to him. His experience reflected the reality of hundreds of people who arrived in Kajjansi on 21 February 2026 for a mega medical camp organised by the Rotary Club of Medical Stars. More than 300 people received eye-care services that day, while thousands of others accessed medical consultations, screening, treatment, health education and referrals.

Across Uganda, timely and quality healthcare remains beyond the reach of many families. Long distances to health facilities, limited specialist services, delayed diagnoses and the growing burden of preventable diseases

continue to affect vulnerable communities. Confronted by this reality, the Rotary Club of Medical Stars asked a simple but powerful question. What if the expertise already present within our organisations could become a force for community transformation?

Chartered on 29 August 2025, the Rotary Club of Medical Stars has demonstrated what becomes possible when professional expertise, institutional support and a commitment to service converge. Born within National Medical Stores, Uganda's specialised healthcare supply-chain institution, the club represents a new expression of Rotary service—one in which professionals carry their everyday skills, networks and resources from the workplace into the communities that need them most. The club was established as part of a broader vision to expand Rotary's presence within the corporate space, championed

by Rotary International Director Emmanuel Katongole. It became the first corporate Rotary club in District 9214, comprising Uganda and Tanzania. From the outset, they determined that for them Rotary will not simply be about fellowship, but about turning professional purpose into measurable community impact.

The idea behind the club emerged from recognising that National Medical Stores already possessed a unique advantage: a concentration of professionals whose daily work directly influences healthcare delivery across Uganda. Pharmacists, laboratory technicians, supply-chain specialists, procurement professionals, warehouse experts, logisticians, biomedical personnel and other healthcare professionals were already contributing to the country's health system. The question was how their collective expertise could be extended beyond their institutional responsibilities and channelled



into structured humanitarian service. The corporate Rotary model provided the answer. It created a platform through which employees could serve through their professional identities, connecting workplace competence with Rotary's commitment to improving lives.

Within its first year, the Rotary Club of Medical Stars delivered two major community health outreaches. The first medical camp, held in October 2025, served approximately 2,100 people. The second, held in February 2026, reached 4,750 people. Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo attended the outreach and launched the club's programme of biannual rotational mega medical camps, designed to take comprehensive health-care services to communities across Uganda.

The camps brought essential services closer to the people through:

- General medical consultations;
- Maternal and child health services;
- Cancer screening;
- Blood donation;
- Disease prevention and treatment;
- Pharmacy services;
- Eye care;
- Dental services;
- Health education; and
- Specialist referrals.

Behind every statistic was a human story: a mother receiving care, a child accessing treatment, a patient obtaining medication or a life-threatening condition being detected before it was too late. For Medard Kawalya, the outreach represented the possibility of seeing clearly again, and returning to the Bible he

had been unable to read for four years. The success of the medical camps was not the achievement of one club acting alone. A combined total of 46 Rotary and Rotaract clubs, working alongside 20 corporate organisations, joined forces to deliver the initiative. The scale of that collaboration demonstrated one of Rotary's greatest strengths: its ability to bring together people, professions and institutions around a shared humanitarian purpose.

It also revealed the potential created when Rotary expands deliberately into the corporate environment. Organisations were no longer participating only as sponsors, donors or occasional project partners. Their professionals were becoming Rotarians, contributing their knowledge, networks, systems and institutional capacity directly to service. The result was a project



larger and more comprehensive than any one club could have delivered independently.

The Medical Stars model challenges organisations to look inward and ask: What skills, resources, systems and relationships already exist within our institution that could help solve a community problem? For National Medical Stores, the answer lay in healthcare supply-chain expertise. The club drew upon its members' knowledge of medicines management, procurement, storage, distribution systems and healthcare networks

to strengthen the planning and delivery of its community outreaches. This is the distinctive advantage of a corporate Rotary club. Members do not leave their professional competence at the office door when they enter Rotary. Their workplace knowledge becomes part of their service capacity.

A financial institution may bring expertise in financial literacy and enterprise development. A technology company may support digital inclusion. A law firm may advance access to justice. A media organisation may strengthen

public education, while a construction company may address shelter, water or sanitation needs. Corporate clubs enable professionals to begin with what they already know, organise around their institutional strengths and apply those strengths to meaningful service.

The medical camps were not designed as isolated one-day interventions. They served as entry points into longer-term community health support. Patients requiring further attention were referred to appropriate hospitals and specialists. Partnerships with healthcare institutions were strengthened, while needs identified during the outreaches helped the club determine priorities for future interventions. This approach is critical to sustainable service. A medical camp may provide immediate relief, but its deeper value lies in connecting patients to continuing care, gathering information about community health needs and building partnerships capable of responding beyond the day of the outreach.

The club's innovative approach was recognised during the District 9214 Conference and Assembly in April 2026, where the Rotary Club of Medical Stars received the Project Excellence Award. The award acknowledged the project's scale, collaboration, innovation and potential for sustainability.

The Medical Stars experience also demonstrates the relationship between meaningful service and membership growth. The club was chartered with 44 members. Its membership has since grown to 51. For a young



club, that growth is significant. It suggests that professionals are attracted to a Rotary experience that allows them to deploy their skills, participate in visible service and belong to a community of colleagues united by purpose. People are more likely to join and remain in clubs where they can see a clear connection between their abilities and the impact they are being invited to make.

The success of the Rotary Club of Medical Stars therefore extends beyond the number of patients served. It offers evidence that corporate clubs can create new pathways into Rotary for professionals who may not previously have seen how Rotary could fit into their lives, careers or schedules.

The Rotary Club of Medical Stars offers a practical model for organisations and Rotary leaders seeking to establish corporate clubs:

Start with your profession.

Identify the expertise, systems, networks and resources already present within the organisation.

Connect those strengths to a genuine community need.

Develop service projects that draw naturally upon the knowledge and capabilities of members.

Build strategic partnerships.

Invite other Rotary and Rotaract clubs, companies, public institutions and professional bodies to contribute

Think beyond one-day interventions.

Create referral pathways, follow-up structures and long-term solutions.

Build a club experience around purpose.

Give members opportunities to use their abilities, assume responsibility and see the results of their service.

The Rotary Club of Medical Stars has brought to life what many have long believed: corporate clubs can become powerful platforms where professional excellence, community need and Rotary's spirit of service come together. By turning workplace expertise into organised humanitarian action, the club is not only extending healthcare to underserved communities. It is widening the doorway into Rotary, strengthening institutional partnerships and demonstrating how professional purpose can become lasting impact.

Sheilla Nduhukire is the Charter President of the Rotary Club of Medical Stars, District 9214.

DISCOVER REGION 27

DISTRICTS 9112 AND 9141

Rotarian Layi Abidoye

Club: Rotary Club of Gbagada, where he served as Club President in the 2009–2010 Rotary year and later as Past Assistant Governor (PAG).



Classification: A pharmacist, a legal practitioner and theologian. He listed pharmacist as his classification on record.

Rotary Year: 2026–2027, District Governor, Rotary International District 9112

Theme: "Creating Lasting Impact Together"

Vision summary

Abidoye frames his year as a shift from short-term interventions to sustainable, generational change, built on patience and consistent execution rather than "massive, instant results." He organises the year around seven pillars: membership growth, The Rotary Foundation, service projects and grants, public image, youth development, environ-

mental sustainability, and fellowship.

Key projects and targets

On membership, he is targeting 30 percent net growth and 30 new clubs, with the district's eleven clubs of over 50 members asked to lead extension efforts. On giving, he has set a total Foundation target of 750,000 dollars for the year, split across the Annual Fund, Endowment, PolioPlus and named gifts from two high-net-worth donors, anchored by a Fundraising Dinner in November 2026.

Polio eradication features a joint Polio Day with District 911, an Ikrodu-to-Lekki boat regatta, and a London-to-Lagos bike ride, with proceeds going to PolioPlus. His service project slate

includes the Rotary District 9112 Eye Hospital in Imota at an estimated 350 million naira, breast cancer screening for men and women, neonatal resuscitation training, defibrillator placement in public buildings, and school infrastructure projects in Apapa and elsewhere.

On public image, he plans a fully functional District Media Centre with quarterly live broadcasts and regular training for Public Image Committee chairs. Environmentally, he has committed to planting 10,000 coconut trees in the first half of the year alongside a push on the 3Rs.

He closes with a personal pledge to serve with joy and consistency, framing the year's throughline as small, deliberate steps toward "Service Above Self."

Rtr. Michael Ekerin

A dedicated member of the Rotaract Club of Gbagada and graduated from the prestigious Yaba College of Technology, where he studied General Arts.



In addition to his academic pursuits, Michael is a freelancer and a brand consultant, serving as the Lead Director of Lite Media, a branding organization that has over the years continued to improve and give their clients a unique insight.

An exceptional Rotaractor and team leader, Michael has served the Rotary and Rotaract community for over four years in various capacities.

Notably, he served as the Assistant Editorial Chair for the Rotary Club of Gbagada and is presently the District Rotaract Representative for Rotaract District 9112.

His leadership and commitment to service are evident in his active role in organizing community fundraising events and service projects, where he has excelled in managing logistics, communi-

cation, and volunteer coordination.

Michael is passionate about football, service to humanity, and traveling. He thrives on collaboration with local communities, working together on joint initiatives that foster community development and empowerment. His goal is always to render his best and contribute meaningfully to society.

Beyond his Rotaract involvement, Michael is a dedicated entrepreneur who believes in the values of discipline, hard work, and the pursuit of excellence. He continuously seeks to expand his knowledge and perspectives, which helps him connect with clients and provide impactful brand consulting services.

Building relationships and ensuring client Satisfaction is a key val-

ues that drive his business.

Hailing from Ijebu, Ogun State, Michael is a past president of the Rotaract Club of Gbagada, where he served as the 37th President. Under his leadership, the club achieved remarkable success, spearheading notable projects that garnered attention both in the community and media.

Michael joined Rotaract with a passion for giving back to his community, connecting with like-minded individuals who share his dedication to social change, and enhancing his leadership skills.

Rotaract provides him with a platform to make a tangible impact, engage in meaningful service projects, and foster positive change both locally and globally.

District 9141

Creating Lasting Impact Across Nigeria's South-South

Stretching across the vibrant South-South region of Nigeria, Rotary International District 9141 is one of the country's six Rotary districts, serving the states of Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, and Rivers. Rich in culture, enterprise, and natural beauty, the district brings together a dynamic network of Rotarians and Rotaractors united by a common purpose.

Home to 284 Rotary and Rotaract Clubs, District 9141 continues to distinguish itself through strong leadership, membership growth, impactful humanitarian projects, and a commitment to developing the next generation of Rotary leaders.

District at a Glance

District	Rotary International District 9141
Country	Nigeria
States Covered	Bayelsa, Delta, Edo and Rivers States (South-South Nigeria)
Rotary Clubs	187
Rotaract Clubs	97
Rotarians	4,534
Rotaractors	884

Meet the Leaders of District 9141



District Governor

Rtn. Chibueze Anthony Olikagu

District Governor
2026–2027



District Governor Chibueze Anthony Olikagu is a distinguished Rotary leader whose journey reflects an unwavering commitment to membership growth, strategic leadership, and sustainable service.

A member of the Rotary Club of Yenagoa since 2010, he has served Rotary in numerous capacities at both club and district levels. As District Membership Chair, he led District 9141 to an unprecedented net gain of **1,998 members and 70 new clubs**, earning the district global recognition as **second in the world for membership growth and the**

best-performing district in Rotary Zone 22 Africa for two consecutive years.

Professionally, he is a Certified Forensic Accountant, business leader, and public sector adviser. His leadership combines strategic thinking with a passion for strengthening clubs and expanding Rotary's impact.

"Together, we will create lasting impact by growing stronger clubs, investing in our youth, strengthening The Rotary Foundation, and delivering sustainable service that transforms communities."

District Rotaract Representative

Rtr. Destiny
Rukevwe
Emurotu

District Rotaract
Representative
2026–2027



Rtr. Destiny Rukevwe Emurotu represents a new generation of Rotary leadership. His journey began in Interact before progressing through Rotaract, where he has consistently demonstrated outstanding leadership, innovation, and a passion for youth development.

Having served as Club President, Assistant District Rotaract Representative, and District Public Image Chair for two consecutive Rotary years, Destiny has built a reputation for strengthening public image, embracing digital innovation, and empowering young leaders.

A graduate of Political Science from the University of Benin and founder of BRAVE CONCEPTS, a digital and social media management company, he believes Rotaract should deliver meaningful value to every member through leadership, fellowship, learning, and impactful service.

"Rotaract should be a place where every member grows, serves, leads, and finds lasting value in belonging."

BRED Literacy Project

No Child Should Learn on the Floor

Education is a powerful catalyst for lasting change. Through the **BRED Literacy Project**, District 9141 is addressing one of the most basic yet often overlooked barriers to learning by ensuring that children have safe and dignified classroom furniture.

Driven by the vision that **no child should sit on the floor while receiving an education**, Rotary clubs across the district are partnering

with communities to provide desks and chairs, creating more conducive learning environments and improving educational outcomes.

The initiative reflects Rotary's commitment to **Basic Education and Literacy**, while demonstrating how simple interventions can create lasting impact for generations of young learners.

Governor's Priorities

District 9141 is focused on creating lasting impact by:

1. Growing stronger, healthier Rotary and Rotaract clubs.
2. Increasing membership while improving member retention and engagement.
3. Advancing literacy through the BRED Literacy Project.
4. Strengthening support for The Rotary Foundation.
5. Developing young leaders through Rotaract, Interact, RYLA, and leadership training.
6. Building strategic partnerships that expand Rotary's reach and impact.
7. Telling Rotary's story through effective public image and communication.

Rotary in Ghana: The Heartbeat of Region 27

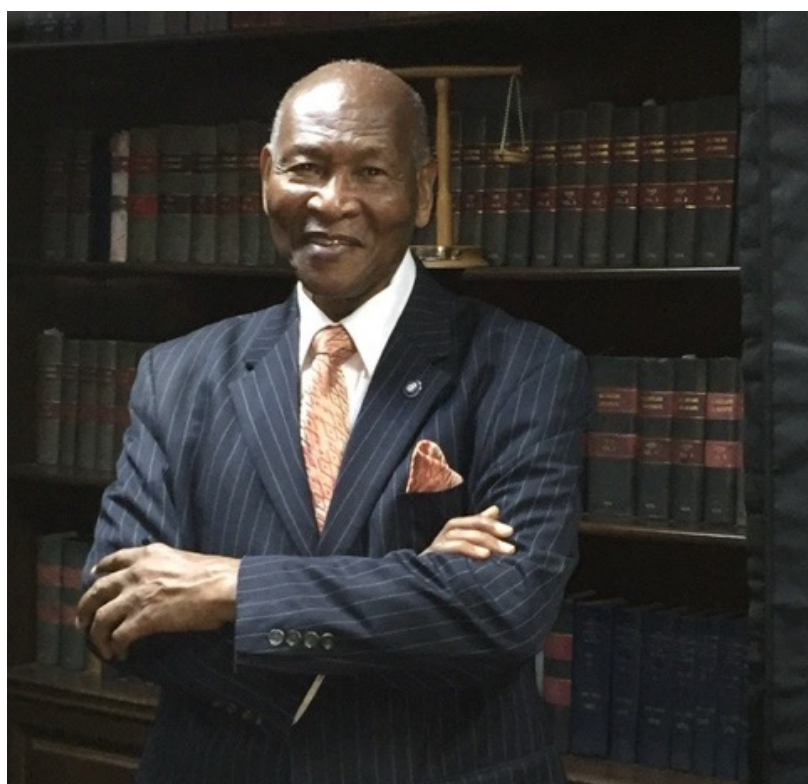
From one accountant's quiet conviction to a family of more than 2,000 Rotarians and nearly 2,000 Rotaractors — the story of District 9104 and where Region 27 grew from.

A Ghanaian Spark

Every good Rotary story needs a first believer. Ghana's belongs to Michael Daniel Quist, an accountant with the American oil company Texaco in Accra, who had studied in the United Kingdom and been welcomed there, again and again, into the fellowship of British Rotarians. He carried that welcome home with him, and in doing so gave Ghana a distinction it still holds proudly: the first English-speaking country in West Africa to receive Rotary through the initiative of one of its own.

On 24 October 1958, the Rotary Club of Accra — Ghana's premier club — was admitted into Rotary International. Its early membership leaned heavily expatriate, with white professionals from the era's leading businesses making up roughly seven in ten members. But seven Ghanaians stood among them from the start, including three politicians, two ruling-party Members of Parliament, and Dr Kwame Nkrumah's own Economic Adviser.

Quist did not stop at Accra's



doorstep. Under his leadership, the Rotary Club of Accra carried Rotary's extension campaign across the region, planting new clubs in Kano, Lagos, and Ibadan in Nigeria and in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Family ties across the border let him carry the same spark into Togo.

By the 1968-69 Rotary year, the whole of West Africa could claim only twenty-one clubs across twelve countries — seven in Nigeria, four in Ghana, one apiece elsewhere. It was not yet enough to be its own District, but the region's Rotarians were determined to build something lasting.

They began meeting annually, first in Accra from 21 to 23 March 1968, drawing eleven clubs from as far as Dahomey (today's Benin), Liberia, and Mali. Four more conferences followed, and by the fifth — held again in Accra in March 1972 and attended by RI President Ernst G. Breitholtz himself — Togo had joined as a seventh member country, and the mood had tipped decisively toward districthood.

The clubs voted, and François Amorin became the first District Governor of the newly created District 210 for 1973-74, taking on the two flagship duties every Governor must deliver: a District Assembly and a District Conference. Growth in those early years was modest but real, with new clubs chartering in Nouakchott, Mauritania (1978), Abidjan-Cocody, Côte d'Ivoire (1978), and Banjul, The Gambia

(1979). Then, in 1976-77, Rotary International renumbered the district from 210 to 910 — and Ghana's own Sam Okudzeto stepped up as its first Governor under the new name, a Rotarian who would go on to serve as a Rotary International Director and a Trustee of The Rotary Foundation.

PRID Sam Okudzeto
Governor of Rotary District 910,
1977-78

The Family Grows

As newly independent nations kept appearing on the West African map, and Nigeria's oil boom fuelled a wave of new clubs, it became clear that no single Governor could shepherd such a vast territory alone. Rotary International divided District 910 into three — 910, 911, and 915. Then, in 1991-92, RI added a zero to every district number worldwide, and 910 became 9100, stretching across fourteen countries from Cabo Verde to Togo. Three Ghanaians

steered this giant district in turn: the late Adotei Brown (1999-2000), Robert F. Atta (2002-03), and Willie Obuobisa Keteku (2007-08).

District 9100 had, by then, become the largest Rotary district on earth by land area, and something had to give. After careful review, Rotary International split it again in 2013 into Districts 9101 and 9102. Winfred A. Mensah took the helm as District 9102's first Governor in 2013-14.

Ghana kept the leadership baton moving from there: the late Sam K. Worentetu (2016-17), Jeffrey Afful (2018-19), Yvonne Kumojo-Darko (2020-21), and Victor Asante (2022-23) each took their turn at the helm.

Ten years on, District 9102 itself made way for something new. Effective 1 July 2023, it split into District 9103 — covering Benin, Niger, and Togo — and District 9104, devoted entirely to Ghana. A new chapter had begun.



Late Adotei Brown
D9100 Governor, 1999-2000



Robert F. Atta
D9100 Governor, 2002-03



Willie Obuobisa Keteku
D9100 Governor, 2007-08



Winfred A. Mensah
District 9102 Governor, 2013-14



Late Sam K. Worentetu
2016-17



Jeffrey Afful
2018-19



Yvonne Kumoji-Darko
2020-21



Victor Asante
2022-23

Four Golden Years of District 9104

2023-24 — A Foundation Is Laid

District 9104 opened its doors under founding Governor Dave Osei Amankwaa, Jnr., who inherited 1,736 Rotarians across 63 clubs and 759 Rotaractors in 46 clubs, with Dennis Kojo Amakye stepping in as the District's very first Rotaract Representative.

By year's end, membership had swelled to 1,965 Rotarians in 69

clubs and 1,142 Rotaractors in 54 clubs — an average of 28 Rotarians and 21 Rotaractors per club.

“Rotary is a priceless mosaic of great intentions delivered by a coterie of selfless souls engendered to the causes of goodness.” — PDG Dave Osei Amankwaa, Jnr.

Governor Amankwaa's fundraising campaigns for The Rotary Foundation brought in \$273,189 in total — \$149,857 to the An-

nual Fund, \$58,117 to Polio Plus, \$34,985 to the Endowment Fund, and \$32,500 to other funds. The number of Rotaractors who were Paul Harris Fellows leapt from just one to eleven, and Governor Amankwaa himself went on to be appointed Assistant Rotary Foundation Coordinator for 2024-2026 and to become an Arch Klumph Society member. Crowning the year, District 9104 was recognised for the highest net growth of Rotaractors anywhere in Africa.



PDG Dave Osei Amankwaa, Jnr.



DRR Dennis Kojo Amakye



Rotaract Africa's Award of Appreciation for the Highest Membership Net Growth in Africa, 2023-24

2024-25 — Sustaining and Growing Membership

Governor Florence Maame Hagan carried the torch into the District's second year, working alongside Rotaract Representative Jeanne-Solange Kegou.

Membership climbed again — to 2,001 Rotarians across 71 clubs, and 1,539 Rotaractors across 61 clubs, with the Rotaractor aver-

age per club rising to 25. Region 27 took notice: District 9104 was named Best Performing District for membership retention among Rotary clubs, while its Rotaract wing earned Best Performing District for net gain, welcoming more than 400 new Rotaractors in a single year.

On the Foundation side, giving rose to \$288,373 — \$116,750 to the Annual Fund, \$66,095 to Polio Plus, \$104,428 to the Endow-

ment Fund, and \$1,000 to other funds — enough to earn District 9104 recognition as the top Endowment Fund contributing district in Zone 22.

Rotary Club of Accra-Spintex added one more shine to the trophy shelf, taking second place in the Rotary Public Image Power of Goodness Video Competition for its mechanised beach-cleaning and tree-planting project.



Governor Florence Maame Hagan (left) with DRR Jeanne-Solange Kegou



Best Performing District, Membership Retention — Region 27, 2024-25



Best Performing District, Membership Net Gain (Rotaract) — Region 27, 2024-25



The Rotary Foundation's Top Endowment Fund Contributing District award, Zone 22, 2024-25



Second place, Zone 21 & 22 Power of Goodness Video Competition, presented at the Fusion conference

2025-26 — Steady Hands, Rising Numbers

Nana Yaa Pokua Siriboe took up the Governor's collar for 2025-26, partnering with Olive Naa Asheley Addo — a ten-year Rotaractor, Past President of the Rotaract Club of the University of Ghana, and Charter President of the Rotaract Club of Accra East Legon

— as District Rotaract Representative.

Membership held strong at 2,030 Rotarians across 71 clubs, while Rotaractors grew to 1,935 across 68 clubs — the Rotaractor average per club climbing to 28, matching the Rotarian side for the first time. Giving to The Rotary Foundation reached a new high of \$442,847: \$132,273

to the Annual Fund, \$94,848 to Polio Plus, \$200,644 to the Endowment Fund, and \$15,092 to other funds. Governor Siriboe herself received a Regional Service Award for a Polio-Free World, recognising her years of leadership as District Governor and, earlier, as Chair of Ghana's National Polio Plus Committee.



Nana Yaa Pokua Siriboe, District 9104 Governor, 2025-26 and DRR Olive Naa Asheley Addo

2026-27 — New Hands on the Wheel

Professional Background

Dr. Andrews Jack Dotsey is a transformational leader with over two decades of experience spanning education, governance, development communication, and community development. He holds a PhD in Adult Education and Human Resource Studies from the University of Ghana, with research focused on leadership, gover-

nance, and sustainable development. His career reflects a consistent commitment to institution building, evidence-based practice, and people-centred leadership.

Current Roles

Dr. Dotsey serves as the founding Executive Director of the University of Ghana Annual New Year School and Conference —

one of Ghana's most prestigious platforms for national dialogue on governance, development, and public policy. As Deputy Director for Partnerships and Resource Mobilisation, he drives strategic alliances strengthening the University's development mandate. As Project Coordinator for the groundbreaking, over 300-million-cedi Digital Youth Village, he is its vision bearer,



Dr. Andrews Jack Dotsey, District 9104 Governor, 2026-27

advancing youth empowerment and digital skills and bridging the academia-industry divide as a pillar of Ghana's emerging digital economy.

Rotary Service

A committed Rotarian since 1999 and an alumnus of the Rotaract Club of the University of Ghana (Club President, 1995-97), Dr. Dotsey has served at club, district, and international levels. At the club level, he was an active Club Extension Committee member in the formation of the Rotary Club of Labone and, under his own Club Presidency, sponsored the Rotary Club of Accra Ridge; he later served as the District Governor's Special Representative in the formation of RC Weija West. His club has earned multiple

Presidential Awards for Foundation giving, membership growth, and maternal and child health, and he has led major projects across Ghana. At the district level, he has served as International Service Chair (2024-26), Vice Chair of the West Africa Project Fair (2024), and previously as Chair of the One Rotarian One Tree Project (2022-23), alongside service on the RYLA, Peace Fellowship, Pacemaker, Scholarship, and Friendship Exchange committees — managing projects from Rotary vaccination cold-room initiatives to district-wide Rotary/USAID Water and Sanitation programmes. On the global stage, he served as Africa Regional Coordinator for the Rotary International Presidential Peace Conference (2024)

and as President of the West and Central Africa Rotary Positive Peace Activators. He is a member of the Rotary International Inter-Country Extended Executive Committee and coordinated the Rotary-Queen Elizabeth Platinum Jubilee Beacons Celebration in 2020.

The Rotary Foundation

A Major Donor and Paul Harris Fellow alongside his wife, Rotary Ann Dr. Salamatu J. Dotsey, Dr. Dotsey has promoted global grant projects, hosted ambassadorial scholars, and founded the Project Clinic at the West Africa Project Fair — a practical resource designed to strengthen the quality and impact of community projects.

Honours & Awards

RI Presidential Peace Award (2024) · Queen Elizabeth Platinum Jubilee Award (2021) · West Africa Project Fair Award (2020) · University of Ghana Vice Chancellor's Award (2019) · RI Meritorious Service Award (2018) · Rotary Foundation District 1900 Service Award, Germany (2010).

Personal Life

A devout Catholic, Dr. Dotsey serves as a Family and Marriage Life Counsellor, Sunday School Animator, and former Parish and Deanery Council Chair. He is married to Dr. Salamatu Dotsey and is a proud father of four: Emmanuel, Enyonam, Kafui, and Selasie. His Rotary journey stands as an inspiring testament to how leadership, accountability, dedication, innovation, and compassion can transform lives and create lasting change.

District 9104 Rotaract Representative



Kingdom Kedor Avisseh, District 9104 Rotaract Representative, 2026-27

Kingdom Kedor Avisseh is a dedicated Rotaractor, accomplished leader, and passionate advocate for service whose impact has been felt across Rotaract District 9104 and beyond. With nearly a decade of active service in the Rotaract Club of Adentan, he has consistently demonstrated a commitment to leadership, fellowship, and community development, earning the respect and admiration of Rotarians and Rotaractors alike.

Throughout his Rotaract journey, Kingdom has served in several key leadership positions at both the national and district levels. He served as the 21st President

of the Rotaract Club of Adentan and later rose to become a two-time National Secretary of Rotaract Ghana under District 9102. Within Rotaract District 9104, he has served as District Secretary and, most recently, as District Coordinator for the 2024-25 Rotary Year — roles that equipped him with extensive experience in administration, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and organisational leadership.

Kingdom is widely known for his approachable nature, excellent communication skills, and ability to build meaningful relationships. A gifted speaker and mentor, he has addressed numerous club meetings, leadership trainings,

district events, and conferences, inspiring Rotaractors through his authenticity, vision, and passion for service. His leadership style is rooted in collaboration, inclusiveness, and a genuine desire to see others grow and succeed.

Beyond Rotaract, Kingdom is an accomplished professional. He serves as Personal Assistant to the Group CEO of NiiPlants Group Ghana, supporting the operations of multiple subsidiary companies within the group, and as General Manager of Trivoxo Limited, where he provides strategic and operational leadership. He holds a Master of Science degree in Logistics and Supply Chain Management and is an Affiliate Member of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply.

As a Paul Harris Fellow +1 and aspiring Major Donor, Kingdom remains deeply committed to the ideals of Rotary. He has attended numerous District Conferences and represented the District at several Rotaract Africa Summits and major Rotary and Rotaract events across Africa, continually promoting fellowship, leadership, and service above self. Beyond his professional and Rotaract life, he finds joy in music, reading, and exploring new cultures through travel — but above all, he finds his truest purpose in serving humanity, a calling he lives out every single day. As District Rotaract Representative, Kingdom is focused on strengthening clubs, empowering members, fostering collaboration, and advancing impactful service initiatives across the District.

Looking Ahead: Nine Big Dreams for 2026–27

Under Governor Dotsey, District 9104 shows no sign of slowing down. Nine ambitious initiatives are already taking shape for the 2026–27 Rotary year, each one reaching into a different corner of Ghanaian life.

At the centre sits the National Humanitarian Dialogue & Policy Practice Project, a wide-reaching effort touching every one of Rotary's areas of focus and budgeted between USD 260,000 and 300,000. Alongside it, the District 9104 Cultural Heritage Preservation and Promotion Initiative, backed by USD 235,000, will champion basic education, literacy, and community economic development by safeguarding the stories and traditions that make Ghana, Ghana. For the region's young peace-builders, the Commonwealth Youth Peace Project will focus on conflict prevention and resolution alongside community economic development, with its budget still being finalised.

Literacy takes centre stage again in the District Library Project, carrying an estimated budget of USD 56,000 to 100,000, while a companion effort, Operation Document Rotary Ghana's Contribution, will preserve the District's own history across every area of focus — a project close in spirit to the one

you are reading right now.

Health remains a cornerstone of the District's work. Operation Eradicate Malaria from Ghana, budgeted between USD 125,000 and 250,000, takes direct aim at disease prevention and treatment, while a National Blood Donation & Donor Recognition Programme will strengthen both disease prevention and maternal and child health nationwide.

The District's youngest members have a project of their own: the Rotaract-Youth Leadership Academy, priced at GHS 41,800 per cohort, will build leadership skills and economic opportunity for young people, club by club. And looking to the environment, the Ghana Flood-Free Agenda sets its sights on flooding's ripple effects across the environment, disease prevention, and community economic development.

Nine projects, one shared purpose: a Ghana that is healthier, better educated, more peaceful, and proud of its heritage — the same spirit that carried one accountant's small spark all the way to a District of more than 2,000 Rotarians and nearly 2,000 Rotaractors today.

Character Must Guide the Future

As Bukola Bakare takes the helm of District 9111, Rotary leaders, traditional rulers and development partners unite around ethical leadership and ambitious humanitarian action

By Otun Olalekan, Damilola Quadri and Akeem Salau

Artificial intelligence may transform the way the world works, but character will determine whether that transformation ultimately serves humanity.

That message resonated throughout the installation of Rotarian Bukola Olabisi Bakare as Governor of Rotary International District 9111, held on Saturday, 11 July 2026, at the Balmoral Centre, Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

The ceremony brought together Rotary leaders, traditional rulers, public officials, corporate executives and development partners for an evening that combined celebration with a compelling call for responsible leadership and greater investment in humanitarian service.

Bakare, an entrepreneur and Chief Executive Officer of Around 'D' Clock Security Company Limited, assumed leadership of the district with an ambitious programme of projects valued at more than **₦1.4 billion** for the 2026/2027 Rotary year.

At the centre of that programme is the proposed construction of a **60-bed Wellness Centre**, estimated at **₦800 million**, at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Lagos.

In her acceptance speech, the new District Governor appealed to individuals, businesses and development organisations to partner with Rotary in delivering projects that would create sustainable and measurable change in communities.

Her call for partnership was strongly supported by traditional rulers at the ceremony, who described Rotary as a trusted model of selfless service and commu-

nity development.

The Owa Obokun Adimula and Paramount Ruler of Ijesaland, Oba Clement Adesuyi Haastrup, Ajimoko III, praised Rotarians for committing their time, expertise and personal resources to improving the lives of people they may never meet.

The Oniru of Iruland, Oba Abdulwasii Lawal, Abisogun III, similarly commended Rotary members for serving communities without seeking personal gain. He urged corporate organisations and traditional institutions to deepen their collaboration with Rotary, noting that sustainable development requires partnerships across government, business and civil society.

Traditional rulers, he said, now have responsibilities that extend beyond preserving customs and culture to include mobilising communities and attracting development.

Drawing from projects implemented in Iruland through partnerships with public and private institutions, the monarch stressed that leadership must

“

Let us build bridges instead of barriers

always place the welfare of the people at its centre.

“Let us build bridges instead of barriers,” he said.

Expressing confidence in Bakare’s leadership, the Oniru also announced a financial contribution towards the district’s humanitarian projects.

“

The Four-Way Test in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Ethics, Trust and Leadership in a Digital World

The Four-Way Test in a Digital World

The evening’s wider message of responsible leadership was reinforced by the keynote speaker, Dr Adesola Kazeem Adeduntan, founder of Sequoia Services Limited and former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of First Bank of Nigeria Limited.

In a thought-provoking lecture titled “The Four-Way Test in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Ethics, Trust and Leadership in a Digital World,” Adeduntan challenged Rotarians, policymakers, business leaders and technology professionals to ensure that innovation remains firmly rooted in integrity, fairness and accountability.

Artificial intelligence, he observed, is already changing industries, institutions and human interaction. Yet, however powerful technology becomes, it cannot replace moral judgement, compassion or responsibility.

Using Rotary’s Four-Way Test as his framework, Adeduntan examined some of the most urgent ethical questions emerging from the rapid growth of AI.

On the question, “**Is it the truth?**”, he warned that deepfake videos, cloned voices and fabricated images were making misinformation increasingly difficult to detect.

“For the first time in history, seeing is no longer believing, and hearing is no longer believing. The first casualty of artificial intelligence may not be employment; it may be certainty.”

In such an environment, he said, verifying information before sharing it must become a personal and institutional responsibility. Transparency and accountability must also remain central to decisions made with the support of artificial intelligence.

Turning to the second question, “Is it fair to all concerned?”, Ade-

duntan cautioned against the assumption that technology is naturally neutral.

AI systems, he explained, reflect the information used to train them. Where that information contains historical prejudice, inequality or exclusion, technology may reproduce those injustices on an even larger scale.

“Algorithms do not create values; they inherit them. Leadership must ensure that technology serves justice rather than institutionalising inequality.”

Corporate boards and decision-makers, he argued, must therefore ask difficult questions about who designed an AI system, the quality of its data, whether it has been tested for bias and who will be held responsible when it fails.

Machines Cannot Build Trust

Reflecting on the third question of the Four-Way Test — “**Will it build goodwill and better friendships?**” — Adeduntan noted the contradiction at the heart of the digital age: people are more connected than ever before, yet genuine human relationships are increasingly fragile.

Social media platforms often promote outrage, division and instant reaction rather than patience, understanding and dialogue.

It is within this environment, he said, that Rotary’s culture of fellowship, empathy and service becomes even more important.

“

Artificial intelligence can answer questions. It cannot inspire trust. It can recommend friends. **It cannot build friendship. It can simulate empathy. It cannot genuinely care.**

“Artificial intelligence can answer questions. It cannot inspire trust. It can recommend friends. It cannot build friendship. It can simulate empathy. It cannot genuinely care.”

Rotary, he maintained, is uniquely positioned to demonstrate that technology should strengthen human relationships rather than replace them.

While AI may take over many routine tasks, Adeduntan insisted that human judgement and moral responsibility must never be outsourced.

“Artificial intelligence may draft contracts, but it cannot administer justice. It may analyse medical images, but it cannot comfort a frightened family. Responsibility

has always belonged to people, and it always will.”

He urged Rotarians to carry the Four-Way Test beyond club meetings and apply it in boardrooms, government institutions, universities, regulatory agencies and technology companies, where decisions affecting millions of lives are increasingly being made.

Drawing from the Yoruba proverb, “**Ìwà l’ẹwà**” — **character is beauty**, he concluded:

“Artificial intelligence may shape this century, but character will determine what this century becomes.”

Building on a Strong Foundation

The installation also provided an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the immediate past District Governor, Prince Henry Akinyele.

During his tenure, District 9111 established 12 new Rotary clubs, recorded membership growth, expanded its community service projects and contributed more than US\$336,000 to The Rotary Foundation.

The district also donated a building to the Peace Institute at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, and hosted a Rotary International President for the first time in its history.

Among the dignitaries at the ceremony were former Governor of Osun State, Rauf Aregbesola; Senator Wasiu Eshilokun, representing Senate Leader Opeyemi Bamidele; the Olofin of Ilisan-Re-

mo, Oba Mojeed Olufemi Sonuga; Nigeria’s first Rotary District Governor, Prince Julius Adelu-si-Adeluyi; Rotary International President 2026/2027, Olayinka Hakeem Babalola; Rotary Foundation Trustee Ijeoma Pearl Okoro; Past District Governor Dr Wole Kukoyi; District Governor-elect Dr Samuel Ayetutu; District Governor-nominee Ade Adenekan; and other Rotary leaders.

Beyond the colour and ceremony, Bakare’s installation reflected the central challenge before leaders in a rapidly changing world: to embrace innovation without surrendering integrity and to pursue progress without losing sight of people.

As District 9111 begins a new Rotary year, its direction is clear — stronger partnerships, ambitious humanitarian action and leadership grounded in character, trust and service above self.

“

Artificial intelligence may shape this century, **but character will determine what this century becomes.**

The Night Africa Came Home

In Abuja, music, memory, pride and generosity converged as Africa gathered to celebrate Rotary International President Olayinka Hakeem Babalola and made history in more ways than one.



By Ibim Semenitari and Kenneth Okpeahior

The hall was dressed for history. Music floated through the room. Laughter rose above the gentle clinking of glasses. Old friends crossed the hall to embrace, while new friendships began across beautifully laid tables. Everywhere, there was colour, warmth and an unmistakable sense of pride. Rotarians had travelled from across

Africa the Indian Ocean and distant parts of the Rotary family. Like Eric Kimani, who had served as District Governor in 2012/13 Rotary year, same year as Yinka, and Cathy, who flew in from Côte d'Ivoire with three others, and others from Sierra Leone and Ghana. They had come not merely to attend another formal dinner, but to witness something rare. It felt like a homecoming. Africa had gathered to celebrate her son.

In more than a century of Rotary International's existence, there have been only a handful of nights that genuinely shifted how the world sees the organisation. The Presidential Inaugural Ball held in Abuja on Sunday, 5 July 2026, was one of them. The occasion honoured Rotarian Olayinka Hakeem Babalola, who had assumed office as President of Rotary International on 1 July. He became only the second African, and the second Nigerian, to lead



the organisation in its 121-year history, more than two decades after the late Jonathan Babatunde Majiyagbe opened that door in 2003.

Twenty-two years is a long wait and the distinguished gathering in Abuja understood exactly what the moment meant. This was larger than the elevation of one man. It was a Nigerian moment, certainly, but it was also an African moment and, ultimately, a defining Rotary moment. Right beside Babalola throughout the evening was his wife, Preba, resplendent and radiant, her presence adding an intimate warmth to the grandeur of the occasion.

As tributes flowed and guests from across Africa and the wider Rotary world celebrated her husband, she beamed with unmistakable pride and joy. Her expression told a story of its own. The quiet satisfaction of one who had witnessed, at close range, the years of hard work, sacrifice and unwavering commitment to service that had brought him

to this historic moment. The applause filling the hall was not merely for the office he now occupied. It was also for a life of service that had inspired Rotarians, partners and communities far beyond Nigeria's borders. Standing beside him, Preba appeared both proud companion and steadfast partner in the journey, sharing the joy of a dream fulfilled and the weight of the responsibility that lay ahead.

There was another reason the night felt different. Never before had a Rotary International President held an inaugural ball. It was a novel idea. An African innovation introduced at the beginning of a historic presidency. For Past District Governor Wole Kukoyi, Chair of the organising committee, the event was "excellence in motion," bringing elegance, dignity and purpose together in one unforgettable night. He described it as a spectacular and historic celebration befitting the new Rotary International President. The idea itself had begun far away from Abuja. Babalo-

la later recalled that during a light-hearted conversation on the coast of the Indian Ocean, Regional Public Image Coordinator Ibim Semenitari had asked him, "Egbon, will you not allow us in Nigeria to celebrate you?" The question was playful, but it planted the seed for what would become the Presidential Inaugural Ball.

What began as a simple suggestion grew into something far greater than anyone initially imagined: an evening that brought a continent together, projected Rotary's public image at the highest national level and mobilised unprecedented support for The Rotary Foundation. Under Kukoyi's leadership, with the support of Co-Chair Austin Opara, former Deputy Speaker of Nigeria's Federal House of Representatives, the organising committee worked against a remarkably short timeline. Sponsors stepped forward. District Governors mobilised their clubs and members. Rotary leaders across Africa and the world em-

braced the vision. By the time the lights came on in Abuja, an ambitious undertaking had become a beautifully choreographed statement of leadership, legacy and service.

The guest list reflected the significance of the occasion. Among those present were the Indian Ambassador to Nigeria, representatives of the President of the Senate and the Government of Akwa Ibom State, senior government officials, diplomats, captains of industry and Rotary leaders from Nigeria and around the world. Their presence underscored the growing recognition of Rotary as a trusted development partner and a formidable force for sustainable humanitarian service. Yet, for all the protocol and prominence, the evening never lost its warmth. There was good music. There was laughter. There was fellowship. There were animated reunions among people who had travelled thousands of kilometres, and there was the quiet emotion of those who understood what it meant to see an African once again occupying Rotary's highest office.

This was no ordinary gathering of dignitaries. It was a family welcoming one of its own home. During the evening, the Nigerian government did something governments do not always do publicly: it said thank you. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, represented by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, paid tribute to Rotary's role in the struggle to eradicate wild poliovirus from Nigeria and Africa. He described Rotary's leadership in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative as one of the finest exam-

ples of international cooperation in public health. Nigeria's journey from a country once burdened by wild poliovirus to one certified free of it, he said, had been built on "persistence, partnership, science and sacrifice." Behind those words were millions of children. Children who can run across school fields. Children who can walk into classrooms. Children who can grow, dream and imagine futures untouched by a disease that once paralysed thousands. "Millions of African children can live, walk and dream today because people of goodwill refused to surrender," the President said. He remembered the Rotarians who stood firm when the task was difficult and the road was long, the volunteers who entered communities, supported vaccination teams, confronted misinformation, mobilised leaders and refused to accept that any child should be condemned to paralysis by a preventable disease. Even as the President Tinubu said thank you, he asked for more. The other half of his message was an invitation. He called for a deeper and more structured partnership between the Federal Government and Rotary International in primary healthcare, maternal and child health, basic education and literacy, youth skills development, enterprise and community economic empowerment. Government alone, he acknowledged, cannot deliver national transformation. But when Rotary's culture of grassroots service is aligned with national policy, the result can be impact that is measurable, local and lasting hope experienced not as a slogan, but as a lived reality.

For Rotary, that invitation mattered enormously. When the government of Africa's largest nation publicly seeks Rotary as a development partner, rather than waiting for Rotary to knock at its door, it represents a powerful affirmation of institutional trust. Trust built slowly, one immunised child at a time. Trust strengthened through boreholes, classrooms, health centres, scholarships and community economic empowerment projects. Trust earned by Rotarians who continued to serve when there were no cameras, no applause and no distinguished guests watching. A polio-free Nigeria became proof that Rotary's model works. The invitation from the Federal Government showed that the country had noticed.

It wasn't just President Tinubu who reaffirmed the nation's trust in Rotary. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo, who led Nigeria during Majiyagbe's historic Rotary presidency, placed the evening within an even wider African story. "Africa is watching. Nigeria is watching. History is watching. And we are proud," he declared. Babalola's rise, he said, was no accident. It was Rotary recognising fellowship, service, competence and integrity where it found them. Africa, so often spoken of as a continent that receives, was this time being celebrated for what it gives the world: leadership, character and Service Above Self. Majiyagbe had opened the door and proved that an African could lead Rotary International with distinction. Obasanjo's charge to Babalola was characteristically direct: do not simply walk through that door, widen it. "Do not just follow



the path. Widen it, so that the third African and the fourth will come faster than 22 years," he said.

Babalola's presidency must succeed not only in what it achieves during one Rotary year, but also in the possibilities it creates for those who will come after him. His leadership must make the path wider, the ceiling higher and the wait shorter for the next generation of African Rotary leaders. Obasanjo also challenged African Rotarians and friends of Rotary to invest generously in The Rotary Foundation and Rotary's humanitarian programmes. If Africa wished the world to recognise the quality of its leadership, then Africa must also demonstrate its willingness to finance service, take ownership of solutions and invest in its own communities. The room answered. So did members of the Rotary family who could not be physically present in Abuja. Among them was Rotarian Emmanuel Katangole, who joined the celebration virtually. Although distance kept him from the hall, it did not diminish his participation in the historic

evening. Katangole celebrated Babalola's elevation and his birthday with a remarkable personal US\$50,000 gift to The Rotary Foundation, a gesture that spoke powerfully of friendship, confidence and shared commitment to Rotary's humanitarian mission. His gift captured the spirit of the evening: Rotarians separated by geography but united by fellowship and purpose. It was also a reminder that the celebration of Africa's son extended far beyond the walls of the Abuja venue. Across countries and continents, Rotary leaders and members were standing with Babalola and investing in the vision of service his presidency represented. Like the Tolerams Group who besides being the major sponsor for the evening, gave a 100,000 donation to the Rotary Foundation to mark the event.

What had started as a night to dine, fellowship and celebrate became something much greater. Under the leadership of Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator Andy Uwejean and the fundraising team, commitments to The Rotary Foundation

crossed the million-dollar threshold. Babalola later described it as Africa's first million-dollar Rotary Foundation fundraising event. "No be moi-moi," he added, with unmistakable Nigerian humour. Initial celebrations spoke of US\$1.4 million and counting. The subsequent reconciliation report placed the total pledged at an even more remarkable US\$1.75 million, with US\$715,208 already paid at the time of reporting. It was an extraordinary declaration of confidence in Rotary's mission and in the promise of Babalola's presidency. Never before had Nigeria or Africa crossed the million-dollar mark in Rotary Foundation commitments at a single event at the beginning of a Rotary year. That was what made the evening remarkable. It did not separate celebration from service. It joined them. The music mattered. The beauty of the hall mattered. The laughter, photographs, fine clothing and joyful embraces mattered. They gave Africa the opportunity to honour excellence and celebrate one of its own. As Babalola reflected, Rotary's greatest achievements are not measured by the meetings it holds or the plans it makes, but by the lives it transforms and the hope it creates. That was why the generosity of the night carried such meaning. Every commitment represented the possibility of clean water for a community, a safer delivery for a mother, protection from disease for a child or opportunity for a young person. The Abuja Inaugural Ball was therefore not merely an elegant party surrounding a historic presidency. It was Rotary's most powerful African storytelling opportunity in a generation.

When Service Brings People Together, Communities Thrive

HOW ROTARY DISTRICT 2451 – EGYPT –
UNITED 62 CLUBS TO TRANSFORM ONE
EGYPTIAN VILLAGE



Across Africa, communities face different challenges, yet one lesson remains universal: lasting change happens when people work together. In Egypt's Fayoum Governorate, Rotary District 2451 brought together Rotary clubs, community partners, businesses, and volunteers to transform one village—demonstrating how collective service can create lasting impact.



By Past President Fiki Goher

Standing at the window of her newly restored home, a resident of Qalamshah Village smiled as Rotary members walked through the narrow streets following the completion of an integrated community development project. Her wave and warm expression of gratitude captured something far greater than the renovation of a house. They reflected renewed hope.

Only months earlier, many families in this rural village in Egypt's Fayoum Governorate were living in unfinished homes with limited access to essential services. Despite these challenges, they shared the same aspiration found in communities across Africa: the opportunity to provide their children with a safer, healthier, and more dignified future.

That aspiration became the driving force behind one of Rotary District 2451's largest collabora-

tive community initiatives.

Rather than addressing a single need, Rotary District 2451 chose a broader vision—bringing together 62 Rotary clubs from across Egypt in partnership with the Orman Association, private-sector partners, volunteers, and local communities to improve living conditions in Qalamshah Village.

The project was built on a simple belief: sustainable development



is most effective when communities are supported through integrated solutions rather than isolated interventions.

Eighteen homes were completely rehabilitated, including structural repairs, plastering, flooring, plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, and interior finishing. Each house was then furnished with essential household furni-

ture and appliances, creating safer and more comfortable homes for the beneficiary families.

Access to clean water was another priority. The project provided 220 household drinking water connections, giving vulnerable families reliable access to safe water and improving daily living conditions.

Recognizing that inclusive development means ensuring that no one is left behind, Rotary also distributed 50 wheelchairs to people with disabilities, helping improve mobility and independence.

The initiative extended beyond immediate humanitarian support. Believing that stronger communities are built through opportunity



as well as assistance, Rotary supported women's economic empowerment by providing sewing machines to beneficiary families, helping create opportunities for sustainable income and greater self-reliance.

What makes the Qalamshah initiative especially significant is not only the number of homes improved or services delivered,

but the model of collaboration behind it.

Rotary clubs from different parts of Egypt worked as one team. Civil society organizations, corporate partners, volunteers, and local communities combined their resources, expertise, and commitment around a shared purpose. Together, they demonstrated that complex community

challenges can be addressed more effectively when organizations work together instead of working alone.

The results can be measured in improved housing, safer water, greater mobility, and new livelihood opportunities. Yet the project's greatest achievement may be less tangible.



It restored confidence.

Families now live in homes that provide security and dignity. Women have new opportunities to contribute to household income. People with disabilities enjoy greater independence. Most importantly, the communi-

ty witnessed what can happen when service is driven by partnership, respect, and shared responsibility.

For Rotary District 2451, Qalamshah became more than a development project. It became an example of what is possible when

Rotary clubs unite behind one vision and place people at the centre of every decision.

Across Africa, thousands of communities continue to face challenges similar to those once experienced in Qalamshah. While every community's journey is



unique, the principle remains the same: lasting change begins when people come together with a common purpose.

The story of Qalamshah is therefore not simply about renovated homes or improved infrastructure. It is a story of collaboration, dignity, and hope. It demon-

strates that Rotary's greatest strength lies not only in the projects it delivers, but in its ability to bring people together to create sustainable change.

As Rotary continues to serve communities across Africa, the experience of Rotary District 2451 stands as a reminder that

when service unites people, communities do far more than recover—they thrive.

"The greatest transformation was not only in the homes—it was in the renewed hope of the families who now look to the future with confidence."

IMPACT ACROSS AFRICA



The Man who Bet on Mothers

How Sir Emeka Offor — Nigeria's most generous Rotarian — has staked over US\$9 million on the conviction that saving mothers and babies is Africa's most important investment

By Kwame Baah-Acheamfuor

There is a hospital in Nigeria where a newborn warming device — a small lamp above a counter, simple by global standards — keeps babies alive in the critical minutes after birth. Before Rotary came, that lamp was not there. Neither

were the trained midwife, the stocked cabinet of vitamin A and eye ointment, or the community health worker making three home visits a week to pregnant women along red dirt roads. They are there now. And behind all of it, pulling levers with quiet determination and a very large cheque, is Sir Emeka Offor.



Sir Emeka Offor
Rotary Club of Oraifite
District 9142, Nigeria

“

Helping mothers and babies survive and thrive is among the **greatest investments we can make in Nigeria's future.**

A member of the Rotary Club of Oraifite, District 9142, and chairman of the Chrome Group — a Nigerian conglomerate spanning oil and gas, finance, power, and logistics — Sir Emeka is, by any measure, Africa's most consequential individual contributor to Rotary's mission. His total commitment to The Rotary Foundation now exceeds US\$8 million, spanning polio eradication, peace initiatives, education, and his most heartfelt cause of all: the health of mothers and newborns.

"Helping mothers and babies survive and thrive is among the greatest investments we can make in Nigeria's future." – Sir Emeka Offor, Rotary Club of Oraifite, District 9142

A 30-Year Mission That Started with a Conversation

The story of Rotary's maternal and child health work in Nigeria actually begins not with a donation, but with a chance conversation in a California hotel lobby in March 1994. Emmanuel Adedolapo Lufadeju — then a district governor-elect and member of the Rotary Club of Ibadan-Jericho Metro, a Rotarian since 1980 — described to a German colleague the harrowing scenes he had witnessed in a Nigerian hospital maternity ward. That conversation sparked a 30-year partnership between Nigerian and German Rotary members that would eventually birth the Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal, and Child Health (RMCH), lay the groundwork for Nigeria's 2021 Maternal Death Reporting Act, and culminate in a landmark US\$2 million Programs of Scale grant in 2022.

The "Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria" programme — which the grant funds — trains health workers, upgrades clinics, deploys community health workers for home outreach visits, and strengthens health data systems across four regions: Abuja (FCT), Nasarawa, Cross River, and Ekiti states. The results, just two years

“

Nobody is going to do it better than a Rotarian. When you see what it will look like in 10, 20 years, you want to be there to make sure it actually works out.

in, are already arresting: a 20% reduction in maternal deaths and a 28% fall in neonatal deaths in supported facilities. Antenatal visits have surged. Facility births have climbed from 18% to 66% of prenatal attendees. Postnatal care jumped from 2% to 70%. "The impact is huge," says programme manager Toyosi Adebambo. "That is the fun part of it."

"Nobody is going to do it better than a Rotarian. When you see what it will look like in 10, 20 years, you want to be there to make sure it actually works out." — Toyosi Adebambo, Programme Manager, Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria

The \$5 Million Vote of Confidence

In April 2025, Sir Emeka Offor announced what amounts to

the largest single private commitment to maternal health in Nigerian Rotary history: US\$5 million through the Sir Emeka Offor Foundation (SEOF) to The Rotary Foundation, specifically to expand the Together for Healthy Families programme to 103 facilities — and beyond. The gift is a vote of confidence in early results, and a declaration that the model works. It builds on Sir Emeka's already remarkable philanthropic record: more than US\$4 million to polio eradication in Nigeria (making him Africa's largest individual donor to PolioPlus), a US\$250,000 leadership gift in 2019 that helped establish Rotary's first African Peace Centre at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, and the construction of a 1,600-seat Rotary Hall at the Rotary Centre Complex in Abuja, completed in 2020.

"This partnership marks a powerful step forward for the health and wellbeing of families across Nigeria," Sir Emeka said at the announcement. His foundation, SEOF, has long worked in education, health, youth empowerment, and widows' support. But maternal and child health has become its most urgent theatre of action in a country where 82,000 pregnant women and new mothers died in 2020 alone — the highest maternal death toll of any nation on earth — and where 60% of births still take place outside a health centre.

AT A GLANCE: SIR EMEKA OFFOR	TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES: KEY RESULTS
Club: Rotary Club of Oraifite	Grant: US\$2 million Rotary Programs of Scale (2022)
District: 9142, Nigeria	Expansion: US\$5 million SEOF gift (2025) — 103 facilities
Member since: Long-standing; Arch C. Klumph Society Platinum Trustee Circle	Health workers trained: 1,146 in emergency obstetrics, neonatal care, data entry & community outreach
Profession: Chairman, Chrome Group	Home visits: Nearly 26,000 conducted by community health extension workers
Total Rotary giving: Over US\$8 million	Community dialogues: Reached 36,000+ people
Polio giving: Over US\$4 million (Africa's #1 donor)	Maternal deaths: ▼ 20% reduction in supported facilities
MCH commitment: US\$5 million (2025, SEOF)	Neonatal deaths: ▼ 28% reduction in supported facilities
Rotary Infrastructure: 1,600-seat Rotary Hall, Abuja (2020); Rotary Peace Centre, Kampala (2019)	Facility births: Rose from 18% to 66% of ANC attendees
	Postnatal care: Jumped from 2% to 70% of attendees
	Coverage: FCT Abuja, Nasarawa, Cross River, Ekiti

Service Above Self — and Above All Statistics

What Rotary is building in Nigeria is not merely a health programme — it is a systems change. Lufadeju and his team have successfully worked with the Nigerian Parliament to pass a Maternal Death Reporting Act (2021), pushed facility reporting compliance from 8% to 90% in one quarter, and forged partnerships with traditional rulers, community health authorities, and state finance directors. The

plan is that, when the grant cycle ends, the government picks up the baton. "We want them to take it over," says Lufadeju. "The only way they can is to embed it in the state programme and budget for it."

For Sir Emeka Offor, it is simply Service Above Self writ large — and writ in the language of maternal wards, home visits, and newborn lamps. "We have seen a unique opportunity to build upon a Rotary-led programme to further turn the tide on maternal

and child mortality," he says. In a country where 82,000 women died in childbirth in a single year, that is not a small ambition. It is the only ambition that matters.

Sir Emeka Offor is a member of the Arch C. Klumph Society Platinum Trustee Circle, recognising cumulative contributions between US\$2.5 million and US\$4.99 million to The Rotary Foundation. His 2025 commitment of US\$5 million through SEOF takes his total well above the Bequest Society threshold.

Red Gold Heroes



District 9214 Launches a Lifesaving Movement

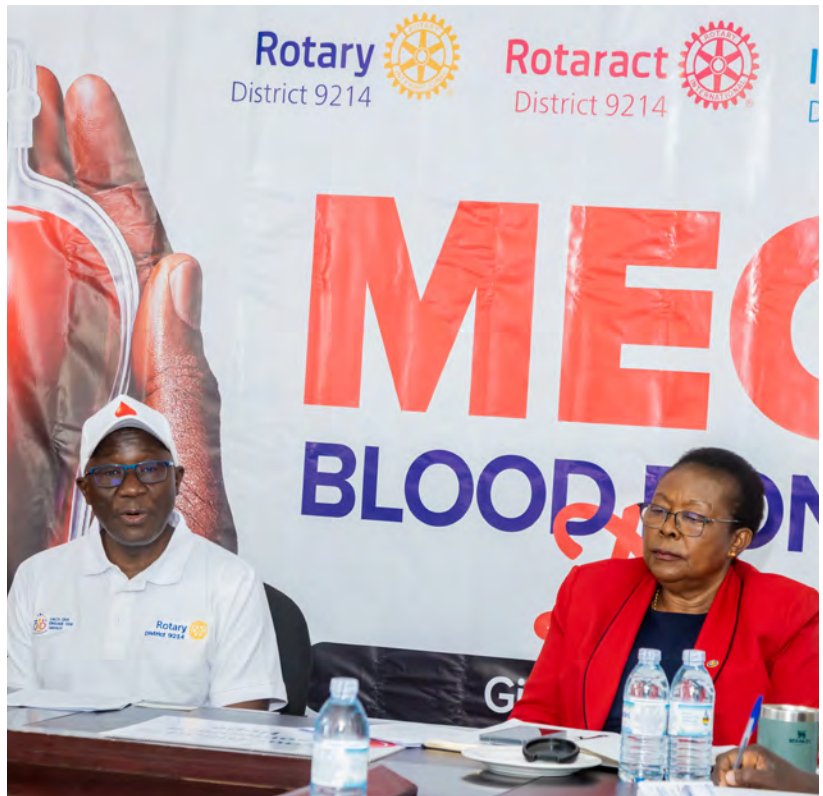
Every drop of blood has the power to save a life.



That was the simple but compelling challenge issued by **District Governor Daniel Mukasa Ddamulira** as Rotary Year 2026–2027 commenced. He called on Rotarians and Rotaractors across District 9214 to begin the year with an act of service unlike any other—donating what medicine often calls **“Red Gold.”**

The response was immediate and overwhelming.

In July alone, Rotary and Rotaract members across District 9214 donated **more than 3,500 units of blood**, exceeding the district’s target and providing a lifeline to thousands of patients who depend on timely blood transfusions.





In Tanzania, the effort took on even greater significance with the launch of the **Rotary Blood Heroes campaign**, a nationwide initiative developed in partnership with the **National Blood Transfusion Services (NBTS)** to help address the country's estimated **21 percent blood shortage**.

The campaign mobilises Rotarians, Rotaractors and local communities to become regular voluntary blood donors, strengthening national blood reserves while raising awareness of the lifesaving importance of blood donation. Throughout the year, clubs across the country will continue organising blood drives in support of the NBTS, ensuring that hospitals have the supplies needed for emergency care, surgery, maternal health and the treatment of childhood illnesses.



As inspiring stories continue to emerge from clubs across Tanzania, the campaign is gathering momentum, with an annual target of collecting **3,000 units of blood** through sustained community engagement.



Rotary Blood Heroes demonstrates the power of collective action. It reminds us that while Rotary builds schools, equips hospitals and transforms communities, sometimes the greatest impact begins with a single donor rolling up a sleeve.

Special recognition goes to **Assistant Governor Nasibu Mahinya** of the Rotary Club of Dar es Salaam Mikocheni, whose leadership as Tanzania's **Rotary Blood Heroes** Coordinator has been instrumental in driving this remarkable initiative.



As more clubs across District 9214 join the movement, Rotary continues to prove that service above self is measured not only in projects completed but in lives saved.

Why “Red Gold”?

Blood is often referred to as “**Red Gold**” because of its extraordinary value. The plasma, proteins and life-sustaining cells it contains are irreplaceable and, in medical terms, can be worth more than their weight in gold. Unlike gold, however, blood cannot be mined or manufactured—it can only be given, freely, by another human being.

Story by Rtn. Roselyn Kagaru-ki, District 9214 | Edited for publication by Rotary Impact Africa



Growing a Green & Blue Generation

How Rotary District 2451 Is Inspiring Environmental Stewardship from Kindergarten to University Standfirst Protecting the environment begins long before large conservation projects take shape. It starts when a child plants a seed, a student cleans a riverbank, and a young leader discovers that every action matters. Through Green & Blue Generation, Rotary District 2451 is helping children and young people develop a lifelong commitment to protecting the planet.



By Past President Fiki Goher

For a young child, planting a seed is a simple classroom activity. Yet that small moment can become the beginning

of a lifelong relationship with nature.

Rotary District 2451 believes that environmental responsibility is not learned through a single

campaign or one-day event. It grows gradually, through education, participation, and real-life experiences that accompany young people as they grow.

With this vision, the Environment Committee of Rotary District 2451, chaired by Past President Magued Zikri, launched Green & Blue Generation—a district-wide strategy that encourages Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact clubs to work together in promoting environmental awareness from kindergarten through university.

Rather than organizing isolated activities, the initiative creates a continuous journey where environmental responsibility evolves with every stage of education.

The journey begins in kindergarten through the Green Sport Club Project, where children learn to care for plants, appreciate nature, and understand the importance of conserving water. These simple hands-on experi-



ences teach an important lesson: people protect what they learn to love.

As children grow, those lessons grow with them.

Several Rotary clubs in Alexandria have transformed schoolyards into greener spaces by organizing tree-planting activities that encourage pupils to nurture the trees they plant themselves.

The experience allows environmental awareness to become part of everyday school life rather than a subject discussed only in classrooms.

The learning journey then moves beyond schools and into the wider community.

Through Sobic – Guardian of the Nile, Rotary and Interact clubs work side by side to remove

plastic waste from the River Nile. More than a clean-up campaign, the initiative demonstrates how different generations of Rotary's family can work together to protect one of Africa's most valuable natural resources.

The commitment continues along Egypt's Mediterranean coast, where Rotaract clubs lead Keep Our Sea Shore Clean, carrying out scuba-diving activities



to remove waste from the seabed in Alexandria's Eastern Harbour. These efforts highlight the importance of protecting marine ecosystems that support both biodiversity and local communities.

Environmental awareness also reaches secondary school students through Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) sessions. Here, young people explore practical ways to reduce plastic waste while learning the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, encouraging sustainable choices that can influence their daily lives.

At university level, awareness develops into research, innova-

tion, and community leadership.

Students at Galala University explore the One Health concept, recognizing the connection between human health, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare. At the British University in Egypt, students present annual COP-inspired projects that address climate change and carbon footprints, encouraging innovative thinking around global environmental challenges.

Seminars at Assiut University and the American University in Cairo further demonstrate Rotary's commitment to sustainable development by highlighting initiatives that combine environmental action with women's em-

powerment and the inclusion of people with disabilities.

One project in Minya Governorate trains rural women to recycle agricultural waste into organic compost, creating environmental and economic value at the same time. Another initiative supports women with hearing impairments in Port Said, Cairo, and Alexandria by providing sewing machines and materials to produce reusable shopping bags, helping reduce plastic waste while creating opportunities for income generation and social inclusion.

Although these projects differ in location and approach, they are connected by one common purpose: preparing a generation that sees environmental protection as a shared responsibility rather than an occasional activity.

Across Africa, environmental challenges continue to grow, but so do the opportunities to inspire meaningful change. Rotary District 2451's experience demonstrates that lasting environmental stewardship begins with education, grows through service, and flourishes when children, young people, and communities work together.

By investing in today's youth, Rotary is not only protecting the environment—it is nurturing tomorrow's environmental leaders.

"Environmental stewardship begins with awareness, grows through service, and becomes a lifelong commitment when young people are empowered to lead."

HEALTH & IMPACT

One Day, 3,600 Lifelines

How Rotary District 9214 launched the 2026–2027 Rotary year by transforming blood donation into a district-wide movement of service, solidarity and hope.



From early morning on 1 July 2026, Rotarians, Rotaractors, students, teachers, health workers, corporate partners and community volunteers gathered at coordinated donation sites with one shared purpose: to give blood and help save lives.

By the end of the day, the district-wide Mega Blood Donation Drive had collected more than 3,600 units of blood—a powerful opening statement for a year dedicated to engaging every member in meaningful service.

Behind every unit was a donor who had chosen to act. Some were giving blood for the first time. Others were regular donors who understood that hospitals depend on a steady and reliable blood supply. Together, they created a lifeline for mothers facing complications during childbirth, children battling severe malaria and anaemia, accident victims, cancer patients and people undergoing emergency surgery.

The success of the drive was not the result of a single club, institution or collection centre. It was built through weeks of planning, coordination and mobilisation across Rotary District 9214.

Before the speeches, banners and celebrations, Rotary began the new year by giving hospitals what they need every day: safe blood.

The new Rotary year in District 9214 did not begin in a conference hall. It began beside donor beds, registration desks and blood collection stations across Uganda and Tanzania.



District leaders worked with Rotary and Rotaract clubs, blood transfusion teams, schools, hospitals, local authorities and partner organisations to establish collection points within major corridors and regions. Clubs were organised into teams, with coordinators responsible for identifying suitable venues, engaging institutions, mobilising donors and supporting the logistical requirements of each site.

Rather than asking people to travel long distances to donate, the campaign brought blood donation closer to the communities.

Schools opened their gates. Hospitals provided technical support. Volunteers guided donors through registration, health screening, donation and recovery. Rotary and Rotaract members mobilised their networks, shared information through community platforms and social media, and encouraged eligible donors to participate.

The wide geographical reach of the campaign demonstrated the strength of Rotary's structure. Each club worked within its community, but every donation contributed to one shared district goal.

The campaign also showed what becomes possible when service is planned as a system rather than as an isolated event. Collection sites required trained medical personnel, safe equipment, donor screening, refreshments, transport, communication, documentation and timely reporting. These elements had to work together for the drive to succeed.

At each site, health teams assessed potential donors to ensure that they were eligible and healthy enough to give blood. Those who qualified moved through the donation process under professional supervision, while volunteers provided reassurance, information and post-donation support.

For many donors, the experience lasted only a short time. The impact of their decision, however, could extend far beyond the collection centre.

A unit donated by a student could later support a mother in a maternity ward. Blood given by a Rotarian could reach an accident victim in an emergency theatre. A first-time donor could become part of a lifelong culture of voluntary blood donation.

That connection between donor and patient—often two people who may never meet—is what gave the campaign its emotional power.

The Mega Blood Donation Drive was also an exercise in public awareness. It helped remind communities that blood cannot be manufactured and that hospitals can only maintain adequate supplies when healthy people choose to donate voluntarily.



By placing blood donation at the centre of the district's New Year launch, Rotary District 9214 moved the conversation from celebration to responsibility. The district demonstrated that a new year is not defined only by new leaders, plans and themes. It is defined by the action that follows.

The district theme, **Each One Engage** for Impact, was brought to life through thousands of individual decisions. Every club that mobilised a site, every volunteer who registered donors, every

institution that provided space and every person who rolled up a sleeve became part of the impact.

More than 3,600 units collected in one day represented more than a numerical achievement. They represented cooperation across borders, generations, professions and communities. They showed that when Rotary organises its networks around a clear public need, service can move quickly and reach widely.

The drive also strengthened

relationships between Rotary, schools, healthcare institutions, blood transfusion services and local communities. These partnerships provide a foundation for future blood donation campaigns and for broader efforts to improve public health.

As the collection teams packed their equipment and the final donors left the sites, the significance of the day became clear. Rotary District 9214 had not simply launched another year of meetings and activities. It had begun the year by responding to an urgent national health need.

Later, members would gather for launch celebrations, speeches and fellowship. But the district's most important message had already been delivered.

It was visible in the courage of first-time donors, the commitment of volunteers, the coordination of clubs and the more than 3,600 units of blood prepared to begin their journey toward patients in need.

On 1 July 2026, Rotary District 9214 showed that service does not always begin with grand gestures. Sometimes, it begins with one person, one donor bed and one decision to give.

One club mobilised another. One community inspired the next. One district came together.

And in a single day, thousands of lifelines were created.

Rtn. Cynthia Baitwa

Rotary Club of Kampala Muyenga Breeze

Rotary District 9214 Blood Donation Officer

A Library of Hope: Honouring PDG Francisco Ssemwanga at Kitala Secondary School

For many years, learning at Kitala Secondary School demanded more than academic discipline. It required resilience.





Some students attended lessons beneath trees, exposed to intense heat, dust, wind and rain. Others studied in ageing, inadequate structures that could no longer provide the safety, comfort and dignity every learner deserves. Bad weather frequently disrupted classes, overcrowding strained the available facilities, and the school's physical environment increasingly constrained both teaching and learning.

Yet, amid these difficult conditions were young people of remarkable ambition. They dreamed of becoming doctors, teachers, engineers, entrepreneurs and community leaders. Their challenge was never a lack of potential. It was the absence of an environment capable of nurturing that potential.

The Rotary Club of Garuga recognised this reality and chose to act.

Rather than offer a temporary intervention, the club adopted Kitala Secondary School and committed itself to the institution's long-term transformation. The decision was guided by a simple but profound conviction: the environment in which a child learns can significantly influence how that child grows, performs and imagines the future.

Working alongside the school leadership, teachers, parents, students, community members and partners, the club identified classroom infrastructure as one of the school's most urgent priorities.

What followed was far more than a construction project. It became a sustained community endeavour founded on partnership, generosity and a shared determination to improve the educational experience of Kitala's learners.

Over the past three years, the Rotary Club of Garuga has steadily

supported the construction of a modern three-storey classroom block. Each phase has marked a deliberate transition from unsafe and inadequate learning spaces towards an environment defined by security, dignity and opportunity.

The emerging classroom block is already reshaping the school's future.

Students who once studied under trees can now look forward to structured, protected and more conducive learning spaces. Teachers will be able to conduct lessons with fewer interruptions from harsh weather and overcrowding. The school will be better positioned to organize its academic programmes effectively, while learners will receive a powerful affirmation that their education matters.

A classroom may appear to be a simple space enclosed by walls and windows. To a student, how-



ever, it represents protection from rain, freedom from distraction, the confidence to ask questions and the opportunity to concentrate fully on a lesson.

It also restores dignity.

The project is creating a school where learners can focus less on the limitations surrounding them and more on the possibilities ahead. It is giving teachers improved spaces in which to guide, mentor and inspire. At the same time, it is strengthening the school's capacity to serve future generations from Kitale and the surrounding communities.

The structure rising at the school is therefore more than a building. It is a declaration of confidence in young people and in the transformative power of education.

The next phase of this journey will introduce another vital learning facility: a modern library to be named in honour of **Past District Governor Francisco Ssemwanga**.



The PDG Francisco Ssemwanga Library is envisioned not merely as a room filled with books, but as a centre of knowledge, imagination, research and independent learning.

Within its walls, students will explore subjects beyond the classroom, cultivate stronger reading habits and encounter ideas capable of broadening their understanding of the world. For learners with limited access to

educational resources outside school, the library will provide an indispensable gateway to knowledge.

Naming the library after PDG Francisco Ssemwanga will permanently associate his legacy with education, service and the empowerment of young people. Every student who enters the library will become part of a continuing story—one that affirms that service achieves its highest

purpose when it creates opportunities for others.

The books on its shelves will offer more than information. They will carry possibility. One learner may discover a future profession through a science book, another may develop confidence through literature, while another may encounter the story that inspires a lifetime of leadership and service.

The progress at Kitale Secondary School has been made possible through collective commitment. Rotarians, school administrators, teachers, parents, students, partners and well-wishers have all contributed to a project that demonstrates what communities can accomplish when they unite around a shared purpose.

The three-year effort also reflects an important principle of sustainable service: meaningful transformation requires patience, consistency, accountability and the courage to remain committed even when the work is demanding.

The school community has not been a passive recipient of support. It has remained an active partner in shaping a better future for its learners.

The transformation at Kitale Secondary School can be measured in bricks, concrete, classrooms and books. Its greatest impact, however, will be measured in lives.

It will be seen in the learner who can attend lessons even when it rains, in the teacher who can conduct a class within a safe and organised environment, and in



the confidence of students who now feel that their dreams are worthy of investment.

When the three-Storey classroom block is completed and the PDG Francisco Ssemwanga Library opens its doors, Kitale Secondary School will stand as enduring evidence that community-driven service can create lasting change.

Where students once learned

beneath trees and within unsafe structures, a new centre of learning is emerging—built not only with construction materials, but with compassion, partnership and faith in the next generation.

Above all, it is building hope: one student, one lesson and one generation at a time.

Jospeh Batter Ssengooba
Rotary Club of Garuga
District Public Image Chair

HEALTH & IMPACT

Saving Lives, One Drop at a Time

At Mengo Hospital, Rotary has helped turn voluntary blood donation into a dependable national lifeline—connecting generous donors to patients whose lives depend on timely, safe blood.



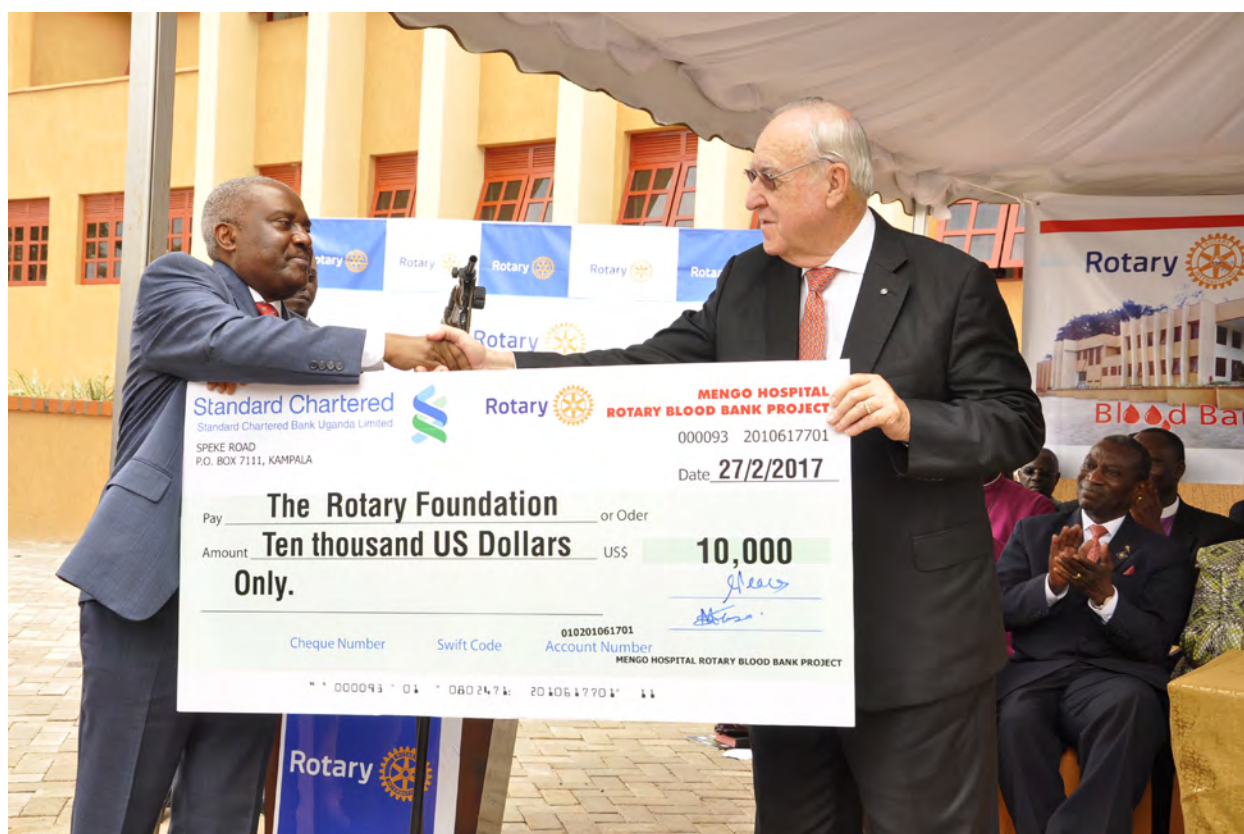
In Uganda's health system, safe blood is not just a medical product. It is life itself. It is needed in emergency theatres, maternity wards, cancer units, surgical rooms, Paediatric wards, and trauma centres. For a child with severe malaria, a mother facing complications during

childbirth, a road accident victim, a cancer patient, or a person undergoing major surgery, timely access to safe blood can make the difference between life and death.

This is the purpose behind Rotary's blood donation services in

Uganda, and at the centre of that story stands the Mengo Hospital Rotary Blood Bank.

The Mengo Hospital Rotary Blood Bank was established through a partnership between the Rotary fraternity and Mengo Hospital, with Rotary International-



al Director Emmanuel Katongole as the vision bearer. The idea was born around 2013, with the aim of helping to close Uganda's blood shortage gap. The blood bank was officially launched on 27 February 2017 by John F. Germ, then President of Rotary International, and Rt. Hon. Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, then Prime Minister of Uganda.

What began as a blood collection centre has grown into a fully-fledged blood bank. Mengo Hospital states that the facility is second only to the Nakasero Blood Bank in Uganda and is regulated by the Uganda Blood Transfusion Services in Nakasero. This makes the Mengo Hospital Rotary Blood Bank one of the most important examples of Rotary's long-term investment in disease prevention, treatment,

and health systems strengthening.

The facility operates 24 hours a day and is accessible to hospitals with transfusion licenses. It supplies free blood and blood products to hospitals across the country at no cost. Blood collected at the facility is distributed to hospitals and health centres across Uganda, and Mengo Hospital states clearly that blood is not sold; it remains a free resource for patients who need transfusions.

The work of the blood bank is built on voluntary donation. Blood is collected from communities, schools, churches, workplaces, institutions, and walk-in donors at Mengo Hospital. Through daily field sessions and community blood drives, the blood bank

makes donation more accessible to the public. According to Mengo Hospital, the facility collects and dispatches about 1,500 units of blood every month.

The importance of this work is clear. Mengo Hospital notes that in Uganda, blood is needed every day for emergencies, surgeries, cancer treatment, childbirth complications, severe anaemia, and malaria. The hospital also identifies children with malaria, pregnant women with complications, accident victims, cancer patients, and surgical patients among the major recipients of blood.

Safety is central to the blood bank's mission. At the Mengo Hospital Rotary Blood Bank, donated blood is tested for infectious diseases including HIV,



hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and syphilis. The facility also processes whole blood into components such as red blood cells, platelets, and plasma, stores them under appropriate conditions, and distributes them based on hospital demand.

The importance of this safety work is supported by research. A 2025 study published in BMC Infectious Diseases analyzed 24,547 blood donations from the Mengo Hospital Rotary Blood Bank between January 2017 and December 2022. The study found that transfusion-transmit-

ted infections among new donations decreased from 13.7% in 2017 to 8.9% in 2022, while hepatitis C showed a statistically significant decrease from 5.2% in 2017 to 1.7% in 2022.

The same study describes the Mengo Hospital Rotary Blood Bank as the second-largest blood bank in Uganda, regulated by UBTS, open 24 hours daily to licensed hospitals, and providing free blood and blood products nationwide. It also confirms that the blood bank's main sources of blood collection are communities such as schools and churches,

as well as donors who visit the blood bank at Mengo Hospital.

Rotary's role goes beyond the physical facility. Rotary clubs and Rotarians continue to mobilize donors, organize community blood donation drives, support awareness campaigns, and promote a culture of voluntary blood donation. Rotary District 9214 has also highlighted the role of the Rotary Malaria Carnival in supporting both Nakasero and Mengo blood banks through blood collection drives and resource mobilization.

This is what makes Rotary's blood donation services significant. They are not only about collecting blood. They are about building a reliable system that connects donors to patients, communities to hospitals, and compassion to urgent medical need.

The Mengo Hospital Rotary Blood Bank is therefore more than a Rotary project. It is a national health asset. It represents what can happen when Rotary, a hospital, medical professionals, volunteers, donors, and communities work together around a clear life-saving purpose.

Every unit of blood collected carries a possibility: a mother surviving childbirth, a child recovering from severe illness, a patient completing surgery, or a family receiving another chance with someone they love.

That is the power of Rotary blood donation services. One donor. One unit. One patient. One life at a time.

The boy who built a School

Derrick Kabuye arrived at a crumbling rural school in Kabale with a vision, a Rotaract badge, and no budget. Six years later, that school is a model for resilient community education — and Kabuye is one of Rotary's six global Champions of Tomorrow for 2026.

By Kwame Baah-Acheamfuor

Nyakijumba Primary School sits in the hills of Kabale District, south-western Uganda — one of those places where the landscape is beautiful and the resources are not. In 2019, when Derrick Kabuye first

visited, the school had unsafe classrooms, no clean water, no sanitation facilities, and a drop-out rate that hit hardest among girls. Sixty pupils were enrolled. The walls, quite literally, were crumbling.

Kabuye, then a young member

“

Education can change the trajectory of a child's life — **and that of their entire family.**



Rotr Derrick Kabuye
Rotaract Club of Kampala South
District 9213

of the Rotaract Club of Kampala South, saw something else: a community that wanted better, and a problem Rotary's values of service above self were built to solve. He launched the Educate a Community Project — recruiting fellow Rotaractors, building partnerships with clubs across Uganda and beyond, and rolling up his sleeves to do the work himself. What followed was not a charity campaign. It was a six-year construction project with measurable targets, annual impact reports, and a young man

who showed up — season after season — with tools, data, and relentless focus.

"Education can change the trajectory of a child's life — and that of their entire family." - Derrick Kabuye • Rotaract Club of Kampala South

The transformation of Nyakijumba has been methodical and visible. A five-classroom block was constructed, replacing the crumbling structures with rooms where children can actually learn safely. An Early Childhood Development centre was established — now supporting 121 learners who are demonstrating measurable gains in literacy and numeracy. A borehole was drilled, ending the daily scramble for clean water that had consumed families' mornings and pulled children out of school.

The most striking results have come from the menstrual hy-

giene programme. More than 545 girls have received education and reusable pads — the kind of practical, dignity-protecting support that addresses the invisible barrier keeping girls away from school. The numbers do not lie: enrolment at Nyakijumba grew from 60 pupils in 2016 to 274 by 2025. A school that had been emptying was filling up again.

"When we built that first classroom, we weren't just adding bricks. We were telling every child: you belong here." – Rotary International, Champions of Tomorrow Honour, March 2026

What separates Kabuye's work from a one-off donation drive is the rigour he has brought to it. He tracked attendance and volunteer engagement. He commissioned annual impact reports. He recruited international partner clubs — including the Rotaract Club of Karura in Kenya, who

joined for the project's tenth-year milestone celebrations under the hashtag #Nyakijumba10 — to demonstrate that community transformation is not a local secret. It is a replicable model.

On 30 March 2026, Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo named Kabuye among six global Champions of Tomorrow — the only African honouree in this year's class. 'By leading projects that provide educational resources and foster personal development,' Arezzo said, 'these honorees are creating more peaceful and resilient communities.' Kabuye's response was characteristically grounded: the award, he said, belongs to every community member who showed up, every volunteer who planted trees, and every girl who stayed in school because someone gave her what she needed to do so. That is the Rotary way: service above self, results that speak.

DERRICK KABUYE — PROFILE		PROJECT IMPACT — NYAKIJUMBA PRIMARY SCHOOL	
Club	Rotaract Club of Kampala South, Uganda	Enrolment	60 pupils (2016) → 274 pupils (2025)
Project	Educate a Community · Nyakijumba Primary School, Kabale	ECD centre	121 Early Childhood Development learners
Active since	2019 — ongoing	Girls supported	545+ menstrual hygiene kits + education
Recognition	Rotary People of Action: Champion of Tomorrow, March 2026	Infrastructure	5-classroom block constructed; school renovated
Scope	Only African honouree in 2026 global class of six	Clean water	Borehole drilled; all pupils served
Partners	Rotaract clubs across Uganda + Karura, Kenya (#Nyakijumba10)	Sustainability	Annual impact reports; international club partnerships

Derrick Kabuye was recognised at the Rotary International Convention, Taipei, June 2026, as one of six global Rotary People of Action: Champions of Tomorrow.

Sickle for Smiles: When Rotary Partnerships Cross Borders to Save Lives

At Mengo Hospital, Rotary has helped turn voluntary blood donation into a dependable national lifeline—connecting generous donors to patients whose lives depend on timely, safe blood.



By Rotary Club of Nairobi Industrial Area, District 9212 and Rotary Club of Tema-Community 25, District 9104

When Rotarians from Kenya and Ghana came together through friendship and a shared commitment to service, they did more than build international goodwill—they delivered hope to hundreds of people living with sickle cell disease in Nairobi, Kenya.

The **Sickle for Smiles** project, a collaborative initiative between the **Rotary Club of Nairobi Industrial Area, District 9212 (Kenya)** and the **Rotary Club of Tema-Community 25, District 9104 (Ghana)**, is a testament to the power of Rotary's global network. United by a common purpose, the two clubs mobilized resources to donate **36,700 Hydroxyurea capsules**, ensuring that patients living with sickle cell

disease have greater access to one of the most effective treatments available.

In many parts of Africa, sickle cell disease remains one of the continent's most significant inherited health conditions. Thousands of children and adults endure recurrent pain crises, repeated hospital admissions, infections, and life-threatening complications. Although Hydroxyurea has



transformed the management of sickle cell disease by reducing painful episodes, minimizing complications, and improving quality of life, consistent access to the medication remains beyond the reach of many families because of cost and availability.

Recognizing this challenge and united by a shared vision, the Rotary Club of Nairobi Industrial Area and the Rotary Club of Tema Community 25 envisioned a project that would go beyond a one-time donation. Their goal was to establish a sustainable supply of medication through a **revolving fund pharmacy model** managed by the **Children Sickle Cell Foundation**, allowing patients to access treatment consistently while ensuring that medicine stocks are replenished on a timely basis.

The partnership came to life during the **West Meets East Rotary Friendship Exchange** between the two Clubs held in Nairobi, Kenya from 3rd to 9th March 2026, where friendship and ser-

vice converged in a meaningful demonstration of Rotary International's spirit of Service Above Self. During the Friendship Exchange, the first consignment of **15,000 Hydroxyurea capsules** was officially handed over on 5th March 2026. The medicines were distributed equally between the **Ruaraka Uhai Neema Hospital** and **Baraka Healthnet** two healthcare facilities in Nairobi dedicated to serving patients living with sickle cell disease where healthcare professionals immediately began integrating the medication into the care of patients living with sickle cell disease.

As one Rotarian reflected during the project handover,

"We did not simply donate medicine. We invested in futures. Every capsule carries with it hope, dignity, and the promise that someone, somewhere, cares."

Encouraged by the success of the initial phase, the project gained further momentum. A

second consignment of **21,700 capsules** was delivered on 10th June 2026, bringing on board **Fanaka Medical Center, Nairobi** and **Baraka Healthnet Ayiera, Nairobi**, to expand the reach and strengthen the revolving fund pharmacy programme, bringing the total donation to **36,700 Hydroxyurea capsules**.

While the numbers are impressive, the true story lies in the lives that will be transformed.

Each capsule represents a child who can spend more days in school instead of in a hospital bed. It represents a parent who can work without the constant interruption of debilitating pain crises. It represents families who can look to the future with renewed confidence, knowing that access to essential medication is becoming more reliable.

The revolving fund pharmacy initial impact is to support approximately **360 patients** in the first year and increase the number over the next three years, cre-



ating lasting impact that extends well beyond the initial donation. By reinvesting proceeds from medicine dispensed, the programme is designed to maintain a continuous supply of Hydroxy-urea, ensuring that treatment remains accessible long after the project's launch.

For Rotary, this initiative embodies the principle of sustainable service. Rather than providing temporary relief, the project establishes a framework that empowers healthcare providers and patients alike. It reflects Rotary's commitment to creating solutions that endure and communities that thrive.

The collaboration also demonstrates the strength of Rotary's international partnerships. Although separated by thousands of kilometers, the two clubs found common ground in their desire to improve lives. Their partnership illustrates that Rotary's greatest strength lies not only in its members but also in its ability to connect people, ideas, and resources across borders.

"Sickle for Smiles is more than a medical donation. It is a commitment to dignity, hope, and sustainable healthcare. Every capsule represents Rotary's promise that together, we can make life better for families affected by sickle cell disease."

The project aligns closely with Rotary's Area of Focus on **Disease Prevention and Treatment**, reinforcing the organization's dedication to strengthening health systems, preventing disease, and improving access to quality healthcare. More importantly, it reminds us that service



becomes even more impactful when communities work together toward a shared vision. Caroline

As the two clubs together with the healthcare professionals continue to monitor the revolving fund pharmacy over the coming years, the project will generate valuable lessons on sustainability, partnership, and community-based healthcare delivery. It also opens the door for future collaborations between Rotary Clubs across Africa, proving that regional partnerships can

address some of the continent's most pressing health challenges.

"Distance never limited this partnership; compassion brought Kenya and Ghana together to change lives."

For the Rotary Club of Nairobi Industrial Area and the Rotary Club of Tema Community 25, **Sickle for Smiles** is not the conclusion of a successful project—it is the beginning of a long-term commitment to improving the lives of people living with sickle cell disease.

We were honoured to have these partners, Animix Ltd - Kenya; Chem-Labs Ltd - Kenya; Asher Glaiden Company Ltd – Ghana, Elgon Kenya and Aude Ltd – Kenya, who believed in the vision and gladly supported to make it a reality.

Every smile restored, every pain crisis prevented, and every life improved reflects the enduring impact of Rotary's motto: **Service Above Self.**

In a world divided by geography and circumstance, this partnership reminds us that compassion knows no borders. Through shared purpose and collective action, Rotarians continue to prove that when we come together to serve, we create hope, strengthen communities, and build a healthier future for all.

Rtn Beth Gachoka,
Rotary Club of Nairobi
Industrial Area, RID 9212

Rtn Prince MANU-BARFO
Rotary Club of Tema-
Community 25, RID 9104

HEALTH & IMPACT

A Race of Hope: How Uganda's Rotary Cancer Run Is Changing the Fight Against Cancer

What began as a bold Rotary idea has grown into one of Uganda's most visible citizen-led health movements—turning kilometres, donations, and collective goodwill into better cancer care.



Long before the first runner crosses the starting line, the Rotary Cancer Run begins in quieter, more difficult places: hospital corridors, family conversations, and the anxious wait for a diagnosis. It begins with a mother praying that treatment will be available, a father searching for answers, a child waiting for care,

and a community refusing to accept that cancer should become a death sentence because help is too distant, too costly, or too late.

That human reality drives the Rotary Clubs of Uganda Cancer Run Programme. More than an annual sporting event, it is a na-

tional expression of solidarity—one that invites ordinary people to take practical action in the fight against cancer.

The journey began with the Uganda Rotary Cancer Programme, founded in 2011 to strengthen cancer care through early detection, specialised treatment,



public awareness, and compassionate support. In August 2012, Rotarians introduced the Rotary Cancer Run as the programme's main fundraising and awareness platform.

The idea was simple but powerful: a morning of running could become a pathway to treatment, while thousands of individual steps could help build a stronger cancer-care system. The initiative soon drew in families, schools, companies, public institutions, sponsors, volunteers, and well-wishers. Each participant became part of a larger story—one in which service moved beyond meeting rooms and into communities and health facilities.

The movement's impact is visible at St. Francis Hospital Nsambya, where the programme helped deliver the Rotary-Centenary Bank Cancer Centre. The completed cancer ward was handed over to the hospital on 7 July 2015, bringing specialised care closer to patients and giving families a stronger reason to hope.

That milestone showed what collective action can achieve. A ticket purchased, a sponsorship secured, a volunteer hour offered, or a kilometre completed may appear small on its own. Together, those contributions created infrastructure that continues to serve people facing one of life's most difficult battles.

Rotary did not stop there. The Cancer Run has continued to grow into a wider movement for prevention, screening, treatment, advocacy, and public education. Its message remains clear: cancer must be confronted together, early testing can save lives, and communities can strengthen health systems when they organise around a shared purpose.

The 2025 Rotary Cancer Run demonstrated the growing strength of the movement. More than 60,000 runners participated in Uganda and beyond, raising a record UGX 3.573 billion.

The numbers were impressive, but their deeper meaning lay in the people behind them. Across the 5-kilometre, 10-kilometre, and 21-kilometre routes, participants of different ages, professions, and backgrounds moved with one purpose. Some ran in memory of loved ones. Others stood with patients still receiving treatment. Many simply chose to support families they might never meet.

It was not only a race against distance. It was a public declaration that every life matters and every step can contribute to change.

The programme is now pursuing an even greater goal: completing and equipping the Cancer Treatment Centre at Nsambya Hospital, including infrastructure required for advanced linear accelerator technology.

The 2026 Rotary Cancer Run, scheduled for 30 August at Kololo Independence Grounds under the theme "Gwanga Mujje," is targeting UGX 5 billion and an



expected 100,000 participants. The ambition reflects the urgency of the need. The goal is not merely to complete a building, but to strengthen access to advanced treatment and give more patients the chance to receive timely care closer to home.

Achieving that target will require the same force that has sustained the programme from the beginning: partnership. Rotarians, corporate organisations, public institutions, young people, families, media partners, health professionals, and communities all have a role to play.

The Cancer Run has become one of Rotary's clearest demon-

strations of public trust. It shows what happens when people unite around a credible cause and consistently turn goodwill into measurable impact.

For many Ugandans, the run has made Rotary visible not simply as a fellowship organisation, but as a movement willing to confront difficult problems. It has shown that service can be energetic, inclusive, and deeply human—and that ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things when they move together.

The invitation remains simple: run, give, screen, advocate, volunteer, and bring someone along. Behind every ticket, every

kilometre, every donation, and every hour of service is the possibility that a patient will receive care earlier, a family will find renewed hope, and a nation will become better equipped to fight cancer.

The Rotary Cancer Run is more than a race. It is Uganda moving together towards a future where diagnosis comes earlier, treatment is stronger, care is closer, and hope is within reach.

Rtn. Joseph Batter Ssengooba
– Rotary Club of Garuga – District 9214 Public Image Chair

Every Step Counts



How One Boy's Determination Became the Heart of Rotary Egypt's End Polio Marathon

Standfirst: Sometimes, the most powerful message of a public awareness campaign is not delivered from a stage but by someone quietly leading through action. During Rotary Egypt's Race to End Polio marathon in Luxor, a 12-year-old boy reminded hundreds of participants that every step toward a polio-free world begins with determination.

By Past President Fiki Goher

When the starting signal echoed through the streets of Luxor, hundreds of runners moved forward together. Some came to compete, others to support a cause. Among them was twelve-

year-old **Abdallah Emad Abdel Qawy**, a student from the village of Al-Zayniya.

He was running barefoot.

He had not travelled to Luxor expecting to win a race. His goal was much simpler—to finish.

During the three-kilometre marathon, Abdallah dropped the small amount of money he was carrying. He noticed it fall but made a split-second decision not to stop. Picking it up would have meant losing precious time and falling behind the other runners. Instead, he kept moving forward.





By the time he crossed the finish line, most participants had already completed the race. The commemorative race shirts and caps had all been distributed. Yet none of that seemed to matter.

He crossed the finish line smiling.

Photographers captured the moment, but what they recorded was more than a young runner completing a race. They captured the spirit of perseverance that perfectly reflected the message behind Rotary's global campaign to end polio.

Abdallah's determination quickly became one of the most memorable moments of the event.

Rotary Egypt later recognised his perseverance—not because he finished first, but because he reminded everyone that true success is measured by commitment, courage, and the willingness to keep moving forward despite obstacles.

His story became a powerful symbol of a campaign built on exactly the same values.

The Race to **End Polio** marathon was organised by **Rotary District 2451** as part of Rotary's continued commitment to raising awareness about polio vaccination and supporting the global End Polio Now initiative.

The three-kilometre route stretched from Luxor Temple to Karnak Temple, combining one of Africa's most iconic historical landscapes with a message about protecting future generations from a preventable disease.

The event brought together students, young people, community organisations, volunteers, athletes, tourists, and local institutions, demonstrating how a shared humanitarian cause can unite people from different backgrounds.

For Rotary District 2451, the marathon was never simply about running.



It was about keeping public awareness alive.

Although Egypt has remained free of wild poliovirus for many years, Rotary continues to support awareness campaigns because ending polio everywhere requires continued vigilance everywhere. As long as the virus exists anywhere in the world, children everywhere remain at risk.

That message has guided Rotary's global fight against polio since 1985, helping reduce cases worldwide by more than 99 percent through partnerships with governments, health organisations, volunteers, and millions

of supporters.

The Luxor marathon demonstrated how local action contributes to a global mission.

Community events like this do more than encourage physical activity. They create conversations, educate families, inspire volunteers, and remind communities that disease prevention is a shared responsibility.

For many participants, the marathon ended at the finish line.

For Abdallah, it became the beginning of an inspiring story.

His determination reminded ev-

eryone that changing the world rarely begins with giant leaps. More often, it begins with one small step taken with courage.

Across Africa, Rotary members continue working toward a future where no child will ever suffer from polio again.

In Luxor, one barefoot boy quietly reminded us why that journey must continue.

"Abdallah did not win the race, but his determination became the strongest message of the day: every step matters in the journey to End Polio."

PEACEBUILDING & CONFLICT PREVENTION

Building Peace from the Heart of Africa

At Makerere University, Rotary is preparing experienced African leaders to transform conflict, strengthen communities and build lasting peace.



Across Africa, peace is not an abstract ambition. It is reflected in whether families can live without fear, whether children can remain in school, whether displaced people can rebuild their lives, and whether communities can resolve differences without violence. At a time when conflict, inequality, climate-related pressures, displacement and social division

continue to threaten stability, Rotary has chosen to invest in one of the most enduring foundations of peace: skilled, ethical and community-rooted leadership.

That commitment is powerfully expressed through the Rotary Peace Center at Makerere University, an institution that has placed Uganda and Africa at the heart of Rotary's global peace-

building mission. More than a centre of academic learning, it is a platform for preparing experienced leaders to address conflict at its roots and turn knowledge into practical, lasting solutions.

The centre was officially launched in Kampala on 9 January 2020 through a partnership between Rotary International and Makerere University. Its estab-



ishment marked a historic milestone: Makerere became home to the first Rotary Peace Center in Africa. Located in the Great Lakes region, an area that has experienced some of the continent's most complex peace and security challenges, the university provides a meaningful setting for a programme dedicated to peacebuilding, conflict transformation and human development.

Hosted by Makerere University's Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, the centre offers advanced professional training in Peacebuilding, Conflict Transformation and Development. Its curriculum brings together theory, research and field-based practice, while engaging with issues that directly shape peace across the continent, including governance, human rights, media and conflict, climate change, forced migration, refugee protection

and community cohesion.

Its greatest strength lies in its practical approach. The programme is designed for experienced peace and development professionals who are already leading change in their communities and institutions. Fellows enter the programme with a social change initiative and use the fellowship experience to sharpen their ideas, strengthen their methods, expand their networks and increase the scale of their impact.

The centre is therefore not simply producing graduates. It is strengthening practitioners working on the front lines of community development, humanitarian response, mediation, governance, youth empowerment, gender justice, refugee support, social healing and institutional transformation. Each

fellow carries into the classroom the realities of a community, and returns to that community better equipped to lead, collaborate and build sustainable peace.

The Makerere centre forms part of Rotary's wider global investment in peace. Rotary awards up to 170 fully funded peace fellowships each year, enabling leaders from around the world to study at its peace centers. The fellowships cover tuition and fees, accommodation and meals, round-trip transportation, and internship or field-study expenses. Since the programme began in 2002, more than 1,800 fellows have been trained and now serve in over 140 countries across government, civil society, education, research, peace-keeping, law enforcement and international development.

For Uganda, the centre also



represents a significant Rotary legacy. Makerere University's account of its establishment recognised the support of the leadership of the then Rotary District 9211 and paid special tribute to Past District Governor Emmanuel Katongole, among other leaders, for helping the university secure the opportunity to host the centre. Their contribution demonstrates what becomes possible

when vision, strategic partnership and persistence are brought together in service of a greater purpose.

The importance of the Makerere Rotary Peace Center extends far beyond its location. It challenges the familiar narrative of Africa only as a continent affected by conflict and instead affirms Africa as a source of knowledge, leadership and solutions. African

peace practitioners are able to study within a context shaped by realities they understand, alongside peers who share a commitment to the communities they serve.

The centre also deepens cooperation among Rotary, universities, civil society, public institutions and communities. These connections matter because peace cannot be built by one



institution or profession alone. It requires people who can listen across differences, understand the causes of conflict, strengthen trust and translate dialogue into action.

At District 9214, we recognise the Rotary Peace Center at Makerere University as a powerful expression of Rotary's public promise. It shows that Rotary is not only speaking about peace; it is investing in the people, knowl-

edge and partnerships required to build it. It reflects our belief that meaningful service must be visible not merely in what we say, but in the lives, institutions and communities strengthened through our action.

Peace is not created by speeches alone. It is built by leaders with courage, competence, discipline and compassion. It is built when communities choose dialogue over division, justice over silence

and shared progress over despair. From the heart of Uganda, the Rotary Peace Center at Makerere University is helping Africa prepare a new generation of peacebuilders—one leader, one community and one lasting solution at a time.

Jospeh Batter Ssengooba
Rotary Club of Garuga
District Public Image Chair

From The Streets To Purpose

Every smile in this photo tells a story. Being with these boys in Cairo reminded me of my own journey as a street boy. Today, I stand as living proof that our beginnings do not define our destiny. Hope, kindness, and opportunity can change a life forever.

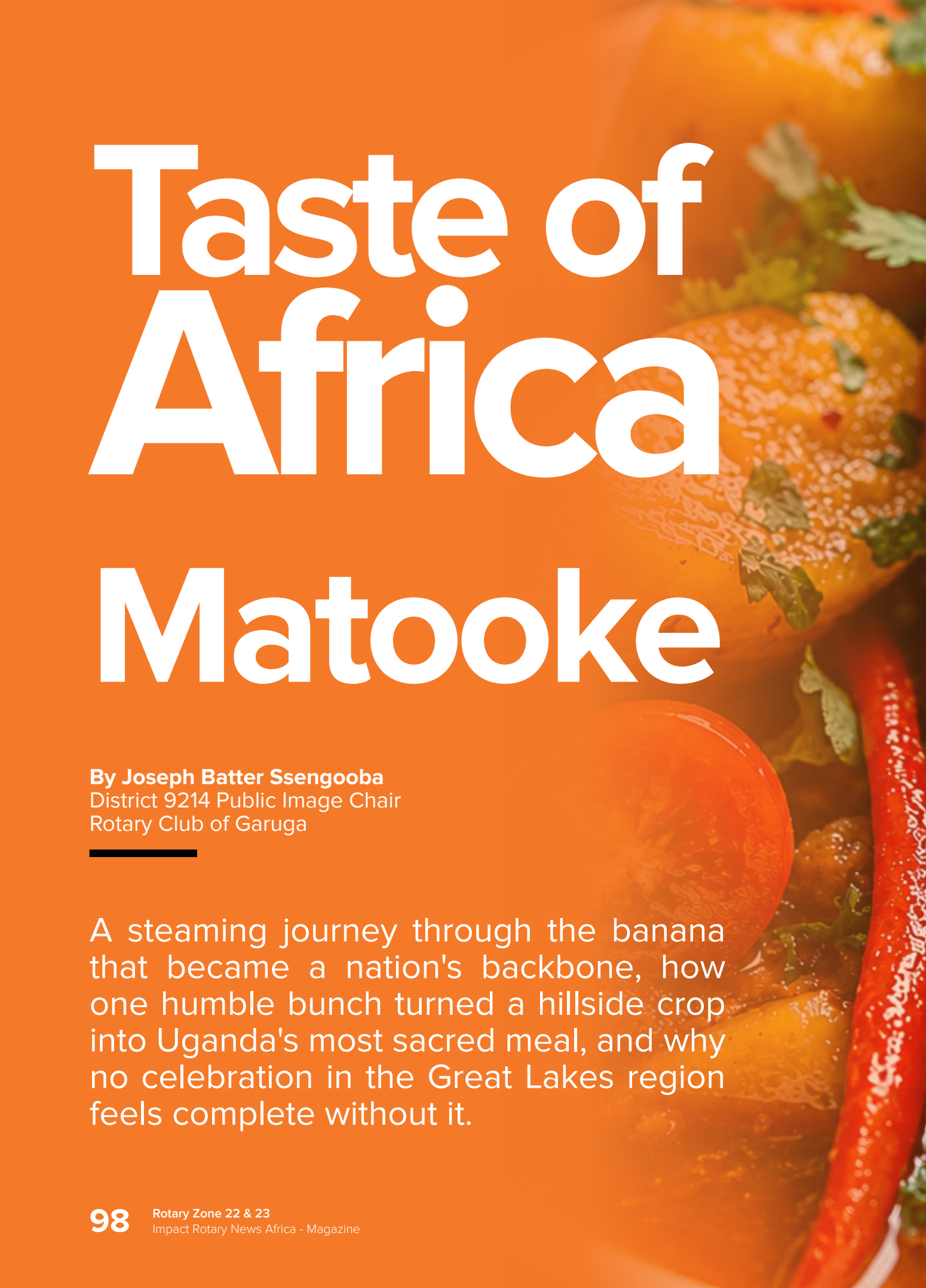
EMMANUEL KATONGOLE

Rotary International Director 2026-28.









Taste of Africa Matooke

By Joseph Batter Ssengooba
District 9214 Public Image Chair
Rotary Club of Garuga

A steaming journey through the banana that became a nation's backbone, how one humble bunch turned a hillside crop into Uganda's most sacred meal, and why no celebration in the Great Lakes region feels complete without it.





Let's get one thing straight: in Uganda, rice is a side dish, chapati is a snack, and potatoes are for other people. There is one food that sits at the head of the table, wrapped in its own leaves like a gift that already knows how good it is and that is matooke.

It does not matter whether the occasion is a wedding, a funeral, a Sunday visit to the village, or a Monday lunch that somehow feels like a small celebration anyway. The moment the banana leaves are peeled back and that soft, golden mound is set on

the table, the room goes quiet in the particular way that only good food commands.

And yet, for all the loyalty it inspires, matooke rarely gets its due outside the region that grows it. It is patient food slow to prepare, slower to rush and its story stretches from the volcanic hillsides of the Great Lakes to tables in Kampala, Kigali, Bujumbura, and now, thanks to a determined diaspora, London and Toronto too. That is not just a recipe. That is a way of life.

FAST FACTS: THE ORIGINS OF MATOOKE

Origin:	The Great Lakes region of East and Central Africa, cultivated for over a thousand years
Name:	'Matooke' (or 'a matooke') is Luganda for the starchy cooking banana, and the dish made from it
Ancestor crop:	The East African Highland Banana (Musa AAA-EA), believed to have arrived via ancient trade and migration routes from Southeast Asia through the Indian Ocean
Cultural role:	A staple so central to Buganda identity that it is often simply called 'food' emmere as though nothing else quite qualifies
Spread:	Grown and eaten across Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, eastern DR Congo, and northwestern Tanzania
Recognition:	Uganda is among the world's top producers and consumers of banana per capita, with matooke as the backbone of that reputation



Where It All Began



Long before it became the star of Sunday lunch, the banana travelled a remarkable distance to get to Uganda's hills. Historians and botanists trace the East African Highland Banana back to Southeast Asia, carried across the Indian Ocean and up through the Great Lakes basin over a thousand years ago. The volcanic soils and steady rainfall of the region particularly around Lake Victoria, Lake Kivu, and the highlands of southwestern Uganda turned out to be extraordinarily hospitable. The plant thrived, diversified into hundreds of local varieties, and quietly became the region's most important food crop.

In the Kingdom of Buganda, matooke grew into more than sustenance. It became a marker of hos-

pitality, a measure of a good host, and an unspoken rule of etiquette you do not visit a Muganda home and leave without being offered food, and that food is, more often than not, matooke steamed soft enough to be eaten with a spoon, or no cutlery at all.

The preparation itself is a small act of devotion. The green bananas are peeled a skill that takes longer to master than it looks then wrapped in their own leaves and steamed for hours over a slow fire until the flesh turns pale gold and yields to the lightest touch of a spoon. No other African staple asks quite so much patience of the cook, and none rewards it quite so generously.

“ You have not truly visited
a Ugandan home until you
have eaten matooke in it. ”

— *Taste of Africa: Matooke, the Green Gold of the
Great Lakes*



The Great Matooke Nations

Travel across the Great Lakes region and you will find that matooke, much like jollof further west, is one dish with many accents each community insisting, quietly or loudly, that theirs is the definitive version.

Buganda (Central Uganda) — The Purist

Steamed plain, dressed only in its own steam and butter

In the Buganda heartland, matooke is treated with something close to reverence. It is steamed for hours wrapped in its own leaves, mashed to a smooth, pale gold, and served simply softened with just a little ghee or butter, alongside a groundnut, meat, or fish sauce on the side. Purists insist that the banana should be the star, not a backdrop, and that any dish confident enough to need no seasoning has already won the argument.

Ankole (Southwestern Uganda) — The Enricher

Golden, glossy, and generous with the ghee

In Ankole cattle country, where herds and dairy define daily life, matooke gets a richer treatment. Generous amounts of ghee are stirred through the mash, giving it a glossy sheen and a deeper, almost caramel-edged flavour. It is usually served alongside milk, meat stews, or a peppery sauce, and locals will tell you gently, but firmly that matooke without ghee is a dish still finding itself.

Rwanda & Burundi — The Quiet Cousin

Known as igitoke, often paired with beans or peanut sauce

Cross into Rwanda or Burundi and the same banana appears under a different name — igitoke cooked in much the same slow, steamed style, though often served alongside beans, cassava leaves, or a peanut sauce. The presentation is humbler, the portions generous, and the dish carries the same unspoken message: this is what a proper meal looks like.



Eastern DR Congo & Northwestern Tanzania — The Border Dwellers

Shared hillsides, shared banana groves, shared table

Along the shared highlands near Lake Kivu and the Kagera basin, communities in eastern DR Congo and northwestern Tanzania grow and cook the same highland bananas, sometimes boiling rather than steaming them, and pairing the dish with fish from the lakes. Borders on a map mean little here the banana groves and the meals they produce cross freely, as they always have.

One Bunch, Many Blessings

What makes matooke remarkable is not complexity, it is patience, and the quiet confidence of a dish that has never needed to shout to be loved. Where jollof rice thrives on rivalry and firm opinions shared loudly in family group chats, matooke's story is one of steady devotion passed down through generations of hands that know exactly how long is long enough to steam a leaf-wrapped bundle until it is ready.

It is served at christenings and burials, at graduations and ordinary Tuesdays, always in roughly the same unhurried way, always met with roughly the same satisfied silence. Few dishes anywhere on the continent carry that kind of consistency across a lifetime, and fewer still carry it across borders quite so gracefully.



Some dishes argue for attention.



Matooke simply shows up, every time, and lets the silence at the table do the talking.

— *Taste of Africa: Matooke, the Green Gold of the Great Lakes*





**AFRICA
RISING**
Grow to Serve

Rotary
Zone 22



7th ALL AFRICA
ZONE INSTITUTE
UGANDA 2026

**SPEKE RESORT
MUNYONYO - KAMPALA**
Thursday, October 1 to
Saturday October 3, 2026

**OVER 1000
ALREADY
REGISTERED**

Extended rates from June 1, 2026, to July 31, 2026.

380 US\$

Rotarians
Spouses
Guests

220 US\$

Rotaractors

Secure your seat NOW.
Register on:

africazoneinstitute.org

UP TO 31
JULY