

By Ibrahim Ruhweza

Rotarians have been challenged to direct part of their humanitarian efforts towards transforming the communities in their home districts, arguing that many local areas remain underdeveloped despite producing influential and resourceful leaders.

The call was made by the executive director of the National Planning Authority, Joseph Muvawala, during the installation ceremony of the 39th president of the Rotary Club of Kampala North held in Kisugu, Muyenga, on Monday evening.

For years, Rotarians across Uganda have championed social and economic causes in different parts of the country, often far away from their ancestral homes. Many members argue that this reflects Rotary's principle of fairness and inclusive development, one of the organisation's famous four-way test values that asks: "Is it fair to all concerned?"

However, Muvawala said while supporting distant communities is noble, there is an urgent need for accomplished individuals to also uplift the areas that nurtured them.

Accordingly, in many villages and districts where some of the distinguished Rotarians come from, people are still struggling with poverty, poor schools and limited health services.

He asked, if those who have the knowledge, influence and

Rotarians urged to prioritise development in their home areas

PHOTO BY ALFRED OCHWO



Lumonya (centre), being installed as the 39th president of the Rotary Club of Kampala North in Muyenga, Kampala, yesterday

networks cannot transform their own communities, then who will? Muvawala reasoned that development must begin at home before it spreads elsewhere.

The economist used the example of the newly installed president, Olive Birungi Lumonya, whom fellow Rotarians described as a resilient and transformative leader committed to changing lives.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Speaking after her installation, Lumonya, revealed that her administration has already mobilised significant resources to support maternal and child health, education and youth empowerment projects.

Muvawala praised Lumonya for consistently giving back to her home sub-region of Busoga through education and child welfare initiatives, saying her work demonstrates the impact leaders can create when they remain connected to their roots.

"She stands as a living example of what true community service means. Women like Lumonya are rare because they sacrifice their time, resources and influence to ensure vulnerable girls and children are given hope. Her commitment to Busoga should inspire many other leaders," he said.

Over the years, Lumonya has built much of her public service around supporting vulnerable children, especially girls from disadvantaged families in Busoga sub-region.

Through her leadership at SOS Children's Villages Uganda and involvement in education campaigns, she has mobilised scholastic materials, advocated better learning conditions and encouraged leaders to invest in needy learners.

In districts such as Mayuge, Iganga, and Luuka, Lumonya supported initiatives aimed at helping girls stay in school despite poverty, early pregnancies and lack of necessities.

She also participated in the Busoga Education Initiative, a campaign that sought to improve academic

performance in some of the sub-region's worst-performing schools through fundraising, mentorship programmes and rehabilitation of struggling schools.

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"We have raised sh42m towards projects for my year in office, focusing on maternal and child health, education and youth employability," Lumonya said.

"In addition, through our proposal on promoting health, the Rotary Foundation approved a sh2.08b grant that is now being implemented across 31 high-volume health facilities in 14 districts across Uganda."

According to Lumonya, the beneficiary facilities include 16 health centre IVs and 15 health centre IIIs under a partnership spearheaded by Rotary District 9213.

She said Rotary District 9213, through Mama Toto Care and 45 Rotary clubs across Uganda, is implementing the Rotary Global Grant 'Empowering Families, Growing Futures' together with several stakeholders, including the health ministry and corporate partners.