

# Pr Kayanja in trouble over youth funds

To refund. Whereas Pr Kayanja and his church have denied allegations of ripping off the more than 100,000 youth, they have agreed to refund the money they collected through the youth groups.

## THE MONEY

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**The groups.** Flanking Pr Kayanja at his Channel 44 television on May 25, Mr Byamugisha said their organisation considered 1,143 groups of 10 people each to take part in the first phase of the programme in 2015.

**Payments.** Of these, he said, 443 groups were considered as "special groups" and, therefore, were not required to pay any money. The remaining 700 groups paid, with each contributing Shs500,000.

About Shs350m was realised from these groups, although Pr Kayanja claims some of the groups did not pay the full amount.

**KAMPALA.** Did a renowned local pastor and his associates con youth groups of at least Shs5b in what appears to be another of the many wealth creation scams in the country?

That is a question that has dominated debate since human rights lawyer Ladislaus Rwakafuzi wrote to Pr Robert Kayanja, the founder and senior pastor of the Rubaga-based Miracle Centre Church demanding for, among other things, accountability of at least Shs5b received and collected from the youth from as far back as 2015.

Mr Rwakafuzi was writing on behalf of more than 1,000 youth groups of 10 members each that subscribed to a programme "Version 86 Youth for National Transformation" (V86) spearheaded by Pr Kayanja. Majority of the groups paid Shs500,000 each as part of a registration process pending receipt of funds from government to help them alleviate poverty.

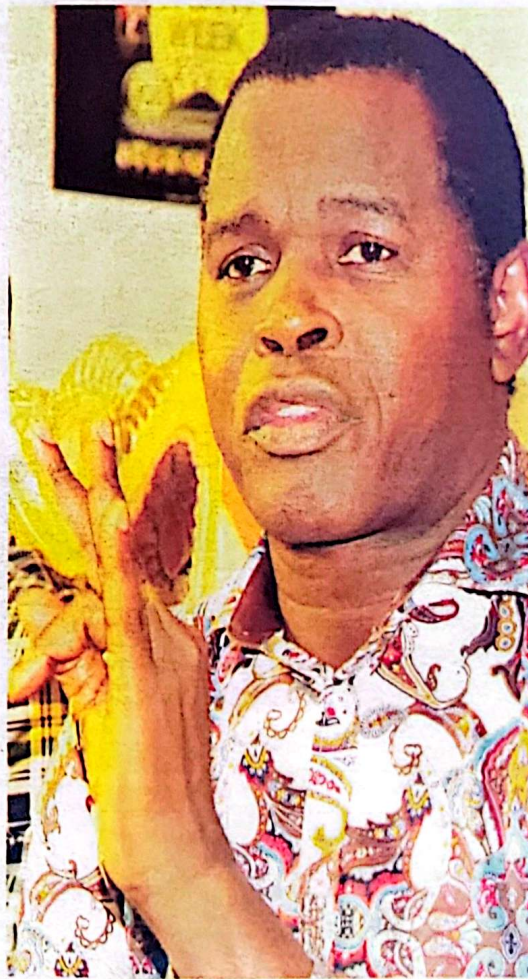
### Refunds

While Pr Kayanja and his Miracle Centre Cathedral team have denied allegations of ripping off the more than 100,000 youth, they have agreed to refund the money they collected through the youth groups.

"Our clients received Shs500,000 only from each group to assist them in registering as SACCOS and also drawing up business plans for the groups. This money has been refunded to those groups that have asked for it due to delay by government in releasing the funds," Pr Kayanja's lawyers of Katende Ssempebwa and Company write in a May 24 letter.

The law firm, on behalf of its clients, has asked any of the groups that paid and is in need of a refund to approach them for their money.

This newspaper could not independently verify whether Pastor Kayanja, the Miracle Centre Cathedral or the leadership of V86 have since received any money from government as per



Accused. Pastor Robert Kayanja. More than 1,000 youth groups accuse him of conning them of about Shs3.5 billion. PHOTO: JULE PHOTO

the directives of President Museveni. Sources that have previously worked with the programme told *Sunday Monitor* that while the group failed to secure funding through the Ministry of Gender, there is a strong possibility that the leadership could have accessed funds from other government sources following President Museveni's directives and that it is this speculation that rattled the youth.

"The President promised twice funding the young people in the organisation with money to prosper or start their businesses. The President

didn't deliver to his promises. The youth became impatient with the programme. V86 started refunding the groups their money. However, this information of refund didn't reach every group. Others started thinking Pr Kayanja received money (I don't know if he did) and he never called the groups back to distribute the money," a former associate at the programme told *Sunday Monitor*. The source explained the money was meant for facilitating the documentation process, and teaching group members businesses they can engage in, among other things.



### Counter-accusations.

"How does Shs142 million, which we still have for those youth, turn out to be Shs5b? Where did he (Rwakafuzi) get that figure?"

"... Of course he thinks you can hurt the church, not any more. We will not allow this nonsense to happen."

PR ROBERT KAYANJA

"If he [Pr Kayanja] begins saying we are malicing his church, then we may as well begin doubting his scheme even when there were good intentions in that scheme... Pr Kayanja should come out and name the person who failed his youthful recruits instead of attacking those seeking answers."

LADISLAUS RWAKAFUZI, LAWYER



Currently, V86 has 1.2 million members registered across the country, according to Mr Emmanuel Byamugisha, the acting chairperson of the entity.

Flanking Pr Kayanja at his Channel 44 television on May 25, Mr Byamugisha said their organisation considered 1,143 groups of 10 people each to take part in the first phase of the programme in 2015. Of these, he said, 443 groups were considered as "special groups" and, therefore, were not required to pay any money. The remaining 700 groups paid, with each contributing Shs500,000.

About Shs350m was realised from these groups, although Pr Kayanja claims some of the groups did not pay the full amount.

Trouble would soon surface with members becoming impatient in light of the V86 failing to deliver on its promises.

"Out of the 700, groups, 415 have been able to get refunds from November 2015 to date. Any group that has been requesting for a refund has been free to get its refund," Mr Byamugisha said.

### Kyanja speaks out

Speaking during the same programme, a visibly vexed Pr Kayanja went to Mr Rwakafuzi, accusing him of exaggerating the money owed to the youth groups and leaking the letter to mainstream and social media. This, he said, was not only an attack on his person but that of the church he superintends.

"... Of course he [Rwakafuzi] thinks you can hurt the church, not any more, not any more. We will not allow this nonsense to happen. People blackmailing the church and accusing it of anything, they don't know and yet these are credible people. If it is a young person spreading the rumour, you will say may be he doesn't know, maybe he is misguided but a lawyer, a senior counsel?"

In an interview, Mr Rwakafuzi said Pr Kayanja was unfair to attack his person yet he only sought to get answers on behalf of young people.

"If he begins saying we are malicing his church, then we may as well begin doubting his scheme even when there were good intentions in that scheme. Personally, I have never doubted him, he is a person very close to President Museveni and he could use his closeness to get some funding for the youth, which would be laudable," he said.

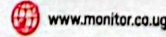
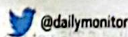
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