



DIARY OF A BADDIE

with
Angela Kateemu

Dear Diary,

I no longer believe anyone in Kampala is actually broke. I think we are all just participating in a city-wide financial improv exercise.

Every single day, people are on X tweeting about the economy collapsing, and every single night, those exact same people are ordering tequila towers in Kololo like descendants of oil money. A Kampala person could have Shs14,000 left in their account and still confidently reply: "Say less. Outside-st!"

Because somehow, despite fuel prices peaking everyday like an overzealous mountain climber, despite rent behaving like it has a personal vendetta against your bloodline, and despite school fees season arriving with the emotional trauma of a military operation, this city simply will not stay home.

This month alone, rent, school fees, Yaka (yes, I still refuse to call it Light), and National Water bills all landed at the same time like a coordinated spiritual attack.

Naturally, everybody spent the

entire week lamenting. "School fees week!" Others declared the economy needed a National Day of Prayer, that fuel was now basically liquid gold, and that everyone desperately needed a side hustle.

Then Friday reached.

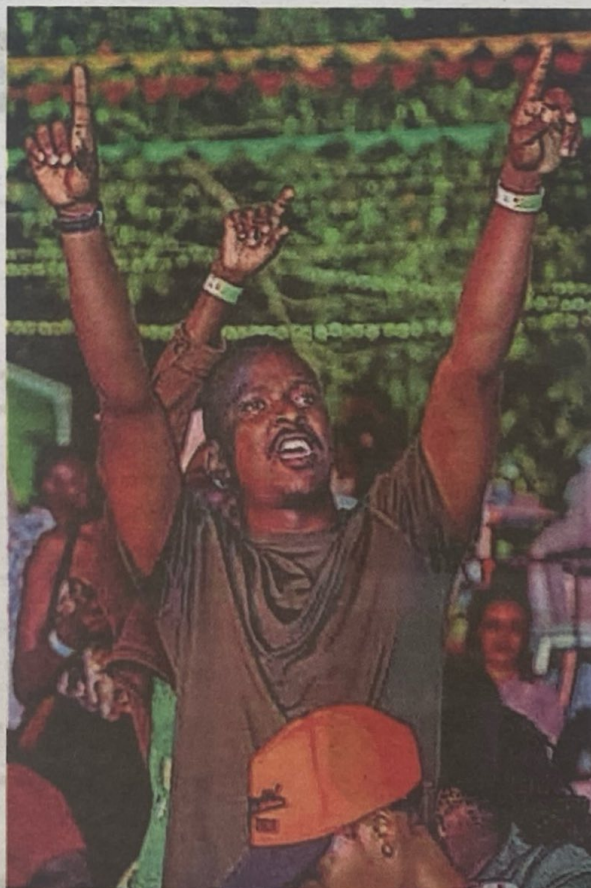
And suddenly, Bandali Rise looked like the economy had fully recovered and the IMF had just forgiven all our debts. The parking was full, the whisky was flowing, and people were laughing loudly with fully moisturised, tax-free confidence.

At this point, our entire financial system seems to be operating on Eddy Kenzo mathematics: "If you earn Shs4,000, spend Shs5,000, and save Shs1,000." Economically? It makes absolutely no sense. But spiritually? Very Kampala!

Everybody is financially distressed by daytime, and financially irresponsible by sunset. At 11am, people are reposting fuel prices and discussing the budget like senior economic analysts.

By 8pm, the exact same analysts are under fairy lights saying,

Kampala Economy: We are all one brunch away from financial collapse



"Bring one more round. Life is short!" And just like that, cement money is gone.

As a country, our level of financial optimism needs to be studied by scientists.

Nobody has money, yet every high-end bar, and *kafunda* are packed. Nobody is okay, yet every brunch on Sunday is two hours of waiting before you can get served.

People are publicly discussing budgeting strategies while privately financing their enjoyment through WhatsApp messages that begin with: "My guy, send me something small quick quick... I am expecting some ka-money!"

We no longer pretend enjoyment is optional. Rent may wait, and savings may collapse, but the vibes must survive. We have mastered the art of emotional budgeting. We may not have inner peace, and we definitely do not have emergency funds, but we shall have grilled pork, Double Black, and Amapiano under good lighting. Because suffering privately is no longer enough. It must also be aesthetic.

And nobody lies better to themselves than a Kampala person making a "quick plan." There

is no such thing as "one drink" in this city. It is a slippery, dangerous slope where one drink inevitably becomes pork, pork becomes a bottle contribution, and the bottle contribution becomes the fateful phrase, "Let us pass somewhere small." Before you know it, it is 3am, you have acquired three new best friends, and someone is pitching a crypto-farming business idea nobody will remember tomorrow.

Maybe financial discipline is important. Maybe we should all save more. Maybe the economy is genuinely terrifying.

But somewhere in Kampala, a person whose account balance is currently reading 2K is swirling a glass of wine. It is the most aggressive form of positive self-deception. We are all just one Mobile Money notification away from total financial collapse, but colleagues, money is coming!

The moment the music stops and the lights go down, that is when the real accounting starts. Until then? We are all CEOs of Vibes Inc.

XoXo,

—TheKat