

# CHARMAR MAGAZINE

*it simply matters*



Vol. 2 Issue 8 November 2025

## Leading Africa

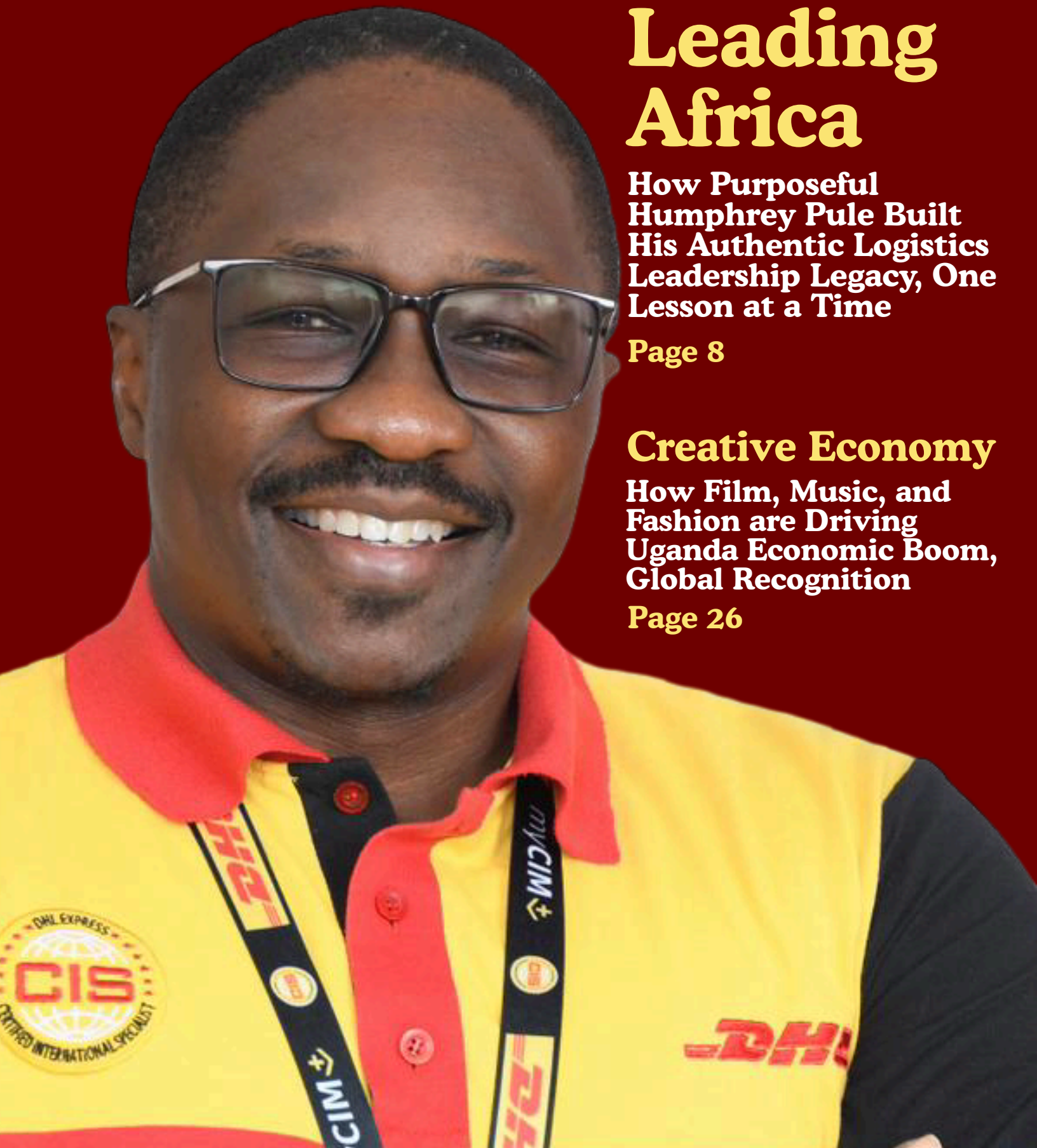
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**Singer Sheebah is enjoying every inch of motherhood, if the pictures she shares are anything to go by. She recently travelled with Babby Amir to London, where the father of the child reportedly lives.**

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

# A Season of Reckoning and Renewal: Uganda Prepares to Step Into 2026

As 2025 draws to a close, Uganda stands at a critical juncture, a moment suspended between reflection and anticipation. The year has been one of profound tests and quiet triumphs, a period when the nation's resilience was once again summoned, and its spirit of reinvention shone through.

From the classrooms to the boardrooms, from the fields of Karamoja to the skyline of Kampala, Ugandans have wrestled with change, demanding fairness, accountability, and progress that touches every corner of the nation. The recent teachers' strike, the renewed debates on public service equity, the continuing fight against climate impacts, and the unrelenting push for homegrown innovation have all revealed something vital: Uganda is a nation refusing to settle for the status quo.

2025 has reminded us that progress isn't a straight line. It's a negotiation between the urgency of today's struggles and the promise of tomorrow's opportunities. We've seen how the youth continue to redefine leadership and expression, turning to technology, art, and social enterprise to tell a more honest story of who we are. The creative economy has blossomed into a powerful voice of identity, and Ugandan fashion, film, and music are no longer shy participants on the global stage.

As we look toward 2026, an election year, Uganda finds itself at another point of decision. The coming months will test our maturity as a democracy and as citizens. It will be a time to choose dialogue over division, integrity over impulse, and shared progress over personal gain. The choices made in this season will ripple far beyond politics; they will shape the social and economic soul of the country for years to come.

Yet, amid all the noise and negotiation, there's a quiet truth that defines us: Ugandans are builders. We turn adversity into invention and setbacks into stories of survival. The energy sector is expanding, agriculture is modernising, and the creative industries are globalising.

At Charmar, we see 2026 as a year to anchor our national identity in purpose and reinvention. A year to elevate dialogue, empower innovation, and champion the voices that refuse to be silenced. The stories we will tell will not just chronicle Uganda's evolution but celebrate its unyielding optimism.

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## Kenzo secures 2nd Grammy nomination



Music superstar Eddy Kenzo has once again brought immense pride to the Pearl of Africa, securing a nomination for the prestigious 2026 Grammy Awards. His song "Hope and Love," featuring Mehran Martin, has been nominated in the "Best African Music Performance" category, marking Kenzo's second career Grammy nod.

This latest recognition follows Kenzo's groundbreaking 2023 nomination for "Gimme Love" with American singer Matt B, which made him the first Ugandan artist to achieve such a feat. The consecutive nominations are a clear testament to his expanding international influence and his unwavering commitment to showcasing Ugandan and, indeed, African music on the world's most prominent stages. "Hope and Love" is a vibrant track that masterfully blends characteristic Afrobeat rhythms with soulful vocals and uplifting lyrics.



## I don't own the rights to my hit songs – Buchaman

In a powerful critique that exposes the long-standing issue of artist exploitation within the Ugandan music industry, former Firebase Crew Vice President Buchaman has revealed that he holds no copyright ownership over the extensive catalog of music he recorded and released during his influential time with the Bobi Wine-led group.

Buchaman, a key figure in the rise of the Firebase, expressed deep disappointment during a recent press address, lamenting that many artists who created massive hits years ago are left with little commercial control over their legacy work today. "I don't own any copyright over all the songs I did under Firebase Crew," Buchaman stated unequivocally. "Firebase and Dream Studios own all the rights to all the music we did under the record label." The revelation underscores the structure of older recording agreements in Uganda, often favoring the management and production entities over the performing artist. Buchaman explained that these arrangements typically involved releasing music in bulk, effectively transferring commercial ownership to the label or studio. "We always released them as albums, and the labels always took the rights," he continued. "I can only perform [the songs] but can't own them. Even if I upload them online, they will be taken down."

## Florence Nampijja quits BBS TV after a decade of service

After nearly ten years of dedicated service, Florence Nampijja recently announced her departure from BBS Television, marking the end of a remarkable chapter in her professional journey. In a heartfelt message to her colleagues, Nampijja expressed deep gratitude for the experience and friendships she has built over the years.

"Spending nearly 10 fantastic years here has been an invaluable experience, and I deeply appreciate the time I've spent working with each of you. Thank you for making my time here so memorable," she wrote. During her decade at BBS, Nampijja has been a familiar and respected figure, contributing to the station's growth and shaping its reputation as one of Uganda's leading media houses. Colleagues describe her as a dedicated professional whose passion, teamwork, and positive spirit left a lasting mark on the newsroom and beyond.

## Aaronx confesses troubled childhood: "I stole from my mother"



Fast-rising Ugandan music sensation Aaronx has shared a candid and surprising revelation about his childhood, admitting he once led a life of petty theft. In a recent interview, the artist confessed to a past where he regularly stole money from his mother, driven by an insatiable desire to play video games.

"I was a petty thief while growing up. I used to steal my mother's money and go to play video games," Aaronx openly stated, offering a rare glimpse into a side of his early life previously unknown to his growing fanbase. The confession sheds light on a period marked by youthful indiscretion rather than malice.

The admission highlights a stark contrast between his early struggles and his current trajectory as a successful musician. Despite this troubled past, Aaronx has demonstrably turned his life around, channeling his energy and passion into building a thriving career in the competitive music industry.

His journey from a mischievous child funding a video game obsession through forbidden means to a celebrated artist underscores a powerful narrative of transformation and resilience. Aaronx's willingness to be transparent about his past not only connects him more deeply with his audience but also serves as an inspiring testament to overcoming early challenges to achieve success.

## Promoter remanded to Luzira over Ssebata concert debt

Renowned events promoter Mariam Mutakubwa, popularly known as Biggie Events, was remanded to Luzira Prison for a period of six months following her failure to repay a debt of UGX 70,050,700 owed to Mr. David Tumusiime Amooti.

The substantial debt reportedly stems from funds borrowed by Mutakubwa last year to organize musician Lord Fred Ssebata's concert, which was held at the prestigious Serena Hotel in Kampala.

According to reports, since the concert, Mutakubwa has allegedly failed to settle the outstanding amount, reportedly ignoring multiple court summons issued in attempts to resolve the financial dispute. Her persistent absence led the court to issue a directive, urging anyone who encountered her to report her to the nearest police station or bring her directly to court.

Her evasion came to an end recently when Court Bailiff Komugisha Sarah apprehended Mutakubwa at her workplace. She was then taken directly to Buganda Road Court for a hearing.

During the court session, the judge ruled that Promoter Biggie be remanded to Luzira Prison for a period of six months. The court further stipulated that upon completion of her sentence, Mutakubwa is still obligated to repay the full amount of UGX 70,050,700 to David Tumusiime Amooti.



# Leading Africa

## How Purposeful Humphrey Pule Built His Authentic Logistics Leadership Legacy, One Lesson At A Time

**BY RODNEY AIJUKA**

From the quiet streets of Luzira in Kampala, Uganda, to boardrooms across Africa, Humphrey Pule's story is one of grit, grace, and grounded leadership. A man shaped by faith, family, and a deep sense of purpose, Pule has navigated the world of logistics with rare authenticity, balancing ambition with empathy and results with respect. As Assistant Regional Director for Western and Central Africa, he brings not only technical mastery but also a human touch to leadership in an industry defined by precision and pace. In this revealing conversation with Charmar Magazine, Pule reflects on the journey that has shaped his character and career, the mentors who molded his path, and the values that continue to guide him in leading with integrity and impact.

**How would you describe who you are at your core, what inspires you, and the journey that has shaped you into the person and professional you are today?**

I was born in 1977 in Luzira, Uganda, into a humble family. Both my parents were bankers at the old Uganda Commercial Bank. I grew up in a semi-village setting, with gardens,





### **Pule has navigated the world of logistics with rare authenticity**

livestock, and neighbors walking or cycling to work. At my core, I am an authentic leader: simple, curious, and deeply driven by impact. I'm constantly learning, calm and balanced, and approach ambition in a measured, realistic way. Faith and family are central to who I am. I'm a devoted Christian and an active parent of four children—two daughters who are academic and research-driven, and two energetic sons. Sports have also shaped me: I represented Uganda in under-19 cricket and played club football.

Professionally, I call myself a logistician. My journey began with SDV (then Transami) as a graduate trainee, learning warehouse management, sales, and commercial operations under incredible mentors like Juliet Kagwa, Charles Minor, Pamela Rwanyarare, and Lilian. I later joined Kuehne + Nagel as a sales executive. Then, I moved to Kenfreight, MSC's logistics arm, from 2008 to 2012. In 2012, I became country manager for DHL Global Forwarding, a defining moment in my career.

Looking back, my journey has been shaped by curiosity, resilience, and a strong work ethic, learning from both exceptional and challenging managers. I've witnessed logistics evolve from manual, paper-based systems to fully integrated global operations, and I remain inspired by the endless challenges and opportunities the industry offers.

### **Thinking about your career path, was it something you always envisaged, or did life redirect you into logistics, and what have you learned?**

Honestly, I never imagined I'd end up here, not in a million years. I always knew I'd be in logistics, but when I started, the industry had a ceiling. The people at the top were exceptional; many had regional experience or had worked abroad and returned home. At the time, I just wanted to be reliable, to learn, and to make a decent life in Uganda. My biggest dream then was maybe working for the UN in a logistics-related role.

So, to now serve as Assistant Regional Director for Western and Central Africa still feels surreal. My journey

wasn't one of clear foresight; it's been a series of redirections, both divine and deliberate. Some doors opened because I raised my hand, like when I volunteered to move to Ghana during a near-crisis; others opened through circumstances beyond my control. But in all of it, logistics remained the constant thread. Looking back, I see a benevolent hand guiding my steps, turning what seemed like detours into defining moments. I've learned that purpose often reveals itself in motion—you may not see the full picture at the start, but if you stay faithful, curious, and ready to serve, life has a way of taking you exactly where you're meant to be.

### **Who would you say played the most defining role in shaping both your professional identity and your character, and how did their influence manifest in your leadership style?**

It's hard to credit just one person for shaping my professional identity or leadership style. My journey has been defined by lessons gathered from different people at different stages of my life. From my father, I learned the value of work, honesty, and responsibility. As a child, he trusted me with small but meaningful tasks—like going to the bank or helping around the house. That trust built in me a quiet confidence and sense of accountability that has never left.

When I began my career, I was blessed to cross paths with people whose professionalism and integrity set the tone for how I wanted to lead. From Juliet Kagwa and Patrick Adengo, I learned that your name and your word are your bond and that respect is earned through diligence, humility, and consistency.

From Suki, I learned finance and commercial acumen—lessons I initially resisted but which transformed how I understood business: not just as movement of goods, but as creating value and profitability with purpose.

Later, mentors like John Michael Kayaki and Hussein Kidi at Kenfreight refined my sense of discipline and structure. Kayaki taught me the power of preparation—running meetings with clarity, taking meticulous notes, and maintaining professionalism even in tough negotiations. From him, I also learned the art of saying “no”—something many struggle with but which is vital to integrity in business. Hussein, on the other hand, taught me precision, record-keeping, and how to present arguments grounded in fact and logic.

All these influences collectively shaped me into a leader who values authenticity, structure, empathy, and accountability. I’ve learned to stay close to my teams, to walk the floor, listen, and understand their world, because real leadership isn’t built from an air-conditioned office; it’s built in the details, in the trenches, and in the trust you earn every day.

**Early in your career you likely encountered tests of resolve. Can you share one such moment, what made it difficult, and how you pushed through it?**

Early in my leadership journey, I transitioned into a new organization where the culture was quite different from what I was used to. In my previous role, the team had grown together—we were aligned, focused, and achieving strong results. But in



this new environment, things were loosely structured, and everyone was moving in different directions. My task was to refocus the company around clear goals and a shared purpose, which was met with resistance, including from one team leader who subtly led a small rebellion. It was a real test of resolve—balancing firmness with openness and conviction with empathy. I had to stay consistent and not cave in, even when some doubted the new approach. I gave space for questions and concerns but held the line on direction. In the end, it proved sustainable, and the team began to see the results of clarity and focus. That experience reminded me that leadership often requires calm strength—and that conviction, not popularity, sustains impact.

**Can you pinpoint the turning point that most transformed how you view leadership and purpose, and why it stands out?**

After more than two decades in leadership, one experience still stands out as the moment that completely reshaped how I view leadership and purpose. Early in my career, I

I accompanied my boss to visit one of our biggest clients, a highly influential businessman. During that meeting, I witnessed the client verbally abuse his assistant so harshly that she could barely serve tea; her hands were trembling as she tried to hold the tray. I instinctively took the spoon from her and served the tea myself.

That moment broke something in me—and built something too. I realized how deeply leadership can impact the lives and dignity of others. I vowed never to take lightly the power I hold over people’s confidence, growth, or sense of worth. From then on, I committed to leading with firmness, yes, but also with empathy and respect—ensuring that even in correction or tough conversations, people leave better, not broken.

**What is your approach to nurturing the next generation of logistics and supply chain leaders, and why does it matter?**

Mentorship, for me, is both a responsibility and a calling. My approach to nurturing young professionals begins with authenticity: sharing the real lessons—both the wins and the mistakes—so they can build on what we’ve learned. I believe in teaching the next generation that logistics is more than moving goods; it’s enabling business, driving growth, and shaping nations. I emphasize professionalism, ethics, and integrity—showing up on time, keeping your word, and respecting your clients. While technology and AI continue to redefine our work, the human touch remains irreplaceable. It’s about curiosity, responsiveness, and genuine partnership with customers. That’s the mindset I try to pass on, because the future of logistics depends on leaders who are not only skilled but also grounded, ethical, and impact-driven.



**Having led teams remotely across multiple countries and cultures, what have you learned about people and about yourself through these diverse leadership experiences?**

Leading teams across different countries and cultures has been one of the most humbling experiences of my career. What I've learned is that, at our core, people everywhere want to feel seen, trusted, and understood. While we may share a common business language, the context—cultural, social, and even emotional—is never the same. The way you do business in Uganda is completely different from Kenya, Tanzania, or Côte d'Ivoire, and real leadership begins when you slow down enough to understand those nuances. I've learned to lead less by instruction and more by intention—to coach, not command. My role is to guide thinking, not replace it; to ask the kind of questions that help people find their own conviction and confidence. That shift has required patience, trust, and humility—knowing that real ownership comes when ideas are born from within the team, not imposed from above. Perhaps the biggest growth for me has been learning to be comfortable with progress that doesn't always happen overnight. Sometimes the most powerful leadership moments come the next day, when someone calls and says, "I've been thinking about what you asked—I think I've found the answer." That's when I know we're truly leading together.

**If you had to write a letter to your younger self, what would you say to him, and what wisdom would you want him to carry forward?**

If I could write to my younger self, I'd say: stress less—life's challenges come and go. Breathe, read more, and learn constantly. Develop self-awareness early and embrace your most authentic, positive self unapologetically, without mistaking authenticity for rudeness or disregard for others. I'd remind myself that I have more capability than I often believe, and it's okay to make mistakes—they aren't disasters, but lessons. I'd encourage myself to speak up earlier in professional settings, to be intentional with my voice, and to trust in my own growth and potential.

Above all, I'd say cultivate authenticity, humility, and resilience early, and carry them as a foundation for both personal and professional life.

**Years from now when people reflect on your leadership legacy, what do you hope they'll say you stood for, both as a business leader and as a human being?**

Years from now, I hope people remember me as a leader who stood for excellence, professionalism, and authentic, ethical leadership. I want my name to be synonymous with integrity and a positive impact—someone who helped colleagues grow, learn, and become better both professionally and personally.

As a human being, I hope my legacy reflects humility, service above self, and hard work. I want my journey—from growing up in Luzira, playing football and netball in the community, to navigating the professional world—to inspire others. I want people to see that with belief, relentless effort, and a commitment to doing what's right, anyone can succeed.

Ultimately, I hope my legacy encourages others to pursue their goals authentically, apply themselves fully, and make a meaningful, positive difference in their work, communities, and the lives of those around them.

**Finally, is there anything else you'd like to share—a thought, reflection, or message that captures the essence of your journey and outlook on life?**

Looking back on my journey, one lesson stands out: the importance of balancing results with respect. Leadership isn't just about strategy, numbers, or achievement—it's about coupling ambition with integrity, emotional intelligence, and human connection. Decisions guided by conviction, rooted in what is right, honorable, and good, give you the courage to take bold, ethical action, even in uncharted territory. If there is one thought I'd leave, it's this: true leadership is measured not only by outcomes but also by how you treat people, uphold your values, and create lasting, positive impact. When ambition and respect coexist, when results are achieved without compromising integrity, you build not just successful teams and businesses, but a meaningful legacy—one that reflects both the head and the heart and inspires others long after you've gone.






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# The Rise of Afro-Luxe

## African designers redefining high fashion with heritage and tech

The world of high fashion is no longer the exclusive playground of Paris, Milan, or New York. From the bustling streets of Kampala to the cosmopolitan avenues of Cape Town, African designers are boldly carving a new lane in global couture, a movement fashion insiders are calling “Afro-Luxe.”

At its core, Afro-Luxe celebrates African heritage while embracing innovation, blending traditional craftsmanship with cutting-edge design, sustainable fabrics, and digital technologies. It is a sartorial statement that says African fashion is not just vibrant and culturally rich — it is globally competitive.



**Afro-Luxe celebrates African heritage while embracing innovation and traditional craftsmanship**



Take Kampala-based label Nkima Luxe, for instance. Founded by designer Amina Ssebunya, the brand fuses traditional barkcloth and kitenge with contemporary silhouettes that have caught the attention of buyers from London. “Afro-Luxe is about telling our stories through fabric and design,” Ssebunya says. “We are taking what is inherently African and translating it into a language the world understands which is elegance, sophistication, and sustainability.” Sustainability is a defining pillar of the movement. Designers across the continent are exploring organic cotton, recycled textiles, and indigenous materials.



**Designers across the continent are exploring organic cotton, recycled textiles, & indigenous materials.**

Cape Town's Zulu Élan, led by Afro-Luxe brands are not just winning As the movement gains momentum, Afro-Luxe is more than a trend — it is a cultural and economic revolution. From the draping of kente in Johannesburg to the sleek lines of Ugandan silk on European runways, Africa's fashion identity is bold, unapologetic, and unmistakably luxurious. The world is watching, and Afro-Luxe is here to stay.

Thandiwe Ndlovu, combines hearts online; they are making waves on hand-dyed fabrics and 3D-printed traditional runways. Designers like Moyo & Co. from Lagos and Uganda's Kifalme Atelier have showcased collections at Paris Fashion Week, London Fashion Week, and New York Fashion Week. Celebrities and fashion influencers are embracing Afro-Luxe, wearing pieces that carry the stories, colors, and textures of Africa to red carpets and magazine spreads worldwide.

Digital innovation is also reshaping Afro-Luxe. Virtual fashion shows, augmented reality fittings, and NFT-based collections are giving African designers a worldwide audience without the carbon footprint of traditional runway tours. In 2025, the first-ever virtual Afro-Luxe runway streamed live from Nairobi attracted over 1.2 million viewers globally, a testament to the movement's growing international appeal.

Beyond aesthetics, Afro-Luxe is redefining the economics of African fashion. By blending artisanal techniques with modern luxury marketing, designers are creating high-value brands that challenge global perceptions about African creativity. Fashion consultant David Ochieng notes, "Afro-Luxe is shifting the narrative. Africa is not just a source of inspiration; it is now a source of innovation, luxury, and global influence."

This is the era of "Afro-Luxe," a powerful movement where heritage, innovation, and an unwavering sense of identity are being woven into the very fabric of high fashion. For too long, the narrative of African fashion has been confined to stereotypes. Today, a new generation of designers is shattering those limitations, meticulously blending ancestral traditions with cutting-



Today, a new generation of designers is shattering those limitations, meticulously blending ancestral traditions with cutting-edge techniques, sustainable practices, and a bold vision for the future. From the intricate beadwork of Maasai warriors to the rich patterns of Kente cloth, these designers are not merely referencing their heritage; they are reinterpreting it through a lens of contemporary haute couture.

This renaissance is fueled by a growing emphasis on sustainability. Many African brands are at the forefront of this movement, championing locally sourced, eco-friendly materials like organic cotton, recycled fabrics, and innovative plant-based textiles. This conscious approach to production resonates deeply with a global consumer base increasingly seeking ethical and environmentally responsible fashion choices.



But Afro-Luxe is more than just sustainable threads. It's also about embracing digital innovation. Designers are leveraging augmented reality to showcase collections, utilizing NFTs to authenticate unique pieces, and building direct-to-consumer platforms that bypass traditional retail gatekeepers. This embrace of technology allows them to reach a wider audience and exert greater control over their brand narrative.

The result? African designers are no longer aspiring to be on global runways; they are commanding them. Collections that once graced exclusive local boutiques are now making powerful statements at Paris Fashion Week, Milan Fashion Week, and New York Fashion Week, earning critical acclaim and sparking international demand.



**At its core, Afro-Luxe celebrates African heritage while embracing innovation, blending traditional craftsmanship with cutting-edge design, sustainable fabrics, and digital technologies.**

# Sustainable living becomes the new luxury



## Beyond fashion, sustainability is reshaping the African built environment.

Across Africa, a new paradigm of luxury is emerging, one where opulence is measured not by excess, but by conscious choice and environmental responsibility. From the vibrant runways of Kampala to the innovative architectural designs in urban centers, a burgeoning "eco-chic" movement is demonstrating that sustainability isn't just responsible—it's undeniably elegant. The earthy scent of sun-baked soil and the rich tapestry of African tradition are increasingly inspiring a wave of designers, architects, and lifestyle brands who are rewriting the definition of luxury. Gone are the days when extravagance was solely about lavish display; today, across the continent, eco-consciousness is taking root as the new marker of sophistication.

### Fashion Forward with a Conscience

African fashion, long celebrated for its heritage, vibrant colors, and exquisite craftsmanship, is now embracing a crucial new dimension: sustainability. Designers are leading the charge, transforming discarded materials and ethically sourced fabrics into covetable couture that tells a story of both culture and care. Ugandan label Fine Grade, founded by William Mukama, exemplifies this shift. Blending traditional African fabrics with eco-friendly practices, Fine Grade utilizes organic cotton, recycled materials, and natural dyes to create pieces that resonate with a global audience. "Luxury today isn't just about aesthetic appeal; it's about responsibility," Mukama explains. "Our pieces celebrate culture while minimizing environmental impact."

Fashion shows in Kampala, Johannesburg, and Nairobi are increasingly spotlighting collections that are as ethical as they are beautiful, attracting global buyers seeking conscious luxury.

### Architecture for a Greener Tomorrow

Beyond fashion, sustainability is reshaping the African built environment. Architects are looking to ancient wisdom and innovative technologies to craft structures that are both stunning and enduring. Eco-friendly materials, solar-powered designs, and water-efficient systems are becoming central to modern homes and commercial spaces.

Ugandan architect Arnold Mukisa is at the forefront of this movement, leading projects that incorporate local bamboo, recycled timber, and passive cooling techniques to drastically reduce energy consumption without compromising elegance. "People want homes that reflect their values," Mukisa states. "Sustainability isn't about sacrifice; it's about creating spaces that are beautiful, functional, and environmentally responsible."

**"Luxury today isn't just about aesthetic appeal; it's about responsibility," Mukama explains.**

Luxury residential projects across the continent are marrying minimalist design with green principles, making eco-conscious living aspirational rather than restrictive.

### Beyond the Fabric and Foundation

The eco-chic movement extends far beyond fashion and architecture, permeating various lifestyle sectors. African brands are demonstrating that luxury and sustainability are not mutually exclusive, curating experiences and products that prioritize quality, longevity, and minimal environmental impact.

In the beauty industry, Ghana's Shea Republic uses ethically sourced shea butter, supporting local communities while providing natural, high-quality skincare. Similarly, Kenyan homeware brands are producing stylish and durable products from recycled glass and upcycled fabrics, transforming waste into objects of desire. Even urban restaurants and cafés are embracing sustainability, with zero-waste menus, biodegradable packaging,

and locally sourced ingredients becoming key selling points for the socially and environmentally conscious consumer.

### The Appeal of Conscious Consumption

Sustainability in Africa is no longer a niche concept; it's rapidly becoming aspirational. Particularly among urban millennials and Gen Z, there's a growing willingness to pay a premium for products and experiences that align with their values. This fundamental shift is reshaping markets, signaling that true luxury today is as much about ethics and provenance as it is about aesthetics.

Fashion consultant Thandiwe Ndlovu observes, "The new luxury in Africa is about responsibility. It's about making choices that reflect style, culture, and care for the planet."

### Navigating Challenges, Embracing Opportunities

Despite the significant momentum, the eco-chic movement faces challenges. Eco-friendly materials can sometimes be more costly, supply

chains for sustainable products are still developing, and widespread awareness about the benefits of sustainability continues to grow. Yet, these very obstacles are inspiring innovation. African designers and entrepreneurs are finding creative solutions, from localized sourcing and community-based artisanal production to ingenious upcycling, making eco-conscious living both accessible and aspirational.

### A Green and Elegant Future for Africa

Africa's eco-luxury movement is more than a fleeting trend; it is a powerful cultural and economic statement. By blending elegance with environmental stewardship, African designers, architects, and lifestyle brands are establishing a new standard of living—one where sophistication is measured not just by wealth, but by informed, conscious choice.

As Fine Grade's William Mukama aptly puts it, "Being stylish is no longer enough. True luxury is knowing that your choices reflect care—for your culture, your community, and your planet."

The rise of "Eco-Chic Africa" is a testament to the continent's ingenuity, its deep connection to the land, and its vision for a future where elegance and environmental responsibility walk hand-in-hand. As global consumers increasingly seek products with purpose and provenance, Africa is poised to become a leading destination for conscious luxury, proving that the most desirable possessions are those that are good for the planet, good for its people, and undeniably, exquisitely chic.



**Africa is poised to become a leading destination for conscious luxury**



# **NOMINATED PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES**

**GENERAL ELECTIONS 2025/2026**

<b>CANDIDATE</b>	<b>PARTY</b>
<b>YOWERI TIBUHABURWA KAGUTA MUSEVENI</b>	<b>National Resistance Movement (NRM)</b>
<b>KASIBANTE ROBERT</b>	<b>National Peasants Party (NPP)</b>
<b>MABIRIZI JOSEPH</b>	<b>Conservative Party (CP)</b>
<b>NANDALA MAFABI JAMES NATHAN</b>	<b>Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)</b>
<b>MUGISHA GREGORY MUNTU OYERA</b>	<b>Alliance for National Transformation (ANT)</b>
<b>KYAGULANYI SSENTAMU ROBERT</b>	<b>National Unity Platform (NUP)</b>
<b>MUNYAGWA MUBARAK SSERUNGA</b>	<b>Common Man's Party (CMP)</b>
<b>BULIRA FRANK KABINGA</b>	<b>Revolutionary People's Party (RPP)</b>

# Reframing ‘Self-Care’

## How Kampala’s wellness scene harmonizes Ugandan tradition and modernity

From sun-salutations performed high above the city in Kololo to plant-based lattes served in the bustling lanes of Bugolobi, Kampala is undergoing a quiet revolution of the self. The city’s growing wellness scene is shedding the stereotype of being an exclusively Western import, instead creating a uniquely Ugandan movement rooted deeply in both ancient healing traditions and modern demands for stress relief. Dubbed “Wellness Kampala,” this movement is defined by a conscious effort among urban dwellers to achieve balance amidst the pace of life in East Africa’s fastest-growing capital. It’s a space where Ayurvedic principles meet local herbalism, and where the goal is holistic health, which is a blend of mind, body, and spirit.

### The Urban Pursuit of Balance

For years, wellness activities such as specialized fitness regimes and organic diets were accessible only to a small, elite demographic. Today, the movement is democratizing, driven largely by local entrepreneurs adapting global trends to local conditions. Kololo, known for its commanding views and quiet streets, has become the epicentre for physical balance. Yoga studios

are thriving, offering classes that range from high-intensity Vinyasa to restorative Yin. “It’s not just about flexibility; it’s about mental agility in a city that never stops,” explains Peace Yiga, founder of ICandy, a bar in Kitintale which hosts regular rooftop sessions. “People need an intentional space to breathe. We offer that space, but we ensure our programs are accessible and culturally sensitive.”

Meanwhile, the suburb of Bugolobi is establishing itself as the capital’s culinary conscience. A growing cluster of vegan and vegetarian cafés is catering to a health-conscious market. These establishments focus on utilizing nutrient-dense local produce, reframing staples like matooke, cassava, and beans into

contemporary, appealing dishes. “The demand for clean eating is surging,” says Francis Muhereza, owner of a popular café in Bugolobi specializing in indigenous grain bowls. “Many Ugandans are returning to plant-based diets naturally, as that’s what their grandparents ate. We just make it look good and serve it fast.”

### Harnessing Traditional Knowledge

What truly distinguishes Kampala’s movement is its deep commitment to tradition. While the modern world emphasizes imported supplements and synthetic remedies, Ugandan practitioners are heavily foregrounding indigenous knowledge; specifically, the potent power of local herbs and teas.





### For years, wellness activities such as organic diets were accessible only to elites

This connection stretches far beyond the city limits. Herbal teas sourced from the fertile lands around Fort Portal and the slopes of Mount Elgon are becoming central to the urban self-care ritual. Businesses are bottling and blending remedies long known to traditional healers, such as *Mondia whitei* (known locally as ‘mulondo’) for vitality, and various forms of ginger and lemongrass for detoxification.

“We realized the traditional remedies our grandmothers relied on weren’t just folklore—they were powerful science,” says Aisha Nabukera, a nutritional herbalist. “The challenge was modern presentation. We’re taking these powerful traditional ingredients, ensuring they are sustainably harvested, and presenting them in a way that fits a professional’s morning routine.”

This emphasis on homegrown remedies acts as a counter-narrative to mass-produced global wellness trends, offering authenticity and economic opportunity to local farmers and herbalists who hold generations of knowledge.

#### Authenticity and the Future

For many young Ugandans, this blending of old and new represents a reclaiming of identity. It’s wellness that feels intrinsically authentic rather than simply prescribed.

Dr. Stephen Nsumba, a sociologist studying urban trends at Makerere University, notes that the movement reflects broader societal shifts. “Urbanization and economic pressure have increased stress exponentially. But instead of purely importing high-cost foreign solutions, Kampala is prioritizing what is local, affordable, and historically proven.”

Dr. Nsumba suggests that the movement’s success lies in its duality: the physical and communal space provided by modern studios, coupled with the ancestral trust placed in traditional ingredients.

As Wellness Kampala continues to grow, it is setting a standard for how global self-care dialogues can be adapted to honour local heritage. It proves that mind, body, and balance are best achieved when rooted firmly in the earth, and in the traditions of home.

Yoga studios like Yoga by Millie are now packed with millennials seeking calm amid city chaos. “It’s about finding balance,” explains instructor Millie Akello. “Mental health is just as important as physical health.”

Organic cafés, such as Kahwa Café and Bloom & Sip, are serving plant-based meals and ethically sourced coffee, appealing to a growing health-conscious demographic. Meanwhile, herbalists and natural skincare enthusiasts are revitalizing Ugandan wellness traditions — from moringa-infused facials to hibiscus teas that double as antioxidants.

The trend extends beyond individual practice. Corporate wellness programs, meditation sessions in parks, and community fitness events are becoming more common, proving that wellness is not just a luxury but a lifestyle.

“Wellness in Kampala is about reclaiming your space, your time, and your energy,” says lifestyle influencer Sarah Namagembe. “It’s modern living, rooted in African tradition.”



# For young lovers, the internet is where to go to find love, and it is working

The vibrant heartbeat of Kampala pulses with a new rhythm, and at its core, so does the pursuit of love. In this bustling metropolitan area, millennials are charting new territories in romance, a landscape dramatically reshaped by the omnipresence of smartphones, dating websites and apps, and the intricate dance of social media. In this digital age, love, romance and sex are a Direct Message (DM) away.

For Kampala's younger generation, finding "the one" is no longer solely about chance encounters at church or introductions through friends and family; it's a dynamic blend of digital exploration and deeply ingrained cultural expectations. Love in Kampala, like it is elsewhere in the world, has gone digital, but it hasn't lost its heart. Between dating apps, flirting on different social media platforms, and voice notes that turn into midnight calls, romance in 2025 is both complicated and captivating.

In fact, gone are the days when courtship was a strictly defined, often chaperoned affair. These digital platforms have opened a Pandora's Box of possibilities, connecting individuals who might never have crossed paths in the physical realm.

"I met my current boyfriend on Instagram," shares Aisha Namubiru, a 27-year-old marketing executive. "We'd been following each other for a while, liking each other's posts. Then he slid



into my DMs, and the rest, as they say, is history. It felt more natural than going on a blind date." For 24-year-old Sandra Assimwe, Tinder was a joke, a case of curiosity, until it wasn't. "I met my current boyfriend there," she says, laughing. "He lived in Bukoto; I was in Kyaliwajjala. We probably would never have met in real life." This digital courtship, however, doesn't operate in a vacuum. Kampala's millennials are acutely aware of the cultural embroidery that underpins their society, one that oftens

emphasises family involvement, respect for elders, and traditional markers of a serious relationship. The challenge, therefore, lies in seamlessly integrating these modern dating practices with time-honored values. "It's a delicate balance," admits Ben Odong, a software developer. "My parents are supportive, but they still expect me to introduce any serious girlfriend to them properly. I can't just tell them I met her on an app and expect them to be thrilled. So, we navigate it. I'll introduce her as someone I met

I'll introduce her as someone I met through a friend, and as things get more serious, we'll have that more formal introduction."

Long-distance relationships have also taken on a new dimension. With increased economic opportunities both within Uganda and abroad, many young couples find themselves geographically separated for extended periods. But thanks to video calls, instant messaging, and the constant stream of shared photos and updates, physical distance is no longer the insurmountable barrier it once was. "My partner works in Saudi Arabia," says Monica Nassali, a nurse in Bweyogerere.

"We talk every day, multiple times a day. We send each other little videos of our lives. It's not the same as being together, but it keeps the connection strong. We plan visits, and that keeps us going."

Social media, while a catalyst for many initial connections, can also be a minefield. The curated realities of Instagram feeds and the fleeting nature of Snapchat stories often create pressure to present a perfect, idealized version of a relationship. "Sometimes I feel like we're more worried about how our relationship looks online than how it actually is," confesses Mark, 26, a teacher.

"We get caught up comparing ourselves to other couples, and it can put a strain on things. It's important to remember that what you see online isn't always the full picture."

But it's not all rosy. Digital dating brings its share of heartbreak, ghosting, and curated perfection. "Social media gives people too many choices," says psychologist Moses Ssemakula. "Commitment is harder when everyone looks perfect online." Still, young Ugandans are learning to balance culture and connection. Some couples blend modern independence with traditional values, cohabiting before marriage but still involving families in ceremonies. Others redefine relationships altogether, prioritizing mutual growth and emotional intelligence.

The apps and sites are also places where people go to get quick paid sex, not dating, just sex. The girls there are quick to name a price, and the boys are willing payers. It has made prostitution easy to conduct and profitable. "Dating is expensive," says Musa Bwire. "You spend a lot of money on dates and gifting a girlfriend, yet here on the app, you pay, say, Shs100,000, and everyone goes away happy." This kind of transaction is more profitable for the girls. They look sophisticated, so they charge a hefty sum, money they wouldn't be able to charge when they line up at the red-light zones. Despite these complexities, the spirit of love in Kampala continues to adapt and thrive. The city's youth are proving to be adept navigators of this evolving romantic landscape, forging genuine connections that respect both their modern aspirations and their cultural heritage.



# The Digital Frontier

## How African youths are rewriting the future of work with tech and creativity



The air in Kampala is heavy with the scent of roasted street food and the constant hum of scooters. Yet, tucked away in the city's bustling innovation hubs and digitized university campuses, a quiet revolution is underway—a seismic shift driven by the continent's most powerful resource: its youth.

Africa is the youngest continent on Earth, and this digital-native Gen Z is not waiting for traditional employment structures to catch up. Armed with smartphones, laptops, and a fierce entrepreneurial spirit, young innovators are leveraging artificial intelligence and global gig platforms to redefine what work means, turning traditional unemployment rates into springboards for digital self-employment.

With these possibilities, a new generation of young innovators is redefining what it means to work, create, and innovate. Young entrepreneurs, freelancers, and AI creators are no longer waiting for opportunities; they are building them. From Kampala to Cape Town, this tech-savvy generation is transforming industries, blending creativity with technology, and reshaping the continent's job market. This emerging class of Tech-Savvy Gen Z is dissolving geographical boundaries, transforming Africa from a recipient of digital tools into a global powerhouse for digital output. And nowhere is this blend of innovation and necessity more apparent than in Uganda.

### From Job Seeker to Global Creator

For decades, the standard path for African university graduates was securing a white-collar job, often in the public sector. Today, the ambition is global, instantaneous, and often self-directed. Meet Sarah Mulungi, a 23-year-old based in Kisementi, Kampala, who introduces herself not as a software developer, but as an AI Prompt Engineer and Data Annotator. "My job didn't exist three years ago," Sarah explains, working remotely for a tech consultancy firm based in Tallinn. "I used to spend months applying for marketing jobs. Now, I spend my time teaching language models the nuance of East African dialect and data structures. My clients are global, but my economic impact is local."



Sarah's story is symptomatic of a massive continental shift. Platforms like Upwork, Fiverr, and specialized African hubs for developers and creatives have turned the continent into an outsourced talent pool. This is the gig economy amplified, enabling high-value skills like coding, cybersecurity, and advanced graphic design to bypass local economic constraints.

**The Fusion Economy, Tech Meets Tradition**

The brilliance of the Ugandan youth movement lies in its ability to fuse global technological mastery with profoundly local cultural narratives. This is the sweet spot where creativity meets monetization.

Alex Ssenyonga, 25, is a prime example of this "fusion economy." A trained animator from Makerere University, Ssenyonga co-founded a small studio that initially struggled to find local funding for traditional film projects. His breakthrough came when he pivoted to using augmented reality (AR) and 3D printing.

"We realized people want to see stories that look like them," Alex notes. "Instead of waiting for a big budget, we started designing digital avatars rooted in traditional Ugandan mythology. We use generative AI tools to rapidly prototype character designs and animations, and then sell the complete AR models to European game studios and African educational publishers."

Alex's studio has become a micro-incubator, training other young creatives in prompt engineering for visual design and integrating African patterns into 3D modeling software—creating high-demand skills that are intrinsically linked to cultural preservation.

**The AI Leapfrog**

The adoption of AI tools is perhaps the most disruptive element reshaping the future of work in Africa. Unlike previous industrial revolutions that required heavy infrastructure investment, the AI revolution is accessed via internet connectivity, allowing young professionals to "leapfrog" traditional stages of development.



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### AI is not just a tool for coding; it's a catalyst for business efficiency.

**Automation of Mundane Tasks:** Young entrepreneurs are using language models to handle logistics, customer service, and drafting legal documents, allowing small businesses to operate with the efficiency of larger corporations.

**Decentralized Education:** AI-driven personalized learning tools are plugging the gaps in formal education, providing accessible training in fields like data science, often taught by international experts via digital platforms.

"The barrier to entry for starting a tech-based business has never been lower," says Dr. Naledi Mabuza, a researcher on African digital economies based out of Nairobi. "A young person in Kampala or Kigali can access the same development tools as someone in Silicon Valley. The only required capital is time, curiosity, and smart data usage."

### A New Set of Challenges

While the narrative is overwhelmingly positive, the path is not without significant hurdles. For this digital revolution to scale, three key challenges must be addressed: **Connectivity and Infrastructure:** Reliable, affordable internet access remains a significant bottleneck, particularly outside major urban centers. Data costs, while dropping, still consume a disproportionately large percentage of income for many African users.

**Policy and Regulation:** Governments are still catching up to the speed of the digital economy. Lack of clear policy on digital taxation, worker classification in the

gig economy, and data privacy creates instability for young freelancers seeking to scale their operations.

**Skills Gap vs. Digital Divide:** While tech skills are flourishing in urban hubs, a deeper digital literacy divide exists between connected youth and older generations or rural communities, threatening to exacerbate existing social inequalities.

### Rewriting the Script

Despite the challenges, the trajectory is clear. The generation currently entering the workforce across Africa is the most digitally aware and globally connected in history. They are not waiting for job creation; they are embodying job creation. The young Ugandan entrepreneurs blending AI with traditional craft, or using global platforms to secure remote work contracts, are more than just self-employed; they are pioneers of economic sovereignty. They are demonstrating that the 21st-century job market respects skill, innovation, and digital fluency far more than geographical location. As the continent continues to grapple with rapid population growth and climate challenges, its tech-savvy youth are proving that solutions—and the future of work itself—will be built not in brick-and-mortar factories, but in the vibrant, interconnected digital spaces they are creating.



# Creative Economy Boom

## How Film, Music, and Fashion are Driving Uganda Economic Boom, Global Recognition

The air in many East African cities thrums with a nascent energy, a vibrant hum that speaks of burgeoning opportunity and a cultural renaissance. But nowhere is this pulse stronger, this creative spirit more palpable, than in Uganda. Once primarily known for its breathtaking landscapes and tumultuous history, the Pearl of Africa is now steadily carving out a formidable niche on the global stage, driven by a dynamic and rapidly expanding creative economy. Film, music, and fashion, once considered fringe pursuits, are no longer simply artistic expressions; they are becoming significant economic engines, fueling entrepreneurship, creating jobs, and projecting a powerful, modern Ugandan identity outwards.

This isn't a fleeting trend; it's a meticulously woven tapestry of talent, innovation, and a growing understanding of the power of creative industries. From vibrant fashion runways, animation houses, electrifying stages of music festivals, to buzzing music studios and the glimmering lights of film sets, Uganda's creative economy is experiencing a transformation. Once considered a peripheral sector, the creative industries — including film, music, and fashion — are emerging as key economic drivers, attracting investment, creating jobs, and putting Uganda on the global cultural map.

### The Silver Screen's Shine

The Ugandan film industry, popularly dubbed “Ugawood,” has grown beyond small-scale productions to

high-quality cinema attracting international audiences. Filmmakers like Mariam Ndagire and Rungano Nyoni are breaking boundaries with stories that resonate globally, while local film festivals such as Bayimba International Arts Festival showcase homegrown talent. According to industry reports, the film sector alone generates millions of dollars annually, providing employment for actors, production crews, and post-production specialists.

The Ugandan film industry is experiencing a remarkable surge.



The Ugandan film industry is experiencing a remarkable surge. Beyond the well-established tradition of independent filmmaking, a new wave of professionalization is taking hold. Streamers are taking notice, international festivals are showcasing Ugandan talent, and local productions are finding audiences not just within Uganda, but across the continent and beyond.

"It's about telling our stories, authentically," says Sarah Nsubuga, a producer behind the critically acclaimed drama series, *The Girl in the Yellow Dress*. "For so long, our narratives were filtered through external lenses. Now, we have the tools, the talent, and the infrastructure to control our own image. This is not just entertainment; it's a powerful form of cultural diplomacy and economic development. We're creating jobs for actors, writers, cinematographers, editors, even caterers on set."



**African fabric showcase**

The rise of digital platforms has been a game-changer. Instead of solely relying on traditional distribution channels, filmmakers can now reach global audiences directly through streaming services and platforms like YouTube. This has democratized access and allowed for a wider range of stories to be told, from gritty urban dramas to heartwarming comedies that resonate deeply with Ugandan audiences.

### **The Rhythmic Revolution**

Music is another powerhouse. From the danceable beats of Bebe Cool and Jose Chameleone to the Afrobeat-infused sounds of emerging artists like Fik Fameica and Sheebah Karungi, Uganda's music exports are growing steadily. Streaming platforms and digital distribution have opened international doors, while music festivals like Blankets & Wine and YUTM Festival drive tourism and local business. "The creative economy is no longer a hobby; it's a serious contributor to GDP," says John Nagenda, head of the Uganda Musicians Association.

Uganda's music scene has always been vibrant, a potent blend of traditional rhythms and contemporary influences. Yet, the economic impact of this industry has reached new heights. Artists are no longer just performing; they are building brands, securing lucrative endorsements, and leveraging their music for wider economic engagement.



**Mariam Ndagire is a film maker**

"Music is a universal language, and Uganda's is finally getting the global recognition it deserves," observes Jose Chameleone, a veteran artist whose career has spanned decades and continents. "We're seeing our artists fill stadiums, not just in Kampala, but in London, New York. This translates to real money: ticket sales, merchandise, advertising. Furthermore, the music drives tourism; people come here wanting to experience the sounds they've heard on international radio."

Beyond the star power, the ecosystem surrounding music is thriving. Sound engineers, producers, event managers, and the burgeoning digital distribution networks are all contributing to a robust musical economy. The growth of music festivals, both large-scale and intimate, provides platforms for emerging artists and creates significant economic activity in the host communities.

### **Fashion's Bold Strides**

Fashion is also carving a distinct niche. Labels like Nkima Luxe, Thabo Kiggundu's Kifalme Studios, and Zulu Élan are blending traditional fabrics with modern couture, winning international acclaim at runways in Paris, London, and New York. "Ugandan fashion is more than clothing; it's storytelling," says Amina Ssebunya, founder of Nkima Luxe. "It celebrates culture while creating global business opportunities for artisans and designers." Ugandan fashion, once a niche market, is now confidently strutting onto the international runway. Designers are infusing traditional textiles and artisanal techniques with contemporary aesthetics, creating garments that are both culturally significant and globally appealing. "We are taking pride in our heritage and reinterpreting it for the modern world," explains Anita Beryl, a leading fashion designer known for her vibrant and ethically produced collections. "It's about more than just clothes; it's about empowering local artisans, supporting sustainable practices, and showcasing the



**Actor Michael Wawuyo Jr**

incredible craftsmanship that exists here. Fashion can be a powerful export; it can tell a story of resilience, beauty, and innovation." The rise of e-commerce has been instrumental in expanding the reach of Ugandan designers. Online stores and social media marketing have allowed them to connect with a global clientele, bypassing traditional retail gatekeepers. This has not only boosted individual businesses but also fostered a sense of community and collaboration among designers, creating a more supportive and dynamic fashion ecosystem.

### **Economic Impact and Job Creation**

The creative sector is a notable engine of employment. Industry analysts estimate that Uganda's creative economy supports tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs, from filmmakers and

and musicians to stylists, choreographers, sound engineers, and digital marketers. Tech integration, particularly in music streaming, e-commerce for fashion, and digital filmmaking, is further expanding opportunities for young Ugandans.

Entrepreneurs like Lillian Omara, a tech innovator creating educational apps for creative skills development, and Sophia Tumusiime, a freelance animator earning international contracts, exemplify how digital tools amplify Uganda's creative reach. "Our youth are digitally fluent and globally connected," notes David Ochieng, a creative economy consultant. "They are turning talent into revenue, and that's transforming the economic landscape."

### **Challenges and the Road Ahead**

Despite this impressive momentum, challenges remain. Access to funding, adequate infrastructure, intellectual property protection, and consistent policy support are crucial for sustained growth. The digital divide, while shrinking, still presents hurdles for some creatives.

However, the optimism within the Ugandan creative sector is palpable. Industry leaders are actively advocating for policy changes, collaborating with government agencies, and investing in training and development. The entrepreneurial spirit is undeniable, with creatives demonstrating remarkable resilience and ingenuity.

# Ugandan creators forge new careers and reshape culture online

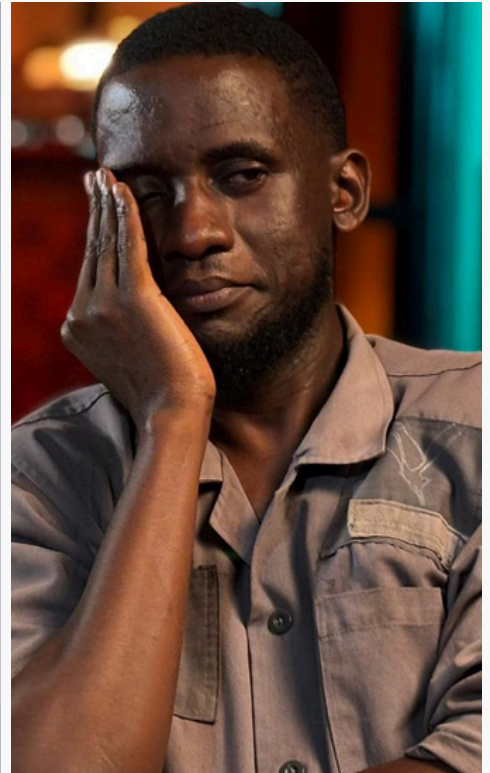
In the bustling digital landscape of Uganda's Kampala, a quiet revolution is underway. Beyond the traditional avenues of employment, a vibrant ecosystem of content creators, from quick-witted TikTok comedians to resourceful YouTube chefs, are not just entertaining millions; they are forging viable careers, redefining success, and profoundly shifting the country's cultural narrative. Welcome to the unofficial, yet hugely influential, "Ugandan Creators Club."

In 2025, content creation in Uganda isn't just entertainment — it's enterprise. Influencers like Uncle Mo, Martha Kay, Kasuku, and others are blending humor, storytelling, and business savvy to dominate social media.

"I started posting skits on TikTok for fun," says comedian Nanjero. "Now I collaborate with brands, pay my rent, and employ two editors."

What's fueling this boom? Three things: affordable internet packages, a growing middle-class audience, and a deep desire for self-expression.

But behind the laughs and lifestyle reels lies hard work — scripting, editing, branding, analytics. "It's not luck," says digital strategist Doreen Asiimwe. "It's strategy."



The industry's impact is visible. Creators are shaping trends, influencing consumer habits, and even driving civic engagement. During campaigns and social causes, content creators now rival mainstream media in reach. "We're the new storytellers," says Martha Kay. "And Uganda has the best stories to tell."

As this ecosystem matures, more companies are investing in influencer marketing, proving that creativity, when consistent and clever, pays.



For a generation grappling with high youth unemployment, the internet has become both a boundless stage and a burgeoning marketplace. What began as a hobby for many has rapidly evolved into a legitimate economic pathway, allowing individuals to bypass traditional gatekeepers and connect directly with audiences, both local and global.

"I started making short comedy skits on TikTok during the lockdown, just for fun," says 24-year-old Brenda Nalule, whose satirical take on daily Ugandan life now garners hundreds of thousands of views. "Suddenly, brands started reaching out. It wasn't just pocket money anymore; it was a real income." This sentiment is echoed across various niches. On YouTube, culinary maestros like Chef Mirembe are transforming local ingredients into globally appealing dishes, attracting subscribers from across the continent and beyond. Lifestyle vloggers offer refreshing glimpses into urban Ugandan living, while educators break down complex topics into digestible, engaging content for learners of all ages.

### **The Entrepreneurial Spark**

The shift from viewer to creator represents a powerful entrepreneurial awakening. Many young Ugandans, armed with little more than a smartphone and an idea, are building personal brands that rival established media houses. Monetization strategies are diverse: beyond YouTube ad revenue, creators are clinching lucrative sponsorship

Monetization strategies are diverse: beyond YouTube ad revenue, creators are clinching lucrative sponsorship deals with local and international brands eager to tap into their engaged and authentic audiences. Product placements, sponsored posts, affiliate marketing, and even direct sales of merchandise or digital products are transforming digital viewership into tangible income, creating a burgeoning 'creator economy' within Uganda.

"The beauty of this space is the direct connection," explains David Twine, a digital marketing consultant who frequently works with Ugandan creators. "Brands recognize the authenticity and reach. These creators aren't just influencers; they're trusted voices in their communities, and that's incredibly valuable."

### **A New Narrative Unfolds**

Beyond the economic implications, this digital boom is profoundly reshaping Uganda's cultural landscape.



**Comedian and content creator Reign Omusoyisoyi**

Young Ugandans are finding powerful voices, bypassing traditional media outlets to tell their own stories, often in local languages, reflecting authentic experiences that resonate deeply with audiences. This shift is empowering marginalized communities, fostering dialogue on critical social issues, and presenting a more nuanced and dynamic image of Uganda to the world, far from the often-stereotypical portrayals found elsewhere.

The "Ugandan Creators Club," while not a formal entity, represents a powerful network of individuals sharing knowledge, resources, and collaboration opportunities. They pool insights on algorithms, content strategies, and brand negotiations, fostering a sense of community and mutual growth that accelerates their collective impact. Yet, the path of the digital creator is not without its hurdles. High data costs, inconsistent internet access, and the financial outlay for quality equipment remain significant barriers for many aspiring creators. Furthermore, the saturated digital space demands constant innovation and a robust understanding of analytics to maintain relevance.

Despite these challenges, the spirit of innovation and resilience among Ugandan creators shines through. They are proving that in a country where traditional employment opportunities can be scarce, the digital realm offers a vibrant alternative, demonstrating that creativity, coupled with digital savvy, is a potent force for career building and cultural transformation. Uganda's Creators Club is not just a trend; it's a testament to a new generation defining its own success, one viral post and captivating video at a time.

# Kampala After Dark

## Nightlife Redefined as a Creative Experience



For years, Kampala's nocturnal rhythm was largely defined by the thumping bass of mega-clubs and the boisterous energy of street-side hangouts. But a seismic shift is redefining what it means to go out after dusk in Uganda's vibrant capital. A new wave of clubs, rooftop lounges, and live-music hubs are evolving, shedding the "chaos" of old for a deliberate embrace of "culture," transforming Kampala's nightlife into a rich tapestry of creative experiences.

No longer content with mere entertainment, a new generation of patrons and entrepreneurs are seeking and cultivating spaces that resonate with authenticity, artistry, and intellectual engagement. This isn't just about a change in venue; it's a fundamental reimaging of the night, where every element – from the curated music selection to the artisanal cocktails, the visual aesthetics to the spoken word performances – contributes to a holistic creative journey.



"People want to leave a venue feeling enriched, not just exhausted," explains Enid Namutebi, a services manager at a bar and restaurant in Namugongo. "It's about crafting moments that resonate, where every element – from the music to the decor to the drinks – tells a story. We're seeing a hunger for more than just a place to dance; people want to connect with art, with ideas, with each other on a deeper level."

### Rooftop Panoramas and Artisanal Sips

The rise of sophisticated rooftop lounges exemplifies this shift. Perched high above the city's bustling streets, these venues offer panoramic views that are as much a part of the experience as the meticulously crafted beverages. Gone are the generic drink menus, replaced by innovative cocktail lists featuring local ingredients and inspired by Ugandan flavours.



Here, conversations flow easily over smooth jazz or afro-fusion beats, and the ambiance is deliberately designed for intimacy and appreciation rather than overwhelming noise. These spaces often host fashion pop-ups or showcase local visual artists, transforming a simple night out into an immersive cultural dive.

**Live Music: Beyond the Beat**

While dance floors still thrive, the live music scene has broadened its spectrum dramatically. Beyond the pulsating beats of Afrobeat and Amapiano, Kampala's stages now regularly feature soulful R&B, cutting-edge jazz ensembles, traditional Baganda melodies given a modern twist, and acoustic sets that encourage genuine listening.



Perhaps most strikingly, spoken word poetry and storytelling nights have found a prominent place, offering platforms for local voices to captivate audiences with lyrical prowess and socio-political commentary. These aren't just concerts; they are intimate performances that foster a sense of community and shared experience.

Hubs of Creativity and Collaboration Many new establishments are conceived as more than just bars or clubs; they are creative hubs. These spaces often double as art galleries during the day, host workshops, or provide studios for emerging artists. The decor itself becomes an extension of the artistic vision, featuring murals by local street artists, upcycled furniture, and installations that challenge perceptions. Culinary offerings too are elevated, with chefs experimenting with fusion menus that celebrate Ugandan produce and global gastronomy.

This "less chaos, more culture" mantra is creating a diverse and dynamic nightlife landscape, one that truly reflects Kampala's vibrant and evolving identity.

It's a testament to the city's burgeoning creative economy, where artists, entrepreneurs, and patrons are collectively redefining 'Kampala After Dark' as a powerful, engaging, and unforgettable creative experience. The night is no longer just for letting loose; it's for discovering, experiencing, and connecting with the profound artistic pulse of Uganda.



# The Ugandan Sound: A fusion revolution forging Africa's sonic future



Across Kampala's vibrant music scene, a new sonic tapestry is being woven, one that defies genre boundaries and pulsates with an infectious blend of tradition and global rhythm. The "Ugandan Sound," as it's increasingly being dubbed, is no longer just a local phenomenon; it's a potent force reshaping Africa's musical landscape and heralding an exciting new era for its sonic future.

For years, Ugandan artists have been steadily carving out their niche, but a recent surge in experimentation has propelled their music onto the international stage. The revolution is characterized by a daring fusion, where the rich, often ancestral melodies and instrumentation of Ugandan heritage are boldly intertwined with the infectious grooves of Afrobeats and the soulful, bass-heavy pulse of Amapiano.

"It's about telling our story, but in a language everyone can understand," explains renowned producer and artist, Solomon "Solly" Kigozi, whose recent collaborations have become anthems across East Africa. "We have these incredible indigenous sounds, the lingala rhythms, the traditional percussion, the unique vocal inflections. When you blend that with the energy of Afrobeats or the hypnotic sway of Amapiano, you create something entirely new, something that resonates deeply but also feels undeniably global." This cross-pollination is not merely superficial. Artists are delving into the nuances of their cultural music, reinterpreting traditional folk songs and incorporating instruments like the endongo (a type of lyre) and adungu (a bow harp) into modern production. These elements are then

artfully layered with the driving basslines and percussive intricacies that define Amapiano, a genre born in South Africa, and the melodic richness and dance-driven beats of Afrobeats, which has already conquered the continent. The result is a sound that is both familiar and exhilaratingly fresh. Tracks from artists like Sheebah Karungi, Eddy Kenzo, and the burgeoning new talent emerging from Kampala's underground scene showcase this daring spirit. Their music often features lyrics in Luganda, Swahili, and English, further broadening its appeal and reflecting the interconnectedness of modern Africa.



**Trending singer Baraka**



## Singer Azawi

"Amapiano brought a specific energy, a feeling that you just have to move," says media personality and DJ, Sheila Gashumba aka Lil Stunner. Sheila, who also manages artistes adds, "But we wanted to add our Ugandan spice to it. We brought in those traditional drums, the call-and-response vocals that are so deeply ingrained in our culture. It's a conversation between the past and the present."

This cultural dialogue is not without its challenges. Some traditionalists may view the embrace of global genres with caution. However, the overwhelming sentiment within the music industry is one of celebration and progress. This new wave is injecting a renewed sense of pride & identity into Ugandan music, giving young artists a platform to express themselves in ways that are both authentic & commercially viable.

The implications of this musical evolution extend far beyond Uganda's borders. As African artists increasingly embrace their unique heritage and blend it with contemporary global trends, they are forging a distinct and powerful African sonic identity. This "Ugandan Sound" is a microcosm of a larger trend across the continent, where artists are no longer content to simply imitate Western music but are actively creating their own narratives and sounds.

"This is about ownership," Kigozi emphasizes. "We are no longer just consumers of music; we are creators. We are defining what African music sounds like in the 21st century. And the beauty of it is, it's so diverse, so rich, and so full of life. The Ugandan Sound is just one vibrant chapter in that unfolding story."

As this fusion revolution continues to gain momentum, the world is tuning in. The raw energy, the intricate rhythms, and the soulful storytelling emanating from Uganda are not just making waves; they are setting a new standard, confidently ushering in an era where Africa's sonic future is being written, one captivating, boundary-breaking beat at a time.



Uganda's music scene in 2025 is pulsating with a new energy — bold, diverse, and unapologetically local. From Kampala nightclubs to the streets of Jinja, a wave of artists is blending Afrobeats, Amapiano, and indigenous rhythms to create something entirely Ugandan.

Rising stars like Azawi are taking traditional Luganda influences and weaving them into Afropop melodies that resonate beyond Uganda's borders. "Music is storytelling," she says. "I want my songs to feel like home, even when you're far away."

Meanwhile, Joshua Baraka experiments with fusions of jazz, Afrobeat, and electronic music, producing tracks that are as experimental as they are infectious. Clubs in Kampala now pulse to this hybrid sound, with DJs like DJ Alisha creating sets that make no distinction between local beats and global hits.

But this revolution isn't just about sound; it's about culture, identity, and opportunity. Music producers are now launching online tutorials, music labels are scouting local talent, and streaming numbers are climbing exponentially. Platforms like Boomplay Uganda and Mdundo are giving artists a chance to monetize their craft and reach global audiences. "Ugandan music is no longer a side note in African entertainment," notes music journalist Gloria Nansubuga. "It's the story everyone wants to hear."

With collaborations spanning Nigeria, South Africa, and even Europe, Uganda's music ecosystem is proving that creativity, when authentic, knows no borders.

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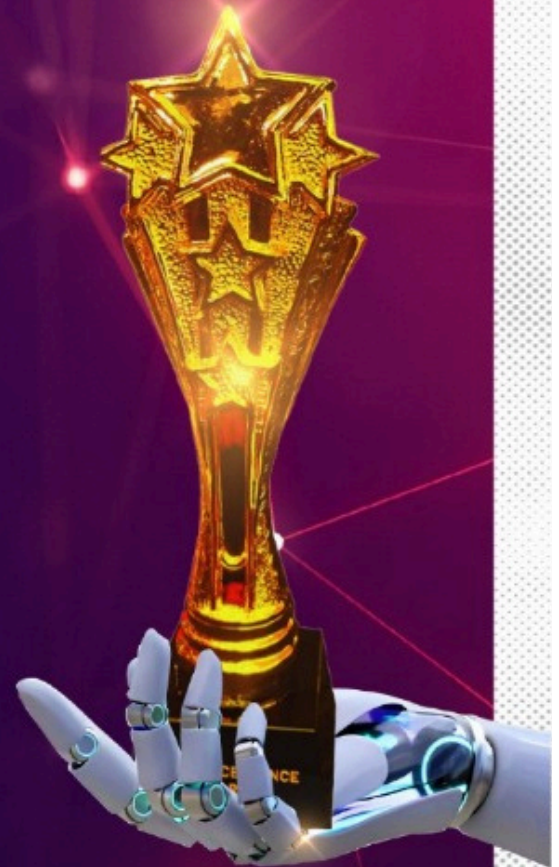
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# Future Forward: Top 10 lifestyle trends poised to define 2026



As the world consistently reshapes itself under the influences of technology, evolving social norms, and a growing environmental consciousness, lifestyle trends are no longer fleeting fads but significant indicators of how we will live, work, and connect. A new report from the Global Futures Institute (GFI) unveils the top 10 lifestyle trends expected to dominate and define 2026, offering a fascinating glimpse into our near future. "The landscape of daily life is undergoing a profound transformation," says Dr. Elena Petrova, lead researcher at GFI. "By 2026, we anticipate a more integrated, intentional, and adaptable approach to living, driven by both technological advancements and a collective desire for deeper meaning and well-being."

Here are the top 10 lifestyle trends to watch in 2026:

**Regenerative Living & Consumption**  
Beyond sustainability, this trend focuses on practices that actively restore and rejuvenate the environment and communities. From regenerative agriculture shaping food choices to circular economy principles guiding product design and ownership models (e.g., rentals, upcycling, repair culture), consumers will increasingly seek brands and lifestyles that give back more than they take.

**Hyper-Personalized Ecosystems**  
Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced biometrics will create bespoke wellness programs that

integrate nutrition, fitness, sleep, mental health, and preventative care. Wearable tech will evolve into "invisible tech," seamlessly monitoring and offering real-time, personalized recommendations, making holistic health management an individualized science.

## AI-Integrated Daily Life

AI will become an invisible but indispensable assistant, not just for productivity but for managing household chores, organizing schedules, personalizing entertainment, and even offering emotional support. Smart homes will become truly intuitive, anticipating needs rather than merely responding to commands.

## The "Third Space" Revival

With continued hybrid work models, the importance of community hubs beyond home and traditional office will surge. Think vibrant co-working cafes, community-run skill-sharing workshops, and purpose-built social clubs designed for intergenerational connection and collaborative recreation.

## Skill Stacking & Micro-Hobbying

The pursuit of diverse, niche skills and hobbies will accelerate. From coding in VR to urban foraging or mastering a forgotten craft, individuals will constantly acquire

new competencies, driven by both personal enrichment and the desire for resilience in an evolving job market.

### Conscious Financials & Ethical Investing

A growing number of individuals will align their financial decisions with their values. This goes beyond ethical consumerism to include impact investing, supporting local co-operatives, understanding supply chain ethics, and prioritizing financial literacy that includes social and environmental returns.

### Digital Decluttering & Mindful Tech Use

As AI becomes more pervasive, a counter-trend emphasizing deliberate digital breaks and "mindful tech" will gain traction. People will actively curate their digital environments, valuing quality interactions and information over constant connectivity, and seeking sensory experiences away from screens.

### Experience-Driven Consumption (Local & Global)

Owning fewer physical possessions will continue, replaced by a greater investment in unique experiences. This includes immersive travel (often with a regenerative focus), multi-sensory events, educational workshops, and subscription boxes offering curated experiences rather than just products.

### Home as a "Wellness Hub"

Homes will be designed and adapted not just for comfort and efficiency, but specifically for physical and mental well-being.

This includes biophilic design elements, advanced air and water purification systems, dedicated meditation spaces, and smart lighting mimicking natural circadian rhythms.

### Flexible Work Ecosystems (Beyond Hybrid)

The "hybrid" model will further diversify into a flexible ecosystem that includes "workcations," rural co-living spaces for digital nomads, project-based contracts, and a greater emphasis on skill-based hiring over traditional office presence. Work-life integration will be less about blending and more about seamless transitions within a highly personalized structure.

"These trends collectively point towards a future where intentionality, adaptability, and well-being are at the forefront of our lifestyle choices," concludes Dr. Petrova. "Individuals and businesses alike will need to embrace these shifts to thrive in the dynamic landscape of 2026 and beyond."

**"Individuals and businesses alike will need to embrace these shifts to thrive in the dynamic landscape of 2026 and beyond."**





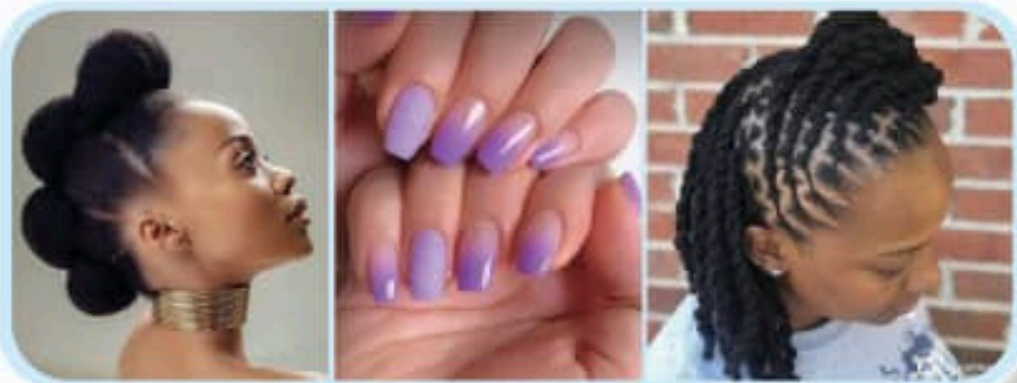
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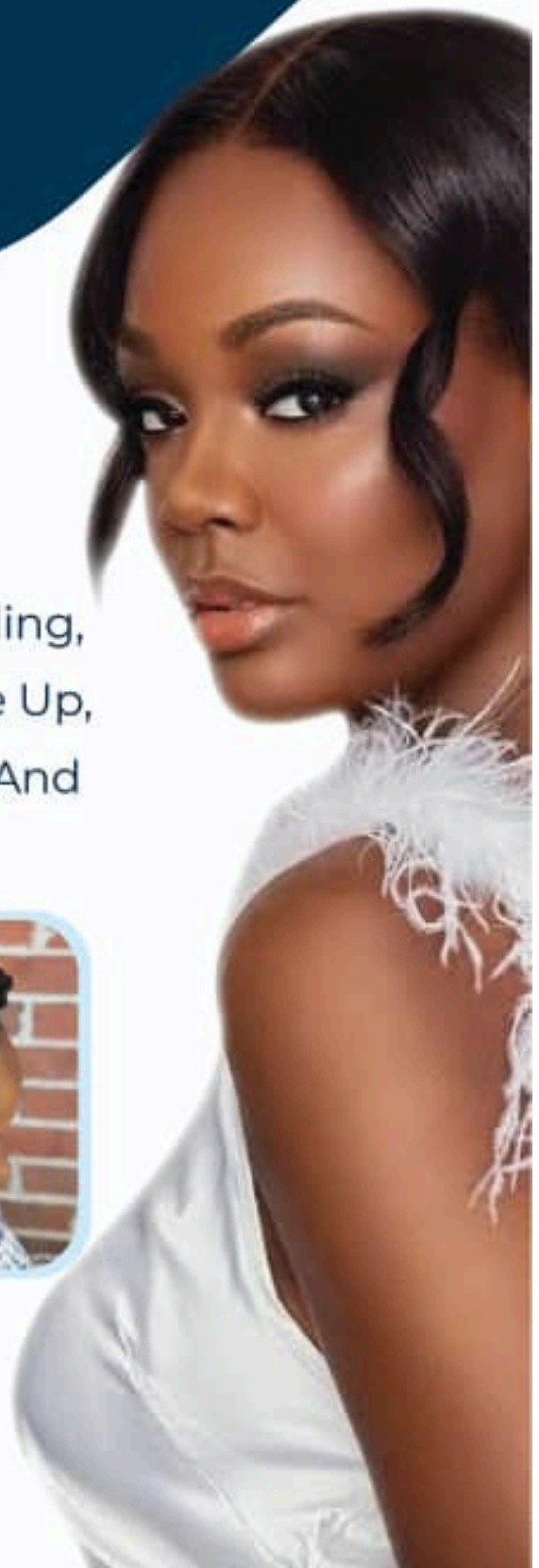
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# Joshua Cheptegei runs into hotel business in Kapchorwa

Joshua Cheptegei, Uganda's greatest ever runner and a multiple Olympic and world champion, recently commissioned a major venture into the hospitality sector, launching the construction of a substantial hotel project in his home district of Kapchorwa.

The investment, valued at an estimated Shs26 billion upon completion, was recently commissioned by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, who used the occasion to commend the athlete for his financial foresight.

During the commissioning ceremony, the President publicly praised the top long-distance runner for making judicious use of his professional earnings.

"I want to thank and congratulate him for not squandering the money he has earned from his talent,"

President Museveni stated. He assured Cheptegei of continued governmental partnership, promising support for the project. "So, we are going to support him. We are not allowed to make pledges during elections, but in principle, we have been supporting other people like manufacturers, even hotels, so we shall support him, the policy is already there," he assured.

## A Vision for National Development

Cheptegei, who holds medals from the Commonwealth Games, World Athletics Championships, and the Olympics, explained that his decision to set up the hotel in Kapchorwa was motivated by a dedication to national development goals. The celebrated athlete revealed that the project is financed entirely through savings accumulated during his highly successful running career.

"I first bought land in 2017 and added on it gradually," Cheptegei said. He estimated the total cost to complete the project at Shs26 billion, with the initial phase requiring Shs13 billion. The investment is expected to deliver a significant boost to local employment. Cheptegei projected that once fully operational, the hotel will create over 400 job opportunities for Ugandans. "Already we have over 100 people working on this project since February this year, up to date," he noted, highlighting the immediate economic impact of the construction phase.

Cheptegei thanked President Museveni for the consistent and vital backing provided to him and other national athletes. "We have been able to achieve a lot because of your support," he said.



# Namuwongo Blazers

## ends City Oilers' decade-long dominance to bring life back to Uganda's basketball



The Namuwongo Blazers officially ushered in a new era of Ugandan basketball by clinching their inaugural National Basketball League (NBL) title. They defeated reigning champions City Oilers 68-55 in a dramatic Game Six of the best-of-seven finals series.

The victory not only represents a significant milestone for the club but, more importantly, brings a stunning conclusion to the City Oilers' unprecedented decade-long stranglehold on the league. The Oilers had won 10 consecutive NBL championships since 2013.

The Blazers sealed the series 4-2, showcasing incredible grit and resilience by overturning a seemingly insurmountable two-game deficit.

The Oilers had started the finals emphatically, winning the opening two fixtures and appearing destined for an 11th straight title, but the Blazers responded in sensational fashion by winning four straight games to complete the historic dethroning.

The decisive Game Six was played before a packed and electric crowd at Lugogo, where the Blazers closed the series with a commanding

performance, becoming the first team since 2012 to lift the NBL trophy besides the City Oilers.

### **From Community Club to Champions**

Founded in 2015 and promoted to the top flight in 2019, the Namuwongo Blazers have rapidly evolved from a promising community club into one of Uganda's premier basketball powerhouses. Their persistence in challenging the Oilers' dominance over recent years finally culminated in glory in the 2025 season—a year that will be etched into Ugandan basketball history.

Under the guidance of Coach Stephen “Escodata” Nyeko, the Blazers built their championship run on a core group of seasoned talent, notably including former Oilers stars James Okello, Tonny Drilleba, Ivan Muhwezi, and Jimmy Enabu.

The Blazers had signaled their intent early in the season, dominating the regular season to finish as the top seed. They proceeded to sweep the Rezlife Saints in the quarterfinals and the UCU Canons in the semifinals, setting up the highly anticipated finals clash with their long-time rivals.

#### The Defining Comeback

After the initial 0-2 slump in the finals, Coach Nyeko inspired a stunning reversal of fortunes. The team’s momentum proved unstoppable across Games Three, Four, Five, and Six.

In the final game, veteran James Okello led the championship charge with 16 points, while Tonny Drilleba added 10. Crucially, Jimmy Enabu came off the bench to score 12 points, providing invaluable offense, and Peter Obleng contributed 11 points. For the dethroned Oilers, Chad Bowie Jordan led the score sheet with 13 points. Following his standout performance throughout the playoffs, Blazers guard Joel Lukoji Banza was rightfully crowned the Playoffs MVP.

The victory marks a new dawn for Ugandan basketball, signifying the end of the City Oilers’ defining dynasty. The Namuwongo Blazers’ triumph was met with widespread celebration and support, with the club receiving over UGX 100 million in rewards from various individuals and partners following their NBL Championship success.





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