



**Here is a compilation of
Uganda's top 20
influential PR gurus**

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**Uganda ready to
host CHAN football
tournament**

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Innocent Kwooya
**The Godfather
of fintech**

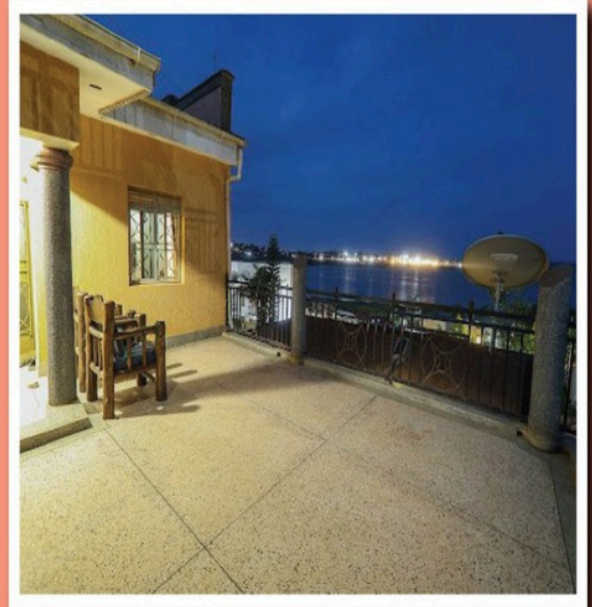
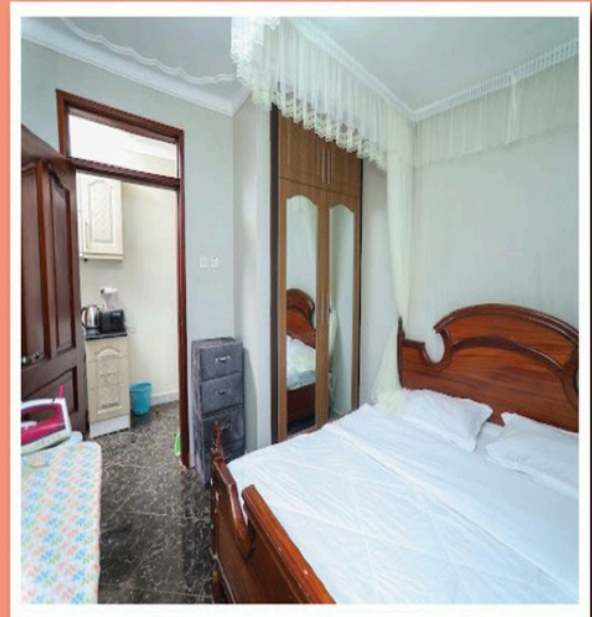
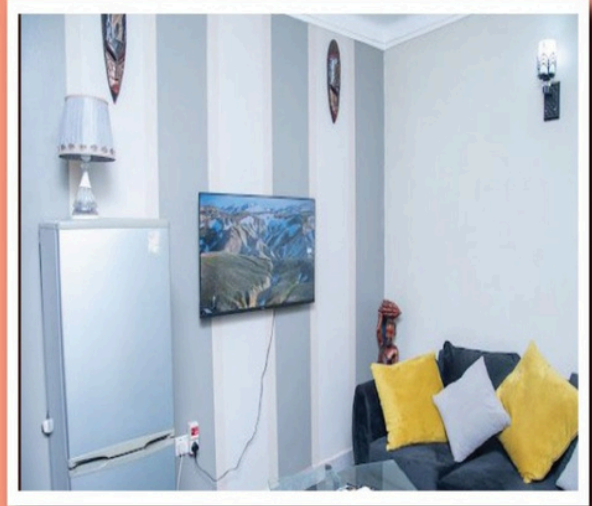
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Happy New Year 2025

To start a new year is always a delightful experience. During this time, we are eager to pursue and jump onto new opportunities. And this is what we are going to do in 2025, to chase and grab new opportunities that will make us better persons.

It is pleasing to see that the most portion of the Ugandan population crossed into the New Year with optimism. We grieve with those who are dealing with all sorts of challenges. We pray that they find soul-healing solutions.

For many people, the start of the New Year presents the chance to account for how they have lived through the past year – what they have achieved or missed. This self accountability also prepares them to set new goals for the upcoming year.

Charmar Magazine takes this opportunity to wish you our readers, advertisers, partners, and stakeholders a Happy New Year 2025 - may it produce life empowering fruits. We have grown as a media house this year and we are looking forward to breaking new grounds next year. We wish the same for you, the person reading this e-magazine.

We have packaged this issue to give you a good read this January as you wind up the holiday season. Read about Innocent Kawooya and his journey to digitize the economy through empowering innovators in the financial sector. We have compiled a list with the top 20 Public Relations Officers (PROs) in the country. We believe our survey has got it right.

We have presented in a feature article the resolutions one can make and achieve this year. These can be a guiding tool for many people who will read it. Also, read about pancreatitis, the disease that has put Dr Jose Chameleone down on bed so that you can understand it better and avoid it. These and many more insightful articles are in this issue to benefit you as you conclude the year.

Once again, Happy New Year.

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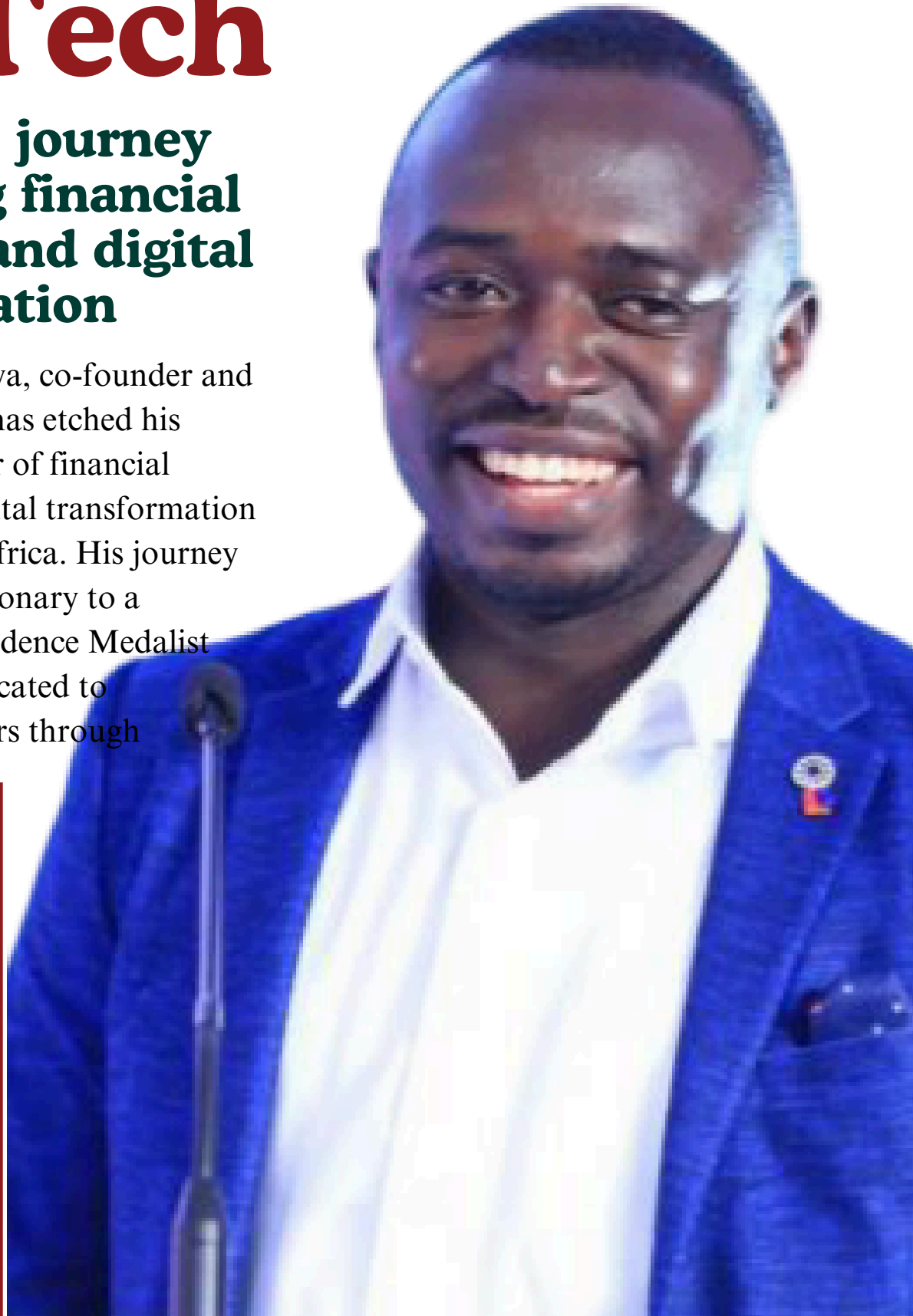
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Godfather of FinTech

Kawooya's journey pioneering financial inclusion and digital transformation

Innocent Kawooya, co-founder and CEO of HiPipo, has etched his name as a pioneer of financial inclusion and digital transformation in Uganda and Africa. His journey from a young visionary to a National Independence Medalist reflects a life dedicated to empowering others through technology.

Kawooya has championed programs that support over 80,000 women innovators





President Yoweri Museveni recently awarded Kawooya with the prestigious National Independence Medal.



Kawooya has partnered with government ICT agencies and other tech innovators to impact the economy through fintechs

From Humble Beginnings to National Recognition **Legacy of Financial Inclusion, Digital Transformation**

Kawooya’s story is rooted in a profound belief in the transformative potential of technology to change lives. Since co-founding HiPipo in 2005, he has transformed the organisation into a powerhouse of digital innovation, reaching over 15 million people across Africa. His leadership in driving financial inclusion and championing gender equality has earned him the prestigious National Independence Medal, a testament to his outstanding contributions to Uganda’s socio-economic development.

Under Innocent’s stewardship, HiPipo has emerged as a leader in promoting Interoperable Instant, Inclusive Payment Systems (IIPS) through its Include Everyone program. The organisation has supported over 300 FinTech companies, enabled over 20 billion financial transactions, and created over 600,000 jobs in mobile money and other digital services. Through initiatives like the 40 Days 40 FinTechs project, HiPipo has showcased over 300 FinTech innovations across East Africa,

connecting unbanked populations to formal financial services. Collaborating with global organisations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Mojaloop Foundation, INFITX, and COMESA Business Council, HiPipo has extended its impact to farmers, traders, and informal workers, empowering communities to embrace the benefits of a digital economy.

Empowering Women and Bridging Inequalities

A tireless advocate for gender equality, Kawooya has championed programs that support over 80,000 women innovators and 260,000 women in informal markets.

The annual Women in FinTech Hackathon has engaged over 700 innovators, 85% of whom are women, fostering their participation in creating market-ready digital solutions. These efforts have had a transformative effect, helping women access secure, inclusive financial services, improve household incomes, and reduce poverty. Digital tools introduced through HiPipo’s initiatives enable women to save securely, access affordable loans, and connect to broader markets for their goods and services.



Innocent Kawooya is an innovator and techpreneur

Transforming Health, Education, and Beyond

HiPipo's impact transcends finance. Digital health solutions such as My Doctor and ClinicPesa, supported by HiPipo, have provided affordable healthcare access and micro-health insurance to 1.6 million Ugandans. These innovations are bridging critical gaps in healthcare delivery and improving outcomes for vulnerable populations. In education, HiPipo's School Financial Inclusion Programs have engaged over 30,000 students, equipping the

next generation with essential digital and financial literacy skills. Such initiatives underscore Innocent's commitment to building a sustainable, inclusive digital future.

Fostering Innovation Through Recognition and Collaboration

HiPipo's flagship events, including the Digital Impact Awards Africa and Digital and Financial Inclusion Summit, have recognised over 400 organisations and brought together more than 600 global speakers. These platforms foster dialogue and collaboration between innovators, policymakers, and end-users, promoting sustainable solutions for financial inclusion.

A Philanthropic Heart

Innocent's philanthropy is as impactful as his professional achievements. His support for Hope Children's Hostel in Kawempe, which provides care for children undergoing cancer treatment, highlights his compassion and commitment to improving lives beyond his FinTech endeavours.

Conclusion: A Visionary Leader and Catalyst for Change

Innocent Kawooya's journey exemplifies the power of vision, innovation, and compassion. From empowering women and farmers to revolutionising Uganda's financial sector, his work has created ripples of change that continue to spread across the continent.

As the "Godfather of FinTech," Innocent is not only a pioneer in digital transformation but also a beacon of hope for those seeking to break barriers and achieve the extraordinary. Through HiPipo, he has demonstrated that technology can be a great equaliser, fostering inclusive growth and uplifting communities. Innocent's story is one of steadfast dedication, a reminder that transformative impact begins with a single step, guided by a vision to make the world a better place.



Kawooya has worked with different women-led fintechs.

Kawooya has supported over 300 FinTechs, enabled over 20 billion financial transactions, and created over 600,000 jobs in mobile money

Here is a compilation of Uganda's top 20 influential PR gurus

By: FAHIM MUYINGO

Photography: INTERNET

Charmar Magazine brings you the top 20 Public Relations and Communication Officers in Uganda who have done well in 2024 and are expected to be pivotal in the running of public and private sector communication trends in 2025. These outstanding PROs have a strong track record of maintaining the positive image of an organization or client through compelling storytelling, plausible media engagement, commendable marketing skills, individual reputation, great communication skills, industry knowledge, crisis management skills, and business acumen. For this list, we surveyed to rank the best in the industry. In no particular order, here are the top 20 PR gurus in Uganda as seconded by their peers and random members of the public.

Jackie Tahakanizibwa – PRAU Uganda



Tahakanizibwa describes herself as a passionate communications and marketing specialist with top-notch communications and marketing skills. She is the Assistant Director at Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU) and Chairperson Uganda Alcohol Industry.

Jackie made her mark while she was in charge of Corporate Relations, Public Policy & Regulatory Affairs Management at Uganda Breweries Limited (UBL). At UBL, her role entailed the management of key stakeholders and overseeing the regulatory and policy issues that have a direct effect on the growth of their business in Uganda.

Bukenya was quite popular when the survey was being done. He is the Principal Public Relations Officer at the Uganda Electoral Commission (EC). Amid torrid election exercises in the country where opposition politicians have not been happy with EC, Bukenya always remains calmly astute in his approach to issues.

He joined the EC as a data entrant and has gone on to serve the organization for more than 20 years. He was there during the reign of Hajji Aziz Kasujja, Engineer Badru Kiggundu and now Justice Simon Byabakama. Bukenya has always been the coolheaded spokesperson at EC no matter how ugly the accusations against the organization get or how turbulent an election season becomes.

Paul Bukenya – Uganda Electoral Commission



**Cynthia Mpanga, Standard
Chartered Bank Uganda**



Cynthia has 20 years working experience as a communication specialist, marketer and brand repositioning guru. She has gained international exposure having worked for the Standard Chartered Group in various capacities in; India, Gambia, Kenya and Tanzania. She has also managed major projects like organizing the Nairobi marathon on 4 different occasions, coordinating the communication and PR for one of the biggest marathons on the African continent.

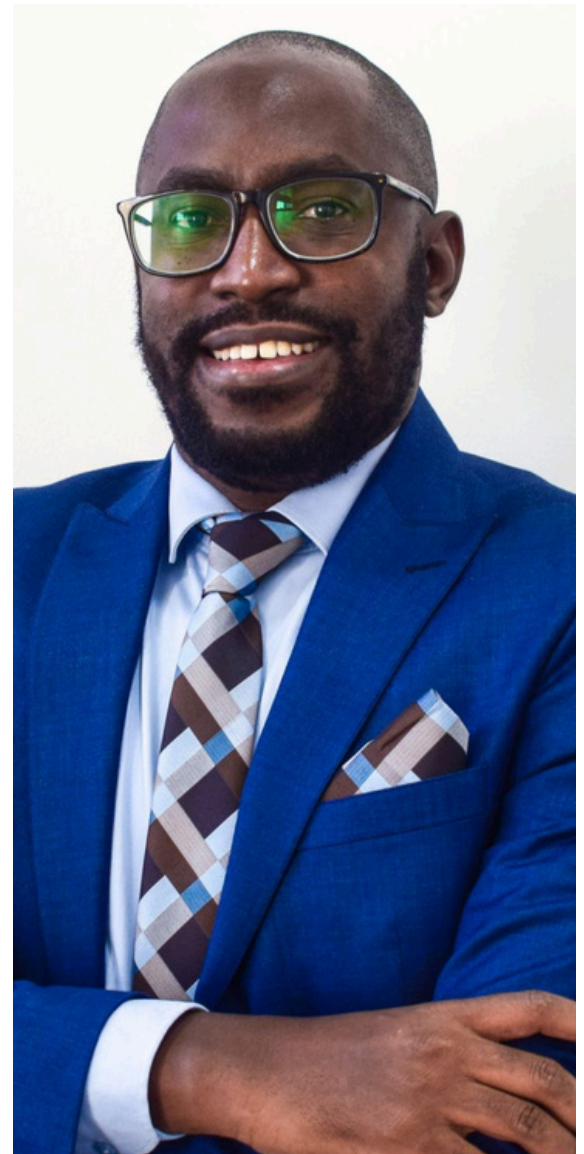
Gloria Sebikari - PAU

As the Corporate Affairs Manager at the Petroleum Authority of Uganda, Gloria is responsible for leading the development and implementation of the communications and public relations strategy of the Authority, which regulates the upstream and midstream petroleum operations in Uganda. She has over 15 years of experience in the communications field, spanning the financial, pensions, energy, and extractive sectors. Her core competencies include internal and external communications management, stakeholder engagement, project planning, management, media relations, media appearances, corporate events, social media, and reputation management.



Ian Rumanyika – Uganda Baati

Ian is a seasoned communications and marketing specialist with experience spanning over 12 years. Award-winning PR practitioner, ranked among the top PR and marketing practitioners in Uganda, 40 under 40 years by New Vision, Top 100 Global PR influencers by Commentric, most stylish public servant in East Africa region by Contour Africa 2021. He is a pragmatic and solution-oriented individual, who delivers a track record of assignments and projects, and aligns goals with broader strategic objectives to solve and deliver solutions to complex, as well as challenging strategic business problems using proven marketing and communication models.



Allen Ayebare – Centenary Bank

Ayebare is the Chief Manager, Corporate Affairs and Communication at Centenary Bank. She has got skills in internal communications, corporate communications, media relations, and reputation management. Ayebare worked at the British Council as the Marketing and communications Manager. she spent 3 years at National Housing and Construction Company as the sales and marketing officer. Ayebare was also the customer service officer at Development finance company Uganda (DFCU Bank)



Diana Kasyate – Coca Cola Africa



Kasyate, not Simon, has a combined experience in corporate and regulatory affairs, public policy & public relations, corporate and development communication, media and journalism, as well as strategic stakeholder management. She has worked in both the private and public sectors at national and regional levels in Eastern, Southern and Central Africa. Currently, she is working as Director of Public Affairs, Communication & Sustainability at Coca-Cola East and Central Africa. In the past, she has also worked as Head of Public Relations and Corporate Affairs at the Ministry of Works and Transport, Corporate and Regulatory Affairs Manager at BAT Uganda and Local Country Representative at Media Focus on Africa Foundation. She was also a News Producer at NTV Uganda.

Emmanuel Ainebyoona – Ministry of Health



Ainebyoona is the spokesperson of the Ministry of Health. He has worked with Daily Monitor as a health reporter. During his time as a journalist, he would gather information and write stories on many topics, including Health, Environment, Business and Politics.

Tina Wamala – PRAU President

Wamala is the Communications Specialist at the British High Commission and current president of PRAU where she has been a committed member for over 10 years. She is extremely passionate about public relations. She has served as the PR and Communications Manager at MultiChoice Uganda. In this post, she was in charge of communication and publicity for DSTv and GOtv.





Tony Otoa -UNOC



Tony's expertise spans across the oil and gas sub-sector, entrepreneurship, communication strategy and innovation in both Uganda and the United Kingdom. Previously, he was a National Content Manager at TotalEnergies Exploration and Production, where he also served as the Public Affairs Manager. He has skills in Negotiation, Event Planning, Editing, and Public Speaking.



Simon Kasyate – Veteran journalist

Kasyate boasts of experience as a private communications and public relations consultant and trainer. With an illustrious career in multimedia journalism spanning 20 years, the former news reporter, news anchor and television show host has worked for some of the top private media houses in the country in various capacities. He worked for some of the best organizations in the country including as the Corporate Affairs Manager at Eskom Uganda Limited and as the Press and Information Officer at the European Union Delegation in Kampala. His last known job as a PRO was as Deputy Director of Public and Corporate Affairs at KCCA.

Herbert Zake - Steadfast Quality Solutions LTD

Herbert, a Certified Gallup Strengths Coach, is an HR, PR and Corporate Governance Expert. He holds a Master's Degree in Human Resources Management from the Uganda Management Institute (UMI) and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences from Makerere University (MUK). He is a Non-Executive Director and Chairman of the Human Resources Committee of Mengo Hospital. He is a member of the Governing Council of the Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU).



Vianney Luggya – Uganda Civil Aviation Authority



Luggya is the Manager of Public Affairs at UCAA. He has been good at maintaining goodwill and mutual understanding (corporate image) of UCAA. He is also responsible for corporate publications, and management of all the Authority's events.



Irene Nakasita, Uganda Red Cross

She is an experienced public relations and communications professional with a demonstrated history of working in Non-Profit Organizations & humanitarian emergency response work. She has special skills in brand management and communications for Not for Profit Organizations, events planning & management, customer service engagement, fundraising & donor relations, strategic planning, strong media relations, and crisis/emergency communications.



Henry Rugamba - Songa Communications

Henry is a seasoned PR professional with over two decades in PR and marketing communications. He honed his skills at British American Tobacco and more recently at Umeme Uganda's leading Electricity Distribution Company. Once described as 'the guy you want in the room during a crisis' Henry was instrumental in building Umeme's brand and bringing key stakeholders and customers to the table of consensus.



Nancy Akullo -ICPA Uganda

Akullo is the Head of Communications at the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda. She has extensive experience in public relations and marketing communications. Her main emphasis is on brand management, digital communications, public speaking, marketing strategy creation, events management, media relations, magazine management, and account management. Previously, Akullo worked with the International Medical Group, The Uhuru Institute for Social Development and Fideli Management.



Frank Mugabi-NARO

Frank is the Senior Communications Officer at National Agricultural Research Organisation. He formerly was the Communication Officer at the gender ministry. He has also worked in the media.



Peter Kauju – Umeme Limited

A Ugandan professional with over 16 years of experience in Media Relations, Public Relations, Communications Management and Strategic Leadership in both public and private sector spaces. Currently, Kauju serves as the Head of Communications and Marketing at Umeme Limited, Uganda’s leading distributor of electricity services with over 1.6 million customers across the Country. Prior to joining Umeme, he worked at Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) where he headed the Public and Corporate Affairs Department with over 40 professionals under his supervision. Preceding KCCA, he worked as Communications Officer at Uganda Revenue Authority, Uganda’s Tax Administration body in the Commissioner General’s Office.



Kyamutetera Muhereza - CEO East Africa Magazine

With over 16 years of experience in the East African media and PR industry, Kyamutetera is a seasoned business journalist and communications strategist who delivers impactful and insightful content and solutions for various audiences and clients.

He is the Editorial Director of CEO East Africa Magazine, a leading business and lifestyle publication that covers the region’s most successful stories, trends, and insights. He is responsible for setting and overseeing the editorial policy and direction of the magazine, developing and finalizing the editorial content.



Sumin Namaganda – Uganda Development Bank

Namaganda is the Senior Manager of Corporate Affairs at Uganda Development Bank Limited. She is an accomplished communications specialist with over 12 combined years of experience in communications, public relations, and journalism. Her background is in the media, fast-moving consumer goods and telecommunications. She holds a master degree in Public Administration and Management and a Bachelor Degree in Communications. She has studied Business Strategy from the University of Virginia in the United States.



Woman of Substance

Marietta Mpanga Enoch comes with a dozen of skills and experiences



Marietta Mpanga is passionate about working and empowering communities.

Marietta Mpanga Enoch is a wonderful woman of substance, entrepreneur and motivation speaker. She has walked all aspects of life that comes with a dozen of skills and experiences.

She is passionate, kind, furious, hardworking, and confident yet disciplined as a person. Marietta is a family woman. She specializes in many experiences especially godly ministries, mental health counseling, and approved for international ministry.

When did you start ministry and why?

I began the Lord's ministry in 2012. Because of experiencing divine encounters with the living God, and finding myself as an individual, and through this experience, I met great men of God to help me understand more, plus the visions and dreams become part of me while God spoke at odd times. I just had to pay more attention and follow instructions, which

has led me to help many others and walk the path of my calling.

How has your journey in ministry been like?

Ministry path is quite edifying, complex, deep and quite educational. The more anointed you grow or become, the greater the challenges. This journey is quite rewarding, although very difficult because you have to understand both the spiritual and physical side.

which are totally different and serve different purposes. The fact that ministry is totally reliant to a spirit, following instructions and listening is vital and key to pleasing the Lord is obedience.

What challenges do you experience as a minister?

Time management: Juggling work, family, emergencies, counseling, and personal time.



Marietta Mpanga Enoch is a woman substance.

However, ministry has got many challenges and that's the beauty that comes with it; you learn how to hear the voice of the Lord while you're trying to find yourself. For example relationships, handling conflicts, managing church staff, reporting to the board, counseling and caring for their flock's spiritual health, as well as taking care of their own spouse and children.

Tell us about the charitable work you are currently doing?

We have an NGO called Hapycornelius CIC. We have discovered the importance of taking seriously the principles of sowing and reaping directly to impact our future and shaping even what

we become in eternity. The smallest decisions impact the generation after us. Hapycornelius is found in two countries UK and Uganda, This NGO stands on the principal: To support others by giving back. Our objective is to carry on activities which benefit the community by helping the less fortunate with; improving skills, educating them about their bodies, providing a safe space, guiding children to becoming successful and respectful adults.

Why did you venture into this?

I love to make a difference in people and communities.

- 1. I have a passionate interest in people more especially the children. I like to put a smile on faces because it brightens my day and completes me. It is what I do best. Changing lives. I am driven by the vision to see communities transformed.
- 2. Creating jobs in the community
- 3. Give support services to disadvantaged children
- 4. Be a role model and inspire students.
- 5. Joining youth into apprenticeship.

Any final comments?

HapyCornellius NGO is raising funding to assist with the building of the orphanage in Kampala. All information is available on the website site. HapyCornellius.org

- 1. Mentor young persons through sports and their skills.
- 2. Building an orphanage, school and a mini hospital



Marrietta Mpanga interacting with a learner at a school.



Marrietta Mpanga's mentorship programmes include sports activities.

How to keep friendships in today's digital age

By Teddy Tracy Nayiga

Photography: INTERNET/UNKNOWN



Many people struggle to maintain friendships in this digital era

In today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, maintaining friendships can be as tricky as finding a boda ride during rush hour in Kampala. While the digital age offers tools to stay connected, it also challenges the depth and authenticity of relationships.

For many Ugandans, balancing online and offline connections is key to nurturing meaningful friendships. Uganda's digital landscape has transformed how people interact. Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram dominate, with many using them to stay in touch. However, the convenience of these platforms can sometimes mask the effort required to maintain genuine connections.

“Social media makes it easy to feel like you're connected, but it's often superficial. Liking a friend's post isn't the same as having a real conversation or being there for them,” says Dr. Alice Musoke, a social psychologist.”

Thirty-one-year-old Nankunda Claire, a fashion designer in Kampala, agrees. “I used to think commenting on my friends' photos was enough. But I realized I needed to do more, like calling them or meeting in person,” she shares.

Technology as a tool, not a substitute

For many Ugandans, particularly those with friends living abroad or upcountry, technology has been a lifeline. Take Brian Atukunda, a 29-year-old software developer in Entebbe. His best friend moved to Dubai for work two years ago, but they've stayed close.

“We have a weekly WhatsApp call to catch up,” he says. “It's not the same as hanging out in person, but it keeps our bond alive.”

Dr. Musoke emphasizes the importance of intentionality in digital communication.

“Use technology to bridge distances, but don't let it replace deeper, face-to-face interactions whenever possible,” she advises.

Challenges of digital communication

Despite its benefits, digital communication can create misunderstandings. Misinterpreted tone or emojis often lead to conflict, especially in group chats.

Sarah Nakyejwe, a university student recalls an incident where a friend misread her sarcasm in a text. “It caused a huge fight, and we didn't talk for weeks,” she says. “Now I'm more careful about how I communicate online.”

Experts recommend supplementing digital communication with offline interactions to avoid such pitfalls.

“Nothing beats sitting down with someone and having a conversation,” says Dr. Musoke.

While digital tools have made staying in touch easier, many Ugandans believe in the power of face-to-face connections. Social gatherings, like weekend BBQs or church events, remain a staple for reconnecting with friends.

“For us, Sunday afternoons are sacred. My friends and I meet up to play football or just hang out. It's a tradition that keeps our bond strong,” says 35-year-old businessman Ssekamanya Ronald.”

These meetups are not just about fun but also about showing genuine care. “When you’re physically present, you’re fully there no distractions from notifications or scrolling,” adds Ssekamanya.

Vulnerability as the glue of friendships

Authenticity and vulnerability are crucial in building lasting friendships. The digital age’s tendency to showcase only the highlights of life can hinder meaningful connections.

“I used to only share my achievements online. But when I started posting about my struggles, like the time I failed to secure a job, my friends reached out with encouragement. That strengthened our friendship,” says 27-year-old teacher NamusokeAnnet.

Dr. Musoke highlights the importance of being open with friends. “Vulnerability fosters trust and deepens relationships, whether online or offline.”

Time is one of the biggest challenges to maintaining friendships in Uganda, especially in bustling urban centers like Kampala. Busy schedules often mean that friendships take a back seat.

“It’s about prioritizing,” says Namusoke. “I make it a point to check on at least one friend daily, even if it’s just a short message.”

Six tips on how to maintain friendships

The digital nomad lifestyle offers numerous opportunities for personal and professional growth. Here are effective strategies for nurturing long-lasting friendships

Emphasize regular catch-up calls

Ensure that you regularly check in with friends via text messages, phone calls, or video chats.

Utilize various digital communication tools such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, X, Skype and others to stay connected.

Make a list of friends you want to catch up with regularly. Ask them for their preferred dates, times, and channel.

Keep friends involved in your journey

Share photos, videos, and stories about your adventures through social media, emails, or blog posts. This way, your friends will feel included and connected to your experiences, even from a distance.

If you don't want to post your travel journey in public, invite your closest friends or your family to a dedicated group chat.

Reach out randomly

We all know people we spent an awesome time with. Either in school or college, at a previous job, during travels, in our last co-living experience and so on. When someone pops up in my memory, I message the person and tell him/her that I thought of them, check in with them, and sometimes it re-freshes an old friendship.

Make the effort to visit your friends

If you want to deepen a friendship with a certain person, or you want to tighten the friendship with a person who wants real-life contact, make the effort and see them. Plan meet-ups, outings, or even short trips together to strengthen your bonds and create new shared memories.

Invite your friends to visit you

It is possible that when you stay in touch with family and friends, you inspire them with your travel plans. Reach out to your friends back home and ask them if they want to visit. When catching up with friends, let them know about your travel plans and invite them to join your journey for a bit.

Don't forget family members

Do you have family members or relatives you haven't spoken to in a while? Maybe you brighten up their day. A bit old-school but the older generation back home might appreciate a handwritten postcard.

Think about a family member you would like to catch up with soon and reach out to the person.

PRAU celebrates 2024 excellence, innovativeness



The best of the country's PR industry met at Protea Hotel in Kampala to celebrate public relations excellence and innovations at the 8th PRAU Excellence Awards ceremony. The Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU) uses the awards ceremony to honor outstanding achievements of PR practitioners. This year's theme was "Recognising Innovation." Shatsi Musherure Kutesa, the MP for Mawogola North was the guest of honor. She handed over accolades to individual and organization winners.



Ten songs that gave us a groovy dancing feel in 2024

By Teddy Tracy Nayiga

Photography: INTERNET/UNKNOWN

The year 2024 saw an explosion of talent and creativity in Uganda's music scene, with artists delivering memorable hits that dominated airwaves, clubs, and social media. From gospel tunes that stirred the soul to chart-topping collaborations that turned into viral sensations, these songs defined the year. Here's a look at ten standout tracks that made waves, in no particular order:

"Dawa" – Elijah Kitaka

Elijah Kitaka burst onto the scene with "Dawa," a hit that showcases his unique voice and relatable style. Signed under Swangz Avenue, Kitaka is making waves with his youthful charm and promising character, marking him as a rising star across Africa.



"Masavu" – Azawi

Azawi once again proved her mettle with "Masavu," continuing her streak of delivering chart-topping hits. Her consistent excellence and partnership with Swangz Avenue have solidified her position as one of Uganda's biggest musical forces.

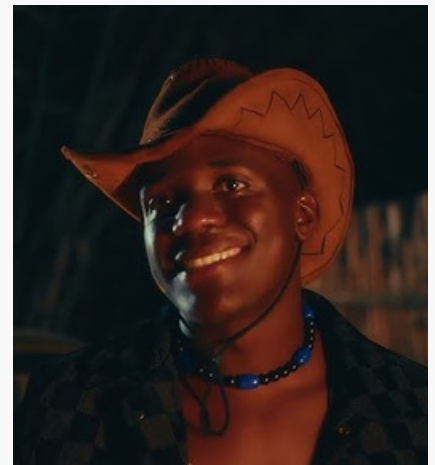


"Swiriri" & "Shu" – Kapeeke



Newcomer Kapeeke shook the airwaves with "Swiriri" and "Shu." His vibrant online presence, characterized by fashion and dance content, has made him a breakout star to watch in 2024.

"Njalwaala" – Aaronx



"Ozambe" – D Star & Mudra

D Star and Mudra created a TikTok phenomenon with "Ozambe." This viral track captivated East Africa, thanks in part to its catchy beats and the creativity of influencers who brought the song to life.



Aaronx's inspiring journey from taxi conductor to celebrated artist culminated in "Njalwaala," a classical music gem. His talent and perseverance have earned him a well-deserved spot in the hearts of music lovers.

**"Dalila" & "Digii IV" –
Joshua Baraka**



Joshua Baraka continued his rise to stardom with "Dalila" and "Digii IV," two tracks that have gained traction locally and internationally. His artistry is a testament to his growing influence in the music scene.

**"Lukusuuta" – Springs of
Life Choir**

Gospel music shone brightly in 2024, with Springs of Life Choir's "Lukusuuta" standing out. This soulful song reminded Ugandans of the power of faith and spirituality, proving gospel can rival secular hits in popularity.



"Tabu" – Ava Peace & Dax Vybz

Ava Peace's "Tabu," featuring Dax Vybz, showcases her confidence and passion. With strong backing from producer Jeff Kiwa, this track has positioned her as one of Uganda's fastest-rising stars.



"Kinawoolovu" – Nandor Love



"Kinawoolovu" by Nandor Love became a club anthem and social media sensation. While her stage presence needs refinement to match the energy of her music, the song's infectious vibe has secured her a strong fanbase.

"Enkuddi" - Lil Pazo



Lil Pazo's song, since release, has been a people's favorite online with thousands of video challenges made on TikTok. It is also a big banger in the night hangouts around the country and it has given Lil Pazo a chance to perform on the big stages again.

Here are achievable New Year's resolutions you can make and keep

By: Zee Krstic and Cameron Jenkins via Good Housekeeping/INTERNET

Photography: INTERNET/UNKNOWN

It's that time of year to set goals for the next 12 months. With the big holidays are behind us, January provides a mental fresh start and the freedom to say goodbye to whatever happened in 2024. It's all a matter of setting the right New Year resolutions.

The key to setting good goals is making them aspirational and yet attainable at the same time — something you want to work toward, and you can honestly see yourself achieving. Remember, even if you fall off the wagon today, tomorrow is a new day to get back on track. Here are some of the New Year resolutions as compiled by Good Housekeeping, a New York based publication.

Start a gratitude journal.

This may just be the easiest New Year's resolution, and also one of the ones that can really help you feel better. In fact, research has shown that recognizing the things in your life that you can be grateful for is good for your mental and physical wellness. "It literally breathes new life into us. It recharges, and it rejuvenates," Robert Emmons, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at the University of California.

Make time for family.

It sounds cheesy, but if you have healthy family relationships, do everything you can to maintain



them. Family members can help you get through tough times and celebrate the great times. This year, try to carve out one-on-one time with loved ones (close friends can be family too!), whether it's via physical meeting, telephone calls or social media.

Create a budget you can stick to.

Budgeting doesn't mean you can't spend money. Budgeting is just the process of sitting down to think about what your priorities are — what you would like to spend money on and what you want to avoid spending money on — within your income limits. Like any new habit, it might be best to ease into new spending behaviors so you're able to commit to long-term changes.

Cook new foods.

We all have our go-to meals and they serve us well when we're short on time or don't have the energy to plan

for something novel. But chances are you're missing out on tons of foods that are both yummy and healthy. Set aside one meal every week to try cooking with a new ingredient or making a new-to-you dish.

Read more books.

There's nothing quite like getting cozy on the sofa with a new book when it's cold outside.

That makes right now the perfect time to set a reading goal for the year. You don't have to leave your house or make small talk over cookies when you get to the end.

Add cleaning tasks to your calendar.

Try scheduling cleaning time into your weekly calendar so that things never get so messy that it's intimidating to start. Create a checklist that outlines exactly how often you should aim to do every household chore. Plus, crossing things off a to-do list always feels great.



Cut back on alcohol.

Alcohol is associated with high health risks, it also costs a lot of money. This year, consider joining the sober curious movement by cutting back on how much you drink. In the process, you might improve your mood, sleep, skin as well as your immune system.

Prioritize sleep.

It's time to stop shrugging off issues like insomnia and sleep apnea and make a solid effort toward high-quality sleep. A lack of sleep can lead to an array of problems, from memory problems to immune system challenges.

Join a club.

Starting a new hobby is one thing, but joining a club will help you meet new people in the process. Find a group of people with similar interests.

Say goodbye to toxic friends.

It may feel impossible now, but there is a way to break up with a once friend turned frenemy without imploding your social life. grow.

Learn to love vegetables.

Whether you're working on weight management or towards a balanced diet, vegetables are your friends. Fiber-rich vegetables are especially crucial for healthy hearts and strong veins.

Schedule annual health screenings.

Open your calendar app or planner and make your appointments for the year in one sitting — not only will you get the anxiety-inducing nuisance over with, but exams will be less likely to get squeezed out as life gets bonkers. Start with your primary care provider, and ask which screenings you're due for.

Be current about the news.

It can be hard to keep up with what's going on in the world given the lightning-fast news cycles. But it's more important than ever to stay informed.

Plan a vacation.

Women who vacation at least twice a year have a lower heart attack risk. And researchers have found that even thinking about an upcoming trip can boost happiness for weeks.

Make time for cuddling.

If you're reevaluating your intimacy, start by thinking about time spent simply in the arms of your loved one. Cuddling is often underestimated for its ability to bolster physical intimacy. But relationship experts say cuddling can help you feel more connected to your partner than ever. Cuddling just for fun can fight stress and improve your moods.

Chill out – let go of anger.

Constantly feeling angry and pissed off (especially for women) can lead to less than desirable long-term effects on your holistic health. Chronic anger can impact the body in more ways than just one — it can induce headaches, anxiety, digestion problems and high blood pressure, among other drawbacks.

Make your bed every morning.

Yes, it's time to grow past the messy bed look! Mastering the art of making your bed will simply transform your space, but also kickstart a productive morning routine. Taking care of your pillows, sheets, and comforter is easy when you have an expert to show you how.

Stop procrastinating

The stress around a major life decision often causes individuals to freeze in their tracks. Mental capacity has been known to be reduced by stress and anxiety, but a major change requires a fair amount of brain power to navigate. The ironic aspect of this is that prolonging what needs to be done can further exacerbate stress — and restart the vicious cycle. Empower yourself to begin making hard decisions this year.



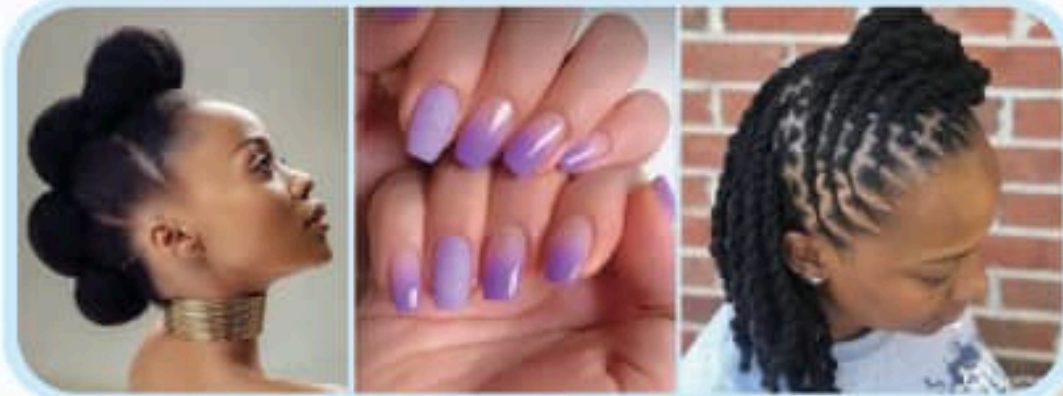
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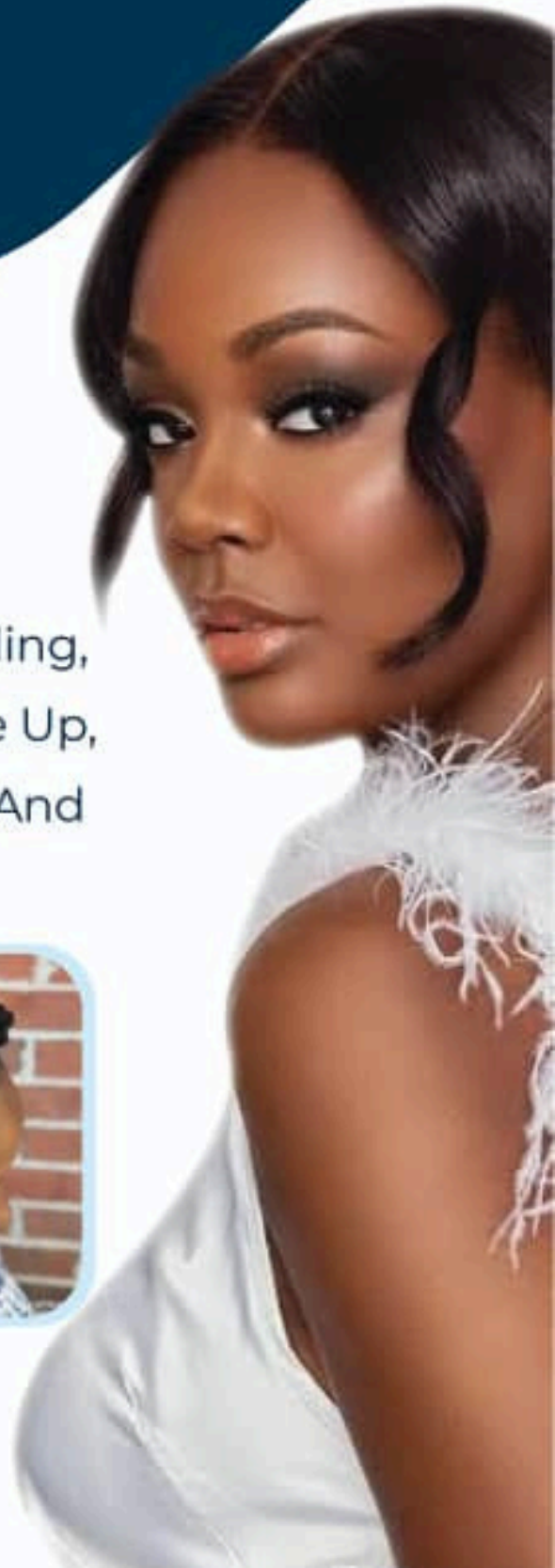
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Are Ugandan youths getting the right skills to develop?

By Teddy Tracy Nayiga
Photography: INTERNET

At 25, Joan Akello has a degree in journalism but feels unprepared for the job market. "University was great for theory, but where are the real-world skills?" she asks, her frustration palpable. "Most of us graduate knowing how to pass exams, but not how to work in a newsroom or even write a convincing CV." Akello's story mirrors that of many Ugandan youths navigating the deep waters of unemployment. With 77% of the country's population under 30, Uganda has one of the youngest demographics globally but it also battles a staggering 64% youth unemployment rate.

In response to this challenge, the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, in collaboration with UNICEF Uganda, launched FunDoo, a digital life coach designed to equip young people with 21st-century skills like communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. But as many youths argue, tools like FunDoo are only part of the solution to a much bigger problem.

A generation stuck in theory

"Let's face it; we're taught to memorize and repeat, not to think critically or solve problems," says Samuel Kanyesigye, a 26-year-old entrepreneur. "In school, no one tells you how to write a business plan or even market yourself. They focus on algebra and Shakespeare, but who's teaching us how to negotiate or pitch ideas?"

Kanyesiga believes the education system is out of step with the modern job market. "The world is evolving, but our classrooms are stuck in the past," he says.

Mondo Kyateka, Assistant Commissioner for Youth and Children's Affairs at the Ministry of Gender, agrees that change is overdue. Speaking at the launch of FunDoo in Kampala, he emphasized the importance of equipping youths with modern skills.

"Our youths are our greatest resource, but many lack the tools to succeed in today's job market. With platforms like FunDoo, young people can access skills they need to stay competitive in a rapidly changing world. It's free, available 24/7, and accessible even in areas with limited internet."

For some, the challenges go beyond skills. Twenty-four-year-old Brian Opio, who studied Business Administration, found himself rejected at multiple job interviews.

"They didn't even ask me about my degree. They wanted to know how I handled conflict at my previous internship or how I worked in a team. I froze because we were never taught these things," he recalls.

Opio's experience highlights the growing importance of soft skills qualities like emotional intelligence, adaptability, and communication that are increasingly valued by employers. Khushbakht Hojiev, UNICEF Uganda's Adolescent Development Manager, says tools like FunDoo can help fill this gap.



Youths are demanding for skills that fit with the times



Every year universities churn out thousands of graduands into the job market

“Today’s job market demands more than just academic qualifications. Platforms like FunDoo allow youths to learn critical skills in areas like job readiness, problem-solving, and even mental health. It’s about preparing them for life, not just work,” he explains.

Okot Francis, President of the Uganda National Students Association, has firsthand experience with this shift. “The teaching we’ve been getting doesn’t give us all the skills we need,” he admits. “The new secondary school curriculum is a step in the right direction, but for those of us who’ve already graduated, we need tools like FunDoo to keep up with an unpredictable work environment.”

Okot emphasizes that embracing such platforms isn’t just a choice it’s a necessity.

“If you don’t adapt, you’ll be left behind,” he warns.

A call for reform

While initiatives like FunDoo are making strides, many youths believe systemic reforms in education are essential. “Why don’t schools teach us about taxes or how to manage personal finances?” asks 25-year-old Stella Mutungi.

“We’re taught to solve quadratic equations, but no one tells us how to budget or invest.”

For others, vocational training holds the key. James Okello, a 27-year-old engineer, argues that not everyone needs a university degree. “We need more programs that focus on practical skills like carpentry, mechanics, or plumbing.

These are the jobs that drive economies, but they’re overlooked,” he says.

Youths taking the lead

Despite these challenges, young people are finding ways to bridge the gap. Some, like 22-year-old IT student Martha Nsubuga, are turning to online resources to stay ahead.

“There’s so much free content out there if you know where to look,” she says. “YouTube, blogs etc are lifesavers. It’s up to us to take charge of our learning.”

Mondo Kyateka believes this proactive mindset is crucial.

“We can provide the tools, but it’s up to young people to use them,” he says.

Khushbakht adds that collaboration is the way forward. “It’s not just about what the government or UNICEF can do. Universities, businesses, and communities all have a role to play in equipping young people with the skills they need to succeed.”

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What you need to know about pancreatitis, the disease eating up Dr. Jose Chameleone



Dr Jose Chameleone reportedly has pancreatitis

When music icon Joseph Mayanja, famously known by his moniker Dr. Jose Mayanja, was admitted in a hospital in Kampala, little was known about his illness despite being in a critical state. It was until his son, Abba Marcus Mayanja posted a video on social media and revealed that his father was suffering from pancreatitis, a disease he said is caused by repeated alcohol use.

The US-based Abba said: “I am choosing to break silence over a very, very serious issue that needs action with immediate effect. As you already know, my father is not doing well. He is in hospital. You guys probably only know the surface level of information of what really is going on.”

Adding: “To start things off, my father suffers with acute pancreatitis. In most cases, this is a condition caused by repeated alcohol use. In this case, this is what is going on with my father. “To put things plain and simple, my father struggles with alcohol addiction. This is something that he has been suffering with for quite a while now.

Painful killer disease

In the wake of Dr. Jose Chameleone condition, Dr Kizza Blair, a regular social media user, told his followers that ‘pancreatitis is no joke’ and that it is ‘one of the most painful and life-threatening conditions linked to alcohol abuse.’ “In Uganda, we normalize drinking until it destroys us and our families. Pancreatitis doesn’t just ‘go away’; it can lead to permanent damage or even death.

Your liver and pancreas can only take so much abuse. Think about your loved ones before you raise that glass again,” he said.

What is pancreatitis?

According to Hopkins Medicine, pancreatitis is the swelling (inflammation) of the pancreas. This may happen when digestive juices or enzymes attack the pancreas. The pancreas lies behind your stomach on the left side of your belly. It's close to the first part of your small intestine (the duodenum).

The pancreas is a gland which does two main things: makes enzymes and sends them into your small intestine (these enzymes help break down food) and makes the hormones insulin and glucagon, which it sends into your bloodstream (these hormones control your body’s blood sugar level). Pancreatitis may be sudden (acute) or ongoing (chronic).

Causes of pancreatitis

Acute and chronic pancreatitis share many of the same causes.

Other causes are belly injury or surgery, high levels of fat particles (triglycerides) in the blood, very high levels of calcium in the blood, certain medicines, such as estrogens, steroids, and thiazide diuretics, infections, such as mumps, hepatitis A or B, or salmonella, cystic fibrosis, tumors, congenital abnormalities in the pancreas, and trauma to the pancreas, among others.

Pancreatitis symptoms include pain that starts slowly or suddenly in the upper abdomen, pain that may spread to the back, fever, nausea, vomiting, swollen or tender abdomen, fast heart rate, diarrhea and weight loss.

Diagnosis & treatment of pancreatitis

According to Health Line, doctors use a combination of blood tests and imaging studies to make a diagnosis. If you have acute pancreatitis, you’ll have severe abdominal pain. Blood tests may show a significant rise in your level of pancreatic enzymes.

Different types of ultrasound, MRI, and CT scans can reveal the anatomy of your pancreas, signs of inflammation, and information about the biliary and pancreatic ducts. A fecal fat test can also determine whether your stools have fat content that's higher than normal. Treatment for acute or chronic pancreatitis often involves hospitalization. The pancreas is a key contributor to your digestive processes and needs to rest to heal. For this reason, you may receive specifically tailored fluids and nutrition intravenously (IV) or through a tube that goes from your nose directly into your stomach. This is called a nasogastric feeding tube. Medication may help manage the pain. You may also receive artificial digestive enzymes for chronic pancreatitis if your pancreas isn't producing enough of them on its own. Recovering from pancreatitis A low fat, balanced diet plays a major role in recovering from pancreatitis. People with chronic pancreatitis in particular need to monitor the amount of fat they consume, since their pancreas function has become compromised. Try to limit or avoid the following foods: red meat, fried foods, full fat dairy, sugary desserts, sweetened beverages, caffeine and alcohol.

Uganda Heart Institute gets Catheterization Laboratory



Medics said Uganda needs more of these cath labs across the country.

Uganda Heart Institute (UHI) recently unveiled the most advanced Catheterization Laboratory (Cath Lab) in Africa, marking a major milestone in Uganda's healthcare journey. This new UGX 7.98 billion Cath Lab, located at Mulago Hospital Complex, was commissioned by Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, Minister of Health on December 17, 2024. The minister emphasized government's commitment to improving healthcare delivery.

What is a Cath Lab?

A Catheterization Laboratory is a specialized facility where minimally invasive heart procedures are performed to diagnose & treat cardiovascular conditions. With a State-of-the-art 2024 design, the only one of its kind in Africa, whose installation began in October 2024, the lab is expected to handle 10,000 complex heart procedures in its lifespan.

The government of Uganda recently unveiled the most funded Cath Lab replaces the previous one installed in 2012, which performed over 6,000 life-saving procedures before being decommissioned in October 2024. "This Cath Lab is a lifeline for thousands of Ugandans. It ensures they no longer need to travel abroad for critical heart procedures and reduces the financial burden on families," said Dr. Aceng.

Why This Matters:

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death globally, claiming 17.9m lives annually. In Uganda:

- 📌 1 in 4 adults suffers from hypertension.
- 📌 16,000 babies are born yearly with congenital heart conditions; 50% require urgent interventions.
- 📌 300,000 schoolchildren are affected by rheumatic

heart disease, the most common acquired heart condition.

The new Cath Lab will offer:

- Cardiovascular diagnostics
- Interventional heart treatments
- Emergency heart care

Dr. John Omagino, Executive Director of UHI, said: "These achievements reflect the government's commitment to delivering world-class cardiac care. Our task now is to fully utilize these resources to save lives." Dr. James Magara, Chairperson of the UHI Board, urged Ugandans to trust the facility. "World-class healthcare is now available here in Uganda," he noted.

Uganda ready to host CHAN

The President of Confederation of African Football (CAF), Dr. Patrice Motsepe is proud of the excellent work Uganda has put in to prepare for of the 2024 African Nations Championship (CHAN) taking place February 2025. The South African visited Uganda on 20th December 2024 to check Uganda's preparedness. Uganda will co-host the biennial tournament alongside neighbours Kenya and Tanzania between 1st – 28th February 2025. Dr. Motsepe arrived in Uganda alongside CAF Fourth Vice President Seidou Nchouwah Mbombo Njoya and CAF Tournaments and Events Director Samson Adamu.

“I’m happy to be in Uganda again. I have always said that this place feels like home and, therefore, I’m not a visitor today. I want to assure football enthusiasts all over the world that East Africa is ready to host a big tournament like CHAN and this will be the best Championship ever,” he said.

” I know there are challenges especially on the side of football facilities but I have all the confidence that these will be sorted before the tournament gets underway in February next year. I have the assurance from the Heads of State of the three host nations.”

Dr. Motsepe indicated that such Championships come with numerous benefits and believes CHAN 2024 will have a positive impact on the East Africa region.



Uganda is assembling a good team

“Football is a tool that brings not only passion but also development in terms of infrastructure, unity, tourism and trade. I believe this region will hugely gain from CHAN as we look ahead of the big picture which is AFCON 2027.”

Dr. Motsepe and his entourage visited Mandela National Stadium checking on the playing turf, dressing rooms, media centre and outside training pitch among others.

The African Nations Championship, known for sponsorship purposes as the TotalEnergies African Nations Championship and commonly abbreviated as CHAN, is a biennial African association football tournament organized by CAF since 2009 and first announced in September 2007. The participating nations must consist of only players playing in their national league competitions.



CAF President Dr. Patrice Motsepe toured Nambole Stadium during his visit to Uganda to check the country's preparedness ahead of the 2024 African Nations Championship in February.

She Cranes: The girls who keep on delivering

Uganda's national netball team, the She Cranes, yet again delivered on the big stage when they settled for Silver after falling to South Africa's SPAR Proteas in the final of the Africa Netball Cup in Namibia.

The win in Namibia is the second time South Africa is beating Uganda in the tournament final – the first was in the 2021 championship. She Cranes was chasing their fourth title after previous wins in 2014, 2017, and 2018.

“Things didn't go as planned, but that's sports—there's always a win, a draw, or a loss. You just have to accept the outcome,” said She Cranes captain Irene Eyar.

Uganda's centre court maestro, Margaret Baagala, was named Best Centre Player of the tournament, because of flawless feeds and court management.

After narrowly losing their opening match to Zimbabwe 49-50, they bounced back with commanding victories over hosts Namibia (55-43) and Eswatini (85-34) in the group stage. They carried this momentum into the semifinals, where they edged Malawi 51-43.





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