

The

# UGANDAN

HISTORY.CULTURE.INNOVATION

ISSUE 1.0 JUNE 2020

Created by UgandanHistory.

## Celebrating Ugandans

INSPIRING UGANDAN  
STORIES.

### MOHSEN TAHA.

*Telling the Ugandan Story through  
Photography.*

### *Esther Kalenzi*

A life dedicated to supporting vulnerable  
children.

### VICTOR OCEN

*The amazing story of a Ugandan boy that rose  
from the ruins of war to become a Nobel  
Peace Prize nominee.*

**INSIDE:**

**DR. MATTHEW  
LUKWIYA: THE  
LAST MARTYR.**

*Special Report*

*What's this all about?*

# CELEBRATING UGANDANS.



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# There's an urgent need to look at our history through our own eyes, to retell our story in our own words

## Editor's Note

It doesn't matter if you were already born or not. There's something nostalgic about looking at these old postcards of Uganda. The railway stations, the clean cities, the young scholars at Mengo and Kings College Budo. There's a hypomania that strikes when you look at footage of Kampala from the 1950s—of Muteesa II speaking—of an old Ugandan song/ballad from Farida Ssonko.

Ugandans need to be more eager to learn about their history. We move forward, in a way, when we learn about our past. In our minds, we set some records straight. We learn new things about our heritage, which frees us from self-doubt and self-hate. There must be a way to look at our history through our own eyes and use it to improve our mindset.

When I say "look at history through our own eyes" I am in no way doubting or downgrading the works of historians who took the trouble to document Uganda's history from as far back as the 1890s. They did an amazing job. There's however a part of our history that has been told in a way that fits the teller's narrative. This has seeped through the cracks to our younger generations, who due to reluctance to dig through the archives that hold our history, are virgin grounds for propaganda. That needs to change. We need to take these books out from the archives, dust them, and put them on social media where our youth spend a considerable amount of their time.

What about innovations? Why are we obsessed with talking about Ugandan Innovations? Let's create a scenario of a young Ugandan girl who wants to change her community for the better. A young Ugandan Photographer who feels it's impossible for a Ugandan to be recognized on an international stage. A young Ugandan musician who needs assurance that it's possible to have success as a Ugandan artiste.

We shall tell the young girl about Esther Kalenzi, The young photographer about Mohsen Taha and the young musician about Eddy Kenzo. We'll say, "Hey, look here, these are Ugandans like you and they are making it, you can too" The Ugandan is here to do exactly that. To create a platform where we can talk about our history. To create a platform where we can celebrate Ugandan Innovations. To equip ourselves with knowledge from our past and hopefully, use it to forge out a future. My prayer is that you enjoy reading this issue and most importantly, learn a thing or two from the content that has been carefully assorted for you.

TAMALE ANDREW PATRICK  
**Editor-in-Chief**

# The Ugandan

HISTORY.CULTURE.INNOVATION

*Created by UgandanHistory*

  
**Ugandan**  
HISTORY

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Celebrating Ugandans for their contribution to society.

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Celebrating Uganda's culture

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**"Oh God, I  
think I'm  
going to die  
in my  
service. But  
If I die, let me  
be the last"**

MATTHEW LUKWIYA

# Dr Matthew Lukwiya.

HE LAST MARTYR.



Grace Obuu, a nurse at Lacor Hospital, leaned in to insert an IV drip into Dr Lukwiya. He was down with a high fever that had initially been treated as malaria without much improvement. Consequently, his samples had been taken off the previous day by Dr Pierre Rollin of the CDC to be tested for Ebola. As Grace went about her business, Lukwiya prayed, “Oh God, I think I will die in my service. If I die, let me be the last”.

He then sang a religious hymn “Onward Christian Soldier”. Everyone around Lukwiya had initially downplayed the cause of his fever. “It’s just malaria”, “It could be a different kind of flu”

“You’ve been working too much”.

None of them was saying it. But most of them were thinking it. At the back of their minds they feared the worst but not a single one of them was brave enough to think it out loud in the early days of his malaise. They were all stuck under a thick cloud of denial, you could say.

A simple flu-like illness grew into a persistent fever, vomiting, body pains, and extreme weakness. He started taking anti-malarial drugs but they could not help. The following morning, his results were returned. It was not malaria, not a strong flu, not a bacterial blood infection.

It was the worst that could possibly happen. It was Ebola.

On knowing the result, he demanded an immediate transfer to the isolation unit. He made it clear that as the leader of the Ebola task force at Lacor, he had to lead by example. This was a message to all other health workers. He was telling them that no one was above the Standard Operating Procedures—not even him.

Later that day, a call was sent to his wife, Margaret, who immediately left Kampala to come and attend to her husband. On her arrival, she was dressed in protective gear and taken to where Lukwiya was.

***“It is our vocation to save life. It involves risk, but when we serve with love, that is when the risk does not matter so much. When we believe our mission is to save lives, we have got to do our work”***

She desperately wanted to get close to him but he wouldn't let her. He actually raised his voice at her “Don't come near me! you'll get infected!” he continued “I don't want you to get infected. If anything happens to me, at least you will be alive to look after the children.”

You can't talk about “Ebola” in Uganda without mentioning Dr Lukwiya.

You can't talk about leadership in Uganda's health system without mentioning Dr Lukwiya. If you wanted an example of men who embodied commitment, kindness, exemplary living and humility, men who ticked all these boxes, Dr Lukwiya's name would come right at top of your list--probably somewhere below the Archbishop.

You'd assume that by now, the winds of change should have blown his name from our active memory. Fortunately, they haven't. His name still elicits the respect he never demanded for, but earned with almost every action in his tenure at Lacor Hospital—a hospital he helped turn into one of the best in Uganda.

Lacor didn't become the best because of an exceptionally big budget, no. It wasn't because Lacor had more doctors or fewer patients. Never! it was because of the great leadership that this hospital had. First, from its Italian founders and then from this kind man, Dr Matthew Lukwiya.

Dr Lukwiya was an Acholi, born to a fishmonger and a petty trader. His father, the fishmonger, drowned when Lukwiya was only 12. His mother had to struggle to raise him with three of his siblings. Life was definitely harder without his father. His mother, the trader would sometimes smuggle tea into south Sudan to make ends meet. She even taught young Matthew the art.

He started smuggling tea across to south Sudan using a bicycle. It was however, not something he enjoyed. He was only doing what he had to do to keep the family afloat and have a piece of bread to eat at school.



Lukwiya focused on school and on many occasions ended right at the top of his class. He earned a series of scholarships that saw him through to Medical School and later went to Lacor as an intern doctor in 1983.

After just three months, Dr Piero Corti had already decided that this young man, Dr Matthew, had what it took to lead this reputable hospital.

Corti started preparing him for this role right away.

His first test would come 6 years later. 1989. On a Good Friday. The Lord's resistance army, a rebel group led by Joseph kony had begun active operations in 1987 and was attacking villages in Gulu frequently.

They attacked Lacor Hospital, probably, for medical supplies. During their assault, the rebels decided to add some Italian nuns to the loot, something Dr Lukwiya was not about to allow. He negotiated with the rebels. Guess what he them in return. That's right.Himself.

He was taken by the ruthless LRA militia and wandered with them in the wilderness for close to a week, fully dressed in his white coat. He was later released and returned to Lacor where he opened its gates to people seeking refuge from rebel attacks.

A year later, Lukwiya earned a scholarship to Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine to do a master's degree in tropical Paediatrics. On completion of his masters, he was offered a teaching position. He turned it down.

His heart was in Lacor. He returned and turned it into the best hospital in northern Uganda. In December 1998, Dr Lukwiya moved to Kampala with his family to pursue his second a master's degree in Public health at Makerere University. It was an opportunity to advance his career, take a much needed break from the hectic routine of running a hospital and a chance to get his family away from a war ravaged region of the country.

Two years into his study, he received a call from Dr Opira Cyprian, the acting Medical Superintendent at Lacor. Opira was in a dilemma. A strange disease had killed two of his student nurses, both of whom had vomited blood before they died. Opira asked Dr Matthew to return to Lacor to help solve this puzzle.

The following morning, Lukwiya packed his bags and left for Lacor. A few moments after his arrival, a third student, Daniel Ayella, passed away.

Dr Lukwiya immediately got down to work. He asked Sr. Maria Di Santo, the head nurse at Lacor to get him all the charts of all “mysterious deaths” in the past 2-3 weeks. That night, he identified 17 cases who had similar symptoms before they died. He spent most of the night awake combing through CDC and WHO publications on infectious diseases that caused hemorrhage.

He found information about the 1995 Ebola outbreak in Congo, whose patients were remarkably similar to the ones whose charts he was reviewing.

The following morning, 8th October, after an emergency meeting with his staff where he informed them about his suspicion, he received community health teams from villages in Gulu. They told him about a strange fever that was wiping out entire families in the community. A strange disease that was causing people to bleed before they die.

Lukwiya's fears heightened. He knew quite well that if this was Ebola, his people would be wiped out. Why? When someone dies of Ebola, their body remains highly infectious. The Acholi, and Ugandans at large, wash the deceased before they bury. He immediately called Dr Sam Okware, Who was the commissioner of community health services. Dr Okware sent a team of laboratory technologists from Uganda Virus Research Institute to take blood samples.

They were transported to South Africa and a week later, Lukwiya's worst fears were confirmed. The "strange fever" was Ebola. WHO and CDC teams rushed to Lacor only to find that they nothing much to add to what was being done. Dr Lukwiya had already organized an isolation ward for the Ebola suspects. The unit was manned by three doctors, five nurses and five nursing assistants. WHO redirected some of its health professionals to nearby Gulu regional referral hospital—a government aided hospital which had some of the Ebola suspects neglected on hospital beds. Their help was needed more here.

Despite Dr Lukwiya's expertise and leadership, the situation at Lacor worsened. Health workers continued to fall ill. Two weeks after confirmation of the outbreak, the hospital lost 12 more workers. Fear crept into the minds of the previously dedicated team and Lukwiya smelt it almost immediately. After the death of an Italian nun, standing in front of deflated souls, he tried to boost their morale. He said "It is our vocation to save life. It involves risk, but when we serve with love, that is when the risk does not matter so much. When we believe our mission is to save lives, we have got to do our work"

He succeeded in raising their morale, but only just. A bigger test was yet to check how deep he had reached into their hearts—or heads. The first week of November was probably the hardest for most of his staff. Seven people died, three of them being nurses who had nothing to do with the Ebola ward. When the health workers knew of this, they downed their tools. They were done.

Instead of going to work, Lukwiya's team of close to 400 workers assembled at the nursing school. They demanded that the hospital gets closed. Lukwiya calmed them down. He reminded them of their duty to serve but they were not hearing it. Not this time. They had heard him say this before and it only brought more death to their workmates.

Lukwiya reminded them of his personal sacrifice, his encounter with the rebels, his decision to dedicate his entire adult life to Lacor. He told them that if they left, lives will be lost and this blood will be on their hands.

He told them that if they wanted to go, they could, but he'll stay. He'll stay and see this through at whatever cost.

Having trained most of them, he had their respect. They owed him that. He had given them a career, a livelihood, a status in the community. By the end of the meeting, Lukwiya had won again. The meeting ended on a happier note. He sang with the nurses as they walked back to work. Lukwiya resumed normal duty, putting in 18 hour shifts at the Ebola ward.

In the morning hours of 20th November, Lukwiya was awoken by another phone call. It was from Babu Stanley, a nurse who had covered the night duty at the isolation ward.

He called to request for Lukwiya's immediate assistance. An Ebola patient, Simon Ajok who was also a nurse, had moved out of his bed and was wandering in the corridors. He was fighting a losing battle, drowning in his own blood. He was coughing up blood, his eyelids were swollen due to bleeding from the eyes and he could barely see where he was going.

Despite Stanley's plea to Simon to go back into his bed, Simon kept staggering in the corridors, clutching on straws.

Simon had pulled out his IV and the tubes were dangling in his arm, with blood dripping from his body as fast as the air in his lungs was depleting. In the course of the epidemic at Lacor, they had not seen a patient this sick. Ajok was literally bleeding from every orifice on his body.

Lukwiya came in a few minutes later. He put on his protective gear but sadly, for some reason, did not wear his goggles or plastic face shield. Simon was now in his bed—almost dead. He was gasping for breath. Lukwiya put him into a sitting position, something doctors do to reduce the severity of respiratory distress episodes. He cleaned Simon and changed his beddings. Simon died minutes later.

A few days later, on Sunday night, Margaret noticed that her husband's voice had changed as she spoke to him on the phone. When she asked him what was wrong with him, he told her that he has caught a terrible flu. The following day, the flu symptoms had worsened. The fever was higher. The body aches were more severe.

He thought it could be malaria but by midweek, he was not any better. He was at first too weak to attend to his duties, and then became too weak to get out of bed.

For the next few days after diagnosing him with Ebola, his condition kept fluctuating. He would show signs of improvement and then deteriorate a few hours later. On the afternoon of 4th December 2000, Lukwiya's condition worsened. His breathing was so bad that he was put on a respirator. The worst fears of his Physicians had come true. His lungs were hemorrhaging. To put this in the lay man's terms, he had started bleeding into his lungs and was, quite literally, drowning in his own blood too.

At exactly 1:20 am on 5th December, he lost his battle with the virus he had so bravely fought against.

He lost his life in the last battle of a long war that he had commanded so well—a war that his army eventually won because of his leadership.

On February 6th 2001, Uganda defeated the virus and was declared Ebola free. The isolation ward at Lacor was disinfected and turned into a children's ward.

*By @UgandanHistory*

40

DAYS



OVER



40

SMILES

*"we had started a movement that could not be stopped. The party was over but the orphans remained. They still needed food, they were still sick, they needed to go to school, they needed a home, and they needed to be loved"*

# ESTHER KALENZI



Esther could have been in a nine to five like the majority of her friends. She could have been a journalist or anything else that she wanted. She has a very decent education that could've propelled her into a powerful position in the formal employment sector. She tried that, but only for a while. Her calling was different. It was more than just a nine to five. Her calling was bigger than running after the top position at a giant company and bigger than Esther herself. She was called to help the less privileged.

The signs that she'd choose to dedicate her life to ensure the well-being of others showed early in her life-- as early as high school. While she was a student at Aga Khan, she headed a campaign to raise school fees for one of her fellow students who was struggling to pay their dues.

When the school administration learned of this, they offered this student a scholarship. She carried this on into her university days, taking every opportunity to do an act of kindness.

In 2012, during lent, she came up with the idea of gifting Vulnerable Children with a descent Easter Celebration. It was meant to be a one-off—a single-day celebration. She opened up a Facebook page and rallied her friends and family to donate.

At the end of the 40 days, she had about 3 million shillings and a couple of other items used in day to day living. After the Easter celebrations, Esther recalls "we had started a movement that could not be stopped. The party was over but the orphans remained. They still needed food, they were still sick, they needed to go to school, they needed a home, and they needed to be loved"

***"I did nothing to earn my background just like it is not the children's fault that they are born into poverty. Making a difference, however, is a choice, and I am glad I made the decision to do more."***

That's when she knew that this would be more than just an Easter celebration. That's when she decided to start 40daysover40smiles, a foundation that now takes care of these children.

Learn more about Esther and 40 days over 40 Smiles in her exclusive interview with UgandanHistory.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Hi Esther, It's so good to get to hear from you and thank you for sharing your story with us. We'll start with the old-time cliché. Who are you? Who is Esther Kalenzi? How would you describe yourself?

How would I describe myself? Well, I would describe myself as a tea addict who loves a good story. If you don't have all the details and sound effects to match, I don't want to hear it :) I am passionate about working with young people and love helping them bring their ideas to life. I lead the team at 40 days over 40 smiles Foundation and Co-run an online accessory store, House of Penda with a friend.

You've dedicated a part of your life to supporting vulnerable children into all-around, productive, self-sustaining adults. How is that going so far?

Like everything else, it has its high and low points. It is a decision I made without fully understanding the responsibility it would come with. I have learnt on the job and continue to, every day. It is a fulfilling experience and the journey has been and still is quite the rollercoaster ride.

Let's talk about 40 days over 40 smiles. What is 40 days over 40 smiles?

40 days over 40 smiles (4040) is a volunteer based, home grown Non-profit organisation which supports underprivileged children through experiential learning.

Our intervention includes children reading for fun, writing, expressing themselves publicly, in speech and through projects. It also focuses on components of self-awareness, resourcefulness and community agency to groom them into mindful citizens with integrity. The tag line "Be the change you want to see" guides us to be 'doers' while inspiring others along the way. Although we might not be able to transform every sector that needs an overhaul, we can play a small part in making lives better for as many people as possible. In our case, it is the children we work with in different communities as well as the volunteers who are actually in the trenches, building systems that will hopefully outlast all of us.

From one of the articles about you in the New Vision, we learned that you could have been a journalist or Marketing executive. You gave this up to start this Foundation. That was a big decision. Tell us about the moment you knew that this is what you wanted to do.

I didn't quite hear a voice in the wilderness and I also don't think that it was one moment per se. Several small moments led me here.



The first visit I made to the first children's home we ever worked with to find out what their needs were during my lunch break from work, the emotional yet fun first Easter weekend we spent with the kids after collecting resources for 40 days in 2012, the literal pain in my heart hearing their stories or realising there were needs we would never be able to meet and my joy whenever I was running errands or planning next steps. I was quite clueless but things would fall in place nonetheless. It was all natural to me, like nothing I had ever done in my entire life. I don't know how I can put it to words but I felt like I belonged and I loved the feeling. A choice needed to be made at the time. I had started 4040 while working with a Business Development and Marketing firm. It was difficult to split my time for both and in the end, the latter was mostly providing resources for the former. My heart was with 4040. I was exhausted all the time and felt that I was cheating my employer by giving a lot less than 100%. I made the decision to stick with 4040, and the rest, as they say, is History.

Have there been times when you've regretted this decision?

Yes, several. In the first year when it would get tough and I felt like I could not push through another day, Mum used to say "You started it, you can end it." At the time, I took it to mean that she could see the toll it took on me but now I think she also wanted me to evaluate the stakes and decide. Was it a bad day or a bad life? You know.

The past two years have been especially difficult, wearing me down physically, mentally and emotionally. There are several moments where I would literally ask myself "Ye nfa ki?/ To what end? On these days, I keep reminding myself why I started and why we do what we do. If I need a break, I take it. If I can, I force myself to get up. I live to fight another day.

The beginnings are always hard. How hard was it for you to start this? Are there times when 40 days over 40 smiles almost didn't start?

There is something glorious about naivety. I was a woman on a mission, naïve enough to think I could change the world with just enough sheer will and determination. To be honest, the beginning in itself wasn't hard. I got up one day and decided to start the Facebook group where our story began and I did. The responses were few and far apart at the beginning but I knew that I would do what I set out to do even if I was alone or with just a handful of people. A few weeks later, things picked up. I started without a concrete plan and things sort of started working themselves out. I received plenty of support from family, friends and strangers alike. In the following months, the volunteers were just as passionate and excited to see the fruits of their work. We were also young and energetic without too many responsibilities meaning 4040 had our utmost attention. This enabled us to be innovative, have fun and make a difference. I would say I had beginners luck. Things got complicated later on.

Tell us about these complications. We are curious about how you manoeuvred through these hard times.

This is something I don't often talk about but I will share one specific incident which did not leave me the same.

Several months into working with one of the children's homes, we began to notice some red flags. My first sign was actually something really random. There is a white and red top that I had been gifted which I really loved. I had sentimental attachment to it so I included it amongst the things I gave away to the home. I noticed that one of the girls, Fiona\* wore it each time I visited. If I went by 3 days a week, she had it on. If I went after a week, same thing.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

I pulled her aside, just to make sure she also didn't just like it. She told me the caretaker only gave her the set of clothes she had on. When I asked others, it seemed to be a similar story although there were some favourites who got preferential treatment. I was livid, knowing the tonnes of clothes we brought regularly.

This was only the beginning. It turned out the same was happening for all the other household items and food stuffs. Unbeknownst to the care taker whom I will call Martha, pretty much every individual or company that visited gave us a breakdown of what they took to the home; many times we actually made the list based on the needs. The children sometimes saw these items for the first and last time upon delivery.

We dug deeper and unearthed even more skeletons. Remember the naivety, I told you about? Yup, the lack of due diligence came back to haunt me. We called Martha\* and her team out on the transgressions. We offered an ultimatum for them to let us bring them up to code with the support of a social worker and the Ministry of Gender or report the violations.

What followed was a full blown war. Martha's team took to Facebook with some bitter, twisted lies and she made sure to call every partner we were affiliated with. Among other things, she alleged that I had bought a car using funds collected for the home. (This happened to be my mum's car that I had driven to the home long before raising any money) Thankfully, each person who got off the phone called me shortly after.

They let me know they didn't believe her, some also had similar experiences to share. Mostly, I knew what I was up against thanks to the heads up. I am not a fighter and this was all new to me so I inevitably fell apart. I did not care what she did or said about me to others but I worried for the children; for what they would go through, and selfishly, about how disappointed they would be in me, in us after she fed them with these stories. Some of them were too young to know what was going on, others young enough to be impressionable.

It was a lot. I cried until I was all cried out. I was ready to call it quits but I had an incredible support system. They lifted me out of the darkness and helped me rebuild myself. I have grown thicker skin with every challenge since then.

**Vulnerable Children. Who are they? What makes a child vulnerable?**

Some of the criteria used to describe -



vulnerable children in Uganda includes those who are orphaned, abandoned by parents/guardians, living on their own or institutionalised, disabled or not going to school/irregular education, live on one meal or less per day.

**How do you identify the children you work with?**

Right now, we work with schools in Makindye Division. The plan is to roll out across the city and beyond but we do not have the capacity yet. We target low income schools with children some of whom fit the 'vulnerable' criteria described above.

We also work with children who have dropped out of school because they lack school fees or other related family dynamics

**We have seen some pictures of activities of 40 days over 40 smiles. There's a lot of children in there. How many children are we talking about?**

Over the course of our 8 years, we have worked directly and indirectly with over 2,500 children. Currently, there are approximately 400. We were working on adding three schools to benefit from our programs, when the country came to a standstill.

**That's a lot of Children. You must need a big team. Every successful innovation needs a brilliant team. We'd love to know more about the different people that have made this dream a reality.**

Wow! Where does one even start? So many people have been responsible for building 4040 to where it is today. If I had to answer just this question and nothing else, there would still not be enough time. We have 5 major departments; Angaza, Fundraising and Events, Finance and Administration, Marketing and Partnerships and Communication all run by amazing people. We have volunteers in each of these departments. We also run an annual Internship program which is headed by an

**How did you manage to convince them to join you and motivate them to stay?**

Haha, I don't know! Perhaps the next interview should be with them. God knows they probably have a more intriguing story to tell. Most of the longest serving members did not need any convincing, not from me at least.

They wanted to be part of this movement so they came, and stayed. Others were recruited as interns (it is a fairly rigorous process), stayed on as volunteers and were promoted based on their skill and work ethic among other things. There are some outliers whose story doesn't fit those examples, like one of our graphics designers whom I took out to tea so that I could pitch a volunteer position at 4040 but in the end we only spoke about that for 20% of the meeting.

I feel that most people come through our doors when they are already 'convinced.'

If they see a future in this work or feel inspired; if they see the impact of their work, feel appreciated and have someone or some people pushing them to grow personally and professionally, they are more likely to stay.

I wrote an entire thesis on other factors that lead them to stay motivated but that is a story for another day.

**Mobilizing resources must be difficult. What are some of the ways you have managed to do it consistently?**

People are our biggest and best resource. I have an incredible team as we have already discussed in a) above for starters :) and they are only matched by our incredible supporters in Uganda and beyond. The simple answer is that we have been blessed to come up with ideas which are well executed and embraced. The loyalists who keep coming back again and again and the new ones who join us are the icing on the cake.

We struggled a lot to find 'big' Donors or Corporate funding and we still do but we made the best lemonade there is. Our story

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW CONT'D

began with us getting Ugx 1,000, 5,000, 20,000, 100,000 or whatever one could give and we did so much with it. We figured we could use the same model. Along the way we learnt to be innovative about the approach and delivery. I think our transparency has been a key component in encouraging people to support us.

**The Foundation has been able to raise over 150,000 US Dollars to-date, to take care of these children. This is no easy feat. How were you able to raise this money?**

We have raised this money mostly through fundraising events and donations. Over the years these events have included Hoops4Grace (Basketball), 5AsideUG (Football) Croak&Rhyme (Music, art and poetry) , Bantwala7s (Rugby) 4040Night (Quiz and Karaoke) We have also run social media campaigns like #BuyABrick from which we built a dormitory and written, published and sold 4 children's story books. We have a subscription program where subscribers make a monthly or annual contribution.

We won the NSSF Torch Awards in 2015 which came with a Ugx 20 million cash prize which enabled us to build a Community Library. We have also had a number of one off contributions from individuals and companies.

**You support the education of these children. Have you built your own School? Do you pay their fees in other Schools? How does this work?**

No, we do not have a School or pay fees. We run a program called Angaza in different community schools. Through this program, volunteers go to the schools weekly and work with the teachers to support learning alongside the regular the School curriculum. Our intervention is heavy on involvement of the children and supporting them to enjoy learning, not to simply pass exams but because learning can indeed be fun. The activities include reading, writing, debates and watching movies. We are piloting a tool kit with focuses on 3 components, Self-awareness, resourcefulness and community agency using a club model. Depending on how it works, we will be able not only to replicate it across several schools but also train other individuals and organisations to deliver it.

We hoped to set up our first Angaza learning centre this year. It would give the schools and children who dropped out access to resources like books, learning aids, computers and skills taught by volunteers. We will most likely not accomplish that this year but it is in the pipeline

**It must be fulfilling to work in community development. Which aspects speak to you the most?**

The people, always the people. When you encounter an educator who is passionate about giving everything for his students to improve, when a child who was once timid finds a voice, it makes it worth it.

Almost weekly, a couple of people will get in touch asking for advice about a project they are starting or want to work on, everything from supporting people who have been displaced by floods to mental health initiatives. Some of these are teenagers!

It gives me hope for Uganda, the world at large really, especially at a time like this.

**Has the 4040 dream turned out exactly the way you hoped?**

Exactly? Not even close. It has turned out better than I could have ever anticipated

**Voluntary work is not easy. Many people put in a lot of efforts but still give in at some point due to the day to day challenges. You have broken this mould. and built something huge here. What keeps dragging you out of bed to go and do this voluntary work every day?**

Thank you. Sometimes I feel like we have made it look huger than it actually is. I have made a commitment to myself, my team, our supporters and beneficiaries. The only way I can back out is after all possible means to keep going have failed and I mean all. It generally takes a lot for me to give up especially when I see the potential, even in the pain and disappointment, there are so many possibilities. In a way, it feels like we have only scratched the surface. I want us to do more, build more, be more and that can't happen if I stay in bed, can it? I owe it to the children, even those being born this very minute, that when they read their Ugandan History, (see what I did there?) they will see how much of a spirited fight we put up to make lives better the best way we knew how and hopefully be inspired to take it to the next level.

**The Work Vs Family balance. How are you able to maintain that?**

I don't think there is such a thing as balance in the real sense of the word. You make time for things that matter to you no matter how difficult it is. I have been lucky in the sense that I could work from home even before it became 'mandatory.' I have a team which can hold the fort when I have other responsibilities.

**What advice would you give to youth out there who would love to have an impact as strong as the one you've had in your community?**

Wow. I don't quite know how to answer this. I just encourage them to find out what they want to do and do it well. Also be comfortable in not knowing. Some musicians were stars as Pre-teens while Susan Boyle became an international sensation at 48 on Britain's got talent. Try. Do the things you like and those you are curious about and everything in between. Your dream, skill, career or innovation does not have to impact millions for it to be a success. Quite frankly, surviving in the world is hard enough without any additional pressure.

If the influence you have is on your family and you are grooming your siblings to leave the world better than they found it, that is already a win. If you can positively impact people through your work, great; if you can support others who are doing something that speaks to you, that is awesome. I do strongly advise that you volunteer at least once in your life.

How big or small your involvement is, is up to you but I can assure you that if you are fully present, it will not leave you the same.

**We are pretty sure there are youth out there who would love to volunteer in your Foundation. Is this possible?**

We are always looking for passionate, skilled young people to join us. We do not have openings at the moment but they can still send a Cover letter explaining why they want to work with 4040 and sharing a bit about themselves to [info@40dayover.40smiles.org](mailto:info@40dayover.40smiles.org). This is where we begin when looking to recruit.

**How about Donations. How do people who would like to donate find you?**

We have a number of platforms to use. They can use Mobile money to 0776840407/075140407 They can deposit on our bank account Forty Days over Forty Smiles Foundation DFCU Bank 01083551658354 Online via Global giving [bit.ly/Dream4040](http://bit.ly/Dream4040) Use the Eversend App and select 4040 under Donations

**Any Final words?**

Thanks for the interview. It actually got me thinking quite a bit about our journey and reminded me just how grateful I am. Much love to the amazing 4040 family wherever you are, from the team, past and present to the supporters. We really only are because you are. I hope that everything you have poured into the work of 4040 will come back to you, tenfold.

# Victor Ocen

## THE ONLY UGANDAN, AND YOUNGEST AFRICAN TO BE NOMINATED FOR A NOBLE PEACE PRIZE

*The amazing story of a boy who rose from the ruins of war to being one of the most powerful young men on the African continent.*

By Tamale Andrew Patrick

It is human nature to seek revenge. It makes us feel better—but only for a moment. A brief moment. If we choose revenge, we live, for the larger part of our lives, with unresolved anger—unresolved hate.

Despite knowing all this, it is still easier to choose revenge over forgiveness.

It is easier to choose hate over love. It is easier to drown in our sadness, languish in self-pity, waiting for an outsider to come to our rescue. It's usually not within the reach of our minds to stand up against our negative thoughts and seek to leave the past behind when the wounds it left are still sore. That's hard. But sometimes, the hardest thing and the right thing are the same. Sometimes you need to forgive someone else to set yourself free. Sometimes you need to make peace, first with yourself, before you make peace with someone else. These are, for me, the first steps in any form of rehabilitation. But this is not about what I think, is it?

It's about a man who chose to do the hard thing—a man who chose love over hate—peace over war—forgiveness over revenge. It's about a man that lost too much to war, his childhood inclusive, but has left all the hate behind. He's decided to dedicate his adult life to changing countless lives and healing countless souls affected by war. It's about Victor Ocen.

Victor Ocen is the founder and Executive Director for African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET), an organization that provides mental and physical rehabilitation to victims in post-war communities of greater northern Uganda, works to ensure access to justice for war-affected communities, mobilizes and empowers young people to champion peacebuilding, conflict mitigation and reconciliation.

To provide physical rehabilitation, AYINET provides reconstructive surgeries to war victims of rape, mutilation, gunshots and other forms of physical injuries. It is through this initiative that Victor has touched the lives of over 21000 people in his community. On top of this, he's served as the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for Peace and Justice, promoting SDG Goal 16. He's also been a member of the Global Advisory Group to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees on Gender, Forced Displacement and Protection.

In 2015 he was listed by Forbes as one of the 10 most powerful men in Africa and was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize the same year, making him the only Ugandan and youngest African to win a nomination to this prestigious prize. For his work, he has received numerous awards, all recognizing his service to poor people and his inspirational leadership for peace in Africa.

It is quite clear that Ocen has had an immense impact on his community. If you look through what he is doing now, you'd think that he came from a well-to-do background, got a high-end education, graduated top of his class, wrote a fantastic proposal that grew into AYINET. You'd be so wrong. Ocen had the exact opposite of that. He came from grass to grace. He's had his fair share of pain, loss, deprivation, poverty, hopelessness and misery. He's had it all and risen from it. Now, he's lifting others.

Victor Ocen grew up in northern Uganda at a time when the region was crippled by war. He grew up in extreme poverty and was denied many of the simple pleasures that make a childhood complete. In one of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) podcasts, Ocen narrated how his childhood was. He said "I lived in a war zone. I spent my entire childhood, narrowly surviving deadly disease, abduction and being recruited as a child soldier. I grew up in the darkness of fear, of death, you know, witnessing the horrors—the crimes—the brutalities of war. This is the society I grew up in. I grew up in a community that had no hope, a community whose choice was limited to, "How can I revenge, how can I also let them feel the pain?"

Ocen had just finished his first year at Abia primary school when the community was attacked by rebels and cattle rustlers. Schools were shut for close to 4 years. On his return, he walked straight to primary five. Teachers tried to stop him but he wasn't having it. Two years later, he'd prove them wrong by being the best at his school in the Primary Leaving Examinations. Throughout his secondary education, Ocen worked to pay his own school fees as he also contributed to the well-fare of his family. He traded in charcoal, was a cleaner at a radio station which later hired him as a receptionist and eventually a presenter. With these part-time gigs, he was able to see himself through secondary school and excited at the prospect of attending a university.

He applied to Gulu University and was accepted. Three days into his University stay, his home town was attacked by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels. His father called him to come back home. In an interview with the Guardian newspaper of October 8th 2015, Ocen recalled " My father called me and said, 'Come back home'. And I said, 'But why? I am in school.' Then he said, 'Come back home because today, we have not even managed to get drinking water for the whole family.' I cried for the whole night. In the morning, I packed up and went back home. I dropped out of university."

*Story continues on next page....*



## VICTOR OCEN. AGENT OF CHANGE.

**“I lived in a war zone. I spent my entire childhood, narrowly surviving deadly disease, abduction and being recruited as a child soldier. I grew up in the darkness of fear, of death, you know, witnessing the horrors—the crimes—the brutalities of war. This is the society I grew up in”**

**....I was inspired by my own reality — my childhood, my suffering, the life I lived. I looked down to my community, down to myself, to see what role can I play to make a difference with a hope that if I acted well, I would bring the positive change I'm looking for. So I decided, let me step forward and bring my best self forward.**

*Story continues on next page....*

Shortly after losing his education, Ocen lost his elder brother, Omara. He was taken by the LRA and never seen again. In 2004, Ocen was the breadwinner of his family. He needed to bring in more money to. He secured a job at Straight Talk, a foundation that gives sex education, talks about HIV/AIDS with youth being the major target of this information. Despite being the least qualified candidate academically, he had the most experience having worked on the radio during his time in secondary school. This gave Ocen a platform to reach out to fellow youth.

In 2005, Ocen went to Kitgum to interview nurses about HIV/AIDS. On entering one of the local hospitals, Ocen noticed an elderly woman desperately trying to console a crying baby of about 8 months. On inquiring he found out that the baby was called Janet, and the old lady was her grandmother. Janet had plasters on one arm, covering injuries she had sustained from an LRA attack that had claimed the life of her mother.

To stop Janet from crying, the elderly woman had placed her nipple in her mouth which Janet desperately tried to suckle. It was clear that she was extremely hungry. The two had survived on a mug of porridge a day, for four days. Janet needed an x-ray which was never going to be done because there was no money for that.

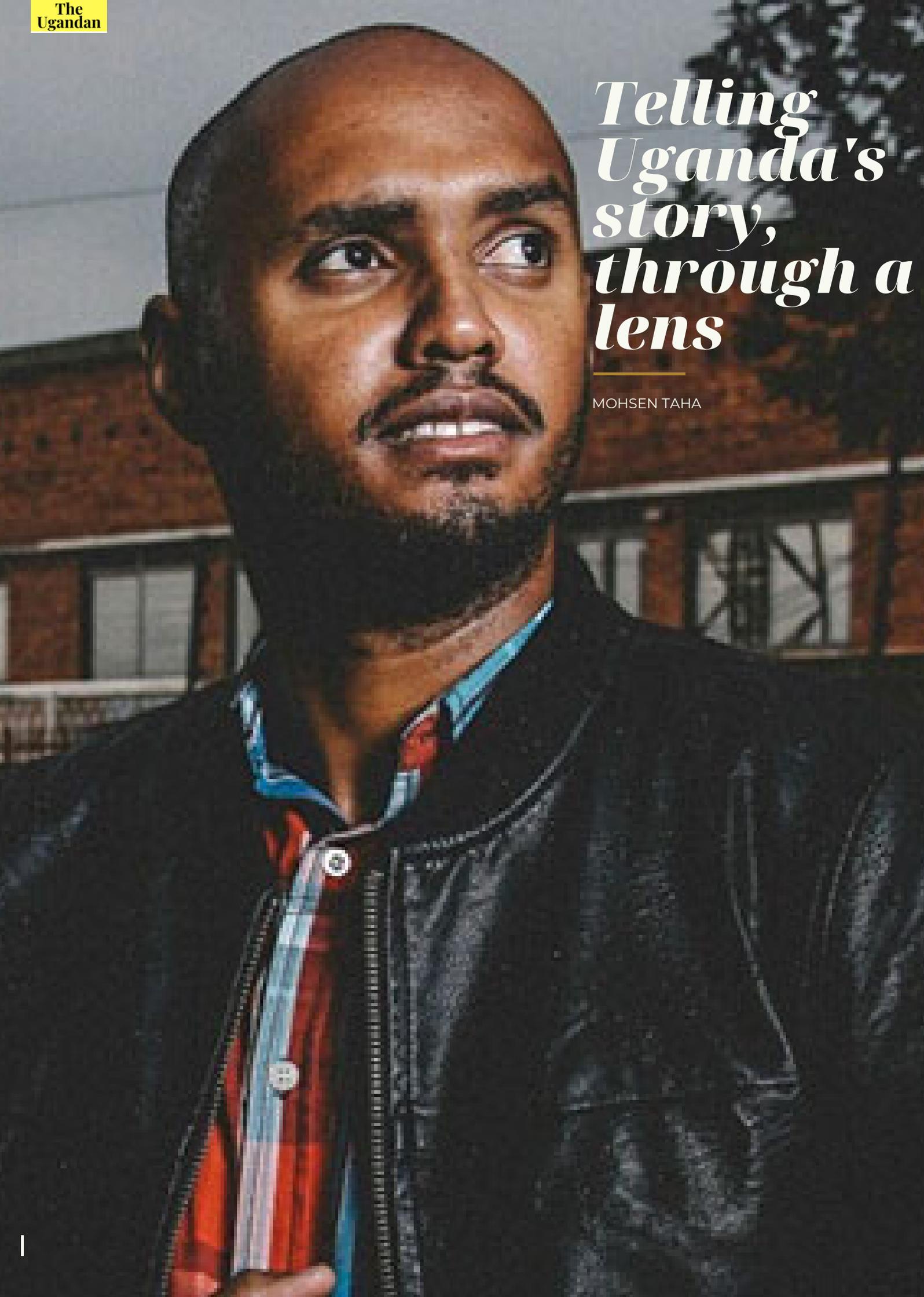
Ocen, deeply moved, carried the two to a nearby mission hospital and paid all their bills. Ocen could not take it anymore. He knew that he had to do something. He had waited long enough for the government, for the educated elites, for the international organizations to come to the rescue of his community but they weren't there yet—and the situation was not getting any better. He ignored all his limitations and decided to do something for a change. He decided to champion the peacebuilding process he so badly craved.

This is why he started AYINET. In his YALI podcast, he tells us what inspired him to start this foundation. He says “ I was inspired by my own reality – my childhood, my suffering, my life I lived. It was always a life calling that needed change, that needed rescue, that needed a means of thinking forward. So that's why I came and said: “For how long am I going to wait for real change to come into my society? And who will bring the change, and when will change come? I'm getting older. Suffering is not stopping. And people are dying. Hopelessness is increasing. And that's what I thought: that instead of sitting and watching and expecting something to come, I asked myself, without much education, without many resources, without any connection – because living in the war zone in northern Uganda as a child, I'd never seen peace. It was difficult to know anything beyond our borders.

I lacked opportunity then of connection, and that's why I said, "Let me look down to my community, down to myself, and see what role can I play to make a difference and what role can I play to change what I don't want in my society." So this is how I was inspired by my own hardships, by my own suffering, but with a hope that if I acted well, I would bring the positive change I'm looking for. So I decided, let me step forward and bring my best self forward. Ocen brought his best self forward and now, look at what he has done. Look what a boy that rose from the ruins of war, from a small village of Abia has turned out to be. Ocen is living proof that you don't need a degree to initiate the change you want to see, that you don't need extraordinary connections or abundant resources. He's proof that all you need is a human heart, a clearvision, and resilience. That's all you need.

# *Telling Uganda's story, through a lens*

MOHSEN TAHA





# Mohsen Taha

PHOTOGRAPHER

By Tamale Andrew Patrick

**W**hen you get as good as Mohsen at your art, usually, the instinct is to try to monetize it as quick as you can. The first thing that comes to mind after getting recognized as a photographer or any other kind of creative is to think about commercial success, which is not bad at all. Ultimately, the bills have to get paid.

The funny thing is, the more you do it for the money, the less money you get. The more you do it for just the money, the less beautiful it feels--the more you sack the fun out of it--the more it feels like a tiresome Job.

Mohsen Taha is one of the few that've chosen to put love and authenticity before the money. He is a Ugandan Photographer that is well on his way to the top. He's exceptionally good at it and he could charge quite a lot for his work, but he chooses to do it without the influence of numbers hovering over him. Starting out as a free-lance photographer, Mohsen reached a point where he felt he needed a normal day Job.

The returns were good, but he quit the job shortly after. He went back to being a free lance photographer which in a way, set him free to shoot at his own terms. Ever since he made this decision, he's won numerous photography awards and feels more fulfilled as a photographer.

In 2015, Mohsen represented Uganda and won the first-ever pan-Africa photo competition, (Agility Africa Photo Challenge) recognising images showing growth and development of Africa. Taha's winning photo was of his son looking at a phone in the dark. It beat more than 700 photos from 33 African countries.

For me, this says a lot about him as a photographer. It tells me that his photography is a bridge that connects his inner self with the outside world. It tells me that it's authentic, slow-paced, beautiful photography. He doesn't shoot for the sake of it. He shoots from the heart.

He opens up to us about his photography journey so far in an exclusive interview.



**In 2015, Mohsen represented Uganda and won the first-ever pan-Africa photo competition, (Agility Africa Photo Challenge) recognising images showing growth and development of Africa. Taha's winning photo (L) of his son looking at a phone in the dark beat more than 700 photos from 33 African countries.**

**So, why photography? Why did you choose to be a photographer?**

Firstly, Thank you for having me on your platform. I am very grateful. My first love was fine art, I loved drawing from primary, to secondary.

Photography is something I picked along from campus in 2007, and by then if you recall there weren't smartphones and easy to find gadgets that we have today. Back then I owned a small point-to-shoot camera that I used to take pictures with of my friends in university parties, just relaxing around hostels, around the university. So much of the memories they have of then, was me taking lots and lots of that footage.

After my masters, I'd take pictures of anything. like street photography that I found interesting just for keeps. In 2014, I had my son in April but I had no job as you know how Uganda unemployment situation is, till about November of that year when Blush Media a media company along Mawanda Road was advertising for a graphics designer and photographer position. I jokingly applied and showed them some of my basic skills and that's actually when I chose to be a professional photographer because I had no other options available career wise.

**Switching from a free-lance photographer to having a boss....how was that?**

There were high demands but a very kind good Samaritan work colleague called Daudi Murungi helped teach me most of the practical photography skills I know now and how to handle a DSLR camera. I picked up fast.

**You're now a free-lancer once again. What happened? Problems with the boss?**

I worked there for some two years then decided to start my own personal freelance business to explore the photography field at my own pace.

**I have looked at a number of your photos. They're pretty good. It appears you've been a professional for so long. How long have you been photographer?**

I have been a photographer for about 6 years. I quit commercial photography last year 2019 and now just do the photography I prefer to do as a hobby and at my own pace

**What are your major interests? What kind of photography do you like to do?**

My major interests are daily life, documentary, and street types of photography as they are real and not pre-acted and tell a story better. I won a Uganda Press Photo Award (UPPA) for daily life category in 2016. I feel a connection and at peace with those types of photography. Wedding and studio photography may have good returns financially which is what pays the bills yes but it is quite exhausting in numerous ways unless they are one's passion. It is what most media companies expect of you to do if it is not journalist type. So basically you can't develop your other skills and interests which can take a huge toll on you.

**Any photographer in particular that has influenced you?**

Osborne Macharia a well-known Kenyan photographer influenced me. I inboxed him sometime back in 2015 on Facebook how he does it and he replied that I should just create my own style and stick to it which was some pretty good advice at the time as I was still fresh and new to the field.

**Favorite camera?**

My favourite camera as per today should be the Canon 5D Mark IV. It's quite expensive, about US\$2600 on Amazon.

**You obviously have tons of photographs. Among your numerous photographs, which one is your best and why?**

Among my photographs, the famous one I took of my son in the dark when power had gone that won me a prestigious famous African award in 2015 of US\$4000 is my best and favourite of them all ever. I have it framed in my sitting room.

**What is the one thing you wish you knew when you started on this journey of photography?**

The one thing I wish I knew when I started on this journey of photography is to not buy unnecessary equipment out of excitement without planning very well because I ended up selling several gear I had even never touched. Trust me all you need is just a very good camera unless you are a wedding or studio/fashion photographer.

**Any regrets so far?**

I may have a few regrets here and there, one is focusing on wedding and fashion photography specifically over my interests that benefited me even way more as it's where I won most awards than commercial photography over the past years. The other regret I will always have is working for anyone who does not respect and understand the art and skill of fine art, graphic design and photography.

**Do you always carry your camera with you on your travels? Do you arrange special photography trips?**

Yes, I move with either my camera or smartphone because there will always be something interesting to shoot. About trips, well they require financing because they involve organisation, transport and accommodation or camping etc., so I do most of my photography within the commercial centre of Kampala since it is cheaper and free.

I wish some Ugandan NGOs, the Ministry of Tourism or some tour and travel companies would make it easier or partner with some skilled Ugandan freelance photographers to capture footage for them than hiring from other countries. At least they would survive this way and motivate other unemployed Ugandans who are unemployed but skilled.

**Have you ever gotten yourself into trouble for taking an unwelcomed random picture? Say one of a man seated at a roadside?**

Funny! Yes, I always get into trouble for taking random unwelcomed random pictures all the time and that is one of the issues we deal with in photography. Many think you are press or others want some money in exchange for taking their pictures.

**Other interests outside photography?**

Outside photography, I love to learn and enrich my knowledge on different things. During this corona lockdown, I have fully learnt Digital Marketing, Project Management and Microsoft Excel Skills. I am also currently trying to apply for a scholarship for my PhD but unfortunately the pandemic has slowed down everything globally. The other thing I love to do is give my give my son all the time in the world. He is my everything, my blessing.

**What makes some of your days horrible? As a photographer that is.**

Editing thousands and thousands of wedding pictures is exhausting for any wedding photographer so that used to stress me sometimes. The other issue could be the disrespect some clients give photographers and other media that they would not give to another profession say doctor, lawyer, business man etc. We are all just trying to make a living.

**The current lot has not yet fully grasped the beauty of photography. Neither have they understood fully the impact it can have in society. How do you monetize photography in a society that still hasn't grown enough to appreciate the art?**

You just have to be as creative as you can in the style you do, be it studio, street, wedding etc. Also you have to market yourself on social media because that is where your market and clientele are most of the time. Non-profit organisations have contributed highly to help show our contemporary art with expos and competitions like Uganda Press Photo Award (UPPA), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), 32° East, The Pearl Guide, A Ka Dope, Alliance Française Kampala, Bayimba etc.

**What kind of clients make up your client base?**

Formerly it was wedding clients generally, the other clients I had were those who appreciated art like some of my documentary photography has been bought by foreigners, also some of my work is on the walls at Caramel restaurant at Acacia mall and a few other enthusiasts.

**How do you gain creative self-confidence and stop questioning your abilities as a photographer? Have you ever doubted yourself and how did you get over that self doubt?**

Creative self-confidence is got by firstly knowing your equipment/gear, educating yourself continuously, practicing, pre-visualising shots the way you want it to look like (creative vision), get ready for constructive critique (feedback is very important), community participation that is hanging around some other professional supportive photographers listening to and applying their tips and encouraging each other, and lastly entering photo contests to help re-evaluate your work form a different perspective.

**Any last words...or advice to younger photographers? Or anyone that's starting out on this journey?**

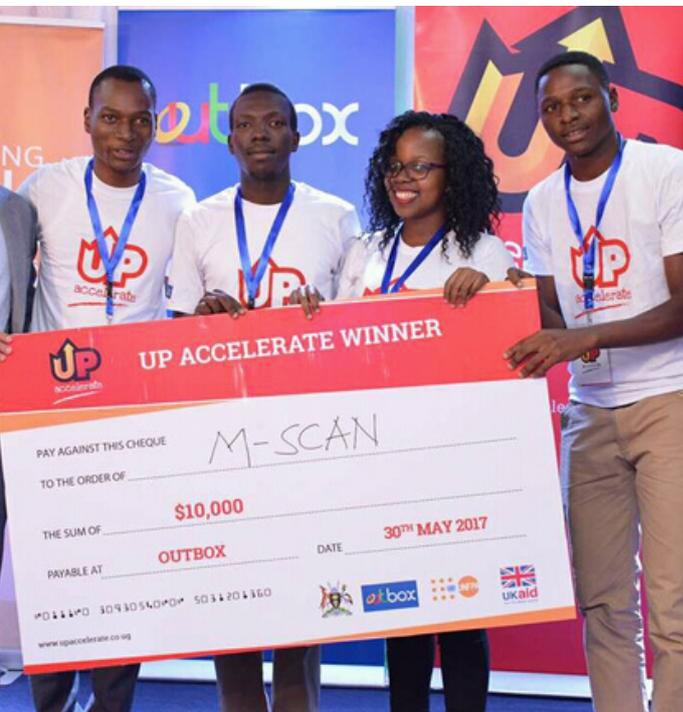
Photography is an amazing way to express yourself and see the world around you. Be patient and grow your skills organically, look for places to get feedback to gain thick skin, choose a niche to master be it portrait or landscape photography or wedding etc., identify a mentor, join a photography group to help bounce ideas off others and gain feedback on your work, learn your craft in your locality as everywhere has its point of interest, visit locations that will help your photography shine, invest time learning post-processing, and lastly practice setting limits for your skills and experiment with focal length, aperture and other features.

*Well, you couldn't have said it any better. Thank you for speaking to us. A nd good luck in your future ventures!*

**Thank you so much.**

**Oh and thank you for letting us use your photograph for the cover. Thank you so much.**

WE STAND A  
HIGHER  
CHANCE OF  
SOLVING OUR  
PROBLEMS  
PERMANENTLY  
WHEN WE  
INNOVATE  
OUR OWN  
SOLUTIONS.



## **MSCAN. Using simple, affordable technology to save lives of Uganda's Mothers.**

We need local solutions to solve most of the local challenges. That will, to a certain extent, reduce Uganda's dependence on foreign solutions which in most cases are expensive and not sustainable in our setting.

Dr Prosper Ahimbisibwe, Phyllis Kyomuhendo, Menyo Innocent and Nasasira Ivan teamed up and invented a mobile Ultra sound scan that uses a handheld device. This could be a smart phone or a tablet connected to an ultrasound probe, which is then used to scan anyone that needs it.

This mobile ultra sound scan is much cheaper than the usual ultrasound scans we find in city hospitals and is easy to carry to hard to reach areas of the country.

This has helped Uganda's health professionals to diagnose maternal complications in the early stages, which ultimately saves the life of both the mother and the unborn child.

Mscan has reduced maternal deaths in Uganda's hard to reach areas through early diagnosis of pregnancy related complications. For their innovation, they have received international recognition and won numerous awards including Africa's TechCrunch Start Up Battle field in 2019 (\$25000), UpAccelerate innovation program (\$10,000)

## **MATIBABU. A bloodless Malaria Test.**

A malaria test that does not require you to withstand the pain of a needle prick. How convenient. Think about how easy it will make the diagnosis of malaria in children. Think about how quick it will make the visit to your physician's laboratory.

In 2018, Brian Gitta, a Ugandan innovator came up with a device he named "Matibabu" that detects malaria by shining a red beam of light on the patient's finger.

The diagnosis is ready to be shared to a mobile phone in a minute.

The device does not require a specialist to operate because it only needs to be clipped onto the patient's finger. Its red beam detects changes in the colour, shape and concentration of red blood cells - all of which are affected by malaria.

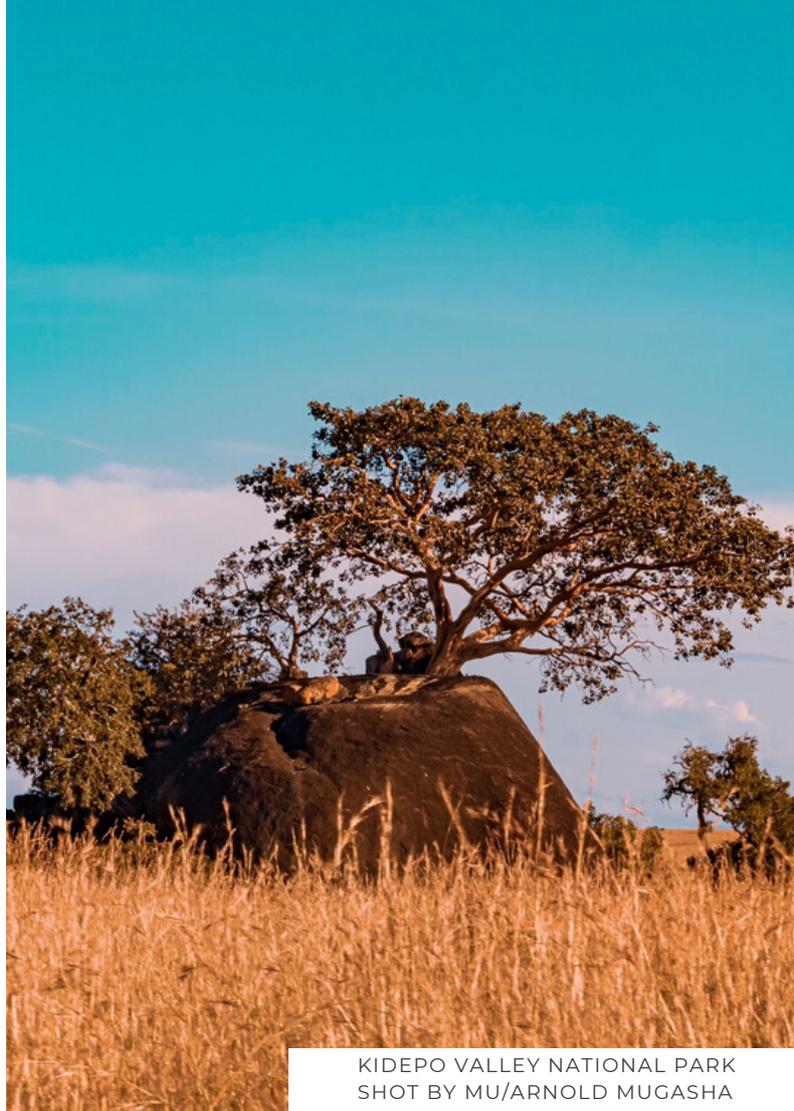
In 2018, he won the Royal Academy of Engineering's Africa Prize worth \$ 25000.



***Uganda's problems need Ugandan solutions. Local solutions. Yes, we can borrow knowledge from outside our walls, but only to use it for our local innovations. Local solutions are affordable and sustainable. We need to support local innovations and use them. If they're flawed, we should work hard to fix them locally. That's what innovation means. That's how a country grows!***



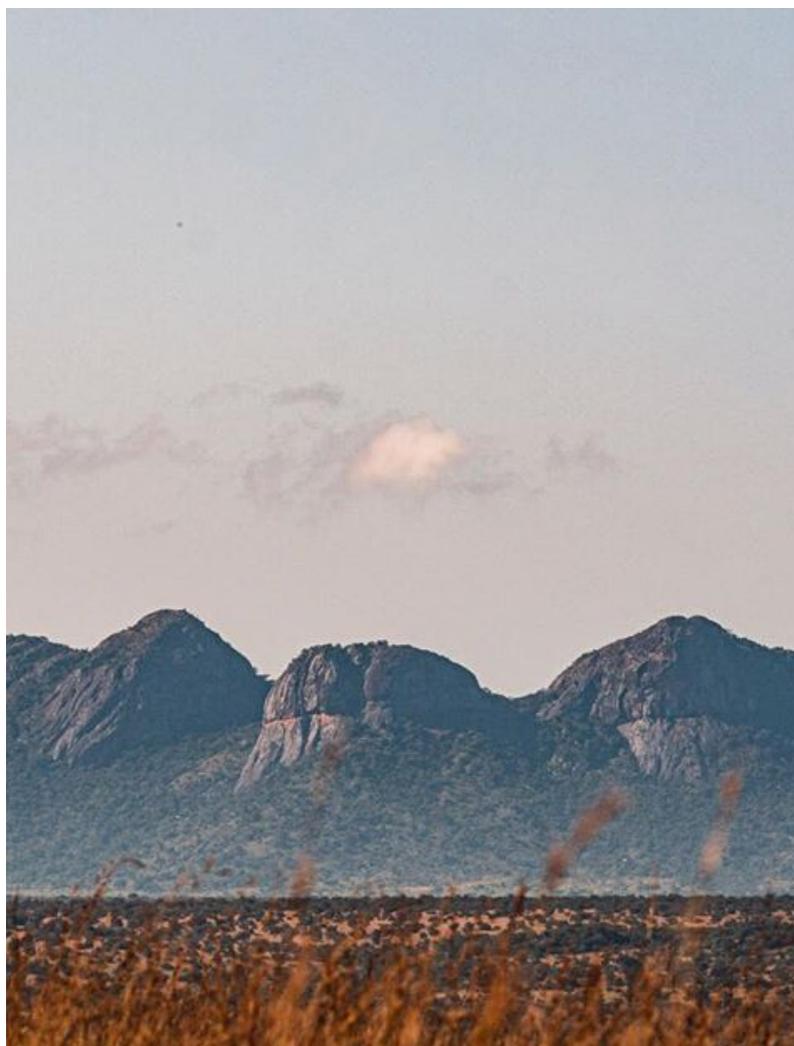
KIDEPO VALLEY NATIONAL PARK  
SHOT BY GRAINNE BURLEY



KIDEPO VALLEY NATIONAL PARK  
SHOT BY MU/ARNOLD MUGASHA



KIDEPO VALLEY NATIONAL PARK  
SHOT BY MU/ARNOLD MUGASHA



MOUNT MORUNGOLE IN KAABONG  
SHOT BY MU/ARNOLD MUGASHA



# LET'S BE YOUR ESCAPE

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Photographs by Humans of Uganda/Nasawali Phame



*We've got a beautiful  
country-but don't  
take our word for it*

*VISIT!*



# *The Assassination Attempt on Milton Obote.*

**“The bullet went in through Obote's mouth, broke two of his teeth and exited through the cheek.”**

## **The Attack.**

December 19th 1969. It's close to seven months since Obote ordered an attack on Tweekobe that saw

Ssekabaka Edward Muteesa flee his palace and almost a month since he died under mysterious circumstances in Britain.

At about 9:30pm, Obote, followed by his entourage, moves out of the hall at Lugogo indoor stadium, where a UPC annual conference had taken place.

There are cheers from his supporters and music from the UPC band—a perfect commotion for an assassin to prey on his target. There is security, but just for one president—Obote. Julius Nyerere, Mobutu Sese Seko and Kenneth Kaunda had attended the conference but had left the previous day. That meant three fewer security details, another weak link for the would-be assassin to take advantage of.

There is a cypress tree ahead of the president and his men. Hidden in this tree is a one Mohammed Ssebaduka, a former soldier that had been dismissed from the Ugandan Army—a Buganda loyalist. As Obote approaches the tree at a distance of about 10 metres, Ssebaduka fires his first shot. There's a stampede. He tries to fire more shots but for some reason, the pistol jams.

Obote's bodyguards pull him onto the floor and surround him to protect him from the bullets. But Ssebaduka knows exactly what to do. He obviously didn't come for such a mission on his own. So, he signals his counterpart, Yowana Wamala, who throws a grenade at the president and his bodyguards. The grenade fails to blow up.

Ssebaduka immediately makes a decision to run but is grabbed by one of the members of the security detail and shot twice.

Every one is infuriated. They want to do away with him but they are stopped by Henry Kyemba, Obote's principle private secretary, who wants to pick as much information from Ssebaduka as possible. Amidst the commotion of shooting and running about, Ssebaduka finds an opportunity to escape. Wamala, his counterpart, on seeing that the plan is ruined, grabs the pistol and hides it in the tree, then takes off too.

Obote is rushed to Mulago Hospital. The single bullet has gone through his mouth, broken two of his teeth and exited through the cheek. Kyemba, on reaching the hospital also realizes that the bullet has grazed his neck which probably changed its angle slightly. Who knows what would have happened if it hadn't?

Meanwhile, Ssebaduka is on the run. He is in a Ford Anglia and has managed to reach Natete. He, however, is unable to stay on the run for long. He's captured a few hours later and taken for questioning. Who sent him? "Benedicto Kiwanuka" He confesses.

## **The Plan.**



In addition to that, UPC had defeated DP in the 1962 elections that saw Benedicto Kiwanuka, a Muganda, from being the first Prime minister of the newly independent state.

Some sources indicate that Benedicto Kiwanuka did not take this in good faith. Could the attack on his king have caused a sudden rush of blood to his head?

Could it have finally caused the rage he had kept a lid on for many years to boil over? We can't say that for sure. We don't know. We'll never know. But here's what we know. There was very little good blood between Obote and the Baganda after the attack on their King. No wonder, most of the architects of this unsuccessful assassination attempt were Baganda.

According to Mohammed Hassan's testimony, the CID boss at that time, he indicated that indeed this assassination attempt had been masterminded by Benedicto Kiwanuka. In June 1969, Kiwanuka had approached a man from Masaka, called Yusuf Kisuule. Yusuf is the one who led Kiwanuka to Ssebaduka, a taxi driver in the capital and Wamala his counterpart. He told them about the plan and went ahead to even secure them UPC part card, which would make their entry into the conference easy.

Kiwanuka went ahead and acquired firearms which he kept with Kisuule, who then smuggled them into Kampala. The team carefully chose the day they thought was perfect. They knew that Nyerere, Kaunda and Mobutu would leave the on the 18th and so the security wouldn't be as much on the 19th of December 1969. They knew that 19th was the last day of the UPC delegates conference and that this would be the only chance in the near future to execute their plan.

On the 19th of December, the two assassins wore their UPC shirts and walked into the venue, prepared to lose their lives. As the events turned out, they didn't lose their lives. They just ruined them. They were captured, along with their boss, Benedicto Kiwanuka and sentenced to life imprisonment.

## **A brief review of the 1966 Uganda crisis that irreversibly broke the relationship between Obote and the Baganda.**

Prior to independence, the strongest political parties were the Democratic Party (DP) and the Uganda People's congress (UPC)

Immediately before the 1962 elections the Baganda formed the Kabaka Yekka Party whose major purpose was to advance the political interests of Buganda in the newly independent state. Kabaka Yekka would later form a coalition with Uganda People's Congress to win Uganda's first election. Milton Obote, the leader of the UPC became the Prime Minister and a year later nominated Kabaka Muteesa II as president, a largely ceremonial position at that time. However, this collaboration between the Kabaka of Buganda and Milton Obote did not last long.

In 1964, Obote championed a parliamentary bill providing for a referendum in the "lost counties" of Buyaga and Bugangazzi. These counties, originally belonging to Bunyoro, were transferred to Buganda after a British colonel, Henry Colville invaded Bunyoro in an effort to secure and expand the Uganda protectorate, which initially included solely the Kingdom of Buganda.

Colville promised all lands south of the River Kafu to Buganda in return for their support, and following the conflict these counties were duly transferred as promised. The transfer was recognised in the 1900 Buganda agreement.

The referendum of the "lost counties" was held in November 1964. It was held to decide whether these "lost counties" of should continue to be part of the Buganda, be transferred back to Bunyoro, or be established as a separate district.

The electorate, consisting of the residents of the two counties voted overwhelmingly to be returned to Bunyoro, which led to those counties seceding from Buganda and being returned to Bunyoro.

The relationship between Buganda and the central Government fractured after this.

Obote, aware that his support from Buganda was at an all-time low, became paranoid with them. He ordered the security forces to react with maximum force to anything he perceived as a gesture of opposition from the Baganda.

In February of 1966, Obote suspended the prevailing constitution and sacked both the President the Vice President assuming all powers of the presidency. Obote cited Muteesa's reaction to the lost counties referendum and also claimed that the King was ordering troop movements without ministerial consultation coupled with seeking foreign military support.

It is also speculated by Obote loyalists that during this time, the Kabaka was collecting arms to fight against the central government. In an interview with the weekly observer, the late Godfrey Binaisa, who was the Attorney General during this time, claimed that: "It all started when Obote sent his police to find out about weapons that had been brought by the Kabaka into the palace. The Kabaka had his own personal guns—but these were guns for fighting; he wanted to throw out Obote. He wanted to become the real president because he was almost ceremonial. That is when Obote realised that he (Kabaka) wanted to take his seat. These arms were however never retrieved by the central government—or if they really were retrieved, they were, for some reason, not shown to the public.

In April of the same year, surrounded by troops in a parliamentary sitting, a new constitution which had not been seen prior—or even debated on by parliament was adopted. This came to be known as the pigeon hall constitution because copies of it were just placed in the pigeon halls of the MPs for them to pick up and read.

Buganda's response to the abrogation of the constitution was to ask the central government to depart from Buganda's land. This resolution was passed by the Buganda Lukiiko on May 19th 1966.

On May 24th, Obote ordered his army, under the command of Col. Idi Amin to attack the palace of the Kabaka. Thousands were killed. The Kabaka was able to elude capture and found his way to Britain, where he stayed for until his death in 1969. In 1967, Obote imposed a new constitution where he abolished all kingdoms and made himself president without an election.

*Written by @UgandanHistory*



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# THE BATTLE OF BALIGOTA ISANSA: THE 1872 SHOWDOWN BETWEEN OMUKAMA KABALEGA AND SIR SAMUEL BAKER.

Written by Ugandan History.



Omukama Kabalega. Photo Credit: Nile Post.



Sir Samuel Baker. Photo Credit: Wikipedia.

Neither of these men require much introduction. Both of them have their names deeply engraved in the history of our country. We've heard—and read about them so much that we feel like we know all we need to know about them. Each of them is famous for their own reasons—some good, some bad. Baker helped to abolish slave trade but then tried to steal Bunyoro from Kabalega. Kabalega on the other hand, was stubborn in his own ways, waging an unnecessary war here and there. Apart from that, he was a great king who worked to empower his people and always put them first.

We'll however not take it for granted that everyone knows these men, who are both great in their own ways. So, we'll introduce them. Kabalega first. Omukama Kabalega was the ruler a great kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara from 1870 to 1899.

He was born on the 18th June 1853 to Omukama Kamurasi Mirundi Rukanama and Kanyange Nyamutahingurwa Omunyonzakati Abwooli. Kabalega rose to the throne at a tender age of 17, and led a historic revival of Bunyoro, registering several victories in war, reclaiming lost territories, increasing food production, cattle keeping and improving trade. He's remembered for many things but most importantly, as a hero who fought against British colonialism.

Sir Samuel Baker was an English explorer who's remembered in Uganda as the first European to see Lake Albert. He is also remembered for being instrumental in fighting against the slave trade. Baker was born on 8 June 1821 in London, to a wealthy family. His father, Samuel Baker Sr., was a sugar

merchant, banker and shipowner. He made his first tour to Africa in 1861 and went back to England in 1865. In 1869 he travelled back with the future King, Edward VII (who was the Prince of Wales at that time) through Egypt. Khedive Ismail, the Ottoman viceroy of Egypt asked Baker to command a military expedition to the Nile equatorial regions to suppress the slave-trade there and open the way to commerce.

*Note: Before being taken over by the British, Egypt was under the control of the Ottoman Empire, which was a powerful empire that conquered Egypt in the 1500s. The Khedive was performing his duties in Egypt on behalf of the Ottoman Empire.*

By 1871 Sir Samuel Baker had arrived in Gondokoro from Khartoum.

He then moved toward Ocecu hill, in northern Uganda. Here, Slaves were a key trading item for Arabs and were captured from northern Uganda, Gondokoro in Sudan and other areas. Ocecu Hill was a sorting ground for slaves. Healthy-looking ones were forced to trek from Patiko, through Sudan across the Red Sea and sold in Egypt. Unfit ones were killed.

Samuel worked hard to end the slave trade here and eventually these slave stations were closed. The hated slave traders, Suleiman and Eddriss with about sixty of their soldiers, were absorbed into the Egyptian soldiers that Baker had travelled with from Egypt. It was the activities of these slave traders in Baker's army that caused the first open breach between Kabalega and Baker.

Baker reached Bunyoro- Kitara in April of 1872, where he met by Kabalega's Chiefs and later, the Omukama Kabalega in Masindi. Baker explained to Kabalega that he was the representative of the Kingdom of Egypt and also enlightened the Omukama about the evils of the slave trade.

He even returned some slaves from Bunyoro that he had managed to free from Arab slave traders, while on his way to the great kingdom. Kabalega welcomed Samuel Baker as he initially had no enmity against the Europeans. He was friendly, as long as the independence of his people was not threatened.

Kabalega was happy to see Baker, who had been a good friend to his late father. He showed him hospitality and hoped they would stay on peaceful terms.

Despite his hospitality, Kabalega was suspicious of Samuel. He had been informed by one of his allies called Burahi, that Samuel had plans of annexing Bunyoro to Egypt. Buhari, an Arab, who knew the intentions of Khedive Ismail and Baker went ahead to inform Kabalega that the reason why Samuel had come to Bunyoro with a big army to fight the Omukama if he resisted. Even with this information at the back of his mind, the young king decided to remain hospitable.

In late April of 1872, Baker started erecting administrative headquarters in Masindi in preparation to carry out his plan. The longer he stayed, the more clear it became to Kabalega that what Buhari had told him was true—but Kabalega kept giving food and cattle (for meat) to Baker's soldiers.

These acts of kindness caused some of Baker's soldiers to leak information about Baker's intentions to Kabalega. The information was similar to the intelligence that Burahi had given the Omukama. Samuel wanted Bunyoro.

In May of 1872, Baker who had set up his administrative quarters about 600 yards from Kabalega's palace sent a message to the Omukama asking him to call for the gathering of his people because Baker had an important message to deliver to them Kabalega responded positively and called for a meeting of his chiefs, sub-chiefs and clan heads and other important people in Bunyoro administration.

He then sent for Baker to come and say what he wanted to say. Samuel Baker came with most of his soldiers who stood on guard outside while he entered into the council hall.

When he entered, he proclaimed that the Kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara was under the Equatorial administration, and therefore the King and his people were subjects of Egypt.

The chiefs, in return, asked Baker whether there were to be two Kings in Bunyoro. The chiefs, perplexed, asked Baker how possible this was going to be. Were they going to be two kings in Bunyoro? Baker had no answer to this.

Kabalega needed a better explanation, so, he sent a messenger, Mbogo Omumizi (the interpreter) to Baker to demand it. He ordered him to ask Baker that if there was any change in the Kingdom, they should organize a meeting with all relevant stakeholders, to come to an amicable solution. But Samuel Baker did not reply which prompted Kabalega to send the messenger to him the second time.

Baker told Mbogo that he'd meet only the Omukama, without the rest of his chiefs. This was against the norms of Bunyoro-Kitara.

The Omukama always moved with his chiefs for such important matters—and, that aside, he was just about 19 years old. He needed his chiefs.

That's exactly what Kabalega did. He travelled with his entourage. When Baker saw them, he refused to let the chiefs in. The Omukama also refused to enter the tent without his chiefs. He knew what Baker was all about.

He'd been warned by Burahi that he should never be alone with Samuel. When Baker realized that Kabalega was not about to give in, he rebuked the Omukama, saying:

"What a proud little child you are." Kabalega replied, "I am a king and you call me a child".

Baker's wife quickly intervened, begging her husband to let them. When they had sat down. Baker brought a loaded pistol and handed it to the King with the muzzle pointing to him (Kabalega). Kabalega refused to take it and instead asked Baker to place it on the ground, from where he would pick it. It's alleged that Baker's intention in this plan was to ensure that if Kabalega handled the pistol with a muzzle pointing to his direction, he would touch the trigger and shoot himself. It's not clear what happened later in this meeting, but if anything was discussed, it wasn't fruitful. It only worsened the already strained relationship between Baker and Kabalega.

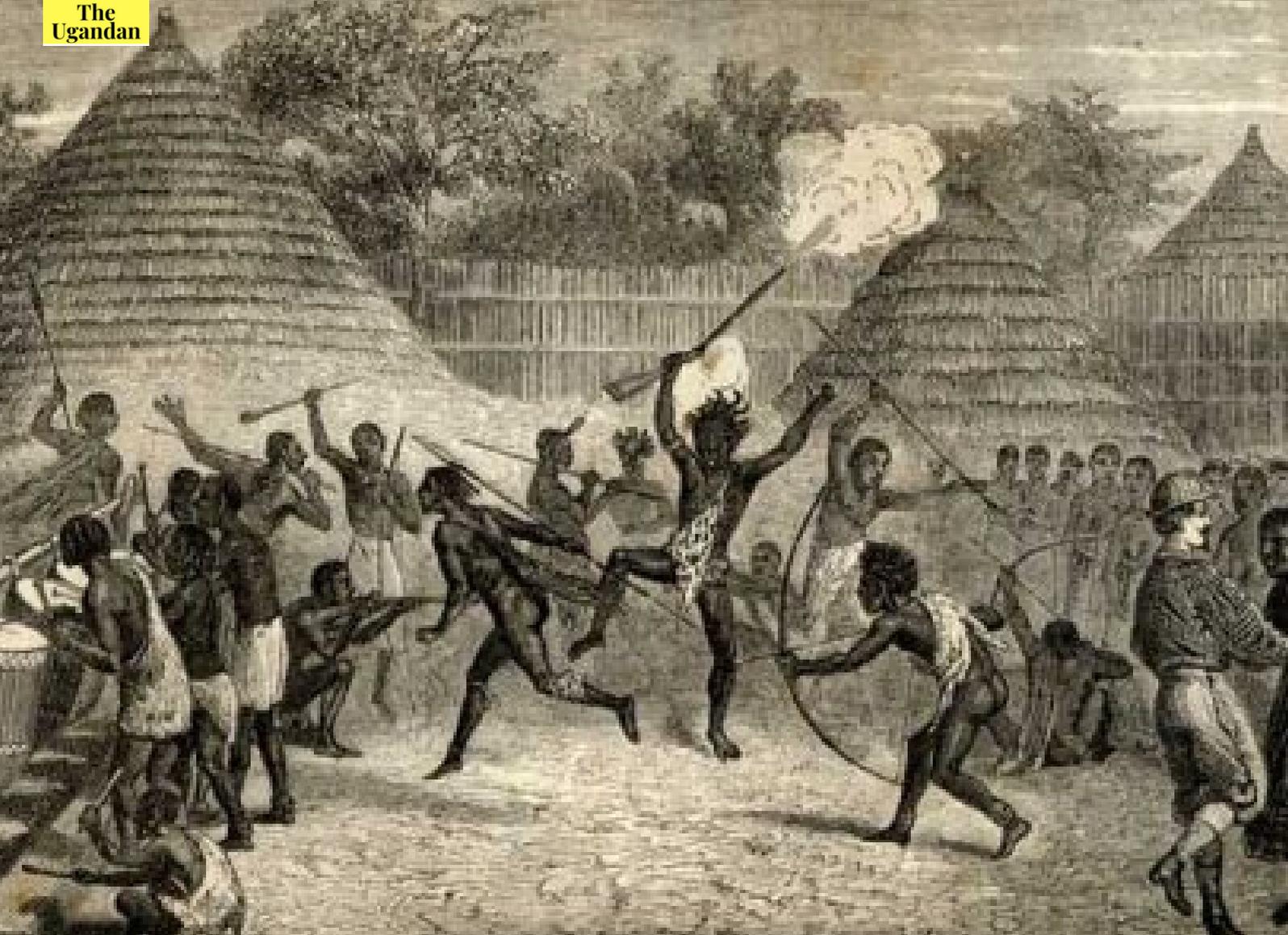
Their relationship kept hitting new lows because Baker's soldiers started mistreating Kabalega's people, probably to spite him and push him to fight.

They raided his chiefs' homes, looting property and raping their wives. These were reported to the Omukama and on many occasions asked Samuel to control his soldiers, which he didn't do. To make matters worse, Baker had been illegally trading in ivory and was known to be cheating Kabalega's people.

Previously, the Omukama had been the sole dealer in ivory because he did not want his subjects to be cheated by crafty foreigners. It had been agreed that everyone was to sell his ivory to the Omukama, who in turn would sell to the foreigners. In this way, Kabalega would maintain a standard price for the ivory and protect his subjects from being cheated. But now, Baker was buying and selling ivory without the King's consent. Baker also hated it that the Omukama had Monopolized the ivory trade, and saw him as a barrier which prevented him from cheating the Africans.

In June of 1872, Baker sent his soldiers, Abdul Kader and Mounsuru to One of Kabalega's chiefs, Matosa, to ask for food for his soldiers. Unfortunately, there was no food available to send. The chief gave them some pots of beer and promised to send food afterwards, but Baker refused to accept the beer and sent back the pots to the Chief.

On the evening of that same day, Matosa sent him 7 pots of beer and 2 bundles of millet and promised to send him more later—but this time, mixed



the beer with some poison because he was tired of the contemptuous behaviour of Baker and his men. Baker distributed the beer among his soldiers who drank it and developed running stomachs.

He was able to give them medicine which causes them to vomit the poisoned beer. Samuel dispatched a message to Kabalega and chief Matosa about the poisoned beer. Kabalega had nothing to do with this. He immediately sent his usual messenger, Mbogo Omumizi to Baker, whose soldiers just arrested and Mbogo at once.

When the King heard that Mbogo had been arrested, he sent another messenger to ask why Mbogo was arrested.

The messenger met Baker on the way coming to attack Kabalega. The messenger did his best to tell Baker what the King had sent him for but his efforts were futile. Another man who had accompanied second messenger rushed immediately and informed the Omukama of the forthcoming Baker's attacks.

Although Kabalega had heard the attack he did not prepare for war at once.

His chiefs advised him to leave the palace, which he did. He escaped to Masindi. Baker arrived at the palace and a tough quarrel ensued and grew into a full-blown fight. On that day, Baker burned down Kabalega's palace.

Another Chief called Katikara tried to broker a ceasefire " He kept telling Baker's troops that the Omukama had done no wrong—that the beer in question had not been sent by him but by Matosa who had already run away. Baker turned a deaf ear. He kept on with the assault and ordered for the execution of Mbogo, the captured messenger. The following day, Omukama Kabalega sent another message to Baker assuring him of his innocence in connection with the beer incidence.

On top of this, he also sent presents to alleviate Baker's anger. All this fell on deaf ears. A few days later, Kabalega and his subjects grew fed up of the whole scuffle. They launched a counter-attack—a strong one.

They burned down Baker's soldiers' houses. A bitter battle broke out.

Baker and his men were pressed hard, gave up fighting, and retreated to Chope. From here Baker crossed the Nile near Ruyonga's Island and proceeded to Patiko where he built a military station garrisoned by Egyptian soldiers.

He then continued back to Sudan. Kabalega's soldiers kept waiting for a counterattack from Masindi but none came. They wanted to finish Samuel once and for all so they forced their way behind enemy lines but found all the enemy's camps deserted. They had won the battle. The first of many to come.

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# THE 1972 INVASION OF UGANDA: A SHORT WAR THAT CHANGED AMIN-OR RATHER, BROUGHT OUT THE REAL AMIN.

Written by JP Rugaba.

Strangely, September 17th is just another normal day on the Ugandan calendar. It shouldn't be. It should be a day we remember—or at the very least, talk more about in our history conversations. If you took some time off to look for days that changed the course of politics in this country, looking for days that changed the way a government-related with its people—and its opposition, looking for day zero of a six-year-long purge, this could be it.

This is the day that lowered Amin's urge to impress the natives and raised his thirst for blood and power. This is when a failed "coup" spurred the country into a spree of extrajudicial killings. On this day, about 1600 Ugandan Obote loyalists, with help from Tanzania, decided to attack Uganda. They aimed to ignite a local revolt that would end Amin's regime. However, the plan failed.

This failure would haunt Uganda for years. The failure of the invasion not only led to a purge of Ugandans to inconceivable levels by the regime, but it also worsened the already unstable relations between Tanzania and Uganda and probably sowed the seeds that blossomed into the 1978-79 Uganda - Tanzania war.

On the 25th January 1971, Idi Amin seized power in a bloodless coup while Obote attended a commonwealth summit in Singapore. Obote and Amin had fallen out and Amin's arrest was imminent. He was to be arrested on Obote's orders upon his return from Singapore. Amin, through his intelligence, got ahead of his boss' plan and overthrew him instead, announcing himself as the new head of state shortly after. Upon Obote's removal, he fled to Tanzania where his long-time friend Nyerere was president. Nyerere and Obote were friends.

Not only because they shared strong pan African interests, had they both had a strong socialist ideology. Nyerere didn't recognise Amin as the head of state and went on to publicly relay his sentiments.

While in Tanzania, Obote was eventually joined by other Ugandan exiles fleeing the new regime. Most of those that joined Obote in Tanzania were former public servants, ex-military officers and Obote's tribesmen—the Langi who later became an important target of the new regime. These would later become major players in the 1972 invasion that miserably failed.

The initial plan was to launch a triple-pronged attack. The first group, which was made of about 100 troops was to be airlifted to Entebbe, launch a surprise attack and take over the airport. They were under the command of Maj. Gen Oyite Ojok. This plan was however abandoned when the East African Airways DC-9 aircraft that was supposed to carry the troops had its tyre punctured.

The second group of about 1300 troops, most of whom had been trained in Sudan and Tanzania was meant to spit into two. One group of 1000 troops, which was under the command of Gen Tito Okello Lutwa and Oyite-Ojok whose earlier assignment had fallen through. These were to go through Mutukula, Masaka and advance to Kampala.

There was a third group. A smaller one of about 300 troops. These were under the command of Capt. Oyile, Lt Okot and Lt Okumu. This group also included Obote's former research assistant in charge of records, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni along with 40 members of his Front for National Salvation (FRONASA).

They were to attack Mbarara through Kyaka and Nshungyezi, overrun the barracks, pick up more ammunition and ignite the masses to cause a revolt that would eventually lead to the fall of the regime, then proceed to Kampala.



FILE PHOTO: Idi Amin.



FILE PHOTO: Oyite Ojok

Initially, all these groups did well against Amin's soldiers. The group under Oyite and Tito surprised Amin's soldiers at Mutukula and successfully overran their detachment. They were able to take some ammunition and a few radios before heading for Masaka. They met some more resistance from Amin's troops on their way to Masaka which they were able to deal with. Unfortunately, as they approached around Kalisizo, they ran out of ammunition. When they fell into an ambush by Amin's men, many were killed. The few that survived fled. Oyile's/Museveni group initially managed to defeat the army at Kaberebere trading centre, took a few military cars and ammunition before crashing Amin's roadblocks on their way to Mbarara. As they reached Nyamityobora Forest, their leading lorry was attacked, receiving heavy fire from Amin's troops.

This caused most of them to disband and flee in panic. The battle that started at dawn was over by midday. Mr John Kamu, an eye witness at Mbarara summarized the battle in a few lines. He recalled "they arrived at Mbarara and made some gains, but they were quickly outgunned and outnumbered and to make things worse, the Uganda army was alerted prior henceforth they laid in an ambush. Most of them ended up hiding in the villagers' houses. A few of them, including Museveni, retreated into the forest and found their way back to Tanzania.

The soldiers who had hidden in the villagers' houses were later handed over to Amin's soldiers for execution. Why was there co-operation from the locals? Amin's popularity, by 1972, was on a high. He had returned the body of Sir Edward Muteesa II, a gesture that was massively appreciated by the Baganda. He then expelled Asians that had dominated the economy and were "exploiting" the Ugandans.

He had also released prominent political prisoners. On the other hand, Obote was now unpopular among most of the Ugandans that were organised in monarchies. This was because of his decision of abolishing all kingdoms in 1967.

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## BECAUSE SHE DID, I CAN TOO:UGANDA’S FIRST FEMALE LEGISLATOR

By Stella Misango Ahaabwa

Photos by Stella Misango Ahaabwa

This year we marked the 31st Heroes Day commemoration in Uganda and it got me thinking about my childhood Heroes/ She-roes and why they inspired me then? It got me thinking about what a She-ro means to me and how they have changed over the years.

To start with; a She-ro is someone who acts courageously to pursue causes for the greater good of others. All my life, I’ve been surrounded by people who have demonstrated actions and decisions that are worthy of awe; most of them women that are not nearly recognized enough. So during the Women’s History Month this year, I re-educated myself on Ugandan women who have inspired me in different ways. Following their stories of courage and determination got me thinking

about how their actions have paved the way for me and many others to pursue our dreams. These women put aside their fear and boldly confronted different injustices and inequalities. This year I had the honor of spending my Heroes Day with one of them and she is one of my She-roes; Mrs. Florence Alice Lubega.

Defying the odds against her at a time when politics and careers were predominately for men, Florence rose up and claimed her seat at the table laying foundations for many women to come.

Hers would become a life and career of firsts and she would go on to succeed where no other woman before her had. She worked alongside a tremendous base of women including; Dr. Sarah Ntiro,

**“Never ever accept ‘Because You Are a Woman’ as a reason for doing or not doing anything”**

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Joyce Mpanga and others who fought for women’s rights and participation. Their actions and successes remind us that because they did, we can too. For every glass ceiling that was broken, today many women and girls are more confident that those walls are safe and within reach for them to climb.

*Who is Florence Alice Lubega?*



**"We cannot afford to leave these subjects of an African girl's education at the time of social changes. They would make her more attractive, especially as marriage is still regarded in our society as almost the only career open to girls. One of the main aims of education is to develop a lively curiosity leading to a desire for knowledge not confined to the immediate environment."**

**FLORENCE  
LUBEGA**

On 5th November 1917, a baby girl was born to Mr. Samwiri Wamala Ssebueyego (Buganda Katikiro then) and his wife Erina Nantongo Birabwa. They named her Florence Alice and she would be the first of 14 children.

In an era where a woman's place was believed to be in a kitchen and education was reserved for boys, her father insisted on an academic path for her. Florence was taken to be the best schools in Uganda.

With her father as the Prime Minister of Buganda then, she was raised not far from the Palace and with an understanding of the Baganda culture from an early age. Growing up, she took a keen interest in the culture and the different systems within the Kingdom. Florence later took on the role of caretaker of Kabaka Edward Muteesa II and his siblings after the death of their father Kabaka Daudi Chwa in 1939. Her education and hard work combined with this close proximity to power would play a big role in her nomination into the Legislative Council (LEGCO) later and her successful career in politics.

Florence attended Namirembe Infants' School for her primary education and joined Gayaza High School thereafter. She later enrolled into Buloba Training College where she qualified as a Teacher. Being a woman, she should have been excluded from opportunities to continue her education naturally but this did not stop her from applying to a then male dominated Makerere College School.

And because of her persistence, she became among the first females to be admitted to the College. Florence took on the challenge and excelled.

Her Education and Early Career

*Primary Education:*

Namirembe Infants School

*Secondary Education:*

Gayaza High School

*Tertiary Education:*

Buloba Training College

Makerere College (1945- 1946)

St. Hugh's College (University of Oxford) (1947)

London University (1950 – 1951)

Florence was an tenacious educator before joining politics. After graduating from Buloba Training College, she taught at various schools

including Gayaza High School from 1942 – 1944 before joining Makerere College in 1945 (present day Makerere University). Between 1947 and 1957, she furthered her education both at home and at different Colleges in the U.K.

In her Dip. Education class at St. Hugh's College, she was the only the black woman and with fortitude she navigated her way through the different constraints that came with that.

She returned home and taught the English language. It was during this time that she met and married Saulo Lubega (A Treasurer in the Buganda Kingdom then).

She ventured into politics shortly after. From the time she joined politics in 1958, her career would go on to be outstanding for many reasons; notably, she was the first Ugandan woman in politics and one of only two members in the first post-independence legislature.

*Paving the way for meaningful participation of women in politics*

The LEGCO comprised of five men and only one woman: Florence. Florence was appointed as a Member of the Legislative Council (LEGCO) in 1958 by Her Majesty the Queen. This nomination and appointment came even before women fully acquired the right to vote.

The patriarchal nature of Uganda's political scene between the 1930 and Independence was particularly bigoted towards women's participation in politics. Changing a political structure that systemically excluded women from meaningful participation has been lengthy and bruising but it all began with women such as Florence Alice Lubega.

On 11th March 1959, she delivered her maiden speech to the LEGCO urging members to prioritize women's education and health as a key element in the progress of any society.

She continued to advocate for the participation of women and in February 1962, she was elected to the Lukiiko during the pre-independence Buganda election. In this same year, she was elected Member of Parliament representing Mityana. She took up several Ministerial positions post-independence in both the Amin and Obote regime.

**Other Positions**

- Member of Parliament for Singo North West Constituency in

Buganda (1962)

- Deputy Minister of Planning and Community Development
- Deputy Minister of Labour

During her time in Parliament and Cabinet, she focused on social issues like education, health, housing, participation and business for women.

As President of the Uganda Council for Women (1968 -1970), she pushed for the enactment of marriage regulations allowing women to inherit marital homes. A major breakthrough in the rights for women and for the women's movement.

In the early 1971, following a military coup that ushered in the Idi Amin regime, she fled to exile in the U.K. where she lived for 10 years. Florence continued to organize and participate in the liberation struggle while she was in exile. She fundraised and mobilized resources for the needy.

*A woman of firsts*

- First born child to her parents (1917) First of four girls to be admitted at Makerere College, now Makerere University (1945)
- First black woman at St. Hugh's College, University of Oxford (1946)
- First Ugandan woman to be nominated as Member of the Legislative Council (1958) First female to be elected MP representing Mityana post-Independence (1962)
- First Female Minister of Community Development and Labour (1962)
- First Vice President of the Uganda Council of Women and later President (1968 -70)

*Coming Back Home*

When Florence returned home from exile, she continued to advocate for women and girls' rights through her work with different organizations. She started a church in Namirembe before going into retirement. Florence now 102 years old lives a quiet life with her niece Maama Ssetimba in Kitara. Spending my Heroes Day with Florence renewed my optimism for the future of women's meaningful participation in different political and social processes.

Her contribution to the milestones we have been able to achieve so far as Ugandan women is unquestionable. At a time when the constitution did not guarantee many rights for women, she stepped up to try and make a difference and she succeeded. She broke many glass ceilings showing women and girls that they too could dare to dream and achieve. She wielded her influence during her time to advocate for our rights; introducing important legislation that we are now able to apply and because of her, other women have been elected into office. Women continue to make history and break new ceilings, I hope that through her story you are inspired to find a window when it seems like all doors are closed. I know I am!



**JIMMY  
KIRUNDA**

1950-2020

# FARE THEE WELL, CAPTAIN.

*Written by Ugandan History.*

On the 25th of May 2020, Jimmy Kirunda collapsed on a sidewalk in Bwaise, a Kampala suburb. He was pronounced dead a few moments later by the bystanders who had immediately recognized him. How could they not recognize a man who led the finest Ugandan football team they've ever seen?

The 1970s will forever be remembered as the golden age of Uganda's football. The Uganda cranes asked the powerhouses of African some questions. They stood up to be counted—and not just once but thrice! Ugandans were more enthusiastic about the local game then than they are today. It's hard to point at exactly why this enthusiasm has died out today. However, it's not hard at all to explain the success of the seventies. It's easy.

It was leadership. The game had men of strong will running it from the backroom staff to the eleven on the pitch. The backroom staff was superb but their genius would never have been manifested without a strong eleven to implement their tactics—and, no matter how talented Uganda's eleven was, they wouldn't have had much success without direction--without a leader. Jimmy Kirunda was that man. He was that link-- that channel through which the backroom staff reached the hearts and the heads of the most successful Ugandan football team in history. Jimmy captained this team for 10 years, leading them to three Africa Cup of Nations tournaments in 1974, 76 and 78. He led Uganda to her best AFCON finish in 1978 when the Cranes made it to the final and lost 2-0 to Ghana.

He led by example in all aspects of the game, most importantly, discipline. In his 20 year career, he earned one yellow card which was for a handball. His discipline on and off the turf is probably the reason why he led the Uganda cranes for so long. No one has captained Uganda's national team for longer than Kirunda did.

In his prime, he was one of the best players on the African Continent. Kirunda started as a striker in his teenage years and occasionally stepped up to lead the line when called upon. Surprisingly, in the 1978 season with KCC FC, he scored 32 goals as a stand-in striker.

He was comfortable with almost everything required of a complete football player, except for one thing. He dreaded penalties. He never took a single spot-kick in his career. He started his football journey at a tender age in 1963 play for Mulago hospital team in the Kampala District League."He was about 14 years at the time. In 1967, he joined Kampala Bus Service for a short spell after which he left for Express FC where he spent a year.

He later joined Kampala City Council Football Club where he won the league three times, Kakungulu cup and the East and Central Club Championships titles. In 1982, he signed for SC Villa, scoring 13 goals and inspiring them to a Super League title. He also earned himself the Player of the Year award.

After his illustrious career, Kirunda embarked on a management journey, once again leading the Cranes between 1989 and 1996. He won the Cecafta Challenge Cup during his first year in charge.



*FILE PHOTO: Jimmy Kirunda (R).*



*FILE PHOTO: Jimmy Kirunda (front left)*

# In case you missed these....

*Here's a couple of stories that we published earlier on Ugandanhistory's blog....*

## **How Shaban Nkutu, the father of Uganda's post independence infrastructural development was murdered by Amin and buried twice. Pardon me, thrice!**

Written by @UgandanHistory

On the morning of January 11th 1973, Shaban Nkutu, a former minister by this time, was attacked at his office on Scindia road in Jinja. Amin's troops tried to force him into the car trunk in broad daylight which attracted the attention of the masses, some of whom were his supporters. They put up a fight but later ran off when gunshots were fired. Nkutu was taken away to Jinja Central Police station and later to the dreaded Gaddafi Army Barracks.

Three days before this, on the 8th of January 1973, Nkutu had been called into a meeting at a place called Baitambogwe on Jinja-Iganga Rd by some of his cousins and brothers. What they discussed with him was not new. No. It was about the same old recurrent threats that Nkutu had kept getting from the armed forces of General Amin. They told him that the only way to save his life was to leave the country.

Nkutu had, however, decided against leaving the country, fearing that Amin would massacre his people, just as he was doing with Obote's loyalists. According to his son, Conrad Nkutu, the directors of Madhivani group sent their personnel manager to this meeting with instructions to drive him to Kakira, hide him and put him on a private plane the next morning, an opportunity he also turned down.

In this meeting with his brothers, he was warned that his life was in danger. Despite the impending doom, he decided to stay put to protect his people and more importantly, his family.

He insisted that he was innocent of any crime, that it was unfair to create so many widows and orphans to save one person—himself. Nkutu was not the only minister that was being witch-hunted by the Amin Regime. About seven of ministers in the ousted Obote's gov't had already been killed by the time he started receiving these threats. Most of these were killed after the failed attack on Idi Amin's government in 1972 by Obote and his loyalists. Amin started killing people he thought had ties with Obote.

Why was Amin going after Nkutu? His close ties with Obote? Probably. Nkutu and Obote had very close ties. They were very close friends right from childhood. They both studied at Busoga College Mwiri. Nkutu proceeded to Kibuli and then to Makerere University College (present-day Makerere University) where he became a teacher.

He would later join the Uganda National Congress and then the Uganda People's Congress. In April 1962, he stood and won the election to represent Busoga South East constituency in the parliament. Shortly after this, he was assigned additional duties by Obote. Nkutu served in various positions in the government.



**Shaban Nkutu, Middle (holding a glass)**

His most notable achievements, however, came when he was the minister of health (1966-67) and Minister of Works, transport and communication (1967-71)

There are not many ministers in Uganda's history that have managed to achieve half of what Shaban Nkutu achieved in his ministerial career.

From overseeing the building of Twenty-one (21) regional referral hospitals to building a functional health system as health minister. He continued to build the nation as minister of works, transport and communication, laying the foundation for multiple projects. These included; The national landline telephone network, Postal services system, Regional airfields, Quality bus and rail transport services, National housing and construction corporation, Housing estates across the country, including the Bugolobi and Bukoto housing estates, East African airlines, Pakwach Bridge (West Nile) The New Entebbe International Airport, Soroti Flying School, International Conference Centre and Nile Hotel (now Serena Hotel and Conference Centre), The dual carriage-way from Jinja to Kakira, Iganga-Tirinyi Road, The Gulu-Pakwach road, The Kampala-Mbarara-Ntungamo Highway The Ntungamo-Kabale Highway.

Nkutu's work was not limited to the projects above. This is less than half of the full list. He fathered numerous other projects. Actually, he oversaw most of Uganda's post-independence infrastructural development.

Nkutu had done his part to try to get away from public life by starting out a quiet private business in his hometown after the coup that saw Obote lose his presidency—but this was not enough. After the that fateful January day, Nkutu was not seen again by his family for 32 years.

In the Gaddafi Barracks, Nkutu was shot in the head. Amin initially directed that he is thrown into the Nile, but the body showed up at the river banks. The locals identified the body as Nkutu's almost immediately.

Security forces were notified and hurriedly took the body to Jinja Hospital mortuary. He was then taken and Buried in the Mailo Mbiri Cemetery with five other bodies in one grave. There was a lot of talk and pressure after the death Nkutu that Amin called a presser to explain himself, something he seldom did after extrajudicial deaths.

He told the nation that Nkutu had escaped to Tanzania and that there was a huge prize for whoever found him. Everyone knew this was a lie.

Everyone new Nkutu was dead. Joshua Kibedi, Nkutu's nephew, who was Uganda's foreign minister at this time was in Ghana on state duty. On hearing the news of his uncle's death, he resigned and fled to the United Kingdom. It's from there that he denounced the Amin

regime and accused them of his Uncle's murder. For the next 32 years, Nkutu's family hurt from the loss of their loved one, but even more from not being able to give him a dignified send-off—a sendoff he rightfully deserved for his distinguished service to his nation.

In early 2004, by pure coincidence, one of Nkutu's family members met one of the gravediggers that had buried Nkutu. The grave digger remembered, quite vividly, the day Nkutu was buried, the exact attire he was wearing and the exact location where he was buried.

In October 2004, Nkutu's remains were exhumed and identified by pathologists; Dr Wabinga and Dr Odida.

In February 2005, Nkutu was given a state funeral in his hometown, Busesa.

## Benedicto Kiwanuka- A man whose popularity threatened Amin, and ultimately cost him his life.

Idi Amin faced Benedicto Kiwanuka and pulled a pistol from around his waist. "Don't you think I can kill you?" Amin asked. Kiwanuka, with no fear in his eyes, replied "You can but I'm not going to say anything at all. I will die with the truth". Then Amin pulled the trigger.

This is how it was narrated by Daniel Mulemezi, a police detective who tried to investigate the disappearance of Benedicto Kiwanuka. Mulemezi said this for the first time in October 1988, as a witness to the Commission of Inquiry which was investigating the Violation of Human Rights in Uganda between 1962 and 1986.

Mulemezi told the commission that this information was from a trusted source—an intelligence officer in the Uganda Army. His name was Odwori Okoth. According to Okoth, Amin is the one who took the shot that ended the life of Ben Kiwanuka, a man he, himself had appointed as chief justice the previous year.

If there was any good blood between Benedicto Kiwanuka and Amin, it never lasted that long. Amin freed all political prisoners when he became president. Benedicto Kiwanuka was among the Beneficiaries. Kiwanuka along with other detainees, as a sign of gratitude, organized a huge rally at Nakivubo Stadium to show support to the president, Idi Amin. Benedicto went ahead to try to convince the Organization of African Unity to recognize Amin as a president. He wrote to them and told them that Amin had the support of the Ugandans.

He became an advisor to the president and was appointed as the Chief Judge, a position he reluctantly accepted, according to his wife, Maxencia in an interview with Drum Magazine in 1980. She added that Benedicto only accepted this role after persuasion from his colleagues who insisted that he was the only one



with the qualifications to be in that position. She went ahead to indicate that Kiwanuka and Amin were never really "friends". Why? Benedicto Kiwanuka's popularity. It was not received well by Amin. Benedicto Kiwanuka was getting very popular and in some cases even commanded more respect than the president.

Amin and his people started seeing Kiwanuka as a potential political opponent and started plotting ways of dealing with him.

As a chief Justice, Benedicto was a man who stood for the truth. He courageously spoke against the extrajudicial Killings by the regime—which obviously angered the regime and created tension between him and the executive arm. Benedicto's last days started with the arrest of Daniel Stewart, a British businessman

**"Sooner or later somebody has to die for a noble cause in this wicked world. If Amin kills me, somebody will take my place. But nobody will do unless someone sets an example first. We can't afford other people to undertake a moral challenge when we can ourselves. If I die I will have played my moral part"**

who had been detained on the orders of Idi Amin. The British High Commissioner reached out to the Judiciary but no judge wanted to take on this case. They feared it. The commissioner then reached out to the Chief Justice, Ben, who agreed to take on the case against the advice of some of his colleagues. Kiwanuka went ahead and released Daniel Stewart, and wrote to the military that they had no business arresting a civilian. He asked them to stop interfering with the work of the judiciary.

The threats to end his life started almost immediately after this. He started receiving late night calls threatening him. One notable call was from Amin himself. Amin said "Who is greater? The president or the Chief Justice?

Why did you say that we do not have the authority to arrest the British?" Benedicto Kiwanuka tried to explain to the president but Amin hang up before the explanation was complete. You'd expect that the next move Kiwanuka should have taken after this call was to reach for his passport, run to the British Council and ask to be allowed into Britain. No. That wasn't him. He was anything but timid. According to his wife Maxencia Zalwango, Kiwanuka was the type that could not run away. He was a man of exceptional courage and he was immune to any threat. "You could say he was a kind of Spartan when it came to anybody trying to challenge or deflect him from what he considered to be a moral duty." She said. "He would rather die"

She recalled her husband saying "Sooner or later somebody has to die for a noble cause in this wicked world. If Amin kills me, somebody will take my place. But nobody will do unless someone sets an example first. We can't afford other people to undertake a moral challenge when we can ourselves. If I die I will have played my moral part,"

A few days after the phone call from Amin, on the 20th of September 1972, Ben called Paul Kawanga Ssemwogerere who was his close friend to meet him in his office. As narrated by Ssemwogerere to the judiciary insider magazine, Ben was clearing his desk when Ssemwogerere walked in. Ben said that he was no longer the chief justice and that he sensed that something bad was about to happen. Ben handed over a briefcase with his land titles to Ssemwogerere. He instructed that they are given to his wife in case something happened to him. The following day, September 22 at 8:15 am, Kiwanuka was forced into a car by a gang of men and driven away at top speed. He was never seen again.

The government released a statement, saying that they had nothing to do with the disappearance of Benedicto Kiwanuka and that they suspected that he had been kidnapped by some guerillas who had been seen around his chambers on that day.

Some of Mulemezi's sources reported that Benedicto could have saved his own life if he had made a public statement, as directed by Amin, that he had been abducted by guerilla rebels. Benedicto refused to do this. He refused to lie to the nation. Consequently, he took a bullet in the head.

*Written by @UgandanHistory*

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## The First Ugandan....

President- Sir Edward Muteesa II  
First Lady- Damalie Kisosonkole  
Prime Minister- Benedicto Kiwanuka  
Engineer- James Zikusooka  
Chief Justice- Benedicto Kiwanuka  
Female Aeronautic Engineer- Winnie Byanyima  
Female Vice President- Specioza Wandera Kazibwe  
Female Legislator to join parliament- Florence Alice Lubega  
Female Physician- Josephine Nambooze  
Governor of Bank of Uganda- Joseph Mubiru  
Graduate Teacher- John Chrysostom Kiwanuka  
Noble Peace Prize Nominee- Victor Ocen

## Uganda's first...

Secondary School- Namityango College  
Hospital- Mengo Hospital  
Football team- Budo Old Boys  
Woman Speaker of Parliament- Rebecca Kadaga

L E A R N

S O M E T H I N G

O L D

W I T H

  
HISTORY

# Sir Gerald Herbert Portal (1858-1894)

**By Professor Ian Shaw.**

*Professor of Health Policy and head of school of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Nottingham*



## THE ROAD TO UGANDA

Second son of a senior British politician (Melville Portal), Gerald Portal was educated at Eaton and was a keen sportsman and scholar. He left University at age 21 to enter the Diplomatic Service. After a short period in London he was posted to Rome as a junior diplomat in 1880. He was then transferred to Cairo in 1882 and was present at the British attack on Alexandria that year. In 1887 he was sent on a mission to Abyssinia to try and broker a peace between the King

and the Italians (who had been in conflict since 1835). Although he failed, his negotiation skills were recognised. He was knighted (CB) and promoted to temporary Agent in Zanzibar when an opening occurred in 1889. He arrived in Zanzibar on the back of a British take over and in 1890 Zanzibar was declared a protectorate. Portal's skill in quickly establishing order and British control was recognised with award of a KCMG (Knight Commander) and he was appointed as Consul-General for British East Africa in 1891.

## PORTAL AND UGANDA

By the early 1890s the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) was becoming increasingly ineffective as a commercial venture because of conflicts between Kingdoms and between Mwanga II and foreign missionaries. IBEAC was considering abandoning Uganda but Frederick Lugard (British Military Administrator of Uganda 1890-92) persuaded the then British Prime Minister William Gladstone that a stronger British presence in East Africa was essential to stem German ambitions in the area and enhance trade.

In 1892 Portal was directed by Her Majesty's Government to travel to Uganda and report on the desirability of setting up a British Protectorate. Portal left Zanzibar on 1st January 1893 accompanied by a military escort which included his younger brother Captain Melville Raymond Portal (who was to die of malaria on reaching Kampala).

Despite this personal loss, Portal rapidly quashed the disputes between the religious factions and established Treaties and agreements with the Kingdoms (which Mwanga II reportedly only signed after being told that the alternative was a war with the British).

Portal travelled between two main bases at Fort Lugard in Kampala and a newly constructed Fort in the West designed to protect the Tooro Kingdom from Bunyoro raids. This new fort was later named Portal in his honour.

These agreements paved the way for the establishment of a Protectorate status for Uganda and the British flag was raised in Mengo on 1st April 1893. However, that was not the end of the matter.

Portal's actions in declaring a Protectorate in Uganda and raising the flag were irregular as the British government had not yet approved it. Portal needed to report back to the British Parliament urgently and recommend the Protectorate to them.

Instead of heading straight back to Zanzibar and then to London Portal diverted to try and establish an alternative route to Uganda via the Tana River. This was an arduous journey through many square miles of marshes where the party ran out of food and stores before eventually reaching the river and passing down it. This weakened Portal physically, but he was keen to return to Zanzibar and thence by ship to London as quickly as possible.

On his return to London in late 1893 Portal presented his report to Parliament. However, Portal died of Typhoid in January 1894 (Typhoid was rife in London as a result of high levels of horse excrement in the streets which had then got into the water supply). It was not until August 1894, some 6 months after Portal's death and 16 months after the Mengo flag raising, that the British Parliament eventually agreed to ratify Portal's actions and establish the Ugandan Protectorate.

## OPINION.

## Africans need a mindset change...

*Writer requested to remain anonymous.*

It all starts in childhood—our childhood. The hate, the love, the fear, the confidence, the idea of what life should be, the awareness of the colour of our skin, the association of our culture with inferiority, the association of western culture with superiority, despising what is ours and uplifting what's not. It all starts when we're young and innocent. When we're beaten in school for speaking our native languages and shamed by our parents because we cannot speak English. We then start to associate the ability to speak eloquent English with intelligence, and, the inability, with the lack of intelligence. What a shame.

It all begins when we, the parents, don't teach our children enough about our own culture. But wait, how can we? We know nothing about it ourselves. All we know is that our culture is probably evil. We're staunch Christians! Guess who taught us that. That's right, the white man.

We've lost our identity trying to borrow another. The unfortunate result is that we haven't (and we can't) grasped the western culture. It's not ours. So we're stuck somewhere in the middle, lost. This is not just about culture. It's about a way of life-- a way of thinking. If you're in the dark about your culture, your identity, then you can't be proud of it. You can't be proud of your language, you can't be proud of the way you dress, you can't be proud of your colour, you can't be proud of anything about you. The simple reason is that; you can't be proud of something you don't know. What happens? You start to want to be something else—something you can't be. Something you shouldn't be.

You start to take in whatever you're told because you lack the knowledge to counter what you're being fed.

You're told that just because you're this, you can't be that—and trust me, with time, you believe it. You start doubting yourself. You get stupid questions like, what can I, a Ugandan, a black man or woman, a non-Christian, ever do in this life?

Can I be an innovator? Can I be whatever I want to be? Can I change the world? And then the self-doubt kicks in.

**"I might only be dreaming about the day when moving to Europe/the Americas will stop being a dream of an African mind. I might even be crazy to think about it. But we all need a little bit of crazy, don't we?"**

Remember, the self-doubt is finding a mind that already thinks that being Ugandan, being black, being a woman is not good enough—is not cool enough. It finds a mind that wasn't fed with enough self-love from childhood. It finds a broken mind.

I have some questions. Who taught you to hate yourself? Who taught you that being an African is not good enough—that being Ugandan is not good enough? Who taught you that being a woman is not good enough?

That the texture of your hair is not beautiful enough—that your nose is too big—that your lips aren't small enough—that your surname is ugly—that local music, film, art is not up to standard. Who did that to you? I don't know who did, but someone did.

My wild guess is that this happened from when you were young and now you're an adult stuck in a mental prison, an adult who's going to bring up your children in the same way you were brought up.

Get born, go to school, learn some English, go to high school, go to university, try to become a doctor, lawyer, engineer.

If you fail, go to America and walk dogs for 200 dollars a week. Stay there long enough to win an American passport and a mortgage—and live in full contentment after that. Phew! I'm out of Africa! That dark continent. My dark continent, If you get a chance to go to England, never come back to this shithole. Work hard in school and if you're brilliant, win a scholarship to Johns Hopkins and never return home. Serve the Americans and the Europeans. What a shame. What a waste.

It all begins in our childhood—with our children. But if you think about it carefully, it must begin with us. We need to keep our children out of this mental prison. We must not let them get in there because once they're in, they aren't coming out. There's no chance they're coming out of there.

Westernization and modernization are two closely related but completely different things. Modernization can co-exist with our culture, with our ways of life, at our own terms. There's enough space for both. We can be modern people that are true to our values. We can teach our children to love their continent enough to stay home and develop it. Yes, the leadership leaves a lot to desire, but we still must use this same approach to bring up leaders that love their countries—leaders that love their people and work to improve their lives.

We must work hard to bring all we leave Africa for, to Africa. We must bring our children up with a belief that what they are is good enough, that they are good enough staying true to themselves. That they can be whatever they dream of and that their dreams can come true here, in Africa. We must create our own African dream, and forge our own ways of getting to the finish line.

I am not saying that our children should not travel the world, or follow their dreams if those dreams are in Europe, or wherever else that's not home, no. I'm saying that, it shouldn't be in their minds that this is the only way to succeed. They must know that it's their responsibility as a people to make their land one where all dreams can come true.

A land that we leave only because we want to, not because we have to.

A land where we are glad to return. We need to instil this in their minds at a tender age. We need to protect them from the propaganda that lures them into thinking that leaving home is better than being home. We need to arm them with enough confidence to resist this urge.

I might only be dreaming about the day when moving to Europe/the Americas will stop being a dream of an African mind. I might even be crazy to think about it. But we all need a little bit of crazy, don't we?

# KINTU AND NAMBI; THE MEETING

*Written By Mugabe Victor*

## *Chapter 1.*

Love; love is only a word until one sees her face. And fate, fate is only word; or so I thought.

My father is a god. The almighty, master of the skies; Gulu. Word is he can spring storms from his breath, thunder from a mere blink and reign death in a whisper. The only unfortunate part about it all is that it's only word. The man I know is a liar, a fool; and a father.

It was always silent at home but never as silent as this. Today was different, I couldn't put my finger on it. Maybe it was because for once the children of Gulu were all in one room. And yet not even the torments of time were able to change some factors in the moment.

Unshifting in nature was father. As usual he was a king, bold and stern in all his commands, rigid in his ways. Seeing him now, you would never believe that his hair used to be pitch black, his stare cold as death, and his voice soft and commanding. He always said the battle of the mind is the best one to conquer before any other. From childhood, I always thought this was his greatest strength.



Every breathe, every motion, even a blink, was a character held by at least one of his children. Walumbe's eyes, cold and cunning, Nambi's voice, the anchor of comfort and rest for the most of us. Whereas for me, let's just say I took the looks.

It was at moments like these that I couldn't help but stare at my siblings; all lined up at the foot of the throne, beaten down and miserable. Sad as it sounds, they did this to themselves. Hand to hand combat between ourselves was always something father condemned as vulgar. He always preferred to watch us attack imaginary foes then scold on and on about how poor our forms were. Then it happened, and as the saying goes, fortune always found the fine hearted. I was finally relieved of that mockery of training and was assigned to the position of teacher.

With the brief results of what I was witnessing, I must have to admit that I've dedicated too much of my attention on one student. And yes, much as it looked ridiculous, Nambi had beat the shit out of Walumbe. Up until now the blood from his nose was still dripping, loose as a faucet.

Some may say that I am a bad big brother. But I really, I had to see how that little spout of rage would play out. Not even Walumbe saw this coming. The shock could still be seen through his swollen up eye every time he stole a glance at her. In a way, I felt proud; at least all the training I gave her was not going to waste. All she did during our sessions was goof around. Mocking me at all my turns.

The only curiosity that stayed erect in all this was the same question am sure reigned through Walumbe's mind, "Why?" Was it for him? I knew she had a soft spot for helpless creatures, but not this much. Him? Him and his insensate breathing? It could be compared to the sound of muzeei Ddungu sharpening his spear. It was the only sound in the room that tore through the fabric of space, nailing my subconscious to the sad reality that this had become.

As though rolling on auto pilot, my legs went numb and an uncontrollable urge rushed through me. My index finger repetitively scratched at the palm in an attempt to find solace. "Please stop breathing; you tiny ugly man," the thought repetitively echoed through my mind. All my attention switching gears onto the cause of all the ruckus, the man Nambi fought for.

"What do you want?" father immediately began, clear to that fact that he was not interested in small talk.

The shaking in the man's legs was so visible, the situation was just getting depressing. Sweat streamed down his face, storming towards the ground. He attempted to speak; only releasing soft stammers. It was torment watching him. His arm pits profusely released sweat, drenching his clothes. Wait, did he just wet himself?

It looked pathetic, and unfortunately, his looks were not helping at all either.

"Your children stole my cow," he finally spoke

Shit, even his voice was trembling in spite of his futile attempt to look brave

"He is lying father!" Walumbe burst forward making a mockery of his own testimony.

"Shut up boy, you brought this upon yourself," father growled taking a sternly sharp look that encompassed the three of us.

Oh he was definitely upset. So much so that the little vein that casually stayed unseen on his fore head somehow wanted an audience with the whole world.

"So your cow?" father casually returned to his guest, prompting him to go on with his plea.

He was definitely at breaking point. The man's hands folded within each other and his neck curved, his eyes fixed upon the ground. His clubbed feet were just at the brink of stomping when somehow he looked to remember his ego.

He begun to mumble, unable to completely release all the words from his lips. Father's patience somehow reared in. He went on gently nodding at every new note from the man's story. Careful as not to leave out any details, he muttered on and on. I almost felt sorry for father, as he kept inching closer and closer to the man in an attempt to hear his sad excuse for a testimony, conscious as not to get off his throne.

At the end of the man's little story, he will have fallen.



Walumbe's eyes grew stiff and focused upon the man, unwilling to flinch a little from him. The hate from his eyes could have bore through the face of the earth. All he had learnt from their first encounter was only sheer detest for the unfortunate thing.

Everything was predictable; aside from one person. Nambi; something was different. Was it her posture? She merely stood there; between the two, unflicked by the situation. Her chest propped out and her eyes focused upon the throne, she barely blinked. She was normally shaken by the dirt collected during training, or blood. However, today she stayed ruthlessly uncaring.

Was it the slight gleam that encompassed her eyes? May be it was just her inexcusable decision to dress as a hairy tuber. I couldn't put my finger on it.

Then there it was, like a small beacon of lies torching her secrets to the rest of the world, her breath.

She was trembling under her breath. The short tremor held by the fiber of her clothes, waved up a flag ship of secrets. If I didn't know her any better, I'd say that I almost saw a smile held back on her face. Did she want this?

*Find the subsequent chapters at @Muchwezi*



MICHEAL DUNGU

# MICHEAL DUNGU: BALL-POINT PEN ARTIST

By Tamale Andrew Patrick  
Photos by Micheal Dungu

When I was talking to Dungu, trying to find a perfect historical drawing that would rhyme with the theme of the magazine, he politely turned me down. "You're a little too late. I can't have a new drawing ready in 2 weeks." I was almost annoyed. Not with him. With myself. And not because he had said no, but because I knew how much I'd missed out on. He's so damn good.

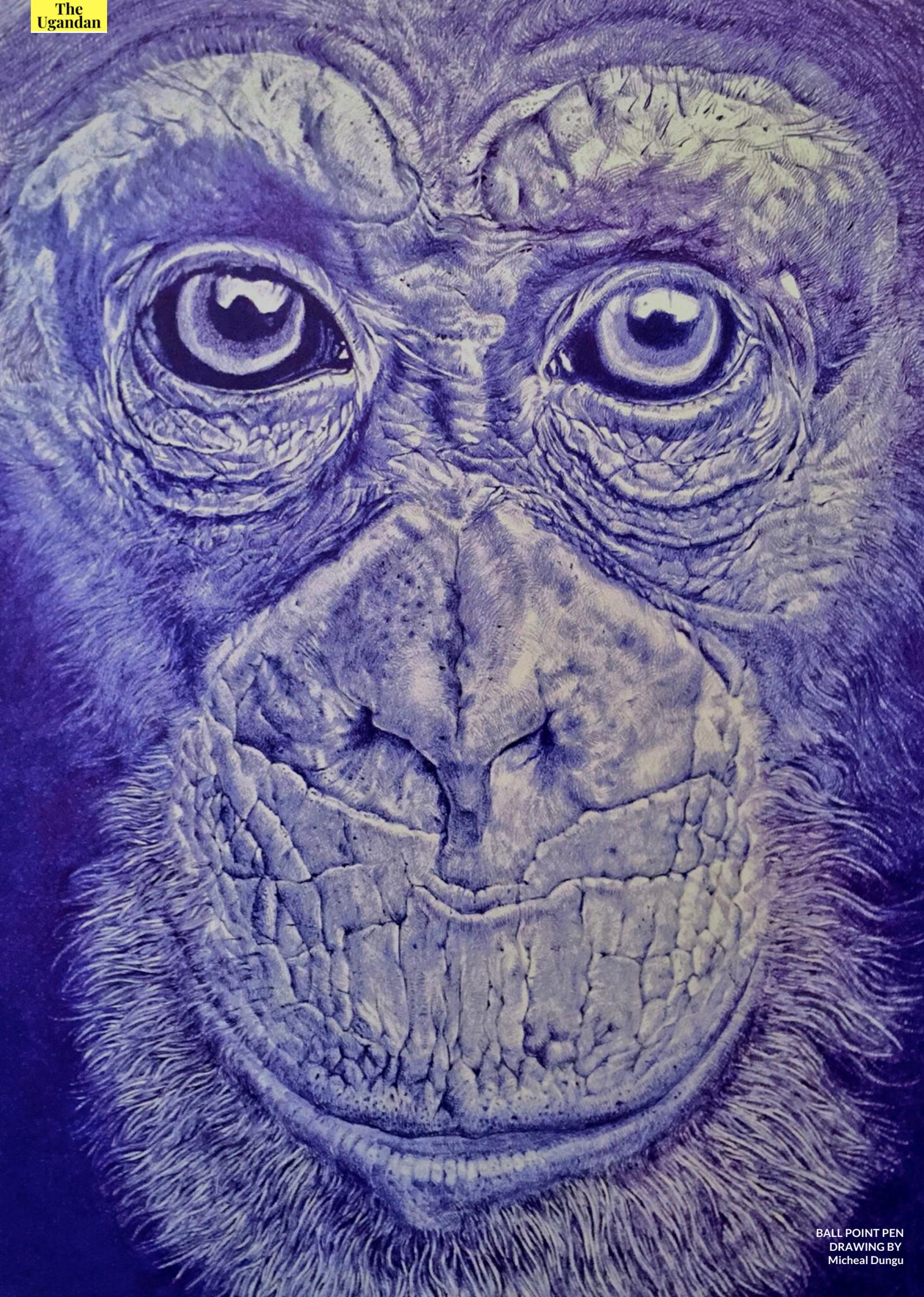
So, he emails me some of the work that he's finalised and I'm like, "who cares about a theme anyway? These need to get in somewhere. I need the magazine to have some real light in it. So, here we are! looking at a beautiful piece of art. A special kind of wisdom.

Just like you, I wondered. Why? Why does he do this? Who taught him? He told me that he's a self taught ball-point pen artist. "I draw because of the sense of fulfillment that comes with harnessing a God-given gift . An earthly purpose of sorts"

African subjects and life forms are his true and major inspiration. It always takes an exceptional amount of patience, dedication and precision to execute such a piece of art using ink, which, in a sense, is the definition of irreversibility because you can't undo a single stroke. That's not something he worries a lot about because, like I said earlier, he's so damn good. Find more pictures at his twitter feed [@Dungumicheal1](#)



**"I draw because of the sense of fulfillment that comes with harnessing a God-given gift- an earthly purpose of sorts"**



FOOD CULTURE.



NAME ONE OTHER  
CULTURE THAT  
BINDS ALL OF US-  
WE'LL WAIT.



# THE EMPAAKO NAMING TRADITION

*Parts of the article have been adopted from [bunyorolitarakingdom.org](http://bunyorolitarakingdom.org)*

Empaako" is derived from a Luo word "Pako" which means "praise. The Empaako is a naming system practised by the Batooro, Banyoro, Batuku, Batagwenda and Banyabindi.

Children are given one of twelve "praise" names in addition to their given and family names.

Addressing someone by their pet name shows affection, respect, love and affirm social ties with a family member or colleague. These names are known as Empaako. They include; Okaali, Ateenyi Amooti, Akiiki, Abooki, Adyeeri, Acaali, Abwoli, Atwoki, Abala, Apuuli, and Araali.

Empaako is given at a cultural ceremony that is usually chaired by the clan head. The name is chosen by the paternal aunties and finally declared by the clan head. Calling someone by their Empaako sends a strong message of identity, unity, good blood and reconciliation in cases of dispute.

Each of these names is carefully selected and has a meaning. Here's the meaning of some of the names.

**Abbala:** It means someone who loves other people unconditionally. It was formerly reserved for those close to the king. This is probably why it is rare today.

**Abbooki:** Comes from a Luo word "Aboko" which means "I have narrated to you". The holder of this praise name is meant to be someone who cherishes the roles of parenting, teaching, mentoring, counselling and leading.

**Abwooli:** Comes from a Luo word "Abwolo", meaning

"I deceive you". However, in Bunyoro culture, it's closely associated with "cleverness" needed in diplomatic relationships. The theory behind this is that "Not all truth needs to be told always, because it might cause unnecessary and often avoidable hurt, division and pain"

**Acaali:** From a Luo word "Acalo", meaning "I resemble you". In Bunyoro it refers to someone who easily relates with other people

**Adyeri:** Adyeri is meant to be given to someone who is friendly, affectionate with an altruistic personality.

**Akiiki:** Is one who upholds national, community and family interests with great love, care, kindness and honesty.

**Amooti:** From a Luo word "Amoto" meaning that "I greet you". In Bunyoro-Kitara, however, Amooti refers to someone who genuinely respects other people, thinking and speaking well of them.

**Apuuli:** Means one who has powers, abilities and skills to attract other people.

**Ateenyi:** Is derived from the Luo word "Atenyo", meaning "I have left it". In bunyoro culture, Ateenyi is someone who loves and understands a wrongdoer without condoning wrongdoing.

**Atwoki:** One who embraces or punishes –as the case may be– other people either physically or spiritually.

**Okaali:** In Bunyoro-Kitara, it implies someone with the highest responsibility as a leader in the kingdom.

**“ REMEMBER THIS;  
THERE'S AN URGENT  
NEED TO LOOK AT OUR  
HISTORY THROUGH OUR  
OWN EYES, TO RETELL  
OUR STORY IN OUR OWN  
WORDS. ”**

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