



INTERCOUNTRY COMMITTEE AUSTRIA – TANZANIA – UGANDA

Review – Report 2022/23-2024/25 - and preview of upcoming tasks

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INTERCOUNTRY COMMITTEE (ICC) AUSTRIA – TANZANIA – UGANDA

Our intentions and our sustainable goal

The InterCountry Committee (ICC) has established a network between Tanzania, Uganda, and Austria from the very beginning, making use of the opportunities Rotary offers for dialogue and collaboration. Each district, each Rotary or Rotaract club, becomes an ambassador for friends from another country and, through conversations, provides deeper insights into foreign cultural orientations than could ever be gained from travel, exhibitions, or concert visits alone. Encounters can only succeed if they occur reciprocally, with respect, appreciation, and empathy. Such encounters leave lasting impressions on each of us, as soon as one sensitively and critically reflects on one's own conditioning and potential prejudices. Here, the ICC can see itself as a MEDIATOR: inviting people, helping them cross boundaries, approach one another, listen attentively, learn from each other, and thus grow. When experienced diversity is understood not as an obstacle but as an enrichment, intercultural competence becomes a driving force to engage in new forms of cooperation in many areas and to strengthen social cohesion.

Where such networks do not yet exist, the ICC can act as a FACILITATOR. Being personally well-informed about issues that a single club cannot handle alone, the ICC passes on proposed project drafts to others. Even if it takes time to find a partner, the committed form of collaboration on an equal footing—extending far beyond a single project—creates a stable network. In our times of multiple crises and uncertainties, cross-border cooperation conveys hope and helps to lay a small stone on the path toward POSITIVE PEACE.

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1. From Migration Context to Rotary ICC - September 8, 2018

The years 2015/16 in Austria and across Europe were marked by migration from Africa and Asia. Following the great willingness to help, especially by civil society, political and media discourse in 2016 became polarized by “fear of the foreign” and concern about the “crisis continent”—whether out of ignorance, clichés, or political motives. In 2016, the governors for the Rotary year 2018/19 were nominated in the two Austrian Rotary districts: Ismail Sadek for District 1910 and Barbara Wolf-Wicha for District 1920 (the first woman ever). The first meeting of the designated governors sparked the desire, with a FOCUS ON AFRICA, to counteract the widespread ignorance about Africa and media reports with a realistic and nuanced perspective through European eyes. Yet we were aware that the complex social reality of 55 countries, with their diversity of cultures, traditions, and languages, could not be captured in a single word, “Africa.” Such oversimplification was still a topic in 2023 when Dipo Faloyin wrote his book: “Africa is not a Country; Breaking Stereotypes of Modern Africa.”

In September 2016, we learned that Ugandan Samuel Frobisher Owori had been nominated as Rotary International President for our year 2018/19 (the second after Jonathan B. Majiyagbe from Nigeria, RIP 2003/4). But we did not want to speak about Africa—we wanted to gain first-hand impressions. We discovered that in 2017, a district conference of District 9211, Tanzania and Uganda, would take place in Arusha, Tanzania. We wrote to the newly nominated Rotary International President Sam Owori and the current and future governors of District 9211 explaining our reasons: to attend the conference, to learn, and to gain experience through conversations. This was received very warmly—and in 2017 we arrived. We were greeted with a heartfelt welcome and never felt like “foreigners.”



Sustainably significant were the many conversations we had with Sam Owori and his wife Norah. We came to know him as an extraordinary individual who treated every person with respect and dignity, regardless of social status. His eldest son, Stephen Owori, described him: “He was the epitome of humility, integrity, simplicity, and selflessness.” In our many discussions, we learned about his vision and aspirations for Rotary: many should be drawn to Rotary’s optimism, but Rotary was no place for dreamers—only for those who apply their skills to serve others. Leaders in Rotary should see themselves as conductors: having a vision but not commanding the musicians, who must follow the vision. Only then does the conductor become effective. For our governor year, he warned us against the “My Year Syndrome” and emphasized involving the next two governors from the beginning. He intended to implement the “Troika” as Rotary International President. During three days of

meetings with Sam Owori, we truly understood why we are Rotarians. In the spirit of the Troika, we involved our successors—Melitta Becker-Unger, Peter Adler (D1910), Walter Ebner, and Dietfried Dold (D1920)—in our efforts to present a nuanced image of Africa, focusing on Uganda and Tanzania.

Shortly after Sam Owori's acceptance speech at the Atlanta Convention, we received the news that he had suddenly passed away on July 14, 2017, following surgery in Texas. On the first day of his funeral, I promised the family and District 9211 to maintain a growing connection with Rotary Austria. Together with Sharmila Bhatt (DG 2018/19, D9211), we discussed forms of exchange between our districts and decided, as an external sign of connection, to establish an ICC. On September 8, 2018, she, her husband PDG Harish Bhatt, and her successor DGE Xavier Sentamu came to Austria to sign with the Austria-ICC coordinator, Paul Jankowitsch:

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Representatives from the state of Salzburg and our successors were present—our first personal connection since 2017 created lasting effects between the districts!



The sustainability of this commitment was shown at our 2019 Multi-District Conference: our friends from Uganda and Tanzania attended, as did Yinka Babalola as Rotary International Director from Nigeria.

This time, 2019, we did not know, but now in 2025 we are extremely happy:

Yinka Babalola will be Rotary International President for the Year 2026/27.



2. Exchange at District Conferences and ICC Meetings

Rotary district conferences are status reports by governors about their year, which in District 9211 traditionally did not end formally: Since the District Conference of 2017 all District Conferences (DCA) take place end of April or the first week in May. This continued from 2022 after the split into D9213 (northern Uganda) and D9214 (entire Tanzania and southern Uganda). During our first visit, we experienced the dynamics of membership and club development in Tanzania and Uganda.

Crucial for our future collaborations was insight into achievements in previously advertised areas: clubs could apply for AWARDS (working from the 2nd Rotary quarter to qualify). Awards recognized contributions to the Rotary Foundation, effective Polio Plus measures, or the number of district and global grants. Praise was given for promoting new clubs (not seen as competition) or sponsoring new Rotaract clubs. Clubs with the highest attendance celebrated almost fully, often musically, with their president. A special recognition is the Governor Award—it is not applied for but received with pride. At our first Multi-District Conference in June 2019, we applied these learnings across 15 areas, however, relying on our experiences rather than award applications. Only 270 members from both districts attended (compared to over 1,000 in Arusha).

Austrian Rotary presence at DCAs 9211, 9213, and 9214:

2017 – (2) Arusha: Ismail Sadek and I as DGN

2018 – (5) Entebbe: two DGE and a Rotarian from 1910; DGN and DGND from 1920

2019 – (6) Dar es Salaam: two DG, DGN from 1920, ICC Chair

2020 – online in Mbarara due to the pandemic

2021 – (3) Munyonyo: PDG and 2 Rotaractors (formal decision of D9211 split)

2022 – (1) Naivasha, Kenya, D9213: PDG

2022 – (1) Arusha, D9214: PDG

2023 – (1) Mbarara (combined 9213 & 9214): PDG

2024 – (6) Munyonyo D9213 (partners from GG in Kidera)

2024 – (1) Munyonyo, D9214: PDG

2025 – (7) Jinja D9213 with Kidera partners from Austria and Germany, PDG

2025 – (1) Dar es Salaam D9214: PDG

2026 – District Conferences will be held in Entebbe (9213) and Kampala (9214)

Reciprocal invitations to Austria for our Ugandan friends to attend the district conferences of D1920:

2023 – Rotary Club Gaba, the host partner in the Global Grant “Kidera – Adopt a Village”, was invited together with Rotarian Stephen Owori of RC Tororo-Sam Owori

2024 – Rotary Club Tororo-Sam Owori was invited, but this invitation unfortunately could not take place due to denied entry visas

ICC Summits – Exchange of Experiences

ICC Summits generally occur within institutes to better inform governors, DGE, and DGN about ICC tasks in their countries. Country coordinators report on international networking. At a cross-continental ICC level, exchanges help to view cultural differences in project work as opportunities for new perspectives, recognizing one's own cultural conditioning and engaging in sustainable partnerships.

November 2022 Multi-Zone Institute in Limassol, Cyprus: PDG Mohamed Ghammam gave an overview.

February 2023 Summit in Tunis: 694 national ICCs; MOUs signed with RAG for Peace, Mediators Beyond Borders, Institute for Economics and Peace, and Rotary Peace Centre at Makerere; focus on Rotaract.

June 2024 Summit in Agadir, Morocco: PRID Yinka Babalola's presentation on "Positive Peace" was central. PDG Ghammam handed ICC Executive Council chair to PDG Nathalie Huyghebaert (Belgium) 2024–26. Next chair 2026–28: PDG Annemarie Mostert, South Africa.

February 20–22, 2025 – Istanbul, Turkey: Presidents' Conference "Healing in a Divided World" with RIP Stephanie Urchick. Over 1,000 Rotarians attended. Highlight: visit to new Peace Center at BOA University.

ICC Summit February 20, 2025, hosted by PDG Nathalie Huyghebaert, with RIP Stephanie Urchick, TRF Chair Mark Maloney, and RI Secretary General John Hewko. Rotary measures in and for Ukraine reported; international projects such as "Music for Peace" from RC Mühlheim-Badenweiler highlighted. ICC status and policy clarified: ICCs self-sustaining, not RI agencies, no financial support from RI or districts.

September 2025 – Brussels, Belgium: Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo welcomes Rotary leaders under the topic "Breaking Barriers – Building Bridges" to the Institute FUSION for Europe – Middle East – Africa.

On September 25, 2025 the ICC Summit takes place, hosted by PDG Nathalie Huyghebaert. In the Village of Friendship many initiatives will present their topics, among others Polioplus, Rotarians against Malaria, Rise Against Hunger, EndPlasticSoup, Shelterbox, WASH-RAG – and also Rotary Intercountry Committee.

November 2025 – Athens, Greece: the meeting will be held under the topic of "ICC and Public Image"

3. Sustainable Impact of Intercultural Competence

3.1. Kidera – Adopt a Village (Global Grant): 2018/19 – 2022

Even before my year as Governor, in spring 2018, Norah Owori gave me an insight into the needs of her hometown of Kidera. At the District Conference in Dar es Salaam in 2019, she introduced me to the Rotary Clubs of Kampala Sunrise and Gaba, which, following an extensive community assessment, had developed a draft Global Grant project entitled “*Kidera – Adopt a Village*”. I presented the Kidera-project in many Rotary seminars in my district 1920, but the first affirmative reaction I received late in 2020 after visiting RC Bonn-Rheinbogen. Soon later in 2021 followed the acceptance of Doris Steinmüller-Nethl of RC Innsbruck-Alpin – a great initiative to move forward. After an initial online conference of the partner-clubs, RC Gaba remained as the Host Partner. Visits from Tyrol to Kidera followed, and the project was developed jointly. Fourteen additional sponsors were brought on board before the comprehensive project was approved by The Rotary Foundation in April 2022, with a total budget of USD 116,232. On the occasion of RIP Jennifer Jones’ visit, RC Gaba and I were honored to present the project to her – a project dedicated to the *legacy and memory of Norah and RIPE Sam Owori*. Making Kidera a “Smart Village” as a model for other communities ensures the project’s sustainability. Formally, my ICC role would have concluded with this first project, but my close connection to Kidera and Tororo has continued.

While my ICC function formally concluded with the approval of the project, my connection to Kidera and Tororo has remained. Building on the first Global Grant, and thanks to the continued commitment of the original partners (RC Innsbruck-Alpin, RC Kitzbühel, RC Bonn-Rheinbogen) in close cooperation with RC Tororo–Sam Owori, the Owori family, Kidera Primary School, Panyangasy Health Centre, local organizations and RC Kampala, further “*Sam Owori Projects*” have evolved. His Royal Highness Kwar Adhola (a 99-year-old Rotarian and co-founder of RC Owori) and his family follow this work with great interest. The people of Kidera, and especially the youth of Tororo, are not only beneficiaries but remain actively involved. Efforts continue to improve the infrastructure of the Panyangasi Health Center and Kidera Primary School, including a farm project (co-financed by the Land Tyrol, to provide healthier nutrition for students and teachers). Another focus includes women’s and girls’ empowerment and targeted skills training for unemployed youth in Tororo – to give them prospects for a future at home. Training will soon begin in workshops at the Skills Center.



The commitment of two medical assistants from Fieberbrunn (Tyrol) at the Panyangasi Health Center has led to a remarkable new initiative: Heidi Bachler and Johanna Astl are building a primary school in Asinge, the last village at the border with Kenya, which is the home village of the Medical Officer at Panyangasi HC, Remigio Epuwat. Locals provided the land and work under expert guidance. The school is named “Joheidi Nursery and Primary School” in gratitude. An association EDAS (Education for Asinge) was founded in Fieberbrunn and Tororo to ensure transparency of donations. More than 80 children in Asinge who previously had no access to education now have sponsors. RC Innsbruck-Alpin and RC Kitzbühel sent two containers with donations from Tyrol to Kidera, including for Asinge: strollers, toys, mattresses, school furniture, and bicycles. The school construction is actively supported by Fieberbrunn, Judith Köck, and Doris Steinmüller-Nethl with their clubs. (<https://www.sam-owori-projects.net>).



3.2. Clean Water and WASH Projects in Namasagali (Global Grant): 2023–2025

Access to clean water is a prerequisite for disease prevention and hygiene. In 2019, PP George Ochieng of RC Entebbe drafted a proposal addressing Namasagali’s community needs in Kamuli District. My first visit in 2021 confirmed the urgency: despite proximity to the Victoria Nile, the only government health center (Category III) in the sub-county lacked permanent running water but treated 21,115 patients and 2,820 births from 43 villages (2024 update). Water was pumped from a borehole 100 m away from medical areas, and rainwater was collected from roofs. Drinking water had to be boiled. Nearby, Namasagali College had a tank supplied from the Nile via a pumping station.



RC Entebbe conducted a comprehensive community survey in 2023 and developed a Global Grant (GG). The project aimed to pump water from the Nile with solar support, transport it via pipes to new tanks at HC III and the primary school, and treat it to ensure permanent clean running water. A solar system ensures sustainability. The community will access water

at closer distribution points but currently must boil it. Sanitation facilities at HCIII needed gender-appropriate renovation, including a toilet and shower at the maternity ward, and additional handwashing stations. Proper disposal of infectious and other waste, as well as wastewater management, protects staff, patients, and the environment. Community members were trained in hygiene and WASH practices and informed about the serious consequences of open defecation.

Through frequent visits to Namasagali and close coordination with HCIII, the primary school, and local authorities, RC Entebbe asked me as ICC contact to find international partners, ideally my own Rotary Club Salzburg-Land. Due to scheduling, I could not present the project personally but shared written materials with photos. Rtn. Jakob Miklautz initiated a board resolution in March, securing commitment to contribute to the grant. To my regret, RC Salzburg-Land was unable to serve as international partner to the host club RC Entebbe. Further coordination with D1920 Foundation Chairs led to adjustments, including the budget of USD 79,989, and new supporting partners were sought (such as Austria's State of Salzburg, EU Commission, and other Rotary Clubs). In summer 2024, a sudden illness and weeks in hospital delayed all plans.



In September 2024 friends from the ICC Germany-East Africa informed me of a German Rotary Club, seeking a reliable Ugandan host club for a joint project of about USD 40,000. So I contacted RC Bad Soden-Königstein (D1820) and informed PE Rainer Schmitt of the urgent Namasagali water demand and proposed the Ugandan RC Entebbe. In October 2024, an initial video conference was held with the main project initiator George Ochieng. In a first attempt we considered reducing the scope to water extraction from the Nile. After intensive consultations in the German club with its partner RC Le Mans-Bérengère (D1510) and two further video conferences in January and February 2025 with detailed technical data, RC Bad Soden-Königstein informed RC Entebbe that the club would be available as the primary international partner for the entire project.

Another travel to Namasagali in April 2025 was necessary to clarify the location of the necessary tanks and to discuss the matter of hygiene infrastructure in the HC III and in the primary school (with 1.126 students, of whom 617 girls). The online Global Grant version was adapted to the two definite partners. In July, RC Bad Soden-Königstein revised the project from the international partner's perspective and submitted the text – as usual in Germany – to Rotary Deutschland Gemeindienst (RDG) for review. This was received, additional project

partners were found from Switzerland, Rotaract, and Rotary clubs in Uganda and Austria. In the final video conference of both clubs on September 29, 2025, the project budget was finalized at USD 96,522. The project was sent on September 4, 2025, to the WASH Ambassadors and the WASH Cadre experts for review, if accepted, the project should receive additional funding of USD 2.000. The last step will be the formal application to Rotary International. Once the Global Grant is approved, work can finally begin for the benefit of the people in Namasagali, which was intensively initiated a year earlier in September 2024 with the full commitment of all involved: *“Clean water to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) situation in Namasagali Parish, Uganda.”*

Beyond conferences, a close, friendly relationship was established between the committed RC Bad Soden-Königstein, the technician, and the project initiator in Namasagali, so that the visit of friends from Germany to Namasagali in 2026 to gain further personal impressions of Uganda is highly likely. On both sides, an intercultural bridge has been built on equal footing, with clear trust, as a learning process, with new experiences, and empathy for the people and their right to access clean water. This very special cross-border cooperation will continue beyond the project as a sustainable network of friendship.

3.3. Tricycle Village Ambulance (TVA): 2023–2024

As mentioned above, the health center in Namasagali (HC Category III) serves people from 43 villages, including seven across the Nile. All, particularly women visiting for prenatal care or childbirth, face frequently impassable roads during heavy rain. The nearest hospital, Kamuli, is approximately 25 km away, to which women with complicated health situation are transferred. Off-road vehicles, which few possess, or all-terrain ambulances would be highly beneficial. In 2023, the HCIII manager, Mable Nshemereirwe, requested a motorized Tricycle Village Ambulance (TVA) from RC Entebbe to reliably transport women from remote villages to the health center. These TVAs, with two beds, serve as small mobile health units. They bring trained personnel to distant villages to provide medical care, education on hygiene, prenatal care, or disease prevention, and transport women to hospitals in emergencies.

At my invitation, the former president of RC Entebbe, George Ochieng, visited Austria in 2023. In Vienna, he met the Vice-President of Ban Ki_moon Center, Dr. Heinz Fischer (former Federal President) and discussed the possibility of cooperation between Rotary and the Vienna Ban Ki_moon Center. In the federal country Salzburg, George Ochieng visited new school-buildings in the rural areas and learned about plants and trees and the use of natural fertilizers from wood waste “Agrobiogel”. I introduced him to the mayors of the Salzburg communities Anif and Elsbethen, because they cooperate on flood safety measures along the river Salzach. Impressed by George’s reports on the lack of access to clean water and the risk of diseases from polluted water, the mayor of Elsbethen, Sebastian Haslauer, invited me to brief the council and board of the municipality on the situation in Namasagali and the people’s needs. My presentation, accompanied by series of photos, was received with great

attention and interest.

When deciding on the budget für the coming years, the municipality's finance committee in December 2023 unanimously decided to donate 3.000 Euro for a Tricycle Village Ambulance to the Namasagali Health Centre III.

On behalf of the municipality, I had the honor of formally handing over the ambulance to the Namasagali Health Centre HCIII and the Namasagali community during a health day on May 1, 2024. The Health Centre III and the community of Namasagali and the present representatives accepted the generous gift from the Salzburg community with great gratitude. On my return, I was asked to convey the letter of thanks to the mayor and the municipal board.



The impact of this TVA in emergency situations was recently described by its driver: He had to transport a pregnant woman with complications from HCIII to Kamuli General Hospital, 25 km away. However, the woman gave birth en route in the ambulance. Hospital doctors arrived to assist. For another woman the distance to the hospital was too long – she also gave birth in the TVA, fortunately a midwife was called from the hospital. This TVA is in regular use, even in emergencies. Another mother needed hospital transfer due to severe postpartum bleeding. The driver checked on the mother the next day and was relieved to learn she was doing well.

The driver is a volunteer, unpaid, but deeply committed to the well-being of those he transports!

However, he requires a driving license permit costing 140,000 UXG (about €35) which he could not afford. George Ochieng immediately offered to cover the cost – but I intervened from Anif.

On phone I have extended my heartfelt thanks to the dedicated TVA-driver, whose empathy and care extend far beyond transportation.

I am especially grateful to the Salzburg municipality of Elsbethen, whose genuine intercultural engagement and generosity have saved the lives of many women and children since 2024!

4. ICC Austria-Tanzania-Uganda – our partners

UGANDA, nominated by DG Geoffrey M. Kitakule (D9213):
Frederick “Fred” Kizza Mubiru, RC Kololo-Kampala (D9213)

TANZANIA, nominated by PDG Agnes Mungati Batengas (D9214):
PDG Jayesh Asher, RC Tanga (D9214)

5. Initiatives by Clubs - programs in Preparation

5.1. Family Health Day in Tanga, Tanzania

The Rotary Club of Tanga, Tanzania, 2024 held a free Family Health Day in Tanga, reaching more than 700 people with medical assistance and education in a single day. This year, on November 1, 2025, the club plans to hold this event again and expects by increased information to reach approximately 1,000 families. Unfortunately, the RFHD Action Group, which usually supports the event, no longer has any funding for 2025, so RC Tana is relying on support from clubs through club-to-club activities. The Family Health Day, planned for 2025, will be **postponed to 2026**. A comprehensive report of 2024 is available for all interested clubs.

The RFHD Campus initiative underscores Rotary's commitment to public health, addresses national health priorities, and extends free, high-quality healthcare to underserved communities in Tanga. The RFHD Day provides access to primary care, diagnostics, and referrals to specialists. The day's impact is twofold: 1,000 beneficiaries are served - and over 10,000 health services are offered, including screening, testing, treatment, and consultations. Raising public awareness of maternal and child health and reproductive health issues is important. This day aims to improve the referral system and follow-up care through collaboration with local hospitals. The primary goal is to promote improved health-seeking behavior among the population through preventive screenings and health education.

In 2024, Family Health Day was attended by 63% women and 35% men. 33% of those seeking advice were between 25 and 49 years old. Almost all (97.3%) had formal education, mostly at secondary level. 35% had visual impairments or other disabilities.

Costs in 2024 were USD 12,961

- Medical supplies and pharmaceuticals \$7,878
- Volunteer training, meals, and kits \$1,840
- Communication and awareness \$1,178
- Tents, logistics, transport, documentation \$1,191
- Contingency and administrative support \$604

The people of Tanga are very much counting on the help of Rotary Clubs in 2026!

5.2. St. Raphael Medical Centre in Gomba District

The implementing Rotary Club is RC Kabulasoke–Gomba (D9213).

Gomba District lies in the southwestern part of Uganda’s Central Region, about 97 km southwest of the capital Kampala (around two hours’ travel). The district was created in 2010 from Mpigi District, but, due to its location and population, is often considered the “Karamoja” of Central Uganda. In 2020, the population was estimated at 173,800 — with 7.8% living in urban areas and 92.2% in rural areas affected by drought.

The district is divided into five sub-counties: Kabulasoke, Kyegonza, Mpenja, the town of Kanoni, and Maddu (the latter two having municipal administrations). There is no hospital in the entire district — only Maddu Health Centre IV, which has an operating theatre that has been out of service for seven years due to the lack of clean water and essential medicines. There is also a shortage of qualified staff (doctors, midwives, or nurses) and no ambulance service. The district has six Health Centre IIIs and twelve Health Centre IIs, with distances of about 20 km between them. Expectant mothers or seriously ill patients must travel to hospitals in neighboring districts: Gombe Hospital in Butambala District (60.8 km away), Mityana Hospital (65.1 km), Mubende Hospital (58.4 km), or Villa Maria Hospital in Kalungu District (83.1 km). Due to poor road conditions, these journeys are life-threatening: mothers die en route or lose their babies. As a result, many opt for home births, which — if assisted privately — cost 200,000 Uganda Shillings by day and 250,000 by night. A study by the Science Department of Kabulasoke Teachers’ College, Mpigi, Uganda, found that 74% of births occurred without any skilled assistance. Home births account for up to three-quarters of all maternal deaths. In addition, a needs assessment was carried out with local community representatives, using a participatory approach starting with WASH training. Thanks to a previous Global Grant, piped water is now available in the town of Kabulasoke.

The most urgent measure is the construction of a Community Health Centre to serve the entire district. Responsibilities between RC Kabulasoke–Gomba and the community have been established through long-term agreements, and a framework for involving local services, craftspeople, and companies has been developed. Formal agreements also provide for continuous monitoring of the measures, regular evaluation, and reporting.

It would go too far at this point to detail all the steps ensuring project sustainability (a comprehensive **project outline** is available). This project is to be seen in light of the high maternal and child mortality rate and aims to establish a functioning health center (at least Category III, preferably Category IV) in Gomba District; however, approval from the Ministry of Health is required (the urgency of the situation is well known there).

According to plans by technicians, engineers, and architects: Project **costs USD 319,914.10**. The plans are available for all interested!

5.3. Cooperation between Austria and Nigeria

District 9111 was created for the year 2024/25 following the division of District 9110 into two districts – 9111 and 9112.

At the ICC Summit in Agadir in June 2024, held during the 40th District Conference of District 9010, I established closer contacts with a number of Rotarians from Nigeria, including past presidents, governors, and governors-elect. A particularly significant encounter was with DGE Dr. Oluwole Kukoyi, who, even before returning to Nigeria—prompted by the ICC Summit—expressed a desire for closer ties between his country or district and Austria. Back in Nigeria, he assumed office as Governor of the new District 9211 on July 6, 2024, as a “pioneer.” Since then, correspondence has taken place with the goal of establishing an Inter-Country Committee from this connection. In this context, I also got in contact with PDG Omotunde Lawson, who had been the first female governor of the former District 9110 in 2022/23 and is committed to supporting ICCs, and also with PAG Benedict Osilamah Okhumale (RC Gowon Estate) – actively involved in formation of ICC Nigeria-Turkey.

For years, there have already been **contacts between our countries** (unfortunately not through club-to-club cooperation). These are based on the work of IPDG Dr. Peter Neuner (District 1920), who is actively involved in Enugu State (District 9142) through the Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal, and Child Health. After more than 25 years of experience, Nigeria won its second Rotary Global Grant (Program of Scale grant) in 2022 for the project “Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria.” It is hoped that Peter Neuner will succeed in bringing young Nigerian doctors to the Linz hospital. Anyone else interested should contact PDG Dr. Neuner as soon as possible.

This invitation could potentially develop into a **Rotary Friendship Exchange**, where clubs from Austrian districts could act as hosts. The diversity of the West African country (910,770 km² with 230 million inhabitants) will be showcased at the All-Nigerian Rotary Convention from November 20–23, 2025: “Igniting Opportunities and Empowering Communities for Prosperity,” bringing together Rotarians and Rotaractors from six Rotary districts (9111, 9112, 9126, 9127, 9141, 9142) at the Obi Wali Cultural Centre, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Rotary clubs were first established in Nigeria in 1961 in Kano, Lagos, and Ibadan. Since June 2025, the innovative Rotary Club of Nigeria Globetrotters, a Passport Club, has been active. The fact that the next Rotary International President for 2026/27, Yinka Babalola, comes from Nigeria might inspire people to first study literature on the country, its history, and cultures—for example, the 2023 book published by Penguin, UK, “*Africa Is Not A Country: Breaking Stereotypes of Modern Africa*” by Dipo Faloyin, who was born in Chicago, grew up in Nigeria, and now lives in London. This book may reveal to many their own lack of knowledge. The manifesto against ignorance (“Afrika ist kein Land”) has been published in German by Suhrkamp. My favorite author is Chinua Achebe, born in 1930 in Ogidi, Eastern Nigeria, and passed away in 2013 in Boston. His book (translated into German) “*Wie man unsere Namen schreibt*” captures the essence of Nigeria and the continent.

6. HOST COUNTRY UGANDA – NAKIVALE REFUGEE SETTLEMENT

This section formally differs from the previous sections. It is not a report on ICC initiatives, but focuses on a specific aspect of Uganda's government policy: the country's willingness to receive fleeing people and their accommodation in **refugee settlements**. Although all 14 settlements are presented, the main emphasis will be on the refugee-settlement NAKIVALE.

The underlying aim of the report is to provide Rotary and Rotaract Clubs in Austria and Germany with opportunities to engage with community-led initiatives (including the Rotaract Clubs established in Nakivale) – through personal encounters and to learn about their visions for the future. In spring 2026, the election of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (81 years old) will take place again, which should be considered when planning trips. According to the constitution, the election is for a five-year term, as age and term limits have been suspended. As far as possible, I will endeavor in 2026 to implement the projects mentioned under Section 5 and will accompany interested friends to Nakivale. I clearly remember one of RIPE Sam Owori's statements that Rotary is not a place for dreamers, but a place to put one's abilities and qualifications at the service of SERVICE. Perhaps others will accompany me!

UGANDA'S TRADITION AS A HOST COUNTRY

Uganda, with 47.54 million inhabitants, is the largest African host country and the third-largest in the world (now the sixth-largest, as Iran, Turkey, Germany, Colombia, and Pakistan are ahead of Uganda). It is internationally recognized as having one of the most progressive protection systems in the world. While the country has contributed to poverty reduction for its own people, the UNDP still classifies it as one of the least developed countries.

This tradition dates back even before independence in 1962. Between 1942 and 1944, Uganda received 6,443 refugees from Poland who had fled Nazi-occupied Poland. In 2024, I visited the cemetery and the Catholic church, Our Lady Queen of Poland Church. In 1959, tens of thousands of Tutsi from Rwanda were admitted to Uganda. They were settled in sparsely populated areas with available farmland.

In 2013, Uganda hosted 244,876 refugees, but due to conflicts and wars, this number grew. By the end of 2018, 1,190,922 refugees and asylum seekers were accommodated in several larger settlements and in the capital, Kampala. By May 2019, the country had already received 1,3 million refugees. As of 30 September 2025, there were 1,955,370 people, of whom 1,914,626 were registered as refugees, while 40,744 were still seeking asylum.

Refugees are accommodated in **REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS**, with the policy goal that they become self-reliant and resilient as early as possible through their own efforts. Thus, the intention is to provide them with temporary accommodation. After registration, refugees have the right to self-determination, work, start businesses, and access essential services such as health care and education. The influx of many unaccompanied minors and the high proportion of children pose particular challenges, especially regarding education (teachers

and adequately furnished schools), which can only be addressed in the long term through international donors.

Overall, active refugee reception is severely underfunded. The World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reported that in April 2025 seven UN agencies, 15 international NGOs, and two national partners appealed for additional funds for the Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP): an additional 44 million USD were needed, especially for life-saving measures, including nutrition (malnutrition being the critical problem). The UCRRP was already only 46% funded in 2024, needing 857.9 million USD. Uganda had expected 145,500 new refugees from DR Congo, South Sudan, and Sudan in 2025, but this influx was reached in the first quarter alone.

Legally, Uganda complies with all major **international laws**: the 1951 *Geneva Refugee Convention* (GRC), the 1967 *New York Protocol on the Status of Refugees*, and the 1969 *Refugee Convention of the Organization of African Unity* (OAU). According to the GRC, a refugee is “a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, being stateless, is outside the country of his or her former habitual residence and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it.”

The OAU expands this definition to include anyone “who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order, in part or all of his country of origin or of nationality, is compelled to leave the place of his habitual residence to seek refuge in another part of his country of origin or another country.”

Uganda has enacted its **own legislation**: the *Refugee Act 2006* and the *Refugee Regulations 2010*. Self-reliance and mobility of refugees are addressed in the 1999 *Self-Reliance Strategy*, updated in 2016 as the *Host Population Empowerment Strategy* (ReHoPE). In 2017, Uganda was the first country to implement the holistic *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework* (CRRF) 2022–2025. In addition, the “*Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP) for Refugees and Host Communities*” strengthens security, self-reliance, resilience, and sustainability for refugee communities and their host municipalities. Given the drastic increase in arrivals, particularly from DR Congo and South Sudan, and the decreasing international aid, it was recently updated again.

These measures were linked to integrating refugees into local development plans. However, reports show that local government resources are limited, making access to basic local services and economic opportunities challenging.

Against the backdrop of increased EU arrivals, a *UN summit on refugees and migration* took place in New York in September 2016 to strengthen long-term international cooperation. The unanimously adopted *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* aimed to overcome

collaboration deficits. Refugee protection should relieve host countries, provide durable solutions, and improve conditions in countries of origin to facilitate return.

Countries of origin of refugees (as of 30 September 2025):

Country of origin	in %	in numbers
South Sudan	52,5%	1,025.791
Democrat.Rep of Congo	32,8%	641.372
Sudan	4,7%	91.488
Eritrea	2,9%	57.373
Somalia	2,6%	50.081
Burundi	2,4%	46.093
Rwanda	1,3%	25.045
Ethiopia	0,8%	16.015
Others	0,1%	2.112

Central to all refugee policy is the office of the **UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**. Originally established in 1950 for three years to assist those displaced in Europe during WWII, its mandate has been extended multiple times and in 2003 was expanded to “until the refugee problem is solved,” - effectively making it indefinite.

Upon arrival at a settlement’s reception center, **UNHCR** registers refugees biometrically (since 2018), facilitating the provision of aid by humanitarian organizations. Refugees first receive medical care and are then offered initial accommodation.

DISTRIBUTION of REFUGEES in 14 SETTLEMENTS

Increase between January (and extra Asylum seekers) and September 2025!

Settlement	Status 30 Sep 2025	Status 31 Jan 2025	Asylum seekers Jan 25
NAKIVALE	272.361	215.417	955
ADJUMANI	231.946	228.563	8
BIDIBIDI	208.939	205.679	2
RHINO	197.518	170.828	65
KIRYANDONGO	165.045	139.815	66
KAMPALA	158.275	128.678	30.825
KYANGWALI	154.029	145.070	209
PALORINYA	141.903	137.733	2
KYAKA II	136.913	128.368	4.642
KWAMWANJA	105.099	99.424	1.148
PALABEK	93.944	88.154	0
IMVEPI	74.837	70.616	17
ORUCHINGA	8.150	8.076	0
LOBULE	6.411	6.286	0
	1,955.370	1.772.707	37.939

Ugandan refugee law grants refugees many freedoms not found in other host countries: the right to work, freedom of movement, access to basic services such as health care and education, and a plot of land for personal agriculture.

Criticism exists that despite these rights, refugees have no path to citizenship, the final step toward full legal integration.

The example of UGANDA shows that a generous host-country-policy alone cannot address challenges associated with **high refugee numbers**. The system will reach its limits if resources (such as land) and funding for implementation are insufficient.

The massive influx of refugees places pressure on natural resources and basic services in the host communities. Education is a major challenge: over 60% of refugees are minors. More than half of primary-school-age children and over 90% of older children do not attend school. About 22% of those in school are in a lower grade than their age. Dropout rates are high across all ages, and primary-school classes are overcrowded. According to the 2019 World Education Report, Uganda would need 7,000 additional primary-school teachers for refugee education. Compared to Kenya, access to education for refugees in Uganda is considerably more difficult.

UNHCR also advises states on compliance with the Geneva Refugee Convention - and emphasizes the need to **respect refugee human rights**. While its legal opinions are non-binding, operational measures are often implemented through local and international NGOs. UNHCR cooperates with over 900 NGOs, UN agencies, national governments, ministries, and companies active in refugee protection. UNHCR is primarily funded by voluntary contributions from governments and intergovernmental actors like the EU, plus the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), foundations, and private donors. Over 40% of its annual budget goes to local and international partners implementing programs.

UNHCR pursues an overarching goal and seeks durable solutions:

- promotion of voluntary repatriation,
- promotion of integration in the host- or first-asylum country,
- resettlement in third countries if returning home is impossible.

These solutions, when possible, shall enable refugees to start a new life.

Refugee settlements are generally intended only for **temporary accommodation**. The 2016 New York Declaration explicitly recognizes that camp-based accommodation should be temporary and serve only as an initial response. Refugees should be supported to develop their potential, including access to education and the labor market, fostering self-reliance and reducing dependency on aid.

However, in reality, **so-called protracted refugee situations** are increasing. These are situations in which at least 25,000 refugees of one nationality have lived in exile in a host country for over five years. Some situations have existed for decades, especially affecting refugees from Burundi, DR Congo, Somalia, Sudan, and Western Sahara. In 2018 alone,

UNHCR classified nine additional refugee situations as protracted, seven of which are in Africa, including South Sudanese refugees in Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda, Nigerian refugees in Cameroon and Niger, and DR Congo and Somali refugees in South Africa.

Accordingly, many settlements ultimately exist for decades and gradually become permanent. Host governments often do not view them as permanent homes. The infrastructure of refugee settlements is generally unsuitable for long-term solutions, creating a state of “**permanent temporariness**” for residents.

NAKIVALE REFUGEE SETTLEMENT

The Nakivale refugee settlement was established in 1958 in the Isingiro District and officially recognized as a refugee settlement in 1960. Ranked as the eighth-largest refugee settlement worldwide, Nakivale covers 180 square kilometers, located 200 km south of the capital Kampala. The nearest major city is Mbarara, approximately 60 km away.

In line with principles aimed at addressing both, the humanitarian and development needs of refugees AND the host population, the settlements have **neither fences nor barriers** - in contrast to “refugee-camps” especially in Europe. Several academic commentaries have highlighted that this practice is particularly praised internationally, as it allows refugees to become economically self-reliant.

However, this freedom of movement has led to **land-use conflicts**. Field research conducted in 2025 examined the responses of local communities around Nakivale (Source: Ingunn Bjorkhaug, Guri Tyldum, Petra Namanya: “Tensions and coexistence: host narratives of refugee presence in Nakivale, Uganda”, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 38, Issue 3, September 2025, pp. 541–553 – <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feaf042>):

Since residents could not oppose government measures, some turned against the refugees. With the increase of refugees from conflict zones, some respondents in the research feared that these newcomers might bring conflicts from their countries of origin to Uganda. Some other respondents highlighted a visible distinction between “us” and “them,” particularly among those facing their own economic difficulties and feeling disadvantaged by support provided to refugees.

No participant in this study, however, called for an end to refugee reception. Despite some criticism of government policy, many viewed the presence of refugees as contributing to improved regional infrastructure and, despite occasional tensions, as an opportunity for long-term cooperation.

As of September 2025, Nakivale hosts refugees from the following countries:

DR Congo – 207,122;	Burundi – 35,435;	Rwanda – 15,581;
Somalia – 11,546;	Ethiopia – 1,412;	Eritrea – 945.

Since January 2025, an **additional 55,000 people from DR Congo** have arrived in Nakivale!

Current developments:

President Museveni signed a **migration agreement** with USA: In the future, Uganda will host persons who were rejected by the asylum policy of USA – those who could not obtain asylum, have been deported, and cannot safely return to their country of origin. From Ugandan perspective, preference will be given to people from African countries – and to those without a criminal record, and no unaccompanied young girls and men.

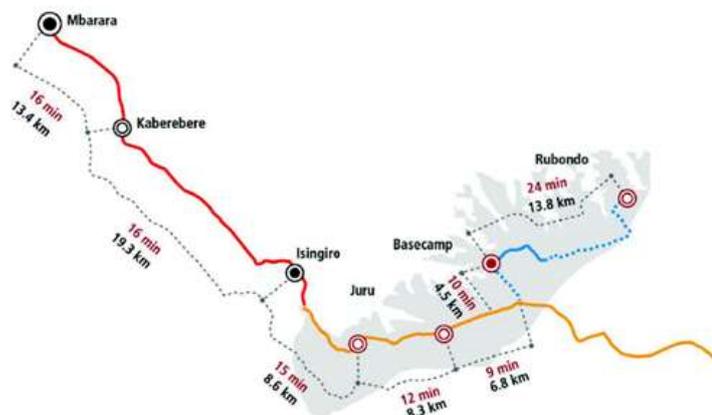
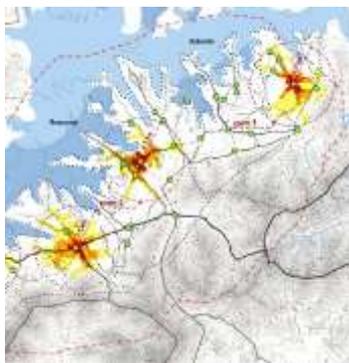
During the UN General Assembly in New York, the Dutch government and Ugandan representatives have signed a memorandum of understanding “to build a transit camp” for rejected asylum seekers in Uganda. Dutch Immigration Minister David von Weel and Ugandan Foreign Minister Odongo Jeje Abubakhar emphasized that this transit camp must “comply with national, European, and international laws”. The idea of Britain for a deportation center in Rwanda was shelved 2024.

Administratively, Nakivale is divided into three ZONES (with 79 villages each):

1. Base Camp (76.1 km²), where newcomers are registered
2. Juru in the southwest (78.5 km²)
3. Rubondo in the northeast (54.3 km²).

Distribution of people and households in the Zones (January 2025 vs. September 2025):

<i>Zone</i>	<i>People IX</i>	<i>Households IX</i>	<i>People Jan</i>	<i>Households Jan</i>
RUBONDO	104.964	38.977	103.000	38.724
BASE CAMP	68335	17026	67.252	17.027
JURU	97.651	46.790	45.047	15.933
	270.950		215.299	
		102.493		71.684



The distances between the three zones are significant, particularly from Rubondo, where travel to the Base Camp must be done on foot. Access to health and education facilities, water, markets, and other services is unevenly distributed among the zones. Base Camp is best equipped, attracting especially young people from Rubondo – which has led to overcrowding Base Camp.

The **reception process** takes place at the Transit Center, where UNHCR and the office OPM first record basic data (age, sex, family size). In a second step, medical examinations follow, assessment of humanitarian needs, and provision for further information is noted – after when accommodation was proposed (more details housing, legal status, local customs, education, food, hygiene products, medicine, water, needs of women, unaccompanied minors, and persons with limited mobility). Each registered refugee is allocated a plot (currently 20 x 30 meters) for housing and cultivation, along with a small starter kit – though limited space restricts self-reliance opportunities.

The local population is encouraged to engage with the newcomers and assist them. Refugees are free to move within and beyond the settlement to seek employment or gather firewood for cooking, which, as previously noted, often leads to conflicts with local residents. On the other hand, the local population also benefits from the schools, training facilities, and health services available in the settlement.

UNHCR/OPM statistics show that **gender distribution** across age groups is nearly equal. As throughout Uganda, children and adolescents up to 17 years make up **50% of the population**: 0–4 years account for 8% each for boys and girls; 5–11 years, 10% each; and 12–17 years, 6% each.

Among the working-age population, men and women each constitute 25%, with the smallest proportion of older people being 1% for both genders.

Governance and participation:

Refugees in all three zones have **participatory rights**. Settlement management, coordination, and security are overseen by OPM teams, led by a Ugandan Settlement Commander. Each zone is represented by 10 people - elected every two years by refugees - to the three “*Refugee Welfare Councils*” (RWC), often with women in leadership positions.

Team roles include a Secretary-General, a *Safety and Accountability Officer* (Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief), a *Secretariat for Women’s Affairs*, and specialized positions for education and nursery/primary schools, which in Nakivale are managed by Windle Trust Uganda and Arise. Water and sanitation are handled by Nsamizi (Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief).

In case of conflicts, all can contact “*People for Peace and Defense Rights*.” A financial administrator is also appointed.

Water supply is critically low:

In Uganda, refugees have an average of only 17 liters of drinking water per day. Zone disparities exist: Juru receives 11 liters per person per day, Rubondo only 5 liters. Boreholes urgently need renovation; rainwater is collected from roofs into tanks. Drawing water from Nakivale Lake was risky due to venomous snakes and crocodiles. Consumption of untreated water has caused diseases such as typhoid and cholera, while malaria in flooded areas remains a major problem for children and the elderly. The *Misera water treatment project*, led by the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) and supported by the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADA) along with international Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, has improved conditions for over 15,000 refugees.

Sanitation facilities are unevenly distributed: 77% in Rubondo, 50% in Juru. To enhance safety, solar lighting is required. Financial support is also needed to provide alternatives to firewood for cooking.

Survey among the refugee residents

A survey among residents was carried out in September 2025 regarding their **most urgent needs**. As in the survey of January 2025, more women (24,590) than men (16,618) were prepared to answer. Lack of knowledge about the new environment was cited first by 19,250 respondents, followed by risks faced by specific groups: children (10,199), women (8,883), single parents (8,817), and their own health situation (8,532).

Only 15% of adults (18-59) confirmed that they found **employment** (in January the percentage was higher with 18%). The majority of these (15,123 individuals) were employed in agriculture and fisheries; 1,075 found work in trade and sales, a growing number in business and administration (1,044). 1,022 people worked as care workers.

Only 460 considered themselves as food producers.

This last aspect is particularly noteworthy, **as food insecurity** is the greatest problem for people in Nakivale. UNHCR, the United Nations - with UNICEF, the World Food Programme WFP - and many international NGOs support the national authorities in providing food, education, and medical care. Monthly contributions from WFP have been drastically reduced: the most vulnerable refugees receive goods worth USD 4.9 per person per month, while less vulnerable individuals receive USD 2.7; those deemed capable of self-support receive nothing. UNHCR and UNICEF continue to provide support but face special challenges due to reduced international aid. Alternative food distributions (three kilograms of rice and half a kilogram of beans per person per month) are insufficient for large families.

Among the newly arrived, acute malnutrition (Global Acute Malnutrition) has risen sharply to 21.5%. For the first two weeks after new arrivals reach Nakivale, the UN has provided USD 2.5 million through the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to allow UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF to provide immediate assistance (clean water, medicine, and protection).

Health services are also unevenly distributed across the three zones. Waiting times are long, although medical staff work beyond normal hours. Nevertheless, most facilities have far too few trained doctors and medical personnel.

Refugees with serious health issues are referred to the hospital in Mbarara.

Schooling and Training

Because of the high percentage of children, education is of particular concern. Unfortunately, the distribution of schools in the zones was not listed in any of the reports. However, Nakivale has nine UN-sponsored primary schools and one secondary school. The number of private schools has increased, but many families cannot afford tuition. In September 2025, school fees for primary and secondary schools were raised to 22.000 UGX per quarter. In September, strikes by public school teachers protesting unequal pay for different subjects added to the challenges. Future national budgets have promised improvements.

In Uganda, 58% of refugees are school-aged children (3-17 years). Many children and adolescents do not receive adequate schooling due to shortages of classrooms and teachers. By the end of 2019, 25% of primary school-aged children and 86% of secondary school-aged children were **not attending** school. On average, 18% of students were enrolled in grades below their age level, with girls particularly at risk of dropping out due to early marriages and pregnancy.

At the beginning of 2021, nearly 40,000 unaccompanied minors were among Uganda's refugees. Registering these children is crucial to provide comprehensive support according to their needs. The high proportion of children and school-aged youth is a major challenge, as many new arrivals **must learn English**, the national language. Although Universal Primary Education (UPE) became mandatory in 1997, only one-third of children reached grade seven six years later. Many parents could not afford uniforms, books, or supplies.

In 2012, the **first secondary school** in Nakivale was established with 145 students, a number that has now grown to over 1,000. During my visit to Nakivale in 2023 (after the Rotary District Conference in Mbarara), I visited this secondary school, where over 1,000 students attend. The director proudly reported that no student had left school early. They are closely connected to the school and have even composed their own school anthem.

The Refugee Welfare Council (RWC) and the OPM Camp Commandant have noted that schools are operating above capacity; some secondary school classes contain up to 200 students. There is a pressing need for secondary education and sports facilities.

International funding cuts have created significant challenges in education. For example, the EU discontinued support to the Norwegian NGO "Norwegian Refugee Council" (NRC). The continuation of preschool programs, especially for new children without sufficient English skills, under the "Return to Learning" initiative, just three weeks before the school year, is uncertain.

UNICEF has a plan to be implemented by 2025 for rural areas, poor urban populations, and refugee settlements: children aged 0–5 should receive pre-primary education through formal and non-formal learning centers; children should achieve learning outcomes through continuous, quality education; adolescents should gain life skills, participate in society, and receive training to support future employment.

“EduTrac” is a tool intended to facilitate web-based annual schooling. “Windle International Uganda,” a UK charity, has built 18 classrooms in the most overcrowded secondary school and equipped them with vocational training materials.

The Ministry of Education and Sports has selected Nakivale Secondary School (one of 25 schools) for a pilot “Digital Skills Training” project, allowing students to share online research experiences with their class and foster lifelong learning.

Overcoming Diversity-Tensions and reducing Trauma

The heterogeneity of Nakivale, with eight different nationalities and cultures, presents challenges for peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. Youth, who make up around 50% of the population, require efforts on two levels:

- Reducing illiteracy among orphans, unaccompanied, and vulnerable adolescents, and teaching them English.
- For those residing longer in the settlement, access to primary and secondary education, vocational training, and life skills must be improved.

Some of these demands are supported or already offered by a wide range of NGOs, UN agencies, and universities (e.g., Université de Sherbrooke and its International Cooperation Group, GCIUS). However, food shortages, limited water access, unfamiliar with new living conditions, and inadequate healthcare contribute to tensions. Religious divisions can also undermine social cohesion. Trauma from war, loss, and displacement manifests in anger, despair, and mistrust, sometimes leading to sexual violence against women and girls.

Coordinated by Norbert Byambo Kagosi, “**World BEYOND War**” aims to break cycles of violence and discrimination among refugees. The group, composed of seven nationalities in Nakivale, promotes peace education, non-violence, and mutual respect. Its members seek to send a strong message to African heads of state and government: invest in peace education and nonviolent initiatives rather than war. By addressing the root causes of conflict, they hope to inspire a new generation of peacebuilders. Key objectives include reducing illiteracy among orphans and vulnerable children, providing education and vocational training for refugees, and fostering a more inclusive world.

The “**Generation Restoration**” initiative (Tina Teucher, based in Munich) under UNIDOS aims to transform refugee settlements into regenerative communities that support resilience, mitigate climate change, promote health and prosperity, coexist peacefully with host communities, and restore ecosystems.

Refugee settlements remain intermediate stops for many, but the common goal is to build a bioeconomy that regenerates soils and sequesters CO₂. One approach is biochar, which stores carbon long-term in the soil, improves soil quality, increases water retention, and enhances agricultural productivity. It can be produced from agricultural waste such as wood residues, straw, maize cobs, or crop residues. Through biochar production and carbon farming, soils in Nakivale can be improved (<https://genr.world/de/biochar-nakivale/>)

Expertise is based in the Local Community

As shown in the previous overview, a number of international organizations have become involved, often after visiting Nakivale. However, discussions with community-based groups have made it clear that it is the community members themselves who best understand their own needs and challenges. They also know their own strengths. Nonetheless, it has proven useful for refugee-founded NGOs to cooperate with international organizations over the long term.

This has also been evident with the Rotaract Clubs established in Nakivale when they maintain contacts with Rotary or Rotaract Clubs in Uganda or, as will be shown later, across the continent.

Environmental Orientation

Many refugees, depending on their country of origin, were former farmers who had to leave their land and livestock behind. However, uncoordinated interventions in the landscape have led to soil degradation, increasing food insecurity.

Nevertheless, there is great potential within the community, as some refugees bring knowledge of regenerative agriculture to Nakivale. They lament the environmental degradation, the lack of awareness regarding soil health, and the limited opportunities for innovative agricultural practices, all of which are exacerbated by climate change. Long periods of drought are often followed by flooding after rains.

Training in soil health principles, climate-resilient planting, and innovative agricultural practices is crucial for making the ecosystem more resilient and equipping refugees with entrepreneurial skills and improved income opportunities.

UNIDOS and African Agriculture

UNIDOS (founded by Paulinho Muzaliwa) works in both directions—providing women’s training and promoting regenerative agricultural practices. UN-Habitat has developed proposals for an alternative model of land and resource management.

The goal of the Unidos Social Innovation Centre in Nakivale is to equip young refugees with entrepreneurial skills. “Our vision is to transform our refugee camp entirely into a regenerative community where everyone becomes self-reliant. We firmly believe that by developing strong entrepreneurial skills, we can create together, build resilience, and turn the difficult and often painful experiences from our home countries into success stories,” says founder Paulinho.

By applying permaculture, determined refugees regenerate not only the soil and ecological environment but also their own lives and the community. I would recommend to invite the President of the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation, Ms. Kwagala Elizabeth Nsimadala – probably her special targeted workshops with UNIDOS and other interested parties would be of great help. Such a connection, along with contact with Million Belay, General Coordinator of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), would be very fruitful in the long term.

Environmental Orientation through AYISED and NELIC

Nakivale refugee settlement is at a turning point, as international food aid is in crisis. Community knowledge of soil, sustainable agroforestry, and permaculture can provide new solutions—because soil means survival.

The community-based organization AFRICAN YOUTH INTEGRATED FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (AYISED) was established for this reason. A former refugee, Benedict from the DR Congo, who had previously lived in Kyaka and was later relocated to Australia with his family, passed his vision to Mbilizi Kalombo, who now lives in Nakivale.

In 2023, this initiative received the *“Refugee-Led Innovation Grant,”* allowing the development of the SEED program, which supports youth in sustainable agriculture and livelihood development. To date, 5,500 children have received training through this initiative, and over 3,000 people in Nakivale have benefited. Cooperation with existing organizations is crucial for joint environmental protection efforts, including reforestation, soil erosion control, and watershed management.

The Nakivale Training Centre

This centre aims to make refugees self-sufficient and equip them with relevant skills. The initiator, Eric Mugisha, comes from a village in DR Congo. Through his own training in *“Grapes of New Hope,”* he gained technology and computer skills, leading to a program that provides refugees with laptops for education and training—initially hindered by a lack of electricity. Without support from RC Kiwatule (D9213) and Rotary Clubs of Southern Districts (Western Australia, D9423), the idea would have stalled. A corresponding project, *“Self Sustainability and Educational Opportunities in Nakivale Refugee Camp Uganda (RAOAF) – Project 12-2023-24,”* began in 2023.

Training has expanded to other professions: 13 foot-operated sewing machines were acquired, along with fabrics and tailoring materials. More than 40 students have participated so far. The next phase plans to equip the 35 laptops with solar lamps.

HOPE Training Centre Nakivale and Smile for Refugees

This initiative also stems from a refugee, Yoshua Kisibo, who, along with his friends and colleagues, works to make shelters safer with bricks.

Toilets have been constructed in the community centre, complete with toilet paper and soap, as he emphasizes. His focus is on albinos, who are still marginalized in society. During my

visit, I observed how he applied soil health principles and new cultivation methods to improve soil fertility. The centre offers diverse training and vocational programs: a bakery where children bake bread for their families, a sewing workshop for women creating marketable products, as well as music, dance, and yoga.

Grapes of New Hope

Founded in December 2021 for a four-year program, in April 2025 this NGO partnered with UNHCR to support the Rubondo Community Center. “*Go Back to School*” is a collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Grapes of New Hope (GNH). Education is a pathway to hope, dignity, and opportunity.

In Nakivale, many children and youth recently arrived after fleeing conflicts and hardship. For them, school is more than a classroom—it is a place of healing, belonging, and a foundation for a better future. The “Back to School” campaign inspires and supports refugee children and their families to prioritize education.

The community center also offers skills training to prepare refugees for the digital world and foster peace-building initiatives. Special attention is given to marginalized groups. TECH courses include graphic-design, web development, computer literacy, and AI-assisted design.

Transforming Lives Through Vocational Skills

„*Empower Rise*“ focuses on practical, marketable skills that can immediately generate income and improve living conditions. These include hairdressing, soap-making (improving hygiene and health), tailoring, and cooking.

Beyond skill-building, the initiative strengthens community cohesion and mutual support. Environmental protection is also emphasized, prioritizing renewable energy sources.

Culture as a Vital Contribution

Two initiatives focus on culture: *Nakivale Heritage Art Centre* (founded by Prosper Mugaruka) and *New Talent for the Best Future* (founded by Muhindo Mutundi), addressing early school leavers, more than 38,000 children. In response to international funding cuts, eleven dedicated volunteers in Nakivale created this community-based group. Marginalized children are nurtured according to their talents and abilities.

Participation allows them to discover their own skills, not just in art but also in sports, play, storytelling, and citizenship education. Knowledge gained is passed on to others.

Life Perspectives or Protracted Temporariness?

Although most initiatives aim to sustainably improve life in Nakivale, bring people from diverse origins together into positive peace projects, and restore autonomy and dignity, the question arises about long-term life prospects.

When and where will it be possible to relinquish refugee status? Do some still hope to return to their original homeland as citizens?

Do they now see themselves as “agents of peace”?

Can they leverage resettlement opportunities and contribute elsewhere in the world through their skills?

Or, through their own experience in multiethnic communities, help contribute to **sustainable peace processes** in a globalized world?

ROTARACT CLUBS IN NAKIVALE

I will begin with the first club ever established in a refugee settlement — although several others have since followed. I personally reported on this pioneering Rotaract Club in the Rotary Magazin (District 1920), August 2018, pp. 30–31. Peter Pauls (D 1860) published a further report in the Rotary Magazin, September 2025, pp. 12–18, where more details can be found, so this section will be somewhat shorter.

ROTARACT CLUB OF NAKIVALE (ID 214948) – D 9213

It was the first Rotaract Club in a refugee settlement worldwide.

The initiator was Paul Mushaho, a student of business informatics and computer science, who fled from the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2016 after receiving death threats from a Mai-Mai militia. Upon arriving in Nakivale, he worked in money transfer services and later entered a competition with a beekeeping project that sold honey. This second project attracted the attention of Rotarians in Kampala. In June 2017, he founded the Rotaract Club of Nakivale.

The sponsoring clubs were the Rotary Club Kiwatule, together with Rotaract Kampala The Core, Rotaract International University (KIU), and the Rotary Club Roseville, supported by the American Refugee Committee (ARC). The Rotary Club Ingelheim am Rhein acts as international sponsor.

Paul Mushaho became the charter president. Within Rotary, the Rotaract Club of Nakivale is considered a “beacon of inspiration.” While there are around 11,000 Rotaract Clubs worldwide, this one is unlike any other – it is made up of young refugees who want to give something back. In 2018, Mushaho was invited to the United Nations Regional Office in Nairobi, where he was one of six honorees recognized as Rotary People of Action: Young Innovators. “Our refugee community has realized that our local challenges require local solutions,” he said in his speech. “We are not beggars; we are a generation of change and inspiration.”

The Rotaract Club of Nakivale came up with an idea to help newly arrived refugees feel more comfortable and dignified. Having personally experienced how traumatic the first days or

weeks as a refugee can be, their idea was simple: more clothing! With the support of the American Refugee Committee, Rotaractors in Nakivale distributed clothing to newcomers.

The training center provides essential skills for income generation — especially for single mothers and unemployed youth who previously saw no prospects — offering courses in tailoring, basket weaving, and baking. These activities strengthen community spirit and cooperation among residents. Rotaract members also taught agriculture and masonry, planted trees, established a women’s community center, and distributed blankets and mattresses to families taking in orphans. “I tell them: what we have given you is just a sign of appreciation for all your efforts within the community,” says Mushaho.

When Mushaho noticed that young refugees of different nationalities had little contact with each other, he helped organize a “Football Tournament for Positive Peace.” The event brought together teams of various nationalities, offering a platform for camaraderie and connection among residents.

A short side-note: In July 2024, the Rotaract Club of Nakivale publicly opposed the formation of new Rotaract clubs - naming former five members with photos, who are no longer permitted to refer to themselves as former club-members (including Chris Scott, Jules Kuguma Mongaru, Ciella Hghlight, Yosua Osea). On this list was also Elie Nuru Elbag – his NEW Rotaract Club of Nakivale-Rubondo was chartered in November 2024 (see later).

The headquarters of the Rotaract Club of Nakivale is in the Base Camp Zone. For the Rotary year 2025/26, Sylvestre Muyengabe serves as the club’s 8th president.

ROTARACT CLUB OF NAKIVALE JURU (ID 216780) – D 9213

The Rotaract Club of Nakivale Juru was established in 2019 in the Juru Zone. The Charter of this Rotaract Club – sponsored by RC Kiwatule – took place on April 2, 1019.

The **charter president was Fidele Hitimana**. The club president for 2025/26 is Ombeni Meshake.

From the beginning, the Rotaract Club of Nakivale Juru maintained a close relationship with the original Rotaract Club of Nakivale. Their meeting place is the “Grapes of New Hope Training Center.”

On 21 September, the International Day of Peace, the Rotaract Club Nakivale-Juru and the organization Grapes of New Hope organized a one-day Peaceful Football Tournament, attracting over 1,000 participants from different nationalities — including Burundians, Rwandans, Congolese, and members of the host community. The goal of the event was to foster harmony and cooperation among different refugee groups and the local population in Nakivale, using sport as a vehicle for peace. Six teams took part, each receiving a football. The winning team was awarded an additional ball and a full set of jerseys — a powerful symbol of unity and sportsmanship. This initiative demonstrates impressively how sport can break down barriers, promote social cohesion, and build positive relationships among

diverse groups. For refugees who are often socially isolated, such events provide opportunities for community engagement, physical activity, and mental well-being.

By bringing together people of different nationalities and the host community, the tournament fostered peaceful coexistence, helped bridge divides, and improved mutual understanding between refugees and their neighbors. The success of this event was made possible through the generous support of the Rotary Club Southern Districts (Australia) and the Rotary Club Kiwatule, whose contributions enabled this significant peace effort. Their commitment underscores the importance of international solidarity and local cooperation in addressing refugee needs and strengthening social bonds.



At Christmas, the Rotaract Club Nakivale-Juru organized a “Christmas Peaceful Coexistence Tournament” to bring together refugees and residents of surrounding villages through sport.

With over 180,000 refugees in the settlement, the event aimed to promote peace, unity, and friendly interaction. Recently, the Rotaract Club Nakivale-Juru has intensified efforts to plant fruit trees with children and youth, inviting them to participate and learn the value of trees from an early age. For health and hygiene reason, Rotaract Club Nakivale-Juru included in the program the renovation of the sanitary infrastructure.

ROTARACT CLUB NAKIVALE RUBONDO (ID 8826760) – D9214

Under the motto *“Healing Hearts – Saving Lives”*, the Rotaract Club was formally established by the Rotary Club of Mbarara (D9214) on 18 October 2024, with District Governor Agnes Mungati Batengas and RI President Stephanie Urchick officiating at the ceremony.

The club was chartered on 16 November 2024, with Elie Nuru Elbag as Charter President.

This health day broadened the sense of community within the Rotaract Club. On 4 August, the Rotaract Club of Nakivale-Rubondo welcomed five new members.

On 2 August 2025, the Rotaract Club held a medical camp at Rubondo Health Centre II, organized jointly by the Rotaract Clubs of Mbarara and Nakivale-Rubondo together with C-Care Medical Services. The Rotaract Club supported newly arrived refugees in the Nakivale Settlement by providing shoes, clothing, hygiene items, and school supplies—bringing renewed hope and health to 476 people (177 men and 299 women).



The Rotaract Club of Mbarara supplied tons of medicine and ensured that everyone received what they needed. There were medical consultations, numerous forms of healthcare assistance, and gestures of friendship toward people who often struggle to access medical care. Free health screenings were offered, including child health services, eye examinations, laboratory tests, and even counseling for emotional support. Forty-one people were tested for HIV, and two women aged 20 and 48 were positive and received immediate assistance. Thirty-six people were tested for malaria, with one 56-year-old woman testing positive. Women were screened for cervical cancer, and everyone received free medicine, eyeglasses, condoms, sanitary pads, and even clothing and shoes donated by kindhearted individuals. Doctors, nurses, ophthalmologists, and laboratory experts from C-Care worked tirelessly to treat common conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, stomach problems, malaria, coughs, colds, and urinary tract infections. Patients with serious illnesses were referred to larger hospitals for further care.

The most important task of these Health Days was to make people sensitive of the value of early detecting dangers. This health day broadened the sense of community within the Rotaract Club. Fortunately, tests for prostate issues, stomach bacteria, and Hepatitis B were all negative. But thirty women underwent cervical cancer screening—four showed early signs and were treated immediately, while one woman with advanced cancer and another already in treatment were counseled on next steps. Severe cases of infection were referred to specialists. One woman was treated for an infection, and all severe cases were referred to specialists. The camp also focused particularly on pregnant women and those in need of family-planning services. They received breast exams, infection screening, and health advice. Especially significant was the cervical cancer screening for 30 women, which detected issues early and ensured appropriate treatment or referral so they could continue their fight for health. The laboratory team assisted 164 people with diagnostic tests to help detect issues early. Of 100 people tested for blood sugar, five had elevated levels; one 57-year-old man showed a concerning 16.1 mmol/l.

With the support of the Samaritan Foundation and the Rotary Club of Bwebajja, the Rotaract Club of Nakivale-Rubondo launched a water project to support its ongoing activities. The Rotaract Club is grateful for the partnership and support from Australia (Helen Stokes and Ara Harathunian) who help provide assistance to refugees from the DR Congo in overcoming trauma after their flight, notably through “Healing Circle Work in Africa.”

7. Concluding Remarks

The report has become so extensive that a summary might be unnecessary. But please let me try to draw the attention to conditions of the work of the ICC.

Through my regular stays in Tanzania and Uganda, I have learned about the commitment of many clubs in areas that are particularly important to them: when they advocate for new educational priorities in schools that open up new career prospects for girls and boys; when they work to ensure that everyone in the community has access to clean water; when they work to preserve the environment, develop measures to support agroecological food systems, and preserve food sovereignty and resilience; or when communities offer practical support to schools and households to prevent malaria. I witnessed when the passion of one radiates to all others in the club – and then the club as a whole becomes truly passionate “burning” for this heartfelt project. I considered this flow of information as task of the ICC to inform clubs in Austria or our European neighbors.

That was the reason why, in the first part of the report, I reported on projects that were not driven by the rational process of raising funds, but rather had their origins in the hearts of the committed people. This is true for the first Global Grant for Kidera and the subsequent “*Sam Owori Projects*”. This can be seen from the very first moment in the parish Namasagali, when the need of the people developed over almost five years into a Global Grant, that makes the precious element water affordable for everyone. One feels the heart of the admirable commitment of two actively engaged nurses, building a school in the community Asinge so that children will get the opportunity to learn. Look at the spontaneous support from community to community by the donation of a Tricyce Village Ambulance to secure the lives of young mothers and newborns.

Global Grants are not the primary focus of the ICC – rather, from the very beginning, when we founded it in 2018, it was to develop an interest in the culturally diverse Rotary life and identity in our three countries and among the clubs. From the very beginning, the desire behind the establishment of an ICC was to develop INTERKULTURAL COMPETENCE in the three countries and among the Rotarians and Rotaractors. However, this requires overcoming the complacency – and accept being “irritated” by foreign cultural orientations.

Each of the three countries has its own very special appeal – a visa application and a plane ticket are required to immerse yourself in the fascination of the present and history, music and the visual arts. And I am equally confident that hosts in all three countries will be willing to invite the guests from abroad and also take the guests to their own Rotary meetings.

As mentioned at the beginning, I have participated in all district conferences in Tanzania and in Uganda since 2017 (D9211 and later D9213 and D9214). This year 2017 was also a very special one: my colleague Ismail Sadek and I had the gift of meeting RIPE Sam Owori at the conference in Arusha. In these days, the encounter influences my understanding and my life as Rotarian. When I attend the District Conferences, I do not only understand it as an obligation. From the first moment I rather want to give something back – I received so much friendship and trust over all these years.

I always wanted to share this experience with others – because, without exaggeration, going to Uganda (even more so than Tanzania) is always like "coming home" for me. Since 2018, it has become a second home to me.

It does not make a difference if I attend as chair of the InterCountry Committee since 2022/23. Whenever possible, I visited Rotary and Rotaract Clubs before or after the Conferences and maintain personal contacts with Clubs and Governors. Online meetings provided excellent opportunities to listen to club's visions and plans, discuss it with them and as soon as possible together with the clubs I visit the project sites. Whenever I traveled through parts of Uganda or Tanzania, each part is somehow different – and mirrors history (to my regret I know quite well the Conference buildings, but hardly the impressive national parks in both countries). This is the best opportunity to debate the projects with **local representatives**. They are of great importance – the local authorities give their written approval, to take care of the established projects – especially when the promised Rotary funds have been used up.

It is the personal impression one can gain through travel—no report, no photo report, can replace that. Although it is certainly a great help to gain an impression of the country one has in mind to visit, one shall make use of the vast literature available. However, everyone has to make the decision to undertake such a trip for themselves. Precisely because so much superficial knowledge circulates and media reports tend to reinforce clichés, I hope that personal impressions counteract this.

Even in discussions without financial involvement, at several times I have recognized the discriminatory reaction and clichés are used against "Africa" – relating the continent to crises, catastrophes, and corruption. Thus, it remains the ICC's task to first overcome the lack of background knowledge and to motivate Clubs to engage in conversations with the still largely unknown Rotary Clubs in Uganda and Tanzania.

The Rotary **VISION STATEMENT**, in particular, opens our eyes because it encompasses not only our immediate environment, but also all other countries. But it doesn't stop there—everything we want to initiate long-term change with has a lasting impact on ourselves. This aspect, in particular, should be considered much more: "[We see a world where people begin together to create lasting change—in every country, in our communities, and within ourselves.](#)"

When Clubs in our three countries focus on initiating sustainable change "*in our communities*", this immediate environment also presents challenges: engaging with an inclusive society, with people from different social backgrounds or ways of life. Sensitivity to the lives of others, opening Clubs to personal encounters, and supporting the implementation of sustainable change is a learning process that goes far beyond financial contributions. Such encounters broaden our view of the diversity of society, develop empathy, allow us to approach the often unfamiliar lives of others with respect - and make us reflect our own position. Thus we can build new bridges for social cohesion!

Creating sustainable change “*in every country*”, is not a contradiction for Rotary Clubs. With the founding of the Club, they became part of the International Rotary family.

This relates to the **ICC- MISSION**: “To promote PEACE and INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING while improving cross-cultural awareness, engaging diversities, and bridging communities.”

In a globalized world, actions in the environment, economy, and even the defense industry of one continent affect all others, demonstrating our interdependence. Our actions here have effects elsewhere, but they require intercultural competence among Club members. This means reducing prejudice, using one’s own skills and knowledge to engage with people from other cultural backgrounds. Understanding diversity is an enrichment rather than a barrier. To appreciate foreign cultural systems respectfully, one must often overcome a lack of background knowledge—whether in history, literature, music, or the visual arts.

The ICC Austria–Tanzania–Uganda will continue to invite friends, colleagues, scientists for travels to East African countries – to experience their diversity in nature, tradition, and innovation through encounters with Clubs and to observe their strong personal engagement in independently improving living conditions. From this, a new network of friendly relationships can develop, forming a basis of intercultural cooperation. Some suggestions for successful cooperation are included in this report, based on proposals and drafts of individual Clubs, particularly in the areas of environment, health, education, and the development of future employment opportunities. It is hoped that our Clubs will open up to proposals for joint collaboration with Rotary and Rotaract Clubs in East African countries.

Recently, the **ROTARY CODE OF POLICIES** (October 2025) summarized the role of ICC: “Cross-border committees promote relationships between two or more international districts or two or more countries to strengthen community and intercultural understanding among people of different nations, foster closer ties between members, Clubs, and districts across countries, and build networks across borders, continents, and oceans.”

Accordingly, the role of the ICC Austria–Tanzania–Uganda described here is to increase UNDERSTANDING of other cultures and traditions in a globally connected but divided world. Those who open themselves to it, embrace it, and use the opportunities without prejudice will see the world from new perspectives. Cultural differences should be consciously understood, respectfully valued, learned from, and embraced as opportunities. Encounters with other cultures may especially help in local and societal contexts, revealing how interconnected we are in this world.

May the friendships and bonds formed be sustainable and long-lasting, and continue beyond the projects themselves!

SUCCESS EXAMPLES ICCS

Barbara Wolf-Wicha Z21A. ILLINOIS DISTRICT 2140



MORE Than
a project
more than money
PASSION
HEART HANDS

INTER COUNTRY COMMITTEE

FOCUS ON AFRICA
LINKED BY FRIENDSHIPS

WE COOPERATE EQUALLY
Don't Give TRUST

PROJECTS CAN BE RESULTS OF FRIENDS WORKING TOGETHER

EQUALITY CAN BE BUILT BY **LEARNING** FROM EACH OTHER...

Knowing about E·A·C·H·O·T·H·E·R
AWARENESS FRIENDSHIPS

RELATIONSHIPS

DON'T JUST SEND MONEY... Build friendships

ADOPT A VILLAGE
ROTARACT is # important

THE DRAWING BY SECTION 2140 @ 2011