



MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

COHORT 8 REPORT

2025



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between June 2024 and August 2025, the Makerere University Rotary Peace Center sustained its leadership in shaping peacebuilders through rigorous academics, immersive fieldwork, and vibrant community partnerships. Fellows from Cohorts 8 and 9 engaged in a rich blend of learning experiences designed to deepen their expertise in conflict transformation and empower them to design and implement sustainable peace initiatives across Africa.

The Center welcomed 20 Rotary Peace Fellows to Makerere University in February 2024. The fellows originated from 19 countries, both in Africa and beyond. The countries included Botswana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, United Kingdom, Kenya, Spain, and Poland. Cohort 8 Peace Fellows commenced their study program on 30th September 2024 and ended on 18th December 2024. They embarked on a nine-month journey to implement their Social Change Initiatives.

Study Programme

While at Makerere, the fellows study for a Postgraduate Diploma in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation for 10 weeks, engaging in both experiential and classroom study. The program emphasizes areas that promote cultural diversity, inclusion, and social development. While at Makerere University, the modules studied included Fundamentals and Approaches to Peace and Development, Human Rights, Governance and Media, Refugees, Migration and Community Cohesion, Identity, Human Security, Resources, and Climate Change.

Experiential Field Activities

Cohort 8 Rotary Peace Fellows conducted experiential field learning trips, engaging with relevant organizations, stakeholders, and communities working to address contemporary issues. The areas visited included refugee settlements, youth organizations countering violent extremism, religious institutions that uphold inter-religious dialogue, informal settlements (urban slums), health, the Genocide Memorial Sites in Rwanda, and communities promoting justice and social cohesion.

Community Engagement

The Rotary Peace Fellows and alumni have continuously developed and worked with the local communities to design community initiatives that address society's most pressing needs and challenges. Through the social change initiatives, the fellows have addressed issues in health, food security, climate change, wildlife conservation, education, security, media, and youth.

Assoc. Prof. Helen Nambalirwa Nkabala
Director, Makerere University Rotary Peace Center.

MEET COHORT 8 PEACE FELLOWS



Noerine Basa Muhindo

Uganda

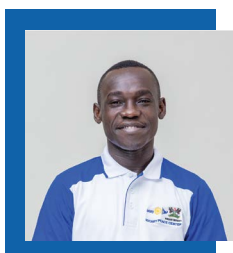
Noerine Basa Muhindo serves as the Executive Director of Rwenzori Peace Bridge of Reconciliation (RPBR) in Uganda. She plays a pivotal role in guiding the organization's strategic direction, overseeing program implementation, and ensuring effective financial management. Her focus is on promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and understanding in Kasese District.



Soraya Ali

United Kingdom

Soraya Ali is a seasoned Global Media Manager at Save the Children, where she excels in managing global media relations and serving as a primary spokesperson. With a focus on humanitarian emergencies, Soraya is committed to advocating for critical issues and ensuring effective communication during crises.



Daniel Semeniworima

Nigeria

Daniel Semeniworima is a seasoned Editorial Director at Strategic Outsourcing Limited, where he leads the Digital Media Group. With a focus on shaping editorial strategy and guiding team efforts, Daniel oversees content delivery, analyzes performance metrics, nurtures partnerships, and reports directly to the CEO. His expertise lies in leveraging interactive methods such as seminars, workshops, adult literacy programs, family education, publications, fact-finding visits, and local peacebuilding initiatives to engage diverse audiences. Daniel is dedicated to developing the potential of young people across Nigeria to promote peace and effectively respond to conflicts through innovative media and educational approaches.



Busta Chiona

Malawi

Busta Chiona serves as the Director of Health and Social Services at Zomba City Council. In this role, he offers technical guidance to Directorate staff, enhances health and social welfare services with a focus on gender considerations, manages departmental budgets and plans, and conducts education programs on vital health and welfare topics, including gender awareness.

Rotary Peace Center's Impact

Rotary Peace Fellows promoting peace and development in a changing world



**Abraham Kahasha**

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Abraham Kahasha is the Founder and Executive Director of The World and Peoples in Transformation (WOPT), based in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. He leads transformative sessions and PEACE talks, promotes and executes WOPT objectives, and organizes National PEACE Summits across the African Great Lakes Region. Abraham mentors Peace ambassadors, engages stakeholders, and coordinates official procedures for WOPT initiatives.

**Isata Ngombulango**

Sierra Leone

Isata Ngombulango serves as the Deputy Program Coordinator at Youth in Action for Development, where she oversees project coordination, manages donor relations, and ensures effective implementation of youth-focused initiatives. Her work is dedicated to bridging cultural, social, political, and religious gaps among youth in Sierra Leone through proactive engagement and peacebuilding efforts.

**Chema Sarri Romo**

Spain

Chema Sarri Romo is a communications specialist and peacebuilder currently working at the International Catalan Institute for Peace (ICIP), where he leads communication strategies and coordinates initiatives on peace, memory, and youth engagement. He has developed international projects with Peace Boat and Rotary, focusing on climate justice, storytelling, and human rights. Passionate about connecting communities and policy, Chema brings a global perspective to his work. Before moving into peacebuilding, he worked for several years as a journalist in radio, print, and digital media.

**Precious Osemwonta**

Nigeria

Precious Osemwonta is a dedicated Science Educator at Beehive School, where she teaches STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects and incorporates lessons on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She is passionate about empowering rural girls through education, addressing various SDGs such as poverty alleviation, hunger eradication, health improvement, education access, gender equality, and economic growth.



Rudolf Nchanji Nsang

Cameroon

Rudolf Nchanji Nsang is the Founder and Executive Director of Silver Lining Africa (SiLA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering young Cameroonians through entrepreneurship, leadership, and peacebuilding initiatives. Based in the Northwest Region, Rudolf oversees direct activities such as seminars and boot camps, develops strategic plans, speaks at events, and cultivates partnerships for organizational growth.



Olalekan Yusuf

Nigeria

Olalekan YUSUF serves as a Chief Superintendent in the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps. His expertise spans humanitarian assistance, disaster management, conflict resolution, protection of schools and national infrastructures, and ensuring the general security of lives and properties. As the Desk Officer of Safe Schools, Olalekan is deeply committed to his SCI, 'Edupeace' advocacy. This initiative asserts that education is pivotal in driving social change by fostering positivity, broadening perspectives, initiating behavioral shifts, and enabling constructive contributions to a progressive and tolerant society.



Olutoyin Falade

Nigeria

Olutoyin Falade is a dedicated national consultant with UN Women, focusing on advancing Nigeria's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. With strategic oversight from the Country Representative and day-to-day reporting to the WPS Team Lead, Olutoyin provides technical support to stakeholders, including legislative engagements and capacity building. Her passion lies in empowering women and girls to actively promote peace through initiatives like the Monthly Peace Architecture Dialogue Platform in Plateau and Niger states.



Julius Engemu

Uganda

Julius Engemu is a dedicated Project Officer at the Communication for Development Foundation Uganda. With a focus on documenting change stories, building capacity, and managing reporting, Julius is committed to addressing violence, promoting gender equality, and advocating for social change. His expertise lies in coordinating inclusive projects, establishing networks, and planning advocacy events that empower youth and promote peacebuilding in communities.



Itseng Moruakgomo

Botswana

Itseng Moruakgomo serves as the Staff Welfare Officer at the Office of the President in Botswana. She specializes in designing and implementing wellness programs and interventions for the workforce, ensuring employee well-being and productivity.



Irene Arinaitwe

Uganda

Irene Arinaitwe is the Program Director at Reach Your Goal Africa, where she oversees program performance, verifies and submits donor reports, innovates for organizational growth, supports recruitment, and supervises staff performance to ensure overall effectiveness.



Bamlak Yitbarek

Ethiopia

Bamlak Yitbarek serves as the Coordinator at the Center for Diplomacy and International Studies at the University of Gondar. His role involves organizing conferences, conducting research, and providing community services. Bamlak is committed to fostering dialogue and understanding through interreligious forums aimed at addressing religious conflicts reported in Gondar. He plans to implement trainings and workshops to mitigate risks and promote harmony among believers, local administrators, and the community at large.



Joan Sani

Nigeria

Joan Sani is dedicated to improving educational access for underserved children through innovative projects in Nigeria. As part of the Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project, Joan focuses on addressing educational gaps among street children. Her commitment extends to providing informal and formal basic education through the School-In-The-Street Project. This initiative aims to support children who are not regularly attending traditional schools, including dropouts, by offering them opportunities to continue learning in non-traditional settings.



Rafal Pankowski

Poland

Rafal Pankowski is a Professor and Coordinator affiliated with Collegium Civitas and the 'Never Again' Association in Poland. His work focuses on promoting peace, human rights, anti-racism, and genocide prevention. Rafal's initiatives aim to cultivate a culture of peace among young people through informal education methods. He leverages his experience from the 'NEVER AGAIN' Association's Music Against Racism campaign to develop training toolkits applicable at music festivals and sports events. His efforts also aim to foster trans-national cooperation between East-Central Europe and East Africa.



Boniface Okumu

Kenya

Boniface Okumu is a dedicated peacebuilding professional specializing in youth engagement and community development. As the Youth Peacebuilding Programs Coordinator at Peace at Heart Initiatives Network (PHIN), he designs and implements programs that promote social cohesion, advocate for human rights, and foster meaningful dialogue between communities and their leaders. Boniface is deeply committed to addressing gender-based violence (SGBV) and empowering women to participate actively in community development initiatives.



Rita Otu

Nigeria

Rita OTU is the Founder of Beau Haven Farms, dedicated to fostering collaboration with government ministries and community partners. Her focus is on identifying grant opportunities, preparing applications, and ensuring efficient grant administration. She is committed to addressing the conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria through innovative initiatives aimed at promoting peace and sustainable development.



**Tejumola Abigail
Abiola-Oloke**

Nigeria

Tejumola Abigail Abiola-Oloke is a passionate legal professional dedicated to advocating for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. As Head of Chambers at M.A. Banire & Associates, she provides pro-bono legal consultancy, focusing on prison reform, human rights, and crime prevention. Tejumola's work extends to advising startups, managing legal teams, overseeing litigation processes, and leading training and fundraising efforts. She is committed to enhancing the protection and integration of migrants and refugees through strategic policy development and community reorientation.

Fellowship Activities: Cohorts 8 and 9

Field Visits and Experiential Learning

Fellows from both cohorts undertook diverse institutional visits to explore the intersections of peacebuilding within health, culture, governance, media, justice, and faith:

- **The AIDS Support Organization (TASO):** Insight into how health interventions bolster community stability.
- **Buganda Kingdom (Bulange):** Understanding traditional governance's role in conflict resolution.
- **Vision Group:** Exploring media's influence in peace narratives and countering misinformation.
- **International Criminal Court (ICC), Kampala:** Both cohorts engaged with staff of the ICC focusing on justice and victim reparations. While cohort 8 visited the
- **United Religions Initiative (URI) Uganda:** (Cohort 9) Interfaith dialogue fostering grassroots peace action.
- **Religious Sites:** Visits to Namugongo Shrine, Bahá'í Temple, Gaddafi Mosque, and Swaminarayan Temple enriched appreciation for interreligious peacebuilding.

Northern Uganda Field Excursions

Both cohorts experienced Northern Uganda's complex peacebuilding landscape:

- **Palabek Refugee Settlement:** Witnessing displaced communities' resilience and reintegration efforts.
- **Dialogue with Ex-Combatants and Former IDPs:** Understanding healing processes post-conflict.
- **Ker Kwaro Acholi:** Learning about traditional leadership and restorative justice.
- **Additional Visits for Cohort 9:** Included the UNHCR Field Office, Lukodi Massacre Site (transitional justice), reintegration programs, and community healing forums.



Rwanda Field Excursions

Exploring Rwanda's post-genocide transformation featured prominently:

- **Cohort 8 (December 2024):**
 - Kigali Genocide Memorial – Reflection on memory and healing.
 - Governance Innovations: Imihigo (performance contracts), Itorero (civic education), Umuganda (community service).
 - Economic Resilience at Gisozi Market.
- **Cohort 9 (March 2025):**
 - Murambi and Ntarama Genocide Memorials – Deep engagement with Rwanda's history.
 - King's Palace Museum – Cultural narratives and nation-building.
 - Mayange Reconciliation Village – Community-based reintegration and healing.



Campus and Community Projects

- **Cohort 8 (December 7, 2024):** Led a transformative project strengthening leadership and conflict resolution skills within the Makerere University Student Guild. This initiative emphasized Positive Peace principles, promoting inclusive governance and repositioning youth as active peace agents.

Academic Programs and Training

Cohorts 8 and 9 underwent an intensive 10-week academic phase emphasizing theory and practice. As part of onsite study, they took part in the following:

- **Julius Nyerere Leadership Training:** Ethical, transformative leadership framed by African case studies.
- **Amani Communities Africa Mediation Week:** Hands-on training in negotiation, mediation, and dispute resolution through simulations.
- **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP):** Use of data tools like the Global Peace Index for evidence-based peacebuilding strategies.





Capstone Conferences and Graduation Ceremonies

6th Capstone Conference – October 18, 2024

Under the theme **“Achieving Peace Through Collaboration and Community Engagement,”** the conference gathered over 120 participants, including fellows, faculty, and local partners. Highlights included:

- A Gallery Walk showcasing innovative community-driven solutions.
- Keynote speeches by Rotary and academic leaders.
- The induction of Cohort 8 fellows into the program.

The event culminated in calls to empower youth, elevate women’s leadership, and promote sustainable development via agriculture, education, and digital platforms.



7th Capstone Conference & Peace Symposium – January 10, 2025

Cohort 7 presented their Social Change Initiatives to an international audience. Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick delivered the keynote address, emphasizing the critical role of community-rooted leadership and innovation in achieving lasting peace.



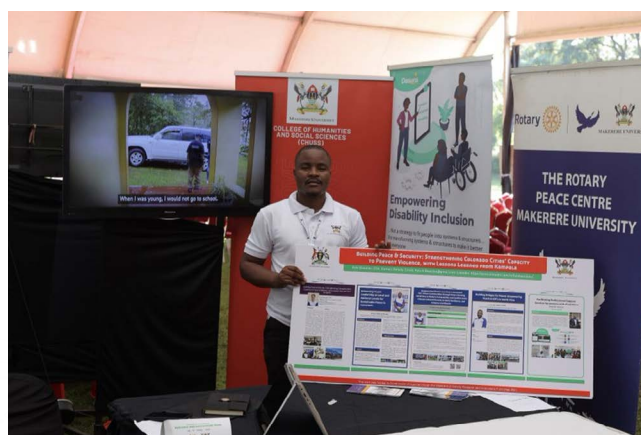
Graduation of Cohorts 5 & 6 – January 17, 2025

The fellows celebrated their academic and practical achievements by receiving Postgraduate Diplomas in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation during Makerere University's graduation ceremony, marking a significant milestone in their peacebuilding careers.



Key Events and Institutional Highlights

- **Africa Peace Concert (January 10, 2025):** Hosted at Nsambya Gardens, the concert raised USD 245,003 for the Africa Peace Fund and showcased the power of art and music in peace advocacy. Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick praised the Center's impact.
- **Africa Peace Walk (January 11, 2025):** A symbolic walk through Kampala celebrating the Center's 5th anniversary and the visit of Rotary leadership, engaging fellows, Rotarians, and peace advocates.
- **Launch of the 5th Africa Peace Concert (April 23, 2025):** Centered on "The Power of Collective Action," this event launched the next phase of the concert series, emphasizing grassroots and institutional collaboration.
- **Makerere Research and Innovation Week (April 8–10, 2025):** The Peace Center showcased SCIs from Cohorts 1–8, highlighting interventions addressing mental health, youth unemployment, gender-based violence, climate change, and social justice.



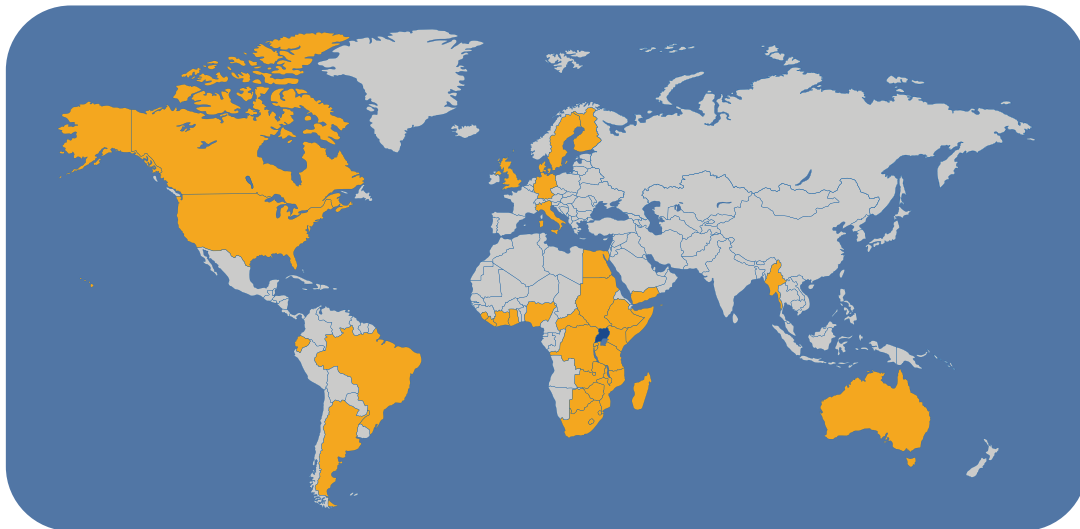
Strategic Visits and Partnerships

- **Rotary International Director Bryn Styles (May 12, 2025):** Praised the Center's leadership and reaffirmed Rotary's continued support.
- **University of Notre Dame Delegation (June 10, 2025):** Engaged with faculty, sharing insights on African peacebuilding.
- **Rotarians from Winchester, Indiana (June 23, 2025):** Learned about SCIs and connected with the Center's leadership and administrative teams.
- **Rotarian Peggy Pollard, Rotary Club of Santa Cruz Sunrise and Mauri Okamoto-Kearney of the Rotary Club of Cupertino (August 5, 2025):** The Rotarians paid a courtesy visit to the Rotary Peace Center.
- **Jacqueline Asimwe, CEO and Catherine Mutesi Mugabo, CivSource Africa and Moses Okech, Lecturer, Makerere University:** Discussed areas of collaboration around philanthropy and local partnerships.

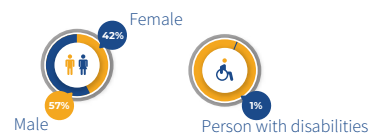




Summary Statistics



	Male	Female	Person with disabilities
Argentina	1	0	1
Australia	0	1	1
Brazil	0	1	1
Britain	1	0	1
Botswana	2	1	3
Burundi	1	1	2
Cameroon	3	8	11
Canada	1	0	1
Columbia	1	0	1
Cote Ivoire	0	1	1
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0	3	3
Denmark	1	0	1
Egypt	3	0	3
England	1	0	1
Ethiopia	0	4	4
Finland	2	0	2
Gambia	0	1	1
Ghana	1	0	1
Germany	1	0	1
Italy	1	0	1
Kenya	3	7	10
Lesotho	1	1	2
Liberia	2	6	8
Madagascar	0	1	1
Malawi	2	2	4
Mexico	1	0	1
Mozambique	0	1	1
Myanmar	0	1	1
Nigeria	16	18	24
Poland	0	1	1
Philippines	0	1	1
Rwanda	0	3	3
Sierra Leone	2	5	7
Somalia	1	3	4
South Africa	0	2	2
South Sudan	0	5	5
Spain	0	1	1
Sudan	2	1	3
Sweden	1	0	1
Tanzania	1	0	1
Uganda	6	11	17
United States	3	2	5
Yemen	0	1	1
Zambia	1	4	5
Zimbabwe	4	5	9



- 48 Countries
- 191 Peace fellows
- 132 SCI projects completed
- 10 Cohorts
- 76 Female
- 115 Male

Professions

- ICT
- Journalists
- Community/Social Development work
- Lawyer
- Human Rights
- Social Scientists
- Education
- Gender advocate
- Music Artist
- Researcher
- Lecturer
- Theology
- Economist
- Security
- Medicine
- Public health
- Engineering
- Information Scientist
- Computer Scientist
- Scientist
- Management
- Pilot

Themes and area of focus for the social change initiatives

- Youth Conflict Prevention in the electoral process.
- Kick out cultism from our schools.
- Youth and Women Empowerment
- Education and Literacy
- Peace Journalism
- Domestic Violence
- Refugee Empowerment
- Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities
- Religion and Peacebuilding
- Governance and Human Rights
- Natural Resources, Conservation and Climate Change
- Maternal Health
- Agriculture and Food Security
- Economic empowerment
- WASH and peace-building
- Combating Violent Extremism and peaceful reintegration
- Community Policing
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Rotary Peace Center's Impact

Rotary Peace Fellows promoting peace and development in a changing world

Upcoming Events

Arrival of Cohort 10 fellows: The cohort 10 fellows started their fellowship on 7th August with an online onboarding meeting and are expected to arrive between October 11-12, 2025.

8th Capstone Conference: October 23, 2025. The cohort 8 fellows are to present their SCIs during the Capstone Conference.

Links and Resources

6th Capstone Conference: <http://bit.ly/4nnUUfd>

7th Capstone Conference: <http://bit.ly/4gnd8Lp>

Testimonials from fellows: <http://bit.ly/3l9e2hN>

Conclusion

Between June 2024 and August 2025, the Makerere University Rotary Peace Center upheld its commitment to nurturing ethical, skilled, and culturally grounded peacebuilders. The comprehensive field engagement complemented the solid academic foundation for the fellows, together advancing the Center's vision of empowering leaders capable of addressing complex peace and conflict challenges across Africa and beyond.

 Rotary Peace Center

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