

Roofings Group @ 25:

Once upon a time, in Nsambya Hospital, I was born into a family of six children; four brothers and two sisters.

I attained primary and secondary education from Uganda, after which, I left for India in 1963 and got my higher certificate.

Aside from education, I also went to India to see where my forefathers came from. I am a third generation Ugandan-Indian and my grandchildren are fifth generation.

In 1966, I left for the UK where I received a certificate in medical laboratory technology, specialising in histopathology.

Later on, I joined my parents' business in Rwanda. At the time, my father ran a thriving supermarket and fuel station in Butare, Rwanda. I worked with him for a few years before relocating to Kigali to start my own electronics business in 1969.

Within a short time, our establishment became an agent for Philips domestic appliances. The business grew quite big. It was around this



Dr Sikander Lalani, the Roofings Group chairman

time that we came to learn that the Japanese were looking for an agent of Bridgestone Tyres.

Not one to miss out on the opportunity, we met with the Japanese and convinced them to give us the sole agency. We also acquired sole distributorship of several other brands.

At this point, I started thinking of venturing into manufacturing. Interestingly, I did not harbour this dream for long and decided to put up an iron sheet manufacturing plant in Kigali, Rwanda. Financially, it looked impossible, but I was determined to have my

dream come true. I sought help from the Rwanda Bank of Development (RDB) which was part of the World Bank.

On sharing the intentions of setting up a steel manufacturing plant in Kigali, RDB requested for a feasibility study which I presented, and to my surprise, they agreed to finance the project to the tune of \$1m in 1972.

Building the plant came with a lot of difficulties, but I was determined to see it through and in 1976, we started manufacturing iron sheets.

Within a short time, we were generating significant revenues.



Dr Lalani (right), the Prime Minister, Ruhakana Rugunda (in red tie) and other guests during the celebrations to mark 25 years of service

The business became prosperous and we started exporting to neighbouring countries such as Uganda, DR Congo and Burundi.

Relocating to Uganda

Unfortunately, in 1994, during the war in Rwanda, everything came to a standstill. With the unfortunate events that occurred across the country during this time, it was quite a miracle that my plant was spared from plunder.

The unrest in Rwanda led me to leave for Europe and greatly consider retirement. However, while living in Europe for a short time, I missed home in Africa and it became more apparent to me that it was where I desired to live and continue working.

I decided to return to motherland Uganda, not only to settle, but to also set up a steel manufacturing plant in Uganda.

Starting with a workforce of 60 people and 3,000 square metres of covered area in 1995, I contacted Uganda Investment Authority who fast-tracked the process and in the same year, we were given a manufacturing licence.

We had the first production

WHY THRIVE

- The Roofings Group boss says the company's priority has always been emphasis on ethical practices and supplying the highest quality steel and plastic products to the population at affordable prices.

of iron sheets here in Lubowa, and since then, we have not stopped expansion and manufacturing of steel products for the construction industry in Uganda and the East African Community at large.

Under the present Government, people were making great strides in development; buildings, roads, bridges, houses, stadiums were springing up everywhere and all we did was to position ourselves for the challenge. The market was immense.

We started with roofing sheets and then went into hollow sections, barbed wire, chain links, expanded metal mesh, reinforcement fabrics, galvanised and pre-

painted roofing sheets, eco tiles, mild steel plates and other steel products for the construction industry. We have since also ventured into the manufacturing of PVC and HDPE pipes of various dimensions.

Thriving on quality

When we started, we conducted a market research on roofing houses with iron sheets in Uganda, and the findings were disheartening in terms of quality and price.

With these discoveries, I made it a policy to manufacture iron sheets of the utmost quality worth the clients' hard-earned money.

Our priority has always been emphasis on ethical practices and supplying the highest quality steel and plastic products to the population at affordable prices.

This policy has stood since – quality or nothing. I am glad that our customers in Uganda and the East African region know and trust this.

Roofings Group has come to be known as a hub of high quality products. It is our reputation and inspiration.

We have penetrated markets



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The heart of steel

all over the East African Community courtesy of our quality products.

We have achieved this by adopting the most modern technology, employing a professionally-trained workforce and complying with the highest international standards.

All our products conform to the DIN 8062:1988, Uganda National Bureau of Standards and ISO international standards. We invest in continually training our personnel. Our success story has helped to realise the Roofings Group's vision.

Roofings Rolling Mills

Ever since I started the steel business, it has always been my vision to establish a cold rolling mill complex.

The relationship with the Japanese goes back 40 years and their involvement as technical and equity partners in Roofings Rolling Mills shows the value of team work and partnerships.

The purpose of Roofings Rolling Mills was to engage in backward integration and value addition using world class technology.

On inception of this project, we contacted Uganda



Dr Ruhakana (second-left), Dr Lalani and family cut cake during celebrations to mark Roofings Group's 25 years of service

Investment Authority and we were apportioned space in Kampala Industrial and Business Park.

We were the first plant on the southern part of the park, showing a commitment to industrialisation in Uganda. Though there was virtually no infrastructure, the Government encouraged us to start while they work on the necessary installations.

To date, we have invested \$180m worth of capital in Roofing Rolling Mills and established it in three phases.

Phase one involved the installation of a high-tech wire galvanising plant unlike any other in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The highly advanced machinery was manufactured and imported from Canada, Italy and Germany, and applies a patented high-turbulence pickling system with ecologically-friendly processes.

The galvanising plant has the capacity to produce 12,000 metric tonnes of galvanised wire per annum. Galvanised steel goes through a zinc-coating process that keeps it from corroding and rusting.

Phase two involved the commissioning in 2010 of a hot rolling mill with the capacity to produce 72,000 metric tonnes of high tensile TMT reinforced rebars.

Phase three involved the

installation of a cold rolling mill complex with a capacity to produce 180,000 metric tonnes of aluminium-zinc (Aluzinc or AZED) galvanised iron sheets and pre-painted AZED iron sheets.

Roofings PolyPipes

Previously, we were manufacturing galvanised pipes which became outdated.

We saw it right to venture into manufacturing of plastic products for the construction industry.

The aim was to wholly serve the construction sector. Our products are made from a plastic and vinyl combination material. The pipes are

durable, hard to damage, and long lasting. PVC pipes do not rust, rot, or wear out over time.

They also have the ability to withstand extreme movement and bending.

We manufacture PVC and HDPE pipes of various dimensions and fittings used in plumbing, drainage management and in electrical installations.

These range from 20mm to 200mm in diameter and relevant fittings.

Today, we are the largest steel manufacturing plant in Uganda and East African Community. We export to Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Tanzania and South Sudan.

We take the biggest share of the market in Uganda, and earn a lot of foreign exchange for Uganda through these exports.

All the above could not have been achieved without the support of the Government and people of Uganda, as well as the East African Community, along with our East African partners in business.

In the future, we hope and plan to go public. With the trust we have gained over the years, we are confident that the public will be interested in investing in Roofings Group.

Involving children

I am blessed with 10 children, four of them yet to reach university. My advice to anyone is to educate their children to the highest possible level so as to realise their dreams.

Also, give them exposure in all aspects of life to gain the experience that will enable them to take on responsibilities and work diligently with integrity and commitment in life.

It is also important for them to appreciate that in life we live as a society, by the old African saying, "I am because we are" – Ubuntu.

My values

The foundation to success lies in the promise you make to the community, the team that you build to realise this promise, and the values you create to guide you towards the promise. Values such as integrity, innovation, commitment and doing business in a sustainable manner.

My journey

For the past 25 years, we have continued to invest in the most modern technology.

With the country moving towards middle-income status through agro-processing, mineral-beneficiation and industrialisation, we are committed to being a part of this journey that will see Uganda attain this goal, taking her place as a key player in the African marketplace.

25 years

We celebrate you
as you build the Nation.

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Creating Opportunities for Business Expansion

We offer medium and long-term financing options for business expansion, asset acquisition, commercial property purchase, construction and other development projects. These facilities are available to large corporate companies, small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) and sole proprietors with a proven business track record.

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