



Let's Talk!

Akaboozi Session with GROWers



If you are born and raised in this part of the continent designed and named Africa, you will then know and appreciate that everything starts with a conversation. With the words 'let's talk' or 'can we talk?' As a society, and community, conversation drives and leads our lives. We thrive on conversation. In many parts of the world, conversation is used as a medium of trade, negotiation, reconciliation, activism, politics, love finding or seeking, and many other factors that drive life. Conversation is therapeutic. It has been used by many scientists and healers to heal people. (Healing talk).

A real conversation always contains an invitation. You are inviting another person to reveal herself or himself to you, to tell you who they are or what they want.

– David Whyte

According to available literature, a conversation is a verbal or written exchange of ideas, thoughts, or information between two or more people. It is a way for individuals to communicate, share their perspectives, and connect with others. Conversations can be casual or formal, and they can cover a wide range of topics, from personal experiences to current events to professional matters. Important to note is that effective conversations require active listening, mutual respect, and open-mindedness. It is essential to pay attention to the speaker's words, tone, and body language to understand their message fully. Responding with empathy and asking clarifying questions can help ensure that both parties are on the same page.

As a GROW_i program that identifies as a community of gallant leaders reaching within themselves to win together, conversation has been one of those ways we have done community, learned together, grown together, and buttressed our leadership growth. It is our unique and secret ingredient of delivering the mentorship and coaching program GROW_i. The methodology acknowledges every leader as a knower of knowledge coming to the space with experience and expertise from their leadership journey. Sharing this with all allows all leaders to learn from the real experiences of those that have been where they have not.

On 29th April 2023, the GROW_i community decided to create a safe space to talk – 'Akaboozi session with GROWers' where we did nothing but talk. If you come from Uganda, the word 'Kaboozi' is commonly used to mean conversation – 'sweet conversation' with friends and family. Just like any other community, we sat in a circle and allowed our energies to follow into one another as we shared a cup of tea and talked about our roses and thorns, the things that excited us, the things we were grateful for, and what our leadership journeys have been.

Each person shared their thoughts on a particular topic related to their work. One person talked about how they improved their time management skills, while another shared their experience with a difficult project. They discussed their successes and failures, and the lessons they learned along the way. I must say, this space and moment enhanced our relationships as a team by promoting understanding and leading to personal growth. It is crucial to approach conversations with an open mind and a willingness to learn from others. Which is what happened at the kaboozi session. Our minds, thoughts, and energies were in sync.

“A problem shared is a problem halved. A joy shared is a joy doubled”.

As the session progressed, everyone was engaged in the conversation, asking questions, and sharing their own experiences. They were learning from each other, gaining new perspectives, and discovering new approaches to their work. From the stories and experiences shared, the leaders seemed to have a lot in common. The conversations steered so much joy and solutions were generated for half of the problems shared. The conversation was a reminder that we are not alone. A reminder that we belonged to a community of like-minded people who are willing to support and cheer us all the way.

Our hosts of the day, Ednah Rebeccah Namugere, Catherine Mugabo and Dorcas Mugala, then crowned the day by sharing why it is important for leaders to share their stories and lived realities of their leadership journey. Notes and tips on creative writing and how we monitor and evaluate our growth was shared to enable and facilitate the GROWers to document their success stories and their leadership experiences.

Let's talk.

Allen Asimwe

Associate Support, Mopane' CivSource Africa

