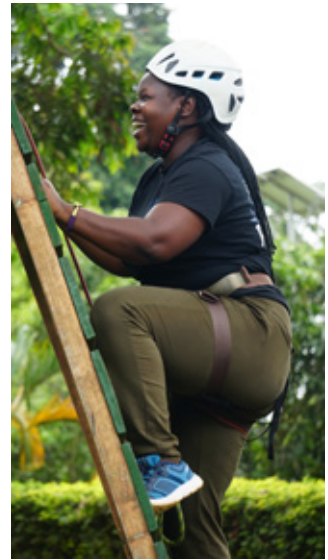




Take Time Out!

An Adventure unveiled with the GROW; Cohort 2 Alumni



Our adventurous journey began in 2022 at the graduation ceremony of GROWj Cohort 1. During their initial module, the team of our first-ever class openly discussed their fears and unanimously agreed to confront them by embarking on a transformative journey. This journey involved conquering those fears through a symbolic activity of bungee jumping at the conclusion of the program.

True to their commitment, after graduation, the team traveled to Jinja, where a few members fearlessly bungee jumped while the rest provided enthusiastic support. The team also shared a beautiful moment as they tubed on the Nile, enjoying laughter, fun, engaging conversations, and a memorable meal. It was an unforgettable experience.

The year 2023 followed in the footsteps of this tradition. The alumni of GROWj Cohort 2 embraced and confirmed their intention to continue the practice and tradition of conquering fear through thrilling and enjoyable activities after their graduation. They aimed to lead and follow the example set by those who came before them.

When overwhelmed by fear or anxiety, clear thinking becomes nearly impossible. In such moments, the initial step is to create space and take a break, allowing yourself to achieve a state of physical calmness.

On the morning of July 1st, 2023, the majority of the GROWers gathered at the designated meeting point, ready to embark on a journey to Entebbe. Bussi Island - Park Shoebill as our destination. The team carried with them a mix of anticipation, anxiety, and fears as they set off on this adventure. Even though the sound of crossing Lake Victoria by boat didn't alleviate these fears, their determination to conquer them remained unwavering. Furthermore, the mere act of being on the lake was an adventure in itself. Upon reaching the Nakiwogo landing site, we were warmly received by the Park Shoebill team, a truly wonderful group. We adorned our designated safety jackets and were guided onto the boat.

Guys! Being on that boat was, without a doubt, the most calming experience I've had since the beginning of 2023. I believe I can speak for my colleagues and fellow GROWers who were also aboard when I say this. We sailed away from the shore and marveled at the distant view of Entebbe town and the International Airport. The breathtaking sights and sounds of Lake Victoria and Entebbe town left us in awe, prompting the team to capture these unfolding moments as they happened and unveiled.

Breathe through panic!

After a 40-minute journey, we arrived at the magnificent Bussi Island - Park Shoebill. It was an incredibly beautiful and peaceful place, almost like paradise. The lush greenery, with trees providing shade at regular intervals, created a picturesque setting. The well-maintained compound was perfect for relaxing, engaging in camp-like activities, and playing outdoor games.

The presence of beautiful gazebos further enhanced the atmosphere of relaxation. And let's not forget about the beach! Despite the fact that many islands and properties along Lake Victoria lost their beaches due to rising water levels, I was astonished and amazed to see that Park Shoebill still had a beach. It was truly a remarkable sight. We had a sandy space to walk on and enjoy the sensation of water splashing on our feet as



the waves of the lake grew stronger throughout the day. Park Shoebill exceeded all expectations and proved to be an exceptional destination.

Face your fears: *Avoiding fears only makes them scarier. Whatever your fear, if you face it, it should start to fade. If, for instance, you experience panic while entering an elevator, the most effective approach is to step back into one the following day.*

Upon arriving at the location, we received a warm, refreshing face towel to cleanse and invigorate our hands and faces. This delightful gesture was accompanied by freshly squeezed watermelon and passion juice. It felt like experiencing the comfort of first-class on Uganda Airlines, haha! After boarding and disembarking from the Park Shoebill water vessel, it was only fitting to be treated with such care and attention.

Now, let's refocus on the day's agenda: confronting our fears through a thrilling three-level zip line adventure on the island. I was truly impressed that not a single one of the eleven participants hesitated to embrace this challenge. The team enthusiastically signed up and underwent a comprehensive safety briefing before embarking on the hike towards the zip line obstacles and ultimate finish line. The details of what transpired during this adventure will be shared another time, but what you need to know is that everyone who embarked on this journey saw it through to the end. Yes, they completed it! The obstacles presented their fair share of difficulties, but the gratification of conquering them and reaching the finish line via the zip line made all the effort and fear encountered during the hike truly worthwhile.

Imagine the worst: *Try imagining the worst thing that can happen – perhaps it involves experiencing a panic attack or even having a heart attack. Then make an effort to mentally simulate having a heart attack. However, you will quickly realize that it is simply impossible. The fear dissipates the more you pursue it, leaving you with a sense of relief and empowerment.*

To provide valuable insights to you our reader, I would like to share that many of the participants in the zip lining activity had fleeting thoughts of quitting, both at the start and halfway through. However, fueled by their unwavering commitment, resilience, and the promise of a rewarding experience at the finish line, they all made the conscious decision to persevere, overcoming their fears and resisting the temptation to give up.

This parallels the challenges faced when leading organizations, startups, and departments. While reaching the finish line brings a sense of fulfillment, the obstacles encountered along the way often breed doubts and the inclination to abandon the journey. Yet, guided by your vision, resilience, and a supportive framework, it is crucial to persist and remain steadfast. Countless individuals rely on your perseverance and fortitude. As a leader, many look up to you, even when you may be unaware of it. Thus, it becomes paramount to strengthen your leadership capabilities, enabling you to conquer any fears or obstacles that arise.

Reward yourself: Finally, give yourself a treat. Once you've mustered the courage to make that long-dreaded phone call, it's essential to celebrate your achievement by indulging in a well-deserved reward. Treat yourself to a relaxing massage, take leisurely strolls through the countryside, enjoy a delightful meal at a restaurant, immerse yourself in a captivating book, or choose any small token of happiness that brings you joy. It's important to acknowledge and reinforce your success, appreciating the progress you've made and nurturing your well-being along the way.

Bussi Island - Park Shoebill served as the ultimate reward, a culmination of our triumphs and resilience throughout the rigorous 12-month leadership program. When the GROWers embarked on this journey, the duration of 12 months felt like an eternity. Personally, I questioned my ability to provide unwavering support and guidance to these leaders for such an extended period. Doubts crept in, wondering if they would grow weary of the program or tire of my constant reminders to submit assignments and attend in-person engagements. Would I be the right fit to meet their unique needs? These uncertainties played like a broken record in my mind. However, I persevered, putting forth my best efforts each day to support the GROWers and the program as a whole. Conquering this symbolic adventure was a testament to my commitment. I celebrated not just their journey, but also my own as I proudly associated myself with the GROWers and the [GROWj program](#) I wholeheartedly endorse. The essence of our existence as the [Mopane` Leadership program](#) lies in our unwavering dedication to support and nurture leaders.

I extend special thanks to my esteemed colleagues, Jacqueline Asimwe, Catherine Mugabo, Treasure Layola, and Ednah Rebeccah Namugere, for embarking on this remarkable journey with GROWj Cohort 2, spanning from 2022 to 2023.

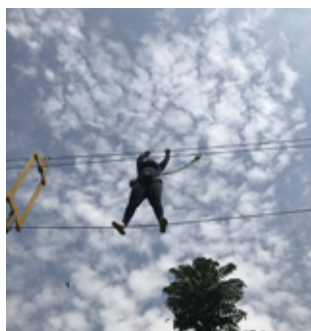
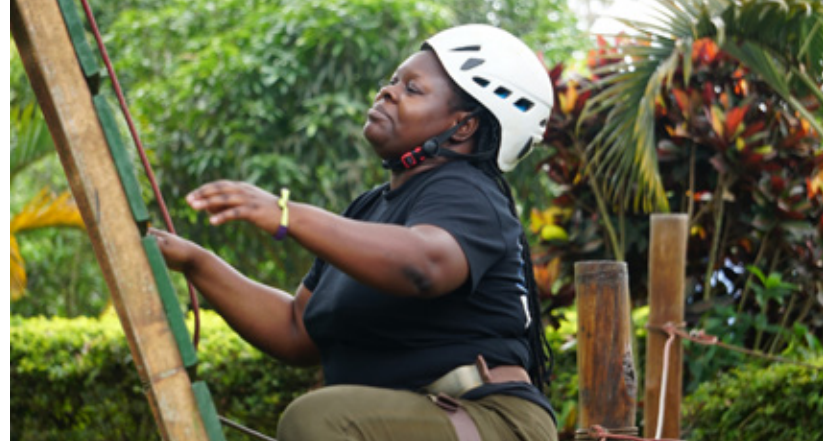
Here's to our next chapter, Grow Cohort 3, commencing in 2023 and continuing through 2024. Gakyali Mabaga! If you haven't yet joined GROWj, I encourage you to reach out to aasiimwe@civsourcea.com - you might be that lucky. Come and join a team of Gallant Leaders Reaching Within Themselves On A Journey To Win Together.

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