

Village Runner

(Anniversary Edition).



We Started as Strangers and Ended as Village Mates

Welcome to the first Anniversary Issue of the Chakra Village Journey!

The Chakra Village is a group of 23 leaders who attended a retreat hosted by CivSource Africa in January 2019. Chakra is the 7-point energy system in our bodies and it was the tool we used during the retreat, to assess our individual and organizational health.

After the retreat, we decided to continue the journey we began together. In naming our collective, we called ourselves a Village. We wanted to be and create a village-like no other - a virtual village of leaders walking the same journey, walking together, keeping each other accountable, supporting each other and meeting together for physical fellowship.

We even discussed the values that would underpin this virtual village and they are expressed in the graphic below:



This past year has been an amazing experience of love, laughter, tears, rebuke, challenge and holding each other as we went through different life transitions.

In this newsletter, we bring you stories of the different points in our collective journey so that you see and celebrate our growth with us.



I Could Never Have Known...

Jacqueline Asimwe

Chief Executive Officer, CivSource Africa



The year 2017 started like any ordinary year. I was going about my daily business of running a field office of a US-based consulting firm. But something was shifting. A transition was happening. That transition meant the phasing out of the old and familiar and literally being thrust into the new and uncharted.

CivSource was born on October 1st 2017 and I was generally in panic mode! I had always been comfortable running and leading other peoples organizations. Now here I was with the opportunity to build something of my own. But I was unsure. Was this baby really mine? It felt like an unwanted pregnancy. I felt like I was being forced to birth and love something that I hadn't planned for myself. My instinct at the time was to run and hide.

I discarded that thought and decided to wade in these unfamiliar waters. I enlisted the help of a coach to guide me in those first few months. My coach helped me think through what 3 key things we would do as an organization. These three things have become our guideposts - support/influence philanthropy, build strength of civic organizations and civic organizers and shape narratives and contribute to telling a new story about Africa.

I entered 2018 more confident and looked forward to our strategic planning process. Through this process, we reiterated the fact that leadership was a key pillar of our work and leaders retreats was one of the products we would avail to leaders.

In mid-2018, we held a meeting with some NGO leaders and spoke about the issue of succession and transitions. We

had a guest speaker who had recently transitioned out of an organization she had led for almost 2 decades. At that meeting, I spoke to two leaders, who, from the way they looked, appeared tired and burnt out. I met one of them for lunch and the other for a walking meeting. During the walk meeting, I floated the idea of a retreat for leaders - one that would allow them to rest, reflect and recharge. That leader gave a resounding yes!

Next, I met Hope Chigudu. After several conversations, we further developed the idea of a retreat that would allow leaders to meet themselves, peel away the layers of who they were, peel away the layers of expectation and just find



and embrace themselves again. With the help of another leader, we developed our first invitation list and wrote to women leaders (most of them young), asking

if the idea of the retreat appealed to them, and if so, that they should write an expression of interest.

Behind the scenes, we wanted to create a retreat that was the ultimate experience for leaders. We wanted them to know and feel that they were loved, honoured, cared for, understood and not judged. Creating this feeling meant we had to be purposeful about how we set up the room. We wanted to create something new and something unique, a setting that would allow for deep conversations. We bought mats, and scented candles and petals and little local baskets and candy and we even had a jar of wisdom in the room, where we could each share our nuggets of wisdom. We didn't provide a program. We wanted the leaders to come open-minded and curious. We wanted to do things differently!

Finally, in January of 2019, 23 female leaders from the business and non-profit sector, headed out to Lakeside Escape, for the first-ever CivSource hosted leaders retreat. We started our first night around a fire. We talked about the transitions we were each going through, especially given that we had just transitioned into a new year. For the next two and a half days, we spoke about the energy we carry and bring into our spaces as leaders. We spoke about what helps and hinders our 7 energy points in our bodies and our organizations. We talked about being grounded; about sexuality and allowing ourselves feel and experience pleasure as an integral part of leading; we talked about the fire in our belly and what extinguishes the fire and the things that fan our flames; we spoke about



love and how central self-love is for a leader; we spoke about voice, speaking out and creativity; we spoke about intuition and how it aids leadership; and finally, we spoke about spirituality and our connection to a higher being and purpose.

During those two and a half days, we shed tears, we laughed, we spoke about our deepest hurts and insecurities and best of all, we bonded, we healed, we held each other. In the end, we agreed to walk with each other throughout the year and to keep each other accountable to our personal and organizational goals. We agreed to meet a month after the retreat, to check how we were doing. We then met 5 more times after that and at each meeting we learned something new, we asked after each other, and there were more tears and more laughter.

So much has happened since that first retreat in January 2019. Many of the things that happened I could never have guessed or even pre-determined in a log frame! How could I have guessed that one of us would grow her hair back after balding because she was suffering the stress of leading and loss of self-love? How could I have known that another would re-organize her office space, grow flowers and start exercising with her team? How could I have known that several among the group would write proposals together or would help each other out with presentations? How could I have known

that one of the leaders would decide to declutter her life and let go of people who were bringing negative energy in her life? How could I have known that three of the leaders would lead their teams through studying the book "Strategies for Building Organizations With a Soul"? How could I have known that we would be sisters to each other, fight, rebuke each other but still walk in and with love? How could I have known that we would travel, all the way to Lira, and conduct a one day retreat for women CEOs in the non-profit sector? We spent a day with them and spoke about feminist leadership and self-care.

Did the retreat fix all our problems? Of course not. But it helped us emerge as a "Chakra Village" as we call ourselves. In our space, we talked about being and leading differently. It's been a year now and we are still going and growing strong. I celebrate our individual and organizational gains.

The first retreat gave birth to three other retreats that were held in January 2020. The first retreat this year was for female lawyers only. This was orchestrated by one of the village mates, who is the chairperson of the Female Lawyers Committee of the Uganda Law Society. She wanted the female lawyers she leads to experience the retreat and all the benefits it had brought her. The second retreat this year was for nominees of the first Chakra Village. We asked each of the village mates to nominate a woman leader they knew who needed

the experience of the retreat. The third retreat was for development partners. That was us daring to tread where we've never gone before - for a civil society organization to ask donors to come and learn from them so that we can start to shift the power imbalance that exists between donors and their partners.

What did the retreat do for me? It helped me learn to stop periodically stop for myself, stop to rest, stop to think and reflect. Throughout 2019, I was more intentional about listening to my body and understanding its rhythm so that I didn't push myself to breaking point. As a result of the retreat, my team and I also purposed to stop every quarter to review our work and commit to doing better. I made a greater effort to connect with my workmates and I was more aware of and determined to manage the energy I carry with me. I made a habit of reflecting each evening, through writing and I was intentional to mark each milestone and celebrate each personal and organizational win.

I am sure that some of the individual and collective results and benefits from the first retreat will be felt years from now, and as CivSource, we hope to do a tracer study that will help us better articulate the results.

Standing back now, even though I could never have known..... I am so glad we did the retreats.



Anniversary Road Map



JAN 2019

Lakeside Escape

Our trip down the Anniversary Road starts here, at the Lakeside Escape in Mukono. Get to know some of the villagers of the Chakra Village and the things they packed in their bags for the year long journey.

MAR 2019

Kampala

First accountability check in, to asses implementing of resolutions made after the retreat. One day retreat of female EDS to discuss self-care and feminist leadership.

JUL 2019

Lira

Next stop on the journey is Lira. Enjoy the one story of sisterhood and generosity that Lira brought to the Village.

AUG 2019

Mitooma

Mitooma was a game-changer. Read as the Villagers re-calibrated, cried together, celebrated milestones and gained energy and wisdom to carry them to the next stop in the trip.

SEP 2019

Kampala

Accountability check in, hosted at Femme Forte to discuss values binding the EDS together.

NOV 2019

Mukono

EDS met up in mukono to plan leadership goals for 2020

JAN/FEB

2020

Kabale

Welcome to the cold hills of Kabale. You will find lots of warmth in these stories. Lots of fun, gratitude and resolve too.

APR 2020

Anniversary

This is where we are today. Not the end of the journey. Certainly not. Only a hiatus for us to celebrate the year that has been. Happy Anniversary to us, the Chakra Village.

Lakeside Escape... Where it all began

JANUARY 2019

The Executive Directors' retreat was such an amazing New Year's gift to me. I had the opportunity to connect with amazing ladies doing amazing work. Being able to share my story and speak about my challenges made my heart feel so light and at ease. The retreat made me appreciate the need to exercise regularly and take care of myself first before others, keeping in mind that we can't give what we don't have. We can never empower another person if we are not empowered ourselves. Thank you, Hope Chigudu, the facilitator, for the wonderful person you are; I wish I had met you 10 years earlier! But it's never too late, I am glad I did at the retreat. My tomorrow must be greater than today.

Talking about my challenges made my heart feel so light and at ease.

Hope Nankunda

Founder & Team Leader,
Raising Teenagers Uganda



The Retreat re-introduced me to the idea of having conversations with self, which I had neglected for over 5 years. I judged myself harshly without reflecting on its impact on my emotions, body, family, friends and career. I can say I was reborn. I am taking baby steps in fulfilling my dreams while passing on what I learnt to those willing to lend a listening ear. I have a sister with whom I chat daily and do not fear

sharing my weaknesses with her. Some things happen for a reason, and I will never doubt why I met 'the witch' in 2019!

I was reborn at the retreat

Bernadette Bakkidde

Director, Access to Land
Justice, LANDnet Uganda



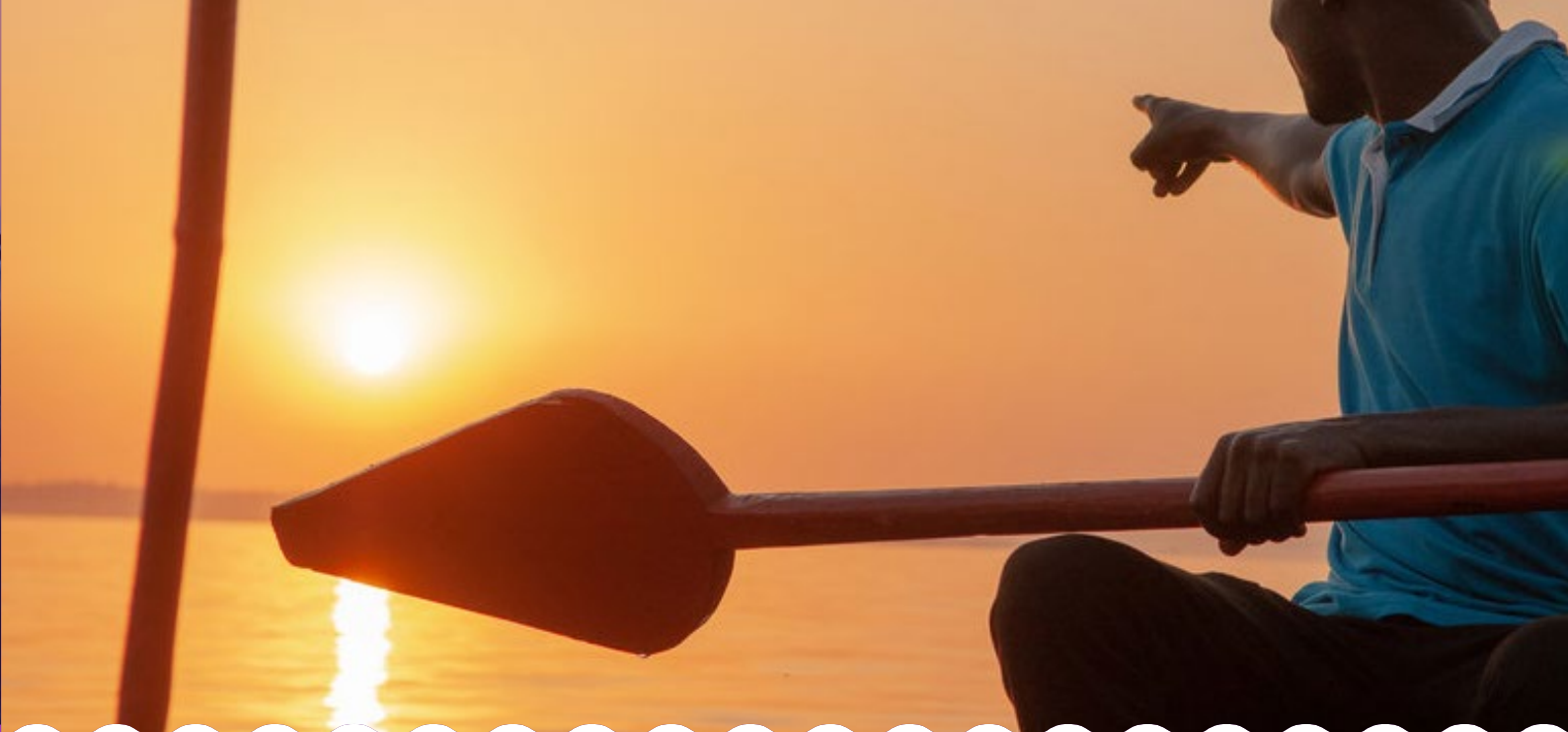
The EDs Retreat was a much welcome escape from the buzz of the holiday season. It provided the perfect downtime to reflect and re-orient my goals - both personal and professional goals for 2019. It was a good space to meet like-minded Ugandan women shaping the future of our country, and I know that our future is in good hands. I learnt that I will need to take time to 'pause,' to be aware of my energy points and, accordingly, work on dialling them up or down; to focus on self-care and spend more time on self-reflection. I committed to have mini self-care retreats for myself during the year to 'stop' and re-energize. It was such a great time and space for us as we work on our leadership journey.

I learnt the importance of being aware of my energy points

Jackee Budesta Batanda

Senior Managing Partner,
Success SparkBrand Ltd





The retreat's timing at the beginning of the year was nothing short of perfect. It was a great time to reflect on the past year and make commitments towards a more fulfilling 2019. The beautiful, serene environment was the cake; the facilitator, Hope, plus the wonderful women present, the cherries on top. I loved hearing everyone's story and understanding how their experiences wove to make them the people they are today.

The platform also allowed us to have difficult conversations with ourselves and think through changes for not just ourselves but the organisations and people we work with. I was honoured to have been able to share a space with such phenomenal women and look forward to bringing the lessons to life, for myself and the people I work with and meet.

A great platform for difficult conversations with ourselves

Esther Kalenzi

Team Leader, 40 Days
Over 40 Smiles Foundation



It is often said that "It's lonely at the top" and as a leader, I identify with that saying. Executive Directors in the nonprofit sector can sometimes feel isolated and this retreat enabled us to create an effective peer network to share experiences, empower, encourage and learn from each other. Getting to spend a few days away together as leaders and reflect on our leadership journeys and take the opportunity of the new year as

a fresh start to challenge ourselves to do, be and lead better in 2019, was a blessing.

I had fun and came away energized to be a more impactful 'me' in 2019 by making time and investing in resources that will support me and CEPIL. The retreat helped prepare me for the 3 days I spent with the CEPIL Board members and secretariat as we worked on the roadmap for 2019 - 2021. I was able to share about the importance of balancing work and life, understanding and being passionate about the work we do, identifying our 'purple cow' and making it visible, following trends, being fluid and futuristic.

The retreat created an effective peer network to share experiences

Jacqueline Ayuya Mukasa

Executive Director,
Center for Public Interest Law



The retreat gave me an opportunity to be in a space that was full of so much positive energy, and an atmosphere to be 'me.' Listening to the wonderful ladies doing a lot of incredible work made me appreciate, much more, the power of women in making lives of people meaningful and beautiful. The moderator opened us up in a manner I could never have imagined and connected us to each other in a way that was so sweet and sisterly. We were people from diverse backgrounds but we connected so well as individual women, as Ugandans. Everyone was so helpful, I was so challenged.

I came back from the retreat connected to the Winfred that I am. I listened to her, reassured her and appreciated her. But also, I challenged her to be herself and enjoy her right to be and have. I will continue to have these reflections and document my journey. I will be good to myself, my workmates, partners and strangers that come into my life. I am determined to hold myself to account and hold my sisters to account.

I will continually reflect on and document my journey

Winfred Ngabiirwe

Executive Director,
Global Rights Alert



The retreat provided a platform for making connections and networking and space for CEO/EDs to reflect on their leadership journeys as well as coaching and sharing experiences on scaling leadership heights.



Participating in the EDs Retreat was one of the greatest gifts for me for 2019! I discovered that I had a lot of self-pity for myself given my previous vulnerable background. However, during the sharing sessions, I felt the power within me to change all the circumstances around me including to stop blaming my relatives who actually had played a big part in making the person I am today. I stopped blaming and justifying aspects of my life that I could discard, and instead chose to be happy. My smile is back which I had lost many years ago because I was scared of Judith (myself) but today, I can happily face her every day; I look at things differently and love myself more. It had been long since I last read the Bible because I thought God had kind of neglected me but, hey, now am on course to rekindling my relationship with Him, which is fulfilling. I have since reduced my interactions on social media, which I had somewhat been addicted to. It's a gradual process and difficult at that, but I am at it. I keep track of my daily activities especially my financial behaviours because that's key in my growth plans for 2019. I am in touch with a few ladies and I am sure will keep the sisterhood, for I vowed to myself to be surrounded with positive sisters.

The book I bought from Babigumira Hope has given me a changeover in my life that I was craving for. In her book, Hope says, "I have to work hard and make a better life for myself, what excuse do I have? I have learned that there's a process to achieving results despite having valid dreams. Success does not come automatically; it takes time. There are daily habits and practices that increase the chances of achieving any given goal." I have to take one step at time but never to give up on myself.

I have since had a changeover in my life

Bakwangira B Judith

Chairperson Coalition
Girls Empowerment



In many ways, my work involves being on the frontline, being the face, and having to show up. But what that really means is that I have to show up with the full awareness of who I am and where I am with whatever is in front of me. If I am to truly give my best effort to my work, I need self-reflection. These are not necessarily things that we learn at school, and having spent a longer time in the academia than in organization management, I have felt the imbalance quite often and not had the tools to make a proper self-assessment.

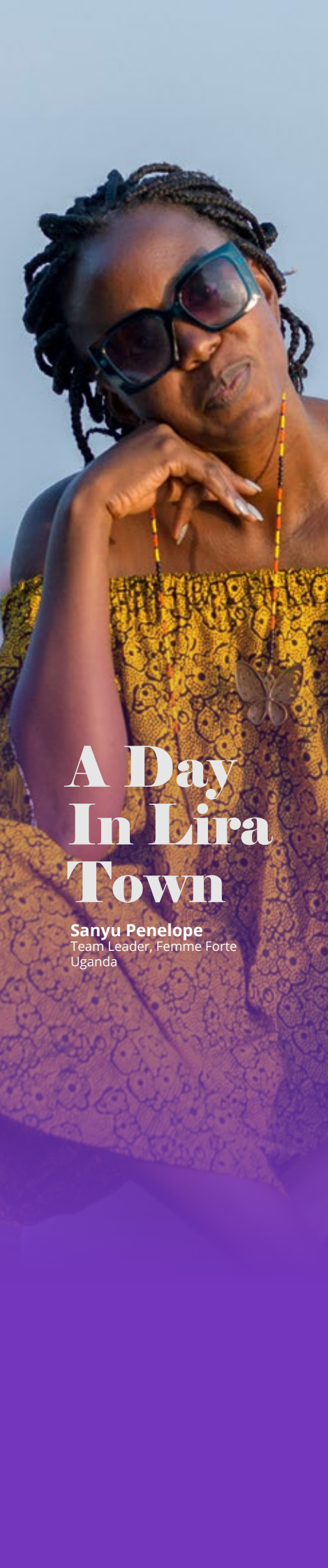
The retreat was a unique experience; a place that sought within us the awareness of the moment and bringing out the fullness of our character as part of our leadership. I call it leading with self, and have found myself practicing this more and more. The retreat was an invaluable experience; I am more awake to myself now and more present in my work. I could not have asked for a better way to level up my leadership capabilities.

I am more awake to myself and more present in my work

Noah Mirembe

Co-Founder and Director,
Taala Foundation





A Day In Lira Town

Sanyu Penelope
Team Leader, Femme Forte
Uganda



The greatest of gifts are given from the heart; that tap on the back, that unexpected text/call, a warm smile, sharing coffee beans or a cup of water on a hot day, a kind word or gesture, your precious time. These gifts, and many others like them, given or received in return enliven us and breathe new life into our weary bones. After all, as beautifully stated by Lao Tzu, "the heart that gives, gathers."

Last week I had the privilege of witnessing this proverb at work when a group of female leaders stopped everything they were doing and traveled to Lira. The trip had been scheduled at the beginning of this year at the "Executive Directors' gathering" organized by CivSource Africa where the leaders agreed to pay a solidarity visit to other female executive leaders to share their leadership experiences and find learning from each other's leadership journeys. Even though this follow up visit had been agreed to, there was no guarantee it would happen. At the heart of their unwavering commitment to make this visit happen and the willingness to turn the belief in this solidarity visit to action was unwavering love. Not just any love, but the love that desires to see other women winning and thriving in their leadership journeys.

Spending a day in Lira was beautiful - the conversations were raw and vulnerable, there was fellowship and breaking of bread, we were home. Our hosts went all out to make sure we were well catered to. They gave of their time, their stories, their pains, their delicious food, they sang with us, laughed heartily and showered us with gifts. The meeting space was colorful and full of all the right energy. We asked questions and basked in everyone's experience with leadership. We traveled to Lira to give of the little we had received in January and the ladies in Lira out-gave us. They opened their hearts to us and received us, and while they learned from us, they gave us so much more than we had anticipated. They gave us love!

Africa (in this case Uganda) is not short of generosity. We are givers naturally because we have been raised to understand that "the heart that gives, gathers." We know that life is so much better, much more peaceful and so much more enjoyable when we give. We embrace "omutima omugabi" (giving with heart) so gracefully and without strain.

THE CHAKRA VILLAGE AND FINDING WAYS BACK TO MYSELF BY LEADING ME BETTER.

Grace Ruvimbo Chirenje (Zimbabwe)

Feminist and Coach

In December 2018, I left Uganda in a blur and glided into a funk I have been staring at for almost six months now. I knew I would return to Uganda for a much-needed closure as I bade farewell to all the amazing spaces and places I had so warmly embraced. I kept going back and forth about my visit until one day I decided that August would be my month of adventure and Uganda would be my very first stop. Naturally, I checked with Jackie if she would be in Uganda during my intended visit. Not only did she confirm in the positive but also informed me that there was a women leaders' retreat she wanted me to be apart of. Who says no to Jackie and an opportunity to be part of a women-only space? Wait, don't answer that - I said yes! That began a wonderful weekend journey for me that brought so much insight, awe, wonder, questioning and closure. The venue was Mitooma and one of our own sisters hosted us at their village home. What a weekend that turned out to be! The Chakra Village was a much-needed space I attended in August of 2019.

I founded a growing organization, Zimbabwe Young Women's Network for Peace Building (ZYWNP) in 2008. I recall that in those days, my passion was my greatest asset. However, with leading a non-profit organization also comes the urgent need to understand what it means to lead others towards a shared vision. It was very challenging. I have since grown and learnt a lot of lessons about myself and what it means to be aware of myself and those that I lead. Being amongst sisters in Mitooma, during the Chakra Village, showed me that many times as women leaders, we struggle with how we are as individuals and it can be so difficult to practice self-love and acceptance. This manifests in unhealthy ways as we lead. The space to reflect in Mitooma meant that I was able to unpack who I am as a person and find ways to become more aware of how best to lead not just myself but those I lead at many levels be it family, work or even where I get my spiritual enrichment. That journey began in 2008 when I founded that organization.

My greatest takeaways from the Mitooma retreat was the urgent need to journal and work with a life coach. I have always been sold out for support through life coaches. This notion was emphasized during the retreat. Learning to unpack my emotions and thoughts for what they are and exploring ways to express them in a healthy way is critical for me. Sharing with each other what it means to have emotions and thoughts that constantly affect how we show up and how best to handle ourselves in ways that empower us and facilitate for a holistic woman was such a powerful force to reckon with. Hearing the stories from each one of the sisters, sharing the laughter, the pain and the tears gave the space such a deep sense of authenticity, honesty and humanity that left me understanding more for myself the need to always, always turn within. I rediscovered my inner wisdom, Chakras and urgent need to keep myself aligned heart, body and mind.

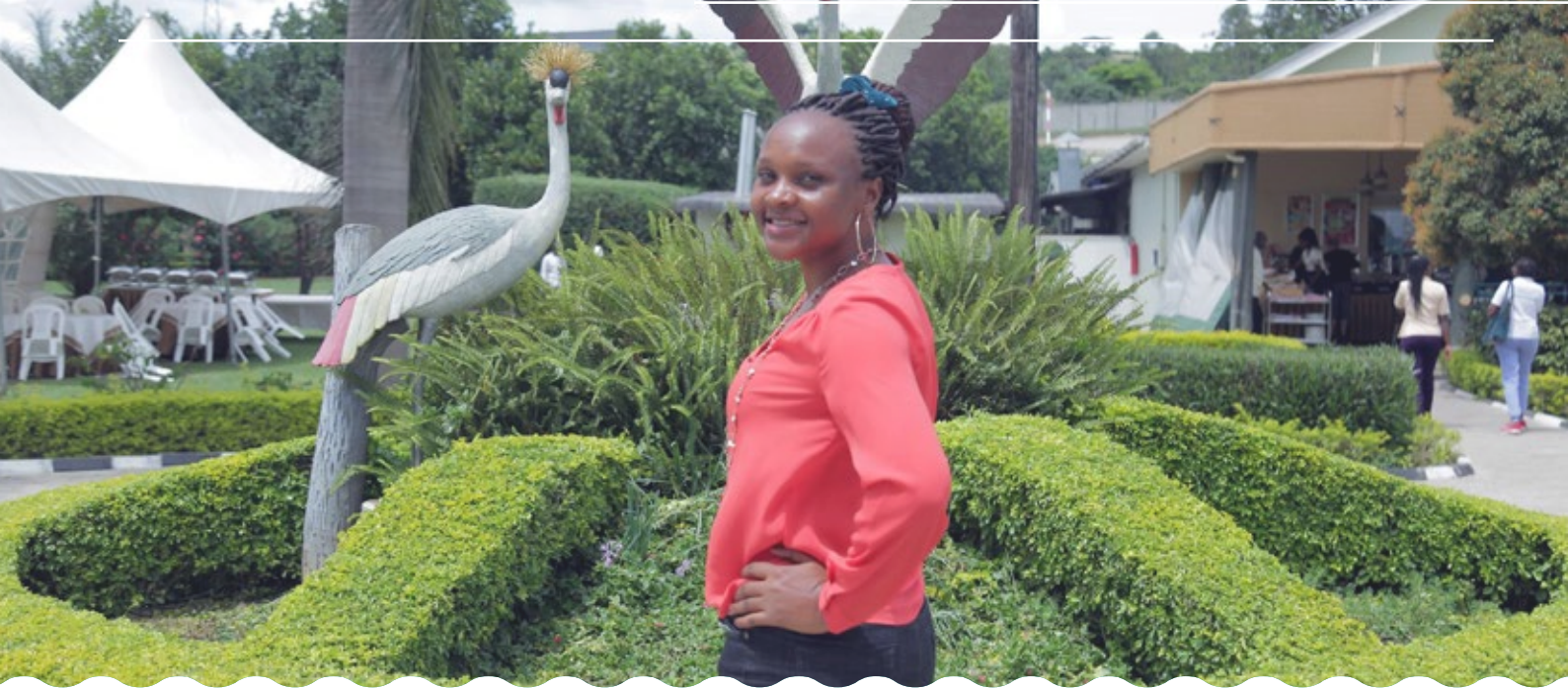
On return to my home in Harare, my heart is full and I'm excited because I'm confident that when women decide to come together and make a difference for themselves, their energy becomes more aligned. This means that once women decide to lead themselves in a healthy and grounded manner, their energy is irresistible, inspiring and formidable.

They become a force to reckon with because they spread that love, security and encouragement with others just like we collectively managed to do in the Chakra Village. It remains one of the most resonating and inspiring spaces I have been a part of in this year of 2019. No distance is too far to be part of a space that reignites one's inner fire and ensures that one understands how to live one's best life more so as a woman leader. Women are their own best friends and this space proved it. It is my hope that this process of exploring women's leadership through energy will be duplicated to create safe spaces for women to keep making a leadership difference for them and others.

”

Being in Mitooma at the Chakra Village reminded me that as women, we lead at very many levels. We have the power and potential to make a difference for ourselves and those we lead.





GRACE WAS IN MITOOMA FOR ME.

Winfred Ngabiirwe

Executive Director, Global Rights Alert

I do things from my heart and not my brain. Which means, if I feel a happy pulp, I just go, do, commit, decide...whatever comes first. The offer to host the villagers in Mitooma was one of those things, and in my heart, I knew I would be happy to host the team. I was already happy being at the Retreat, starting a unique and much-needed journey.

I didn't pay much attention to the reunion, until the last minute. Then I wondered what I had signed up for. I called my family to inform them we had guests and ask for their support. We needed rooms, food, and presence even. Let me tell you, some people are easier to call than others. But thankfully everyone I called just said yes to whatever I asked. I think I am a bully!

When I was told we would have guests (Joan and Grace), I was excited. I've known Joan from about 12 years ago. Grace, I met when she showed up at my home. Seeing all the girls show up warmed my heart but I also started worrying about the food, the house, even the tea. It was like I was hosting aliens.

The discussions were very rich and revealing of the strength we have as individuals and collectively. Most importantly, taking the time to visit a secondary school, to inspire the girls and challenge them, was for me an extremely powerful statement. And this was not on the programme! ***You were so real, ladies. You just jumped into it. So, I am not the only person that jumps into things, without asking much?*** A good lesson for me.

Back to Grace. She asked me about my pain. ***Pain? Ka'Winnie has no pain. She knew no pain. She knows no pain.*** But as soon as Grace asked me, I immediately felt it. I knew right there, she was right. But because I didn't know much about pain, Joan and Grace dissect me. Publicly. I had volunteered and so I can't blame anyone honestly. I celebrate those two surgeons (their new titles). I must mention here that they built on a foundation set by Jackie (during our one on ones), the retreat, plus a few conversations I had had with Hope C.

Now I know I have pain. Yes. Just this morning, I stood in my bathroom and cried. And I knew exactly where the pain came from. I remembered those things I didn't realise had hurt me deeply. I was about 11, then 15, then about 19, and then around 20 years old. I know every time, each one of them failed to break me. How they failed, I do not know. How could I have been lucky? Where did I get 'the clever', so to speak, to survive? Why did God protect me? Which God protected me? I don't know.

If there is anything I got from Mitooma, it's the courage to open this part of my heart. I know it's there and this morning, for the first time, I cried over these incidents. I had never cried because I never thought about them, and what they meant. I just moved on to the next book to read, lesson to attend. Now, I am alone in a room writing to you and crying. Crying because Grace asked. And because Belinda called me an open book. Because Joan saw. Because every member of the Chakra Village seems sweet and may understand where I am coming from. I may as well open up. To you.

How can I not be grateful that this is happening? How can I not celebrate hosting you and loving every bit of it? How can I not celebrate the support I got from my family and everyone else? I am already feeling happy, lighter and blessed. My family thinks I am friends to super women only and I agree with them! I celebrate you.

Learning all the steps we have taken as leaders were so fulfilling. Everyone is doing so well. Thank you for sharing. The space that the village provides, for me is out of this world. It's the real space that I needed and will always need. The sisterhood, love, the smiles, and the tears.

Thank you for contributing money to send a girl to school. Pray for her, and all the other girls we met to be safe, in and out of school. Pray that their dreams will come true. That they will be much better than us. That they stop traffic, in the air, on the land, sea and everywhere. Thank you, villagers.

INSPIRING GIRLS.

Hope Nankunda

Executive Director, Raising Teenagers Uganda

Early this year, we had our first ever EDs retreat organised by Jackie Asiimwe, the CEO of Civsourse Africa. The retreat was such a blessing to me and such a great way to begin the year 2019. It allowed me to meet new leaders and share experiences as we work towards making a difference in the lives of others in this world.

At this retreat, I realised that I have spent most of my life attending to the lives of others and paying less attention to myself which in the end affects my wellbeing significantly. I realised that I rarely do exercises yet it is very important for my health. With a very energetic and inspirational facilitator Hope Chigudu, I learnt about the Chakras and how they relate with my daily lives. I also learnt some indoor exercises that I can do both at home and in my office without necessarily going to the gym. That was powerful and it has since changed my life.

Leaders just like other people need time for self-care because we can't pour from an empty cup. At that time we agreed to head back to our organisations to create organisations with souls. Ones that make life meaningful and not stressful. That encourage growth and sisterhood.

And then Came Mitooma...

After our retreat in January, we agreed to meet again in August to review and share experiences about our journeys. We were hosted by our very own Winnie Ngabiirwe the Executive Director, Global Rights Alert.

We started with visiting the nearby school, Kyeibare Secondary School, to inspire and motivate girls to stay focused on their education until they achieve their dreams. The girls were so happy to see so many leaders from Kampala visit their school at one go. How wonderful it is to change the lives of young people. The Headmistress was equally glad to host us and requested us to go back.

In Mitooma, we had the opportunity to share our stories as leaders. I shared that I started creating time for myself and my family which wasn't the case before. I am now exercising in my home which I had never thought of. I learnt to let go of negative energy and this helps me to remain focused. Most importantly, I created time for my God and I am a completely new person in Christ Jesus. Creating time for his service and learning his word has been the greatest achievement so far.

For a long time, I had confused mentorship with coaching. Joan Mugenzi the Executive Director, Imagine Me Africa did such a great job facilitating a coaching session which cleared up the confusion. She even gave us a practical session. That's when I realised that we always have answers to our problems but all we need is a coach to probe and make it clear to us that we are much more than we think. Now I know that I need a coach so badly and am sure once I have one, I will not remain the same.





The people of Mitooma are so loving and caring. We had dinner with Winnie's family and spoke about the work we do and why we decided to make the trip. They invited us to visit again. One thing I will not forget is how much we were fed. It was such a weekend.

The sisterhood makes all the difference. The way we support each other in our different events is encouraging. For example, the Jackies, Asimwe and Ayuya participated in our 2019 Annual Hiking event in July. The hikes raise awareness and funds for girls and break the stigma around menstruation. The Jackies also inspired the girls in the mountainous region, whom we gave sanitary pads and knickers, to make their lives meaningful. They were reminded that the world cares about them no matter where they live. Our Mitooma host Winnie also supported us with a contribution towards sanitary pads. This is what we call sisterhood and we are happy to belong together as one big Chakra Village.

FAVOR AND BLESSINGS.

Allen Asimwe

Gender Specialist

Two words; favour and blessings are the only words that can best describe my experience in Mitooma. I'm blessed and favoured to have been part of the team that had a Mitooma experience. I call it a Mitooma experience because it was phenomenal. No words can best describe it. For one to understand and relate with what I am talking about, one has to allow themselves to experience this by being part of the next executive leaders retreat in January 2020 organized by CivSource Africa.

Fast forward, standing on the shoulders of giants, being supported by them and learning from them is what I did and felt during my two days in Mitooma. If one had given me a prior memo, I would have probably requested for an extension of this love, support, generosity, and humility. It was an honour to be amidst powerful ladies that head organizations, some of which they founded. Swimming and showering in their overflowing knowledge, experience and expertise as they shared their leadership journeys was the most empowering piece of the experience. I could never exchange that for anything. I was right at the source of knowledge, wisdom and power.

Ooh yes, I made use of and I am still making use of my opportunity to tap into their wealth. Where they are is where I want to be, and like they say there is no better teacher than learning from experiences.

I felt and still feel grateful for the exposure and the opportunity to network, mingle and create new relationships with all the leaders that came for the retreat in Mitooma. At this point, I'm reminded of the statement, "our network is our net worth". With no fears, hesitation and limits we shared our journeys of growth. We laughed, we cried and celebrated each other. Some stories were filled with pain, others with joy and laughter, and others rejection and disappointments. We celebrated that too because that was part of us. What we have experienced doesn't define us but rather brings us together. So, we celebrated, provided comfort and solutions to each story as it was told.

I can testify, I left Mitoma as a whole new person, with less worry about what the future holds because I was no longer alone. My network and relationships have grown. The "Chakra Village" is where people are happy for your happiness and sad for your sadness. I preserve a special place in my heart for all the Chakra Village member. With them, by my side, I'm certain about a positive change in my life. Where they are is where I want to be. The Chakra Village is a place I call home.





Kabale Tales

JANUARY FEBRUARY 2020

KABALE WAS CHALLENGING AND THERAPEUTIC

Elliot Orizaarwa Tumwujukye

Executive Director, Women And Girl Child Development Association
Coordinator, Coalition On Girls' Empowerment

The day the visit to Kabale was announced in one of the Chakra Village meetings was a dream to me. However, my decision was not taken until the last week before travel, on the 30th January 2020.

Leaving Kampala at 9.30am for a 6-hour journey seemed late but ended up becoming shorter than I expected. The fun and jokes were healing, eating all sorts of foods from maize to meat to chicken, and a main meal at Ingogo Restaurant made the journey more interesting. The slogan of Puut! Puut! (a playful phrase that came out of an elder's instance that more food was on our plates) till rings in my head. We were welcomed at Dora's place with love, more food and refreshments. The love we found in the house will always be shared in history.

The second day reminded me how sisterhood brings healing. Sharing how I felt in the year 2019, and listening to other village mates, become my turning point. I felt like sharing from the bottom of my heart and this relieved me. It was a sad moment sharing about the loss of a very close friend. Big thanks to the village mates who gave me comfort.

One of my highlights was The 4 Women. Their sharing left me wondering how national level feminists had never connected with them. Their stories healed me more because I learnt how to keep strong and build stronger friendships. I learnt that keeping together needs strong people with values that builds trust. This takes courage and love with an open heart.

The visit to Grace Villa brought more therapy. The Villa reminded me that many girls are still vulnerable. Ruth, who started the home, left America, where many services are provided, and come to help vulnerable girls in Kabale. It left me wondering why her and why Kabale? Thank you, Ruth, for the big heart.


Then there was the Lake Bunyonyi experience. The lake is beautiful and the resort we had our last session of the day at was very serene. However, after it rained for much of the evening, we got stuck on a very slippery road. There was communal screaming and praying as the car skidded from side to side, to get us back to the town. There was also collective cheering when the driver finally got us to drier road. All that extra travel time allowed us to discuss and reflect on what trust means to us. Trusting really does require time and courage.

While I do struggle with writing, a conversation on this trip, about documenting our stories encouraged me to see writing as a tool for great feminist and transformative leadership. This piece is my step to doing better in that area.

I must declare that since the first retreat, my life has changed. The village has helped me heal and leave without fear. I used to be very angry, but I have let go of a lot of that inner frustration. I now practice leading with a soul even though I still find some things challenging. My body and soul are connected to my spirit and this will help me change. The organisation that I founded will be branded with new strategies, a new board, new brains and new face. I have been strengthened and taught how to be a better leader.

I cannot stop appreciating sister Dora and her family for the love and care they showed us. Thank you for all the food and refreshments. May the Good lord bless you abundantly.





To Ms. Jackie Asiimwe, 'Do not get tied of me. The great things in you will change me and make me the Elliot you want to see. You are a champion of sustainable change. The facilitator you identified was the best to heal me. We are so grateful, Grace.'

Chakra Village sisters, from the bottom of my heart, I appreciate your love and the knowledge you share. we shall grow and change the world together. I am healed, and my soul, body, and spirit, are connected. I commend CivSource Africa for supporting this kind of space that makes us heal with professional therapists. I look forward to being challenged often.

CHAKRA VILLAGE: THE ONLY PLACE TO CALL HOME IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Hope Nankunda
Founder & Team Leader, Raising Teenagers Uganda

One year after its establishment, the Women Leaders of the Chakra Village set off on 30th January for a retreat in Kabale, hosted by one of us, Dora Kiconco Musinguzi the Executive Director for UGANET. I'm so blessed to be part of this village that has given me the opportunity to discover my true potential as I give priority to self-care and self-love. As it is commonly said, we cannot give what we don't have, and we cannot pour from an empty jug. The village has brought out the best in me as I grow my organisation Raising Teenagers Uganda, that aims at advocating for the right to education for all children, especially the girl child.

The retreat was an opportunity for us to empower, motivate and celebrate each other's accomplishments from 2019 and plan for 2020. Listening to the achievements of everyone was very encouraging. I was able to realise so much that I had accomplished, and I needed to celebrate even though before the retreat, I had honestly not realised how important they were. Thank you to Jackie Asimwe Mwesige, CEO - CivSource Africa who came up with this amazing arrangement of creating a safe space for women leaders.

Chakra Village is a safe space where listening is part of the Journey. We share, we listen, we learn.

While in Kabale, I had a lot to learn. Particularly from the different guests that came in share their stories with us. The session with four widows, who fondly call themselves the 4 Women, was such a moving one. For the very first time I saw a group of women that have stood together through thick and thin for over 30 years. Their solidarity gave me hope for a better tomorrow among women who believe in each other. I saw true love and trust. I saw their value for respect and their commitment to keep their group strong. Many times, groups of women are broken by lack of trust, commitment, respect and presence, but the 4 Women showed us that all the above can be addressed and a can group grow for generations and generations. It gave me strong hope for our Chakra Village with an assurance that we can grow stronger together in #Sisterhood.



The story of the 4 Women was such a powerful one showing the true meaning of solidarity.

Then came Shwenkazi. Her presence at our retreat was exceptional. Such a kind lady with lots of love for the younger generation. Listening to her share her growing up story humbled me and made me realise how much one can achieve if they have humility and a positive attitude towards life. Being a widow for 35 years, raising her children and being a very good example to her fellow women in her community was such a great experience to share with us. Her advice to us as women was to respect ourselves, avoid rumours, put Jesus Christ at the centre of our lives, and above all, be careful with our tongue. She made it clear to us that the tongue can create but can also kill. These were such powerful words from an 85-year-old lady. I will forever remember and cherish them. Where would I have got them if I did not belong to the Chakra Village!!



Chakra Village is a safe space where listening is part of the Journey. We share, we listen, we learn.



The powerful words I heard from Shwenkazi will forever guide me in my day to day life. She is such a blessing to humanity.

We intend to carry along sanitary pads and knickers to contribute to girls staying in school.

A VISIT TO GRACE VILLA - KABALE:

I celebrate the proprietors of the home and pray that God continues to uphold them and provide for all their needs in life.

This was yet another landmark on this retreat reaching out to the adolescent girls faced with different challenges but all struggling to make it in life. It was such a moving moment as I listened to Ruth share her story and how she started the home. I saw myself in her and wished there were more people like her across the country. People that will commit their lives to serving the younger generation, particularly those in desperate need.

We visited Lake Bunyonyi, later that day. It is very beautiful. It was the perfect setting to appreciate Uganda's spectacular nature and have a powerful conversation among ourselves. We spoke about group dynamics and what we must do to protect the Chakra Village, recognising the need for trust, presence and commitment. It was a very timely conversation. I'm glad to belong and committed to see it grow from strength to strength as I work closely with the sisters in the Village.

Meeting the girls and sharing smiles and love was a very special moment for me. The kind of welcome that we received from the girls was so beautiful. It was the famous Kikiga dance. I was forced to join them and dance because it made me feel at peace. I also wanted to assure the girls that we are there for them. The few minutes I spent speaking to the girls were magical. Every day that passes, my desire to touch the lives of many girls grows. To encourage them not to give up on life.

This trip would not have been complete without some unscripted drama. When it was time to leave Lake Bunyonyi, the murrum road became user unfriendly because of about four hours of rain. The car could not pass through the mud with us seated inside. To allow the car to navigate the slippery track, we had to come out and walk some distance, in the mud and darkness. For a moment I thought we would not make it out of there, but our God was present and right there with us. We looked out for each other and made sure we were all safe. How exceptional we are!!

It even became more touching as I listened to Eva, another village mate, speak to them and share her university experience. Millions of girls need to hear such encouraging words so that they realise that the challenges they face today are not unique to them alone. They need to be assured that their situations are only temporary and that only the brave pass through them with their heads held high. It was amazing to see and hear the different things the girls are doing to raise funds for school including tailoring, baking, music, playing soccer, among other activities. Ruth has organised hikes to raise awareness about Grace Villas and fundraise for the home. This is something we too, at Raising Teenagers Uganda, do annually. We hike to break stigma around menstruation and create awareness about the dangers of child marriage and the benefits of keeping girls in school. This year we are hiking Mt. Moroto in Karamoja region.

To the Village-mates, you are so special to me. I thank God who made it possible for us to travel to Kabale and return safely. Powerful thanks to our host that made our stay very warm even though it was a cold season. Dorah and her beautiful mother made sure we had everything we needed.

THANK YOU DORAH KICONCO MUSINGUZI AND YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY FOR HOSTING US AND MAKING US FEEL AT HOME IN KABALE



A photograph of three women standing outdoors, smiling. The woman on the left is wearing a white top with a large, intricate black and yellow pattern. The woman in the middle is wearing a blue top with large yellow floral patterns. The woman on the right is wearing a blue and white patterned top. They are all looking towards the camera.

THE WISDOM OF ELDERS

Jacqueline Asimwe
Chief Executive Officer, CivSource Africa

Kabale is a part of me. It is part of my roots, it is part of my heritage. Kabale is home. And so, I was more than pleased that we were starting our new year by going home. And what a homecoming it was!

Elders are central to our roots and heritage and this particular visit was filled with interactions with elders.

I started off by visiting my great grandmother, who is about 110 years old. She has the softest, whitest, waviest hair I've ever seen on a woman. She looks regal. I looked at her long and hard. I studied the lines on her face and hands, and wondered what those lines portend, what stories and memories are etched there, what wisdom and insight. I was just content to sit in her presence and literally drink her in.

As we said good bye to her, she said she feels she is ready for her next journey. She's done with the journey here on earth. I contemplated those words and reflected on my journey. What journey am I currently walking?

Am I preparing for my next journey as well?
In Kabale, I stayed with my Uncle and Aunt. I consider them my elders



and I stay with them whenever I visit Kabale. From them, I repeatedly learn lessons in generosity and love. They give with passion and love with such abandon. They love me and all who I bring to their house. I don't take it for granted that they open their home and their heart to me.

For our meeting, we were hosted by Aunt Lydia, mother to one of the village mates (as the female leaders fondly call themselves). At

Aunt Lydia's home, we had the opportunity to interact with 5 elders. The first was Joy Kwesiga, an icon in the women's movement, a trail blazer and activist for higher education for women. Joy spoke to us about her journey of leadership. She implored us to stand firm, seek guidance, take charge and not be hesitant leaders. In many of her leadership positions, she was thrust there by history and circumstance and sometimes by and through other peoples wishes. She had not been taught that she could plot her own leadership journey. But looking back, she is glad for all the opportunities she had to lead. And she led with distinction and integrity. She told us about celebrating every win - big or small. She taught us about having wisdom and tenacity as we lead.

We met the 4 widows - women who have helped and held each other through their most trying times. They have been friends for over 30 years. They sing together, pray together, support each other in public, rebuke each other in private. They challenge each other to pursue their dreams and they love each other unconditionally. They confront and challenge patriarchy in their own ways. They defy conformity and have beaten their own path. They have raised their children and they now have grandchild. They practice sisterhood daily! What a gift it was to be in their presence!

We also listened to my paternal Aunt tell us her story of living as a widow and how this enabled her lead other women. She stands strong in her faith in God. She stands tall as a beacon of light to and for other women. A key lesson I took from her was to watch my mouth, watch my words, learn to put a guard on my mouth. She told us not to have 'long lips' lips that tell tales and spread gossip. Instead, out lips should be used to uplift women.

The final elder that I had the opportunity to visit, was a grandmother of a dear friend of mine. This grandmother lives in Mbarara. We stopped over on our way back to Kampala. This grandmother is a sweet soul, she is her family matriarch and she takes this position very seriously. She laid a table before us and gave us gifts of food and local baskets. In her presence I felt loved, favored and accepted.

I left Kabale with my heart full. As I grow older, I appreciate the central role of elders and I am more determined to honor and celebrate them in every way I can. I am nothing without them. Literally. They are my mothers, my mentors, my teachers, my guides, my roots, my belonging.



KABALE EXPERIENCE

Jacqueline Ayuya Mukasa

Executive Director, Center for Public Interest Law

Since January 2019 I have always looked forward with excitement to the Chakra Village meetings. Dora Kiconco offered to host us at her village in Kabale from January 30th to February 2nd, 2020. The long journey on Thursday was filled with lots of talk and laughter from the villagers catching up on life, family and work. We arrived in Kabale in the evening and were welcomed like special dignitaries by Dora and her family, and a brief on the agenda for the weekend over sumptuous dinner.

Friday was an action-packed day with four sessions and lots of delicious food and drinks, I almost thought food would be the death of me. Grace Ruvimbo Chirenje (development consultant, transformative feminist leader) facilitated the first session in the morning on balancing our wellness wheel. We got to reflect and share about 2019, our vision for each area in our lives, set goals for 2020, define our why, set up supportive systems, and create 2020 plans with deadlines. My key take away from this session was that life is a marathon and not a sprint so I need to be kind and gentle with myself as I seek to make life work.

In the afternoon we were honored by Prof. Joy Kwesiga (academic, administrator, gender specialist and community activist) who traveled all the way from Kampala to Kabale to spend a late afternoon with us and share her experience and wisdom based on her career and leadership journey. She inspired me to continue to yearn for growth and development, be principled and professional, have a support system to guide, encourage, motivate me, create and maintain networks and last but not least, be an active member of the community.

In the evening we had the pleasure of interacting with "The Four Women" who shared about their friendship journey that has seen them through the good, bad and ugly for more than 30 years. It was amazing to hear how they affirm, trust, love, commit and pray for each other and their families.

The icing on the cake for the evening was Shwenkazi and elderly (as in her eighties) senga of Jackie Asimwe who urged us to work for the Lord in all that we do, be happy, keep our word, be present, observe and learn and only quarrel when necessary.

We started off Saturday with a visit to Grace Villas, a home that provides a warm nurturing environment for orphaned and under privileged girls. We were warmly welcomed with song, dance and delicious refreshments. Ruth Ndyabahika (founder & Executive Director) and her mom Rev Canon Grace shared her journey of compassion and support for the girl child. We gave a brief motivational talk to inspire the girls to stay in school and work hard to achieve their goals and dreams.

The afternoon found us at a resort by the scenic Lake Bunyonyi where we had lunch then a conversation about trust, presence and commitment which are fundamental in building the Chakra Village. We agreed to endeavor to make our Village space one where we each offer and receive love. We also got to set dates for the Village meetings for the rest of 2020. We ended the evening session with singing and dancing, sharing lots of love and laughter.

Before we retired for the evening, we briefly dropped by to say hello to Jackie Asimwe's aunt & uncle who were so excited and happy to meet us. We sang hymns and they prayed for the group. We then proceeded back to Dora's home where they had laid a sumptuous buffet for us, at this point I am convinced they are trying to kill us with food but we still indulged before we called it a night.

We traveled back to Kampala very early on Sunday morning. I am thankful for the love and hospitality that we received in Kabale from Dora and her family. I left feeling refilled with love, wisdom, knowledge and energized with my plan for 2020.



WOMEN AND THEIR TONGUES

Peace Kadondi

Associate Support, CivSource Africa

Whichever way you use your tongue,
Let your strokes wield purpose
Your flicks never wasted.
Even when it rests behind your teeth,
Protecting the world from your thoughts, your power
Let its hiatus be full, knowing that your mind will summon it soon.

Like Stella, it could be hard. Fast. Coarse. Indelicate.
Taking no prisoners with the tapping of each letter of a keyboard
Luzira bars failing to dissuade your lashes.

Like Winnie, you could be persuasive. Strategic. Factual.
Convincing a Mother's Union chapter to vote left instead of right.

Like Theresa...quiet, gentle, pious even
Leaving a room full of the most powerful men in the world, uncomfortable, by your ten-minute speech
Almost completely in monotone.

Whichever way you use your tongue,
Let your licks wield purpose
Its appearance never wasted.





TRANSCENDENT

Grace Chirenge Ruvimbo
Feminist and Coach

Have you ever heard the story of The Transfiguration? It is a story about one of the greatest human spirit to ever walk the earth - Jesus - He is known as. So, the story goes that He went up a high mountain with Peter, James and John who were His 3 most trusted disciples. Whilst they were up on the mountain, Jesus is said to have been transfigured and His face shining with glory whilst Moses and Elijah appearing to converse with Jesus during that most glorious moment. The disciples were too excited about the moment of bliss they witnessed and offered to build 3 tabernacles for Jesus, Elijah and Moses. To top it all up, the disciples heard a voice from heaven affirming Jesus as most beloved Son of God. Now that right there, dear reader, is an experience I'm so sure the disciples had no words to explain. And just how do I know? Because I too experienced my very own Transfiguration when I and a group of woman leaders, whom I have now grown to love as sisters, visited Kabale. Let me attempt an unpacking of my version of the Transfiguration in Kabale.

THE GENESIS

In August of 2019 whilst I was on a business trip to Uganda, I was invited by Jackie Asiimwe to join a group of sisters who had formed what was known as the Chakra Village. We trailed to Mitooma where we met and explored the many aspects that define our lives as women leaders. What stood out for me was the authenticity and vulnerability that the sisters shared. It was like none I have ever witnessed. We shared about our children, love lives, relationships, black tax and all sorts of career management issues. I left Mitooma with such a light in my soul I began a process of healing from what was a very dark period in my life at the time. I felt renewed and rejuvenated - I suppose for me that was tantamount to being invited as one of the 3 beloved disciples of Jesus favored out of the 12. It was such an enriching and healing conversation that I still regard as a lifeline saving me from a myriad of confusion that I was then facing.

OVERCOMING FEAR

You know that moment you introspect and wonder why you agreed to do something in the first place? Well, that was me as I tightened my harness just before negotiating my way up to where I was supposed to jump off to begin my zip lining. It felt scary and long lasting - like a moment frozen. My partner in crime, Jackie whom I was confident in, failed to become my friend in whom I'm well pleased, after she too showed signs of fear of the climb and zip line. However, we did both let go at some point and made the to and from zip lining and even shocked ourselves by doing a slight water glide as we hug loosely on the harness. That experience left me feeling like I could conquer the world. That moment I let go and simply let loose resulted in me taking a step towards the unknown and trusting that everything would be just fine. Almost like those disciples following Jesus up a mountain without a clear picture of where they were going and for what reason, let alone what they would experience. It is when we choose to let go that we transcend into a realm of insight we never knew existed. As I walked away from that zip

line experience, something within me had shifted. I had more faith in my gifts and capabilities. I knew that even when I'm afraid, I should trust and do the unthinkable and everything will turn out just fine. Especially when the road I'm treading on seems rough and winding, letting go and trusting brings results in my growing and becoming.

GRACED

When I got out of the car to attend a descend from the car to the door, nothing could have prepared me for the young girls who came, arms widespread, faces alight with the warmest smiles I had ever imagined! They gave me a tight squeeze and told me I was welcome, loved and expected. For a minute I stopped in my tracks and couldn't help but let tears stream my cheeks. I was overwhelmed with love. These young souls who are vulnerable to life itself had just reminded me, very strongly so, that life is all about bringing love to each soul I meet and ushering each one that crosses my path into the light of their best version of self. It was a moment I cannot explain fully in words. Deep within my soul I felt a very warmth like never. I guess a feeling that indescribable is one which made those 3 disciples offer to build 3 tabernacles. You know when you experience something too profound you just keep quiet because the reality is it hits the soul too much and deeply to remain silent and yet also speaking usually results in jabbers. That visit to Grace Villa, totally changed my life. It was like a new chapter opened in my life full of gratitude, love and hope. The young girls and their wonderful aura reminded me that everything begins in the mind - our thoughts create realities and so we can create goodness even when we face trauma, pain and agony. I was nudged to remember the power of sisterhood, solidarity and focus to see young girls and women succeed. And what power we have when we choose to hold hands to transform lives, communities and humans. It was such a wonderful experience and I left Kabale feeling transcendent just like Peter, James and John. Only I had to share for no one like Jesus asked me to keep it unto myself!



THE SLEEP-OVER BUG!

Winfred Ngabiirwe

Executive Director, Global Rights Aler

My children introduced the term “sleep over” to me and, as someone who never used this term growing up, I always wondered what happens at sleep overs. So when I mentioned it to them that I was heading to Kabale for a retreat as part of the Chakra Village programme, and that I was going to sleep at someone’s home and not a hotel, they corrected me that what I was going for was actually a sleep over and not a retreat. I therefore left home trying to figure out the differences between a retreat at someone’s home and a sleep over, as they called it.

So, let me tell you what happened at this sleep over. I didn’t sleep! Ok, I slept a bit. You see, I got a roommate, a stranger I first met at Lakeside in Jan 2019, and for some reason, just like with all the Chakra girls, we connected. My roommate and I talked much of the night, about everything and anything that before we knew it, it was morning. No one complained.

The next night would turn out even better. As a rule, our group discussions cannot leave you the same. I could not calm down. How could I? Do you have any idea how deep our conversations can get? No, you don’t. And I will leave it at that. But let me tell you why I didn’t sleep for the second night at this sleep over. The women. The women of Kabale. The 5 women we met on day two all touched my heart in so many ways. First, sitting with these ladies (most of them, if not all in their 70s) was humbling. You see I had to behave in their presence. I had to put my phone away and give them my attention and be able to translate to my colleagues who don’t understand Rukiga. The ladies (especially The Four Women) talked to us about many things... but what caught my ear was they too had (and may be still have) sleep overs! They have loved each other, shared spaces, leaned against each other and have grown into one. When one of them is sick or has a patient, the other one(s) will go and sleep over. Whether in a home, or a hospital, they have slept at each other’s place and enjoyed the love that I enjoyed in Dora’s home.

I think when we grow, we tend to censor pure, innocent basic beautiful moments from our lives. We think sleep overs are for children. We have many excuses for not visiting and spending quality time with our friends. Meanwhile, we do not hesitate to sleep over during difficult times. But what Kabale taught me is that, when we spend nights with our friends, in their homes, we experience something deep and personal.

Kabale also reminded me of my mother whom I had seen visiting her friends and spending nights there. I have also seen her friends come home and spend nights. It dawned on me that between my mother and my children, I am the lost one. Why haven’t I been thinking about, and having sleep overs with my girlfriends? Am I the only one (in my age bracket) who had not noticed how good sleep overs are?

Today I called our host (Dora’s mum) to thank her for the love she extended to us. And do you know what she told me? “Mbwenu itwe abakuzire nituba nitwenda abantu kugumanbakijja bakaturarira... namya obumwe nituhubaara” meaning “At our age (70s?), we need people who come and SLEEP OVER at our homes.... Sometimes we feel lonely.”

I might not sleep tonight again because since morning, I have been reflecting on the statement. Who will sleep over at my place when I am old? Who can sleep over when I need help? Who of my friends will not find it strange (especially the married ones) when I tell them I want to sleep over at their homes? And most the exciting one, how much laughter I am holding up in my belly? I laughed so hard in Kabale. It seems sleep overs have a way of opening up laughter chambers. And so to Dora’s mum I say, ‘I will come and sleep over again.’



THE “PUT-PUTTING” IN KABALE THAT LIFTED MY SOUL

Joan Ssenfuka

Executive Director, Freedom and Roam Uganda

My phobia for travelling long distances didn't stop me from joining the Chakra women in Kabale.

On 30th January 2020. We set off from the CivSource Africa offices to head to the land of hills and coldness. The journey was so long that I didn't keep track of how much time we spent on the road, but I can never forget the chicken, maize and the conversations we enjoyed on the trip.

Upon arrival at Kabura in Nyabushabi, I agreed that indeed, Kabale is the Switzerland of Uganda. We were treated to a hot bath, tea and a variety of foods including delicious local chicken, beef and matooke which we enjoyed after a warm welcome from Dora and her mother. Dora's mum has a beautiful smile. It made me feel at home.

The next day started with breakfast and then we gathered, in the compound, to reflect on our leadership in 2019. Our facilitator introduced us to the Wheel of Life and asked us to reflect on its balance in our lives. This session was quite emotional because it brought us face-to-face with both the achievements and challenges of 2019. We also had an opportunity to set goals and identify areas of focus for 2020. A heavy down pour had us running back into the house and this is where we had a session with powerhouse Prof. Joy Kwesiga. She is a cherished elder of the women's movement and the Vice Chancellor of Kabale University. She shared her life's journey with us, include how she set up Kabale University. My key learnings from her story were to never give up on your dream and that it's never too late to start something. She encouraged us to believe in

ourselves and create supportive systems in the work that we do.

We crowned that day with two stories from Shwenkazi who shared with us how she built women over generations and the success of aging like fine wine. We also heard the story of 4-widowed women of Kabale who've stuck together through thick and thin with their backbone being trust, patience, love and most importantly, God. With these words of wisdom, we were ready for a delicious dinner from Mama Dora and then enjoyed the cold night of Kabale.

We woke up early on Day 3 to visit Lake Bunyonyi which is the number one travel destination in Kabale. However, before we got there, we stopped over to visit Grace Villas, a home for vulnerable girls. We danced, played football with these beautiful young girls, and listened to stories from the Villas. We then made our way to Lake Bunyonyi to plan for the Chakra Village. We enjoyed the beauty of the place as we connected with nature amidst another down pour. The day ended with gifts, pizza, music and dancing. After we managed to leave Lake Buyonyi via a very slippery road, we stopped over to visit an Uncle and Aunt of one of us. We enjoyed the anthem of the Bakiga and a blessing for when we returned to Kampala. The day ended with dinner prepared by Mama Dora and an early night. We were up very early and started our journey back at 4am.

The welcome, happiness, joy and kindness of the people of Kabale will always stay with me.

Biggie



One Year Down the Road

APRIL 2020

RE-AWAKENING THE JOURNEY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SISTERHOOD

Bakkidde Nakimbugwe Bernadette

Director, Access to land Justice, (LANDnet Uganda)



The year 2019 began with re-ignition of some senses that had been lying asleep due to the Christmas break. Upon receiving an invitation to the CEOs retreat, I was overwhelmed with joy because 2018 had taken a toll on me professionally, emotionally and physically. LANDnet was heading into its consolidation year and I had no clue on how to do this.

The ambience, the facilitator, fresh meals and refreshments, safe space, sharing experiences with women of valour of different ages from different professions was all new to me. One thing for sure was that we all had dreams and needed guidance on how to follow them through while manoeuvring past the challenges each of us had held onto for some time. It dawned on me that I had not been focused and intentional in my decision making and this was my first highlight of the entire process.

Every chakra struck the right codes in my mind and body and I could relate to each one of them thus developing annual goals and plans including specific actions to be taken in reducing my knowledge gap, nurturing my existing and new networks to strengthening my family relations with parents.

The journey began and to my surprise, I received a call from the BBC East Africa Regional office to become a panellist on one of their shows known as "She Word" to discuss women and inheritance particularly, land rights. Especially land rights! I was overwhelmed with joy but also panicked. I commenced reading a lot of literature. To my shock, it was an interactive session that did not focus on legal jargon or assessments but on enabling the ordinary folk or non-lawyers understand the plight of women and girls in inheriting land across Africa. Due to the success of the show, I was invited for a second show this time focusing on the payment of bride price. To me, this was an achievement because my mouth which had been silenced for years had suddenly woken up. I knew I had to continue speaking for those who did not have such opportunities.

Being accountable to a person whom I never knew previously helped me create a new support structure. This has resulted in us being more than just accountability partners. We've become sisters and mothers to each other's children. The opportunities for support have enabled us to become relatively financially stable and feed our families.

When a husband travels out of the country to seek better opportunities, you subsequently became a "single mother". Your world and plans change to include being a dad. This has changed my thinking and duties as a mother to my children. My guidance to them has increased as I provide security, psychosocial support, and participation in all school activities, responsibilities which were previously shared. I thank the Almighty God for this phase because my children and I have become closer than before. I have become their main source of love, comfort and guidance. This also affected my trips away from home to attend reviews. I realised that days away from them meant looking for an additional support structure. Luckily one of my sisters-in-law is always available. But it, later on, had a cost implication which I was incapable of sustaining.

The check-ins by CivSource have meant the world to me. Previously, I was closed off and did not want to let anyone in because of the hardships I was facing. It gave me comfort and support.

My accountability partner told me once, "Berna live one day as it comes. Everything will be ok with time!" I had heard these words before but had not practised them literally. I've since learnt how to live within my means and sacrificed things I loved including hanging out for a cup of coffee with friends when I could not afford it. I realised that buying in bulk from wholesale shops was much cheaper and reduced the pressure instead of running to a nearby retail shop. I learnt how to handle smaller amounts of money, particularly because donors have changed their funding priorities. Access to land justice is no longer a hot topic for most. The result is me thinking outside the box and coming up with a comprehensive strategy on access to land justice, cleaning house and getting ready to showcase in 2020, what I plan to achieve with the support of different stakeholders.

The Year 2019 ended on a positive note. I realised I was not alone in my struggles and this made me stronger.

It's an amazing journey that continues. And as my former school motto says "Strive Regardless"

ONE YEAR AFTER THE WOMEN LEADERS' RETREAT.

Jackee Batanda

Senior Managing Partner, Success SparkBrand Ltd



In December 2018, when Jackie Asimwe, invited me to join in the inaugural Women CEOs retreat in January 2019, I said yes. I did not hesitate. I have been to retreats before and have been running writing retreats since October 2015 and I know they are important spaces for thinking and reflection. One never stays the same after any retreat. I had spent the last couple of years in a reactive mode and an opportunity to get me grounded and to lock out the world for a few days was appealing. I was also entranced with the idea of joining a retreat, which I did not have to organize, so it would be good being on the other side of the table.

I went with an open mind. I did not know what to expect. I was ready to be wowed and to go with the flow. It was an intense time, where I was forced to confront different decisions I had not faced. It gave me clarity of where I needed to go, what I could and could not tolerate, to slow down and be mindful. My roadmap after the retreat included:

- **Emotionally**

- Create 20 minutes each morning of 'me' time. – I have miserably failed at this and I am working on carving out this time.
- Practice the 'pause' – this has stilled me and centered me in the most tumultuous situations.

- **Spiritually**

- Read the Book of Daniel and write lessons from it to prepare myself for my seasons.
- Take personal retreat times away.

- **Physically**

- Lose weight
- Home exercises



AT WHAT AGE DID YOU MOVE OUT OF YOUR PARENTS HOME TO LIVE ON YOUR OWN? HOORAY, WE DID!

Rita Atukwasa

Executive Director, Institute for Social Transformation

How old were you when you moved out of your parents' home to live independently? The answer to this question is not universal. A quick sample among my acquaintances, both females and males, reveals that anywhere from the age of 24 when people leave the university, is acceptable. It's true that there are some peculiar cases who moved out rather early in life, between the ages of 12 and 20.

A few weeks ago, this was the topic of discussions on a morning show of one of the popular leading radio station in Uganda. Most callers' contributions corresponded with what my acquaintances had shared, except one. This gentleman, in complete disbelief at the ages being suggested by most, said he had moved out of home at the age of 13 and so had many of his friends. His experience struck a chord because at 12 years of age, the Institute for Social Transformation, a pre-teen, was just on time to move out of its parents' home and live independently.

The Institute for Social Transformation founded in 2006 had for the last twelve years been housed and hosted by a founder member and Board Chairperson Dr Thelma Awori.

During the CEO's retreat at the beginning of 2019, as I reflected on our existence, I got the idea to transition to a spacious place that would promote more creativity, thinking and opportunities for wellness. The team had grown in number and was not afraid to dream. As a leader, when the thought popped up, I was sure that it was the right one. I picked it up, documented it, and set a timeline. The reality of no funds and an actual physical space to move into did not deter me. The most difficult thing was to navigate the attachments we already had because our old home had been a place of much love and care. However, the thought process provided by the Retreat made it possible to face the challenge.

With the support of the team and the Board of Directors, on August 22nd 2019, we did it. We moved out!!!



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Belinda Namutebi

Co-Founder & Director Ondaba World Ltd

It takes two to make a child but a village to raise the child.
They have two minds but the village has a gold Mine.
They carry two perspectives but the village is rich with experience.
They are two hearts but the village, an overflowing bossom.
Two is absolute but the village is a web.

A web of wealth;
A web of intellect;
A web of love;
A web of safety.

Of wisdom I can use because it's worked for a sister;
Of counsel from the palms that have rocked the cradle and now smile with mature joy;
Of hugs, open doors, generous dining tables and jogging laughter;
Of vulnerable strength, of safe whispers, of tears, of cleansing.

It takes two to make a child but diversity is in the village.
And diversity is what makes life colorful;
Like the colors of the rainbow;
That mirror our Chakra energy.



MY 2019 CHANGE OVER POINT

Bakwangira B Judith
Chairperson, Coalition Girls Empowerment

Meeting the great ladies was great and has not left me the same since we parted from the Retreat. It was one of the greatest gifts to me in 2019.

When I examined my background, I discovered that I had a lot of self-pity because of my experiences. However, when we shared our stories, it became clear to me that I had the power within me to stop the “woundology” I had against my relatives who had actually played a big part in making me the person I am today. I had to stop blaming and justifying issues which I could put aside and be happy. Particularly with myself.

Since parting, I have reduced my interactions on social media. It’s been a gradual process giving up something I was, for all intents and purpose, addicted to. I have been intentional though and I am doing my best to stay away. My smile, which I had lost years ago, is back. I can now happily face Judith every day because I love myself more. I had taken ages without reading the Bible because I thought God had neglected me. Now I am fighting to rekindle my relationship with Him, which is fulfilling.

I’m keeping track of my daily activities, especially my financial habits. This was key to my growth and plans for 2019. I have kept in touch with a few ladies since the retreat because it was important to me to surround myself with positive sisters. The book I bought from Babigumira Hope gave me courage to take one step at a time and never to give up on myself. In her book Hope says “I have to work hard and make a better life for myself. What excuse do I have? I have learned that there’s a process to achieving results despite having valid dreams. Success does not come automatically; it takes time. There are daily habits and practices that increase the chances of achieving any given goal in the setting of commitment to good values and principles”.

I achieved most of the things I had on my bucket list for 2019 especially those tied to my personal growth. I attended a public speaking course and that experience did not leave me the same. My facilitation and leadership skills have improved greatly and I can proudly say the Retreat was a life changing experience for me.

I pray a blessing on all of us.

TIME FOR DISCOVERY

Elliot Orizaarwa

Executive Director, Women And Girl Child Development Association
Coordinator, Coalition On Girls' Empowerment

Receiving the invitation to the leaders' retreat from CivSource Africa was not something I expected. However, it has ended up changing my leadership journey.

January has not been the same since I attended the leaders' retreat in 2019. First, I was curious about the choice of venue. Why choose a place we had to access using a boat? The memory of Ugandan revellers who died after their boat capsized in Lake Victoria was still very fresh for me. Even then, I was at KK Beach Ggaba, by 4pm on January 6th 2019, with my bags ready to go. The boat ride took about 45mins and when we arrived, my journey had only just started.

My leadership style, spiritual life and social capital have all changed for the better since those three days at Lakeside Escape. I now share my feeling with the people around me and that has helped me connect, in a meaningful way, with my staff and friends. My finances are planned more consistently, with a greater focus on investing rather than spending.

As a feminist leader, CivSource helped me connect with myself and gave me tools to use to appreciate who I am. I am grateful for Hope Chigudu and her big heart, together they helped me learn to have intimate conversations and find myself.

I remember saying that when we are broken, everyone looks ugly except us. This has enabled me to lead with the presence of body, mind and soul.

Our staff have been trained on the same principles I learnt at the retreat and there is a big change in the organisation. Previously, the staff never drafted proposals and concepts without my presence. However, after the training, they now feel part of the team and have learnt to submit their work out of love. Even our project management has improved. I can say with confidence that my organisation now has a soul. I have used the information on chakras to train other organisations which have led to a demand to unpack them as a tool for managing organisations.

I look forward to uncovering more even as we deeper into our understanding of the 7-chakras.

”

It is only when you drop yesterday's assumptions that you can glimpse tomorrow's patterns and possibilities. To see deeper, unseen first.

- Umair Haq.





MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY 2019

Jacqueline Ayuya Mukasa

Executive Director, Center for Public Interest Law

It is often said that it's lonely at the top and as a leader, I identify with that saying. Executive Directors in the nonprofit sector can sometimes feel isolated and this retreat enabled us to create an effective peer network to share experiences, empower, encourage and learn from each other. Getting to spend a few days away together as leaders and reflect on our leadership journey so far and take the opportunity of the new year as a fresh start to challenge ourselves to do, be and lead better in 2019 was a blessing.

I had fun and came away energized to be a more impactful me in 2019 by making time and investing in resources that will support me and CEPIL. The retreat helped prepare me for the 3 days I spent with the CEPIL board members and secretariat as we worked on the strategic roadmap for 2019 – 2021. I was able to share about the importance of work & life balance, understanding and being passionate about the work we do, identifying our purple cow and making it visible, following trends, being fluid and futuristic. We now have offsite quarterly performance review and reflection meetings to monitor and evaluate our progress and highlights shared at the quarterly board meetings. We have established work-life-balance and activities such as team dinner and movie nights, prayer fellowships, fitness and games sessions to build team spirit and make CEPIL a great place to work. We have strengthened technical and leadership capacity of the team through communications and financial literacy trainings. We have noticed a significant improvement in the team performance .

On a personal level as a leader, I also embarked on a journey of integrating self-care and wellness in my life to increase overall wellbeing and in multiple dimensions of performance. I resolved to

make time for me and other parts of my life that were there before I became a leader and make me more human. I set goals for emotional, physical, social, spiritual, intellectual, environmental and professional wellness. The list was long and I did not accomplish all the set targets but I am proud of the few accomplishments such as hiking Mt. Rwenzori, completing a 42km marathon, attending a project management professional course, doing a Western European tour, making time for family, friends, Rotary, daily devotion and Bible Study Fellowship.

I still need to up my game with regards to journaling, reading, serving in the Children's Ministry, jewellery making which I enjoy but have psyche challenges. From these minor lifestyle adjustments, I realize that I can be a more effective, efficient and successful leader by making time to relax and reboot.

Last but not least is the Chakra Village a support system that was established during the retreat in January 2019 to do life together. It is a shelter where we are one another's keepers as connected leaders with connected spirits. It is a granary where we share our collective wisdom, knowledge and generosity. It is a well where we refill and draw from each other to enable us to raise our leadership bar. Lastly, it is a fireplace where we are warmth and light to each other celebrating, supporting, elevating and holding each other accountable and dance. Since the retreat, the villagers have kept in touch individually supporting each other and met four times last year to reflect, relax and reboot. I am so thankful for this safe space with like-minded people.....leaders and I always leave the meetings re-energized for my leadership journey. Phillip C. McGraw said, "Life is a marathon and not a sprint." As leaders, we need to acknowledge that the journey is long and arduous so we need to pace ourselves to be successful.

I GOT TIRED

Eva Mujungu Kasasa
CEO, Evashots Photography and SUA Investments

TIRED of looking down on myself yet I have so much on the inside of me.

TIRED of being in places that don't speak to me.

TIRED of limiting God and limiting myself.

I GOT TIRED of not being fully grounded and decided I had to do something about it.

I GOT TIRED and realized that Women who know what they want stand firm, they are grounded and not easily shaken.

Because I GOT TIRED, I Chose to shed off most of the things that were in my way. I chose to create a beautiful space I could work from that spoke to me.

Because I GOT TIRED, I created a space I loved and was so happy. It smelt better, it felt different. All because I GOT TIRED.

When I look at the Chakra women,

I see Strength,

I see Women who are fighters and are not afraid of the storm.

I see Hard work,

I see Persistence,

I see Love,

I see Power,

I see Winners,

I see Gifts, gifts that I can learn from, Ohh, how I am blessed,

I see big sisters I can learn from.

I BLESS GOD FOR THE VILLAGE

EvaShots

A LETTER TO MY FELLOW VILLAGERS

Hope Chigudu

Feminist, Activist, Organisational Development Specialist

Dear Village-mates,

Greetings!

A year ago, thanks to CivSource, we sat together, in our created and creative meeting room, at Lakeside Escape, and talked about embodying our leadership through integrating heart, mind and body. The meeting brought together people from different sectors but the conversation had a quality of absolute equality- everything was drawn out of everyone - equal and different. I was energised by sharing our collective experience, learning, and networking, as dynamic individuals, leaders, social entrepreneurs and hasslers. I listened to you with humility, I followed the radical connections, empowerment and community building that was emerging. I was excited that we were learning from the inside, not just responding to the outside. I also remember that we were clear that the self, organisational and our movements are interdependent. Since then, many of us have walked side by side, supporting and learning.

Today, the retreat experience sits comfortably in my heart, reminding me that we, who are at the forefront of social change, should learn to integrate different strategies to be whole, to apprehend wholeness, create wholeness, and understand it. I felt enriched by the level of both intellectual and emotional engagement. We visited our humanity.

I am writing this letter to you, to update but also to take you back to that beautiful space that we shared more than a year so.

This month of Covid-19 has been emotionally; mentally and physically intense. I have felt my levels of anxiety increase, been unable to concentrate and felt pain in parts of my body that I didn't even know could hurt. There have also been times when I have heard this song playing in my mind:

I am a fraud.

I am a total failure.

I can't trust myself to finish anything I start. I will never achieve my life goals.

I will never succeed. I will never amount to anything.

I am useless.

I am a disappointment to everyone.

I am nothing.

There's no point even trying.

I give up.

What will people say if they find out?

WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY???"



There is another song; I know that the lockout has allowed us to introspect and to face our demons. There have been times when I have been on top of the world when I have kept hope alive and known that in the end, things work out.

In this letter, I might appear as if I'm going all over the place, I may even stutter but bear with me, let me share my thoughts as they relate to grounding.

How have I been coping? How do I usually get out of paralysis especially when I wake up and I am all fearful and scared? By digging deep within me, recalling the discussions at the retreat and finding ways of grounding.

I don't have a special grounding formula for wholeness that integrates mind, body and spirit but there are things I know for sure. The body is a vehicle for consciousness, and your seven chakras, which I know you remember, are the wheels of life that carry this vehicle about-through trials, tribulations, and transformation. Just to remind you, village mates, that chakras are organisational centres for the reception, assimilation and transmission of life energies. What we generate determines much of what we receive and in this way, it behoves us to work on our chakras and clean up outdated, dysfunctional, or negative programming that may be getting in our way. Now and again, we need to stop and identify what it is that we need to clean up. Is it a relationship that is gone wrong, unsatisfying work, money related fear, children, parents etc? Whatever it is, we need to clean it up.

Village mates, remember that we are on a journey and we have been provided with a vehicle in which to take this journey. The vehicle is our body (ies), which is equipped with everything we need. It is the only one we will be given. Even if we cry for years to have another, that might not work. We are our bodies. We live our lives in this physical world; getting up in the morning, eating, going to work, touching, sleeping, and bathing. One of our challenges on this journey is to keep our vehicle nourished, happy, and in good repair. It means checking with the vehicle, now and again. Even a small scratch must be identified and repaired.

Think of days or situations when you wake up with a feeling that you have no sense of direction, those days when you feel fragmented, broken, and exploding with anger. Think about the times when you wish you were not a leader. How do you bring yourself back? Start with the body. It is the journey and it is where you begin. It is your connection to the physical world, your foundation, the home of your dance. So dance and dance, do your grounding dance. Dance for the body and with the body. Grounding dance is a process of dynamic contact with the earth, with its edges, boundaries and limitations.

I don't know about you, but with me, when I am not grounded, I become unstable, lose my centre, fly off the handle, and get swept off my feet. I lose my ability to contain, to have or to hold. Natural excitement becomes dissipated, diluted, and ineffectual. Then I know I have to ground because grounding is a way of coping with stress. It brings clarity through stillness. Just as a lightning rod protects a building by sending excess voltage into the ground, so too, our grounding protects the body from becoming overloaded by the tension of everyday life.

Village mates, grounding anchors and roots me. Through my roots, I gain nourishment, power, stability and growth. I thrive and flourish. I embrace stillness, solidity, clarity, grounding out the stress of everyday life and increasing the vitality of my life force.

Many people who cannot find their true path in life have simply not yet found their grounding. Finding grounding does not just happen. We have to pay attention; stop and listen to the body. What is it saying to us? Then respond in a way that nourishes it. Ideally, though, we should not be thinking about grounding but make it our way of life.



In today's urban world, few people are naturally grounded. Our language and cultural values reflect the superiority of the high at the expense of the low. Our natural bodily process such as waste elimination, sexuality, birth, breastfeeding, or nudity is considered dirty, to be done only in private. Our power structures in organised religion, business, and government flow from the top (power over), controlling and often trampling that which is below to serve the higher cause of that which is below. Colonialism and patriarchal practices took away some of our natural grounding strategies in the name of civilisation.

By losing touch with our ground, we have lost the sense of our intricate connection with life. We are ruled by bits and parts, instead of the whole, and a part of that is isolated, fragmented, and out of touch.

When we live in an alienated and ungrounded culture, where most values do not favour the body or its pleasures, we develop pain. The stress of competition and fast living does not give us a chance to rest and renew or to process that hurt and to release it. No matter what the case may be, there is always an opportunity to reset. To be rooted.

As we ground, we need to honour what matters to us: something less tangible, yet more meaningful. We need to bring soul to the intellectual – the heart as mediator and thinker. All this emphasises the very real need to look after ourselves – 'time out' to nurture and look at our sources of inspiration. Else we become overwhelmed and burnt out. There will always be contradictions, Oh SM! But we learn to live with contradictions, paradox, possibilities: we have to weave, wind and be open to whatever comes.

How do we ensure that our grounding is sustainable? We need a maintenance programme to protect the health of our bodies, and our day to day mundane needs. We need self-nurturance which is at the centre of self-care. In the tool kit of nurturance are many items, for example, rest, massage, hot baths, eating well, exercising and giving the body pleasure.

In addition to the nurturance bag, at my best, my self-care tool kit includes the following:

- Showing up for myself, every single day, whether I feel like it or not
- Unconditionally loving, accepting and embracing all parts of me
- Celebrating and honouring myself in good and bad times
- Trusting in my "crazy" and magical process
- Tapping into and listening to the wisdom of my soul
- Sometimes it's ok if the only thing I do today is breathe. Sometimes self-care looks like sleeping all day for me – but guilt-free because that's what my body and mind need at the moment.
- Being fully me in the world – I think it was Tom Sawyer who said, "Just be and do you". You don't owe anyone, including our family, any explanations. There's only one you, and you only have one life. Live it fully."
- Sharing and expressing myself authentically in all spaces and spheres of life
- Creating safe spaces for myself and others
- Being intentional about everything – what I eat and drink, where I go, who I spend time with, what I watch, what I read, and even what I wear
- Feeding my brain with superfoods and high protein diets because I know it is working over-time and requires additional fuel to sustain it.
- Being clear about my boundaries even if it means losing friends or opportunities – Self-care is not selfish.
- Claiming my name –Hope

So, my village mates, CivSource opened up a journey, with unending vistas and possibilities. It is really up to each one of us.





Happy Anniversary Chakra Village



Plot 18, Balikuddembe Road, Naguru
P.O. Box 4310, Kampala, Uganda
+256 393 224 056
info@CivSource.com