

# Olivia Mugabe

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## Where do I start from!!! It is lifetime experience that I got! Before I knew it was the PLOT for me, in came the THEME and finally, the ACTION!

It all started with a phone call from a friend asking if I would be interested in taking part in a Women Leader's Retreat organized by CivSource Africa on the given dates. Immediately, I thought it was something I should give a go at since I needed some time to relax and unwind.

Fast forward, I receive an email from the amazing Allen (Asiimwe – Associate, Mopane program) with a ticket to the retreat. I took time and read through it and believe you, me, even the small voices in me that were suggesting that I shouldn't go, shut up right away! The packing, the anticipation, the waiting, and all that.... kicked off as I waited for the 10th of June 2021. Of course, for my safety and that of everyone else, I made sure I carried out a COVID-19 Test and fortunately, I was safe and good to go!

On the day of setting off, 2:48pm found me at KK Resort beach in Gaba where we were all supposed to meet and board a boat to Lakeside Escape resort, in Mukono. Most of ladies had already arrived. Being me, I moved around greeting each and every one asking if they were headed to the same destination. We stayed at KK Beach for about 30 more minutes before we set off.

On the boat, I led the prayer just before we started moving. The ladies were amazing, full of life and by the look of things, each one of us was held up in anticipation of what was awaiting us at our destination. Halfway the beautiful sail on the lake, I noticed balloons and some construction materials but in form of decoration on the boat. I didn't really pay much attention until the little inquisitive girl in me asked Allen, what all that meant? and whether she said she was taking us all for a reconstruction. Now, that was the plug for me because, first of all, I needed the 'RECONSTRUCTION' and also, I was amazed at how creative the organizing team was! The waves were a bit stronger but nonetheless we enjoyed the boat ride.

Almost fifteen minutes after 4pm, we safely got to our destination. The team at Lakeside Escape resort, together with the phenomenal Jackie Asiimwe and incredible Penelope Sanyu were waiting for us. We were served to a cold glass of juice together with a gift for each of us... (very thoughtful of them)! We all checked in and settled into our rooms.

Dinner was served at 6:30pm and at 7:30pm, we converged at the fireplace. Here, individual introductions happened, we sung, we talked about our daily hustles and our most favorite space in our respective homes! At 9pm, we were off to bed as we had to be up early the next day.

That was the start of an exciting, awakening and fun-filled weekend!

On Friday, 11th June, our day started at 6:30am with a physical exercise session led by the extremely passionate Felix of Kona Dance Workout. The session awakened my mind, body, and soul!

### Time for Action!

My oh My! Our very first session commenced at 9am. Welcomed into a training room, beautifully set up, cozy and in every corner, laid or pinned with a very meaningful placards plus several words of affirmation.

Penelope Sanyu, with so much peace, calmness and composure took us through the morning. The session was interactive which enabled each one of us speak their mind regarding the topic at hand. Our first assignment was to set up a house in only 60 minutes which we did in groups. It was a very fun and educative session as it proved the power of teamwork.

Throughout the different sessions, we were given time to reflect and meditate on each topic we had covered. This enabled me to view all past events with clarity and understanding. Meditation helped me cultivate an environment of focus primed for purposeful reflection. At the end of day one, each one of us took an oath to be an improved version of themselves, to be an empowered and fulfilled woman. This exercise still rings a bell in my head as I pledged to live by my oath! It is surely going to keep me in check and will get me back on track whenever I feel like backsliding.

On the third day, Jackie Asiimwe took us through different topics. Her humor and very energetic mood kept me wanting more of her content. Highlight of her session was the "Changing Our Underwear" context. This I will share with everyone who cares to listen!

The peak and most catchy event was when we put our grievances, problems and obstacles on paper and let go of them by burning them down. As the smoke went up, I visualized my unwanted thoughts going up with it, I felt renewed, happy, and lighter at heart. I released all that I didn't want, I let go and let God do all the work, I opened my heart to joy, peace and harmony.

Sunday morning, we had our last session! We also got gifted once again and prepared to leave Lakeside Escape resort, back to Kampala.

In a nutshell, I cannot say enough about the Mopané Leader's Experience Retreat. Every session I attended was insightful and moving. The facilitators, Penelope and Jackie are all you need in this crazy and judgmental world! The support group, Allen Asiimwe, Grace, and Jackie Ayuya Mukasa; May God bless you always. To my fellow leaders who shared their testimonies, painful pasts, hardships, loss; all is well. One session in particular stood out (the burning ceremony) because I kept waiting for the next speaker to shed a tear as she spoke about her many losses: divorce, the death of a child, family issues etc. etc. I instead cried the most as I didn't have the courage to even talk about what I was letting go.

I look forward to a new life full of positive energy!

Thank you CivSource Africa.