

# **Huduma Fellowship Valedictorian Speech**

By Moses Mulindwa – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2022

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Distinguished guests;

The leadership and staff of Leo Africa Institute;

Faculty members;

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung team;

My great comrades, the Huduma Fellows Class of 2022; Ladies and gentlemen,

I am humbled and honoured to give this Valedictorian speech on behalf of the Huduma Class of 2022. It is a great privilege to represent such an extremely distinguished class.

When I was starting to prepare this speech, I looked up the call for applications that was put out by Leo Africa Institute inviting applicants to join the Huduma Fellowship Class of 2022. This was premised on the need to assess whether the programme has met its intentions and purpose.

Ladies and gentlemen, here is the report card. The Huduma Fellowship has indeed provided us with an opportunity to learn the ideals of “servant” leadership. It has offered networking opportunities and a deeper understanding of the public sector in Uganda. Accordingly, today, we are graduating as more civically conscious individuals & public sector champions.

To drive this home, I will make reference to a social media post by Comrade Thomas Ibale, one of the youngest Fellows of the class. This is what he posted for his LinkedIn audience last month, “As we approach the final hurdle of the Huduma Fellowship, I reflect on the journey thus far. Starting out, imposter syndrome had me in a chokehold but it was not too long until I found my feet. The fellowship has greatly enriched my desire to become a change-maker in my society, taught me valuable lessons, and connected me with equally as passionate fellows who have become family. I am looking forward to the graduation seminar and the nostalgia has

kicked in. Forever grateful to have been a part of the journey.”

Coming from one of the youngest Fellows, this paints a clear-cut picture of how impactful this Fellowship has been to the 15 of us.

To put it differently, a good training programme must pass the REI Test;

R - It should be Relevant.

E - It should be Empowering.

I - It should be delivered in an Innovative way.

This is an accurate depiction of the Huduma Fellowship. It has equipped us with the necessary knowledge and skills to turn our fortunes into reality.

Throughout the seminars and workshops, we have had a memorable time, made new friends, and broadened our networks but most importantly, our intellectual capacities have been built.

The seminar and workshop topics gave us unmatched enlightenment. Right from the first contact with situational leadership and personal inventory to the thought-provoking discussions on political consciousness and contemporary Africa. We are indebted.

We are also delighted to join a network of young and intentional leaders.

The Huduma Fellows Class of 2022 that started as timid strangers on a quiet bus to Kasenge Forest Resort Beach has been transitioned into one with an unbreakable bond of comradeship gracing this space on graduation day.

We can't wait to return to the world and continue to exercise the knowledge and learnings accumulated.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a

hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16

The Huduma Fellowship has lit our lamps by honing our abilities in servant leadership. We must let them shine in the different spaces that we occupy.

Each morning, wake up singing ***This Little Light of Mine***, a traditional hymn for children that was once an anthem for the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 60s.

*This little light of mine,*

*I'm gonna let it shine.*

*This little light of mine,*

*I'm gonna let it shine.*

*This little light of mine,*

*I'm gonna let it shine.*

*Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

Comrades, as we return to work after the fellowship, the bar has been raised. Each one of us has immense potential to contribute to Uganda's development and Africa at large.

New ideas must be birthed

Well-thought concepts must be tabled

Falsehood must be trounced

Conflicts must be solved and bridges built

Today, humanity stands at a defining moment in history and is confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being.

At this deeply challenging time, the world needs calm, competent, and pragmatic leadership.

No statue has ever been erected in honour of a critic. If we want to win, we have to show up. We have to be the man in the arena as described by Theodore Roosevelt in his speech, *Citizenship in A Republic*.

We, therefore, must be ready to face the challenges that are ahead of us.

We must speak with confidence in board rooms, zoom meetings, twitter spaces, media talk shows and conferences.

We must become brokers of knowledge by authoring news articles, books, policy papers, and issue papers.

For the scientists amongst us, new disruptive technologies must be invented.

Dear comrades, as we progress in life and our careers, we must be careful not to fall victim to the temptations summarised by the 5 Ps.

Avoid being a victim of Power.

Avoid being a victim of Property.

Avoid being a victim of Prestige.

Avoid being a victim of Prosperity.

And finally, avoid being a victim of Pomposity.

Ladies and gentlemen, you might know the African proverb that says: "it takes a village to raise a child." On behalf of the class, I would like to appreciate the individuals and partners that have walked this journey with us.

First, we would like to thank our facilitators especially, Awel, Kwezi, Kwame, William, Bright, Angelo, and James. You have moulded us into who we have become and for this, we are very grateful. Your efforts shall be rewarded.

To the different partners led by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, thank you for committing resources to such transformative programmes. Anna and the team you lead, the class recognises and appreciates your immense contribution thus far.



To all the staff of Leo Africa Institute, your selfless service to us throughout the fellowship is highly appreciated. We can only pay it forward.

Finally, we applaud Nze Eve Photography for capturing all the moments through her magical camera skills. Through your photography, telling the story of the Fellowship got easier and more interesting.

As I wrap this up, I would like to turn to Leo Africa Institute one more time. As a sign of our appreciation, we have carried gifts for the institute in form of books. Each book contains a personal message from the respective Fellows. Books have a purpose, are thoughtful, and will benefit many others that will come after us.

We are also delighted to announce that we started a book club, the Huduma Huddle. The idea of the Huduma Huddle is to keep together and share perspectives on various

issues that affect us on a national, regional and continental level.

Secondly, in the coming days, we will engage with various actors in government, religious and cultural institutions, academia, science and technology, and the private sector not only in search of more knowledge but also as entry points for collaboration and partnership.

Furthermore, The Huduma Class of 2022 commits to starting up a social scheme that will raise funds to support noble causes in the community.

I would like to end my speech by congratulating the entire Huduma Class of 2022. Please stay true to the principles of our comradeship.

Thank you very much.