

“If you want to walk fast walk alone and if you want to move far move together” - this is a famous quote repeated to me by my mentor Immaculate Chocho who has been working with me since July. We were speaking about teamwork during one of our mentoring sessions but I wanted to reflect on this quote again with the new meaning it has had for me on my mentoring journey so far.

I must admit that when I found out about the Commonwealth Women’s Mentorship Scheme I was intrigued about how it would work. In the past the mentoring I had participated in was always related to specific aspects of careers and roles, and the foundation had always been familiarity and face-to-face interactions. As I excitedly told others about the opportunity that The Commonwealth had given me I was met with some scepticism. What would we have in common? How could we relate to each other? Would we understand each other’s positions, workplace cultures and environments we were operating in?

I was matched with Immaculate; a mentor who would inspire anyone through her achievements (Representative on the Uganda Olympics Committee Women and Sport Commission, City Authority Sports Management Committee, Participant in the ESPN Global Sports Women Mentorship programme to name just a few). Of course her career journey, accolades and skill set was relatable for me which helped our initial connection, but this has not been the most impactful aspect of our relationship.

Immaculate’s perspectives she has provided when giving me advice have been a real game changer. She has asked me what questions I hadn’t previously considered and shared stories about how she had overcome challenges with approaches I would not have felt comfortable doing until now. Of course as women we have faced similar barriers that women across the world face and this is precisely why I believe that this type of programme can have a real impact for women globally.

I want to say this to those who asked me those questions about the programme- we shouldn’t limit ourselves to one sector, one city, or one country. The answers are out there and they may be somewhere you would never expect them. This also why I believe in the value of expanding your networks globally. It is important that we don’t fall into the trap that our current environment is the only place we can learn from, or more importantly the only place we can receive support.

Going back to the quote- this experience has taught me to overcome barriers through overcoming borders. It has been amazing to see so many women like me from the Caribbean, Africa and Europe go further when working together. Maybe we need to rethink how we are taking part in mentoring as women. We have a lot to offer each other but we must remember that we have a lot to offer the world. Why limit the support we give to each other to our local environments? Gender inequality is a global issue and we must think globally.