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Absa GenA Graduate programme prepares youth for leadership roles

Beneficiaries. Absa GenA Programme, formerly Rising Eagles Barclays Graduate Programme provides a platform to prepare youth for leadership roles.

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When 31 year Mr Maurice was pursuing his Master's degree in Financial Services at Makerere University in 2013, he had to struggle to get hands on skills to ensure that he stays relevant to the job market.

He says that the Master's degree he attained gave him an opportunity to interact with people some of whom were already working in the financial field.

These he says, were instrumental in helping him achieve his dreams. "During that time, I met many people working in the banking sector. I realise that these were the right people to further open doors for

me for bigger potential in my life," recalls Mr Atan. He says one of his classmates sent him a link about a global outreach by the then Barclays Bank for a job and training opportunity, which led to his career

breakthrough.

"The link was about a training programme introducing me to the practical, leadership skills and market business," Mr Atan says.

Luckily, he was selected to be

part of the global outreach known as the Rising Eagles Barclays Graduate Programme in 2016, which automatically rendered him an opportunity to join the banking industry.

He happily speaks about the immense benefits from the graduate programme.

"This was a very big change in my life. I developed leadership skills, exposure to the business world, acquired opportunities and hands on technical skills," Mr Atan narrates.

He adds, "The opportunity I got is something I will always be proud of."

He says that the nature of the job market has changed and it is important to continue the journey of upskilling.

"I am a believer in the value of skilling. It is a comparative and competitive advantage," Mr Atan says that this can only be achieved through interacting with the right people, studying the right things and acquiring practical skills.

Currently, Mr Atan is the Market and Risk Manager at Absa.

Mr Atan is not alone. Cindy Kukunda, 26 years Old, is a Junior Trader, specialising in foreign exchange, derivatives and fixed income, also found solace in the Rising Eagles Barclays Graduate Programme.

Ms Kukunda holds a Bachelor's Degree in Finance from Makerere University and graduated in 2016, she was jobless for a year after her graduation.

She later acquired a sales job at one of the petrol stations around Kampala but it never deterred her from focusing on achieving her finance dream job.

"It took me a year to get my dream job but I never gave up because I was determined to achieve my dream," she recalls, noting that in January 2018, she joined Barclays Bank now Absa bank, through their graduate programme.

Although she did not have experience in the finance sector, her pro-activeness and open mindedness enabled her gain skills from the training during the graduate programme.

The Rising Eagles Barclays Graduate Programme is currently known as 'Absa GenA Graduate Programme'.

Ms Gloria Ssali, Head of Learning, Leadership and Talent, says the programme was formerly known as Rising Eagles, Barclays Graduate Programme but following Barclays re-branding to 'Absa Bank Uganda Ltd', the programme name has changed.

The Pan African graduate development programme is a 10-month schedule which runs from January to November. It started in 2013, to allow young graduates below the age of 30 to spread their wings and ascend to greater heights in Banking.

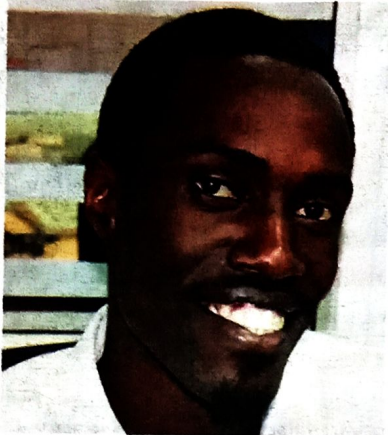
"Graduates below 30 years are prioritised because we want to contribute to youth employment in the country," Ms Ssali says.

In addition, the graduate programme invests in developing future leaders for critical roles within the Bank. The programme offers a minimum of three to seven graduates with Postgraduate degrees preferably, or a four year degree with a second class upper, an opportunity to be hired permanently at BA3 level.

Ms Ssali explains, four years degrees are generally Bachelor of Science Engineering, Statistics etc.

"Initially when the programme started, we were looking to grow internal colleagues at the lower grades but in 2015 onwards, we opened the programme externally, searching for young talented graduates".

"Graduates to be considered for the programme should also have zero to two years' " Ms Ssali adds



L-R: Mr Maurice Atan, the Market and Risk Manager at Absa, Ms Cindy Kukunda, Absa, Junior Trader, Foreign exchange, Derivatives and Fixed Income and Ms Gloria Ssali, Head of Learning, Leadership and Talent at GenA Programme. COURTESY PHOTOS

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Congratulations to Absa Bank

Sebalu & Lule warmly welcome and congratulate Absa Bank upon its entry into Uganda and rollout of the unified Absa Group brand identity. We are proud to serve and be associated with Absa Bank Uganda.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection process starts in April. Graduate must have their transcripts by the time of application.

The Graduates send in applications, assessment is done. If many are picked then a phone interview is done to reduce the number and lastly a one on one interview.

Whereas the screening process is done in December, induction is carried out in February.

However, Ms Ssali says that whereas the process is done by July in other countries, it tends to be slightly slower in Uganda in terms of people applying.