



Acumen East Africa Fellowship Graduation

*Mohamed Okash, the Class of 2025
7th November 2025, Nairobi-Kenya*

Good evening everyone,

Distinguished guests, Acumen team, and my incredible fellow classmates, what an honor to stand here today as we all imagined a year ago!

This year has been more than a fellowship; it's been a journey of *becoming*. We came in as leaders from different corners of East Africa, each with a vision, each with our own story. And along the way, Acumen helped us find something deeper: our authentic voice, our shared purpose, and the courage to lead differently.

We learned that leadership is not about titles or certainty, it's about *service, curiosity, and moral imagination*.

Through the Authentic Voice and Public Narrative framework, we discovered how to tell our stories in a way that moves others to action, to amplify not only our voices, but the voices of those we serve.

Through Polarity Management, we learned that leadership is not about choosing sides, but holding tensions, between tradition and innovation, idealism and pragmatism, self and system. We learned to harness the energy of diversity, not to avoid conflict, but to transform it into creativity.

And through Adaptive Leadership, we confronted the hardest truth: that the biggest challenges we face are not technical, but adaptive. They require us to learn, unlearn, and grow; to stay curious in discomfort; and to mobilize others for the work of change.

In **immersive Two**, we dove deep into *The Good Society*, exploring what it truly means to build societies rooted in **freedom, human rights, identity, power, and justice**. Those conversations stretched our minds and our hearts. They reminded us that change is not just about solving problems, but about reimagining systems, about asking not only "*what works?*" but "*what's right?*"



Looking around this room, I see more than fellows, I see true elites, politicians, Moral Leaders, social entrepreneurs, dreamers and doers.

We are united by a shared belief: that hope is not naïve, that dignity is non-negotiable, and that leadership begins the moment we choose to act, even when it's hard.

And today, apart from graduating, I am deeply proud to be the pioneer Acumen Fellow from *Somalia*.

This fellowship has shown me what's possible when courage meets community, and I will make sure to bring more Somalis into this transformative journey in the years ahead.

As we transitioned into **the Foundry**, we add one more identity to our lives, *Acumen Fellows*, leaders grounded in values, fueled by purpose, and connected by hope.

Finally,
May we have the *humility to see the world as it is,*
and the *audacity to imagine a better world.*
May we have the *ambition to learn at the edge,*
the *wisdom to admit failure,*
and the *courage to start again.*

Thank you, Acumen, the facilitators, and the cohort who made this journey unforgettable.

And to the Class of 2025, thank you for your gifts, freindship, laughter, your wisdom, and your light.

The work begins again, out there, in our communities, in our countries, and in our hearts. Let's go and build that good society we dreamed of together for East Africa and the World.

Thank you.