

Simulizi Blog

APN Conversations: Young African Leaders with Elias Mambo



“We all have what it takes to bring about change in our communities,” says Elias Mambo, the Executive Director - for Youth Advocacy Platform in Malawi, an organization that supports youth-led, community-led and citizenry-led participation in implementation of Sustainable Development Goals through advocacy, information dissemination and capacity building. In this interview, Elias reflects on the significance of African Philanthropy and how it manifests in Malawi.

“Africa Philanthropy brings a sense of local ownership and local solutions to problems affecting our communities. It prioritizes local initiatives that empower local communities and encourages community-led participation in decision-making and development processes aimed at ending challenges faced by the communities. In this case I am speaking about agency in Africa individuals and organizations in addressing local challenges.”

He further stated the work being done by his organization to ensure that young people are involved in charitable giving. Elias said his organization managed to raise the youth voices by providing a platform where they express their perspectives, concerns and aspirations for their communities. By involving the youths in such initiatives, they get the sense of agency and this has encouraged them to become active participants in decision-making processes. “We have launched various projects like construction of Resource Centers in remote areas. The involvement of the youths and some citizens from these communities has given them a sense of ownership in the projects. We also run some programs aimed at tackling issues such as education inequality, poverty, environmental degradation, mental health, or social exclusion, and we have seen young philanthropists contribute to positive change at the grassroots level. Their initiatives can have a direct impact on the lives of their peers and other community members.”

To further grow the benefits of youth philanthropy Elias listed the following key factors:

a) Education and Awareness

Providing education and raising awareness about philanthropy, its importance, and the potential for youth involvement is crucial. This can be done through schools, youth organizations, community programs, and online platforms. Educating young people about social issues, the needs of their communities, and the various ways they can contribute fosters a culture of giving and encourages their active participation in philanthropic endeavors.

b) Mentorship and Guidance

Offering mentorship and guidance to young philanthropists is essential for their growth and development. Experienced philanthropists, community leaders, and professionals can serve as mentors, providing advice, sharing their expertise, and helping young people navigate the philanthropic landscape. Mentorship programs can help shape their understanding of effective giving, strategic planning, and sustainable impact.

c) Funding and Resources

Access to funding and resources is also a vital factor. Establishing dedicated funding streams and grant programs specifically for youth-led initiatives can provide financial support for their projects.

Additionally, providing resources such as training opportunities, networking events, and access to information and expertise can empower young philanthropists to implement their ideas and initiatives effectively.

d) Collaboration and Networking

Encouraging collaboration and networking among youth philanthropists is crucial for their growth and impact. Creating platforms and events that bring young people together to share experiences, exchange ideas, and collaborate on projects can foster a sense of community and collective action.

Building networks with other youth organizations, nonprofits, businesses, and community stakeholders can also enhance the effectiveness and reach of youth philanthropic efforts.

e) Recognition and Celebration

Recognizing and celebrating the achievements of young philanthropists helps motivate and inspire others to get involved. Highlighting their successes, sharing their stories, and providing public recognition through awards, media coverage, and community events not only boosts their confidence and commitment but also raises awareness about the importance of youth philanthropy.