

Accelerating AfCFTA: Voices of Youth on Infrastructure for Philanthropy and Social Investment

JOIN THE YOUTH WEBINAR

ACCELERATING THE AFCFTA: VOICES OF YOUTH ON INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PHILANTHROPY AND SOCIAL INVESTMENT

JOSEPH MIMBALE
SPEAKER

VANESSA DONKENG
MODERATOR

TANATSIWA DAMBUZA
SPEAKER

KAENE DISEPO
SPEAKER

CHANCEL ZORBLEWU
SPEAKER

SAMI AISSAOUI
SPEAKER

The graphic features a dark blue background with a stylized architectural pattern. At the top, the text 'JOIN THE YOUTH WEBINAR' is in yellow, and the main title is in white. Below the title, six circular portraits of the speakers and moderator are arranged in two rows. Each portrait is accompanied by the person's name and role in white text. A large yellow curved line on the left side of the graphic connects the top and bottom rows of portraits.

In our continuous efforts to engage with the youth in Africa, we have been actively hosting discussions on the topic of Accelerating AfCFTA: Youth Voices on Infrastructure for Philanthropy and Social Investment. A series of sessions were previously held in South Africa to commemorate Africa Day, at the 8th East African Philanthropy Conference in Zanzibar and at the 4th Africa Philanthropy Conference in Senegal. Building on the key takeaways and recommendations from the aforementioned sessions, APN organized a similar youth webinar on August 29th, 2023, that featured four esteemed young panelists who shared their extensive knowledge and specific focus on how young people can meaningfully contribute to the acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Opening the discussion, Chancel Zorblewu, from the AfCFTA Coordination Office in Ghana, emphasized the importance of young people creating strategies that align with the African Union's 2030 agenda. She highlighted the need for young people to invest in skills that will enable them to access finance for their initiatives. Zorblewu also stressed the significance of utilizing available IT tools to follow institutions working in areas of interest, rather than solely expressing grievances.

Representing the Zimbabwe Institute of Regional Integration, Tanatsiwa Dambuzwa, emphasized the need for a user-friendly language when raising awareness and educating people, particularly at the grassroots level. Dambuzwa highlighted the potential impact of AfCFTA and the importance of effectively communicating this to all stakeholders.

On the other hand, Kaene Disepo, from Change Africa, called for a reorientation of the education system to align with the realities on the ground. Disepo also emphasized the importance of showcasing successful youth collaborations and adopting a practical approach to awareness raising and education. This approach would enable young people to fully leverage opportunities and acquire the necessary knowledge to navigate the AfCFTA.

Sami Assaoui, the Digital Media Specialist on the panel, highlighted the role of organizations with access to information in educating and empowering youth on AfCFTA. Assaoui emphasized that lack of information and basic skills should no longer be barriers to young people's access to the benefits of AfCFTA.

The webinar also provided an opportunity for participants to share their insights. One participant stressed the importance of open collaboration among young people, as it is crucial for achieving significant milestones in the acceleration of AfCFTA.

In a nutshell, all the speakers agreed that African philanthropy plays a pivotal role in providing the necessary infrastructure for meaningful youth engagement in the acceleration of AfCFTA. This includes filling gaps in education, technical and capacity development, reaching out to marginalized communities, and amplifying the voices of young people at all levels. The webinar served as a platform for youth to learn from and interact with one another, exchanging viewpoints and perspectives on the challenges and opportunities presented by the implementation of AfCFTA. The story of AfCFTA is an ongoing one, with more chapters waiting to be written. The visionaries who initiated this agreement understood that Africa's strength lies in its unity, and the youth are at the forefront of driving its success.