

## APN YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS CONVERSATION WITH GRACE GONDWE



In this interview, we have the privilege of speaking with Grace Gondwe, the Operations Manager for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation. With over five years of experience working with young people in various capacities, Grace has dedicated her career to empowering and supporting youth in their personal and professional development. She has been involved in research, project management, and training initiatives that aim to enhance the lives of young people, particularly in the areas of education, entrepreneurship, and community engagement. Today, Grace will share her insights on African philanthropy, the impact of youth philanthropy in her community, and how young people can drive philanthropic efforts in Africa. Let's dive into the interview and learn from Grace's wealth of knowledge and experience.

### **Could you please briefly tell us about yourself and the work that you do?**

My name is Grace Gondwe, and I work for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation as the operations manager. I have more than five years of experience working with young people in a variety of settings, including student government leadership, volunteering in youth-led, youth-focused development initiatives, and conducting youth-focused research. I am also a researcher who works in various capacities, generating data that is used to influence programming and policy that advances the

interests of young people. I serve as BeRelevant's research lead and I also chair the board of the Amini Center for Policy Research at the moment. I've conducted research for the Mastercard Foundation and the Youth Think Tank at Restless Development, where I helped produce statistics on helping young entrepreneurs scale up their businesses. I previously served as a USAID Youth Lead. I was the project manager for Youth Lead's Operation Chapamo initiative, which aimed to increase the involvement of young people in development, governance, and decision-making. I oversaw research on the problem's youth participation and governance face, which included feedback from 967 young people. Additionally, I have worked with the Standard Chartered Foundation and Volunteer Services Overseas to train young people in employability skills, particularly female and disabled young people.

***What does African philanthropy mean to you and what does philanthropy look like in your context?***

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation is responsible for fostering the expansion, accessibility, and positive effects of the non-formal education program for young people that we offer all over the world. This initiative is called the Award.

The Award is an international framework for non-formal education and learning that encourages young people to dream big, recognize their successes, and change the world. The Award helps young people discover their purpose, passion, and place in the world through the development of transferable skills, improvement of fitness levels, development of an adventurous spirit, and community service.

Philanthropy, in my view, involves mobilizing resources to assist in providing young people with the skills they need to safeguard their own futures and those of their families.

***Could you please share a story of how youth philanthropy is driving change in your community?***

Through the resource mobilization that we do, young people across the globe and in Zambia in particular are given the opportunity to engage in the Award and empower themselves for the future. Hundreds of young people from marginalized and at-risk backgrounds have received this globally recognized certification. They have built skills to improve their livelihoods, engaged in community service work, and been part of physical recreation activities, enhancing their health and well-being.

### ***How can young people drive youth philanthropy in Africa?***

Young people can promote philanthropy on the African continent in a variety of ways. I've included the ones I believe will have the biggest influence.

***Educate Themselves and Others:*** The first step for young people should be to educate themselves on the urgent issues affecting their communities and all of Africa. With this knowledge, they can decide where to focus their charitable efforts. Youth philanthropy is important, and young people should spread the word and encourage others to get involved. This can involve holding workshops, delivering speeches, or using social media. They can accomplish this by participating in initiatives like the Award, which offers opportunities to carry out all of these activities.

***Join Existing Youth-Led Organizations/Movements or Start their Own:*** Young people can join already-existing youth-led organizations that are dedicated to philanthropy and social impact or start their own. These groups can act as hubs for cooperation, resource mobilization, and collective action. They will be able to select the issues that are most important to them and act to address them.

***Build Partnerships and Collaborations:*** Working with other youth-led organizations, NGOs, and philanthropic foundations can help organizations increase the impact of their initiatives. Additionally, networking can offer valuable knowledge and resources. This offers opportunities for increased impact due to the synergies created.

### ***What factors can be considered to grow youth philanthropy on the continent?***

We need to stop thinking about philanthropy solely in terms of money or finances. Providing pro bono services and volunteering are two examples of generosity. By approaching generosity from this perspective, we may see the many and varied ways we can donate the various resources we possess.

### ***Can you give an inspiring quote about giving?***

*"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*