

Pulse on the Principles Season 1 EP 3 Final Transcript

Claudine: We live in a time when the world is more interconnected than ever before. But this has never been more apparent than it was in early 2020 when the novel Coronavirus, COVID-19 swept across the globe shutting down cities and overwhelming healthcare systems. While governments scrambled to respond to the crisis, the development and humanitarian community stepped up to offer their knowledge, tools, and decades of experience to help fight the virus. At the forefront of the response, digital technologies are being deployed to curb the spread. But how can we ensure that these tools are being used responsibly and designed in a way that includes rather than harms individuals? This is "Pulse on the Principles." Welcome to "Pulse on the Principles," a podcast series that gives you a live look at putting the principles for digital development into practice. I'm Claudine Lim, your host for our mini-season on the Digital Principles and COVID-19.

From smartphones increasing access to the internet and information the future is digital. In order for youth to be able to fully create their own opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and have a positive impact in their communities, they must be empowered with digital skills and be ready for the future. However, opportunities for building the youth's digital skills can only go so far if there's limited access to these tools. As we've navigated COVID-19 the past several months, the importance of digital access has become evident as the majority of the world population relies on it for work, mental and physical health, education, entertainment, and more. COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of digital skills and access. It has also exposed inequalities and the digital divide. Before we get to our guests today, I want to remind you that for the latest news and resources, be sure to visit digitalprinciples.org and follow us on Twitter @digiprinciples, that is @digiprinciples. You can also use #digitalprinciples. Don't forget to leave a five-star rating and subscribe wherever you get your podcasts for more episodes, which now brings us to our guests.

To talk about the political and social exclusion of young people and the importance of access to information and communication technology, we have Richard Dzikunu with us today.

Richard: Thank you very much. Glad to join you on the show today.

Claudine: And to discuss youth engagement and their involvement in tech, we have Nanjira Sambuli.

Nanjira: Hi, lovely to be here.

Claudine: Both Richard and Nanjira are leaders in the technology for development sector and are renowned advocates for youth and inclusion. Richard is a United Nations award-winning activist. His professional portfolio includes working as a programs officer for Curious Minds in Ghana and as an advocacy associate for the Primary Health Care Initiative with PAI in Washington, DC. Richard is also an alumni of the Women Deliver Young Leaders Program and currently serves as a facilitator for the Young Experts: Tech 4 Health. Nanjira is a researcher, writer, policy analyst, and advocacy strategist who works to understand the intersection of information and communications technology adoption with governance, media, entrepreneurship, and culture. Nanjira is a board member at the Digital Impact Alliance, Development Gateway, and The New Humanitarian. She is also a commissioner on The Lancet and Financial Times Commission on Governing Health Futures 2030, Growing Up in a Digital World. Nanjira, let's just get right into it.

Working at the intersection of technology and international development, we often talk about how digital literacy and digital skills are necessary for young people, especially as tech becomes more ingrained into all aspects of our lives. So, you're on several boards that focus on ICT adoption. Can you start us off by defining what it means to be digitally literate, and what specific skills we should focus on? So, is it as simple as knowing how tech and the internet work? Is it knowing how to use tech to our advantage? Or is it being able to navigate the wide breadth of resources and identifying the best ones?

Nanjira: Digital literacy can either have a very descriptive definition or it can be as wide as you've sort of encompassed in that question as it were, and I think all of them are valid. There is value in folks knowing how to use a very specific tool or a very specific code programming kind of thing, just as much as it is to have general knowledge about what's happening in the tech ecosystem that is shaping our lives. I think it has that technical component, as well as how it fits within society. And I think when we describe not necessarily even try to define digital literacy, it's really about how people get to be knowledgeable and aware about how the bits and bobs that shape their lives come together. Because if we define it as say, being a coder, which has been one popular frame around digital literacy, it's sort of saying all of us have to learn how to code which is fine, but then what happens after that? It limits our imagination around what tech is and by extension, digital literacy could be. But what we should do is allow the magnanimity and the complexity to be defined and described as diversely as appropriate to different stakeholder groups.

I would say I'm digitally literate, for example, because I understand many general things and not necessarily how it all works, and sort of like how the sausage is made. But having the breadth of insights and perspectives is a form of digital literacy, which is just as valid as the person who knows code inside and out.

Claudine: So, Richard, you're a big name advocate for youth inclusion in tech. We just discussed digital literacy and skills of which are usually required for economic empowerment or basic youth development. Can you talk a little bit more about this and talk about the mismatch between these aspirations and the education that's actually available? And where do we see these trends being most prevalent?

Richard: Yeah, thank you very much. We see a society where there is increased digitization of services of almost everything we do. So, it's basically our ability to be able to leave, learn and grow within this society where everything is going digital. And so, it's very important. And so, when it comes to young people, when it comes to the issue of mismatch and education, then it's very important to consider what we define also what a digital technology or having the skills. And so, for instance, I grew up in Ghana. During my primary school and secondary school, the curriculum for ICT was based on learning what is a mouse, what is a keyboard, how to use the web, how to use Excel. And after graduation, I'm considered to have digital skills according to the curriculum. So, as this the digital skill according to what we study or what educational program has given me. But if you also listen to what Nanjira is saying, then we know that it's very complex, and we are talking about being competitive in a society that is increasingly becoming digital.

So, the mismatch I would say is where we assume that certain skills are enough to say I'm digitally literate, when the actual competitiveness, it's people coding, people having the ability to market online, to use various platforms to be able to earn an income. But according to my curriculum, I should be digitally literate, because I know what a mouse is, what a computer is, how to use Word, Excel, and not necessarily knowing how to use the internet to be able to access a service. So, that is where the mismatch is, where some leaders from my country say that we are training young people to become digitally literate. So, that is the mismatch if I should put it that way.

Nanjira: What's interesting is, let's say a predominant narrative I've seen around digital literacy that's permeating to education curricula has been around this developmental thinking where we've seen language like coding is the literacy of

the 21st century. It's very poetic, isn't it? There's another one around data as well, as data has become this economy and currency and oil of the digital economy. So, those very narrow frames have been taken on as sort of like, recommendations in the development sector that then translates to education. And I think that's what shapes, what become curricula. The challenge in that is, you base a curriculum on today's sort of understanding around these issues. And by the time that goes through all the processes and into the books, it's not like back in the day, when we had a runway, maybe 10 or so years. By the time you go out there, and you're telling kids to code or using a very particular program, and you focused only on that, and not what the basics of code is, it's sort of obsolete. So, that's been a challenge.

And I know one practical example, too, from a tech company that was running sort of like programming skills for folks in different parts of the world. And when they focused on their own suite at the time and trained developers around that, by the time they were trying to move to another suite of coding programs, they had to retrain all these folks again, because they focused so narrowly on the kind of tool that was in the place, sort of like a funnel, as opposed to the broad strokes. What are the building blocks that you need to know, the essentials really, that you can put together and sort of like assemble your own literacy, if you will? So, that's where we need to make sure that there's that flexibility that is also recommended when we say governments should adopt digital education curricula. So that's, I think, where we need to distinguish this going forward.

Richard: A lot has to do with, like Nanjira mentioned, the educational curricula and what actually goes into the understanding of what digital literacy skill is. And so for me, I see a lot of efforts going into making sure some of the curriculums meet some of the requirements in terms of current trends and current skills that are needed. But then we also see a mismatch in terms of how we are bridging the gap. I feel that the digital society is evolving so much that it's becoming difficult, particularly in developing countries to be able to meet the requirement. And so, if we take the African Continent for example, according to World Bank report, the Sub-Saharan African Continent has a very young population and we are looking at those under 25. And so, we are saying that, yes, the African Continent is the next big thing for digital technology. Young people can harness digital technology for businesses. But then we come to the training they are receiving in the schools, to this big thing we are talking about, and there is a mismatch.

It's important that whilst we talk about the innovations and what we stand to achieve, we look at the current circumstances. Yes, there are a few young innovators on the continent who are doing a lot of good things, but out of a

population of over 60 million young people. Like, how many young people can we pick out of this and say, they have digital literacy skills? And so, like I said, if you have a lot of young people graduating from high school, from the university, and the curriculum is teaching them a certain computer modeling system of what you should do and not getting the skill to even go online or even be able to establish a platform to market some of the innovations or even be able to code. There are a lot of online resources. There are a lot of digital platforms, but are we able to use them to benefit young people that we seek to? So, I think that's where the mismatch is and this is where we need to invest more, particularly in mainstream education, and making sure that the curriculum meets the competitive requirement that we have now.

Claudine: I mean, we even have SDG 9 that aims to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation. But from what you guys have told me, it feels like we're pretty far from it. So, what does digital equality look like realistically, and who is responsible for making sure nobody gets left behind?

Nanjira: One of the SDG's targets in SDG 9 that I've worked on very closely has been 9C. They have this lofty dream of having least developed countries especially connected to the internet, enabling technologies by 2020. Here we are in 2020, in the age of the Coronavirus pandemic, and it's been laid bare that we didn't get everybody connected. And even among those of us who are connected, by the way, the quality of what we're connected to, what we're meaningfully able to derive from it is varied so that we've now talked about digital divides between those connected but also between the connected and unconnected. And each of these concerns is valid, each of them has to be considered. The challenge has been because we're transitioning from a world that has always thought about these things in very linear boxes. And the interconnectedness of it all has been difficult to get people to understand. It becomes a very difficult thing to show people that even if you're working on something as old school as health, you have something to bring to the conversation about digital equality.

Whether it's purely from carrying the message that, you know, that you can't have digital health transformation without affordable or available internet access, to making sure that you have familiarized yourself with what are the best practices for whether you are an innovator or you are the government trying to set policy. I'm trying to not say the answer is everybody's responsibility because then that can become nobody's responsibility. But it really is everybody's responsibility in these domains we're working in. In public sector, one of the most difficult things that now the pandemic has made sure we cross

has been getting governments to see that there's a need to prioritize investments in infrastructure in ICT, for example. But that also means stuff like making sure that electricity is there or schools are there because how good is it to have this fancy education program that will get kids laptops or tablets if they don't have classrooms, which there's still concerns.

So, what digital equality essentially is looking like is how do we make sure that this digital age that is bringing so many great benefits but also showing that it's an amplifier of what's in society. Digital is a tool and as much as its own thing, of course, with its own infrastructure, but it's a tool that's coming to cut across where we are in society today. It can be used for great good to make sure we also fast track some of the things we've been working on. But if we just continue as though it's this blind, technical, alone, siloed thing we risk leaving people behind. So, it's a political question, a moral one, a social one, an economic one. And when we get to this part of our definition people are just like, "Oh boy," but I'm like, "No, that's it really, that's what it looks like." And that that's the big thinking that we need to get back and expand our framing to, so we can strategically and coherently organize who takes what part of collecting from the same collective understanding.

Richard: It's a political one, it's a social one, and it's an economic one. And we have to go back to redefine this framework. We have to go back and look at who is being left behind now. I see a world now where there's so much focus on innovation, new technology, forgetting that more people are already left behind and we are bringing more and more innovation. So, let's take, for example, if as an average Ghanaian young person, I have digital literacy skills. If you are able to introduce 10 innovations within a year, I would be able to access that because I have the skill. Those who do not have the access I would be gaining more skills and more opportunities because I can access. And those who do not have the skill, they continue to lag behind. So, we need to really take a step back and go back to investing in access and the skill. And that is one thing that I think Nanjira already mentioned, the SDG. When we look at indicator 9C, it says universal access to ICTs. And we have already in 2020 COVID-19 shows us that people don't have the access and they don't have the skill.

And so, we really need to go back and revisit. It's important that we continue to talk about innovation, we continue to talk about new technologies. But let's take a pause and acknowledge that a lot of people do not have that access. How do we give them access and the skill to use? And so, I think that is very important, because as a young person who works in the field of sexual reproductive health, and we were excited when WHO's new operational framework for COVID-19 acknowledged that for instance, in facilities where there has been interruption in

access to sexual reproductive health services, facilities should try and move to online services, so that services is not interrupted. This is good. Facilities should move to online services. Women, children, girls, do they have a computer? Do they have a mobile phone? How do they access this online digital service that WHO is saying they should access? Even if they have a mobile phone do they know which website to go? Do they know how to click?

So, we are talking big, and the people who have to get the services basically cannot access them. So, if their new operational framework is saying, we should prioritize digital health services, the end-user is the woman, is the girl in the rural community wakes up in the morning, water to maybe drink is a problem, even food on the table is an issue, then we are saying they should go online and be able to access a service. So, I think it's important that we have to look at those who have been left behind. And a lot of times when we meet at conferences and talk about interventions, we talk so big forgetting the end-user. Like, basically they don't have the access and the skill and that is where we need to begin from.

Claudine: Right, I think you guys brought up so many good points. And just like tying it to the digital principles, one of them is to be collaborative. So, we need to see a lot more conversations happening between like government, NGOs, tech companies about, you know, how do we build this infrastructure? What tech is available? What tech can actually be used in certain regions? And then, like Richard was talking about, designing with the user. So, you know, you might give them all these fancy tools to be able to access health services, but can they actually navigate it? There's so many things to consider and it all can't be answered in just one session. So, we've established that digital skills and literacy are key for youth and economic empowerment. But there's a large disparity between that and the education, tools, and resources that are actually available to build it. A lot of inequalities as well as our reliance on technology has been exposed plainly during the pandemic. Has COVID-19 impacted these trends at all or has it just made them more obvious?

Nanjira: Those of us who had home internet access could make the link from being told to stay at home and work from home. But even people who typically might have access to the internet, maybe through mobile bundles, which is pretty much how the developing world sort of consumes the internet, it's very prepaid bundled kind of thing, which can be bought in affordable daily size packages. Now, having to rely on all of that to sustain your activities, the ones that you're replacing, you know, meeting people, dealing with clients, and so on and so forth it's meant a whole new thing, for instance, on budgets that people have in their homes. That you'd have to think about, okay, now we're talking

about bundles becoming a budget item. What does that mean when we have food and all these other things to consider? And this, by the way, is not even just a preserve for developing countries. We've seen this in developed nations as well where kids could not transition as well to the online learning because at home, they just don't have any affordable access. So, their peers are continuing to learn while they're left behind.

Interestingly, here in many parts of Africa, what the governments did was also used radio and TV as other ways to broadcast content, maybe somewhat simultaneously to what maybe classrooms are supposed to be doing via Zoom and other sessions. So, there's a workaround. Look at that, having old school technology still counts. Those are just workarounds, right? So, there's been patchwork here and there to get things going and get this whole work at home, learn from home thing going. But it's really shown us all the ways all these things come together. Telling folks in Lagos, for example, to work from home without electricity, 24 hours a day was a tall ask. And so it shows you the link there for all the things that need to be there together to make sure that this is something that's happening. So, we're really dealing in a world of a pandemic where it's really a privilege, unfortunately, to have all these things working. It's a privilege that transcends our understanding and development, but at the same time, also manifest those.

So, I'm hoping that if nothing else, and the lessons are unfolding as we go along, people start again to bring back all these complexities and interconnectednesses into how they do the diagnostics and more importantly the solution that will be used to intervene going forward. Yesterday in Kenya there's a big fanciful launch of the Project Loon, which is a Google internet connectivity project that uses as sort of the best description of like almost hot air balloons. Anywhere there can be connectivity in rural parts of Kenya, somebody asked is that what the people in rural Kenya asked for? Nobody seemed to do that. So, they did this fanciful thing where the minister called the president, and it was fantastical. But can they afford it? We're back to those questions. Do they have the right devices to get this 4G network that we're now all being encouraged to use? So, that's where we are with this reality of the pandemic. It's also showing, to Richard's excellent points earlier, the hypocrisies because even when we say, for example, principles of development, like design with the user, I can very almost confidently say that that particular project was not designed with the user in mind.

So, we're back to the basics. When we say we're designing with the user, what does it actually mean to do it very deliberately? And this pandemic is an

opportunity to go back to those basics, and really also take stock and hopefully start course correcting as opposed to doubling down on those mistakes.

Richard: I love the point Nanjira raised about designing with the user and the hypocrisy that exists. I'm here in Brussels, but I follow the news in Ghana. And one of the big success stories that our government celebrated of the COVID-19 tracing app, there was a lot of money spent on this. And after launching this app, now, let's look at the statistics. According to the World Bank, one out of five people in Africa have access to the internet. Now, this beautiful app that was launched, how many people in the rural areas, first of all, know about this app, can even use it for contact tracing to be effective? Now, even if people know about it, and can use it, let's look at access or cost of internet services. Zimbabwe has one of the highest cost of internet services in, I think the world or so. Almost \$75 for 1 gigabyte of data. It's a whole displacement of priority here. And I think this is where we see that COVID-19 has revealed all of these loopholes in terms of how we plan, how we design, and how we implement.

It reminded us that indeed, we need to begin to have these conversations all over again because for me, it was a big shock. Like, I'm talking about millions of dollars here, which could have gone to rural areas to either provide some literacy training skills, or even organize hundred women, and taught them how to, for instance, use a mobile phone, how to access a service, and it was used to launch a contact tracing app. And if you ask me, if that was successful, I will say you should look at the current figures of COVID-19, which are on the increase, and we can conclude if the contact tracing app was successful or not. It shows that there's a clear mismatch and we need to revisit the conversation about digital technologies and look at where indeed there's the lack of access and then the gaps and address them.

Nanjira: I must really jump in there not just to laugh because I remember following that and thinking wow, how not to do development. They were seeing this in developed countries too where the resources that have gone into it are also going to have this unfortunate effect where people think digital tools are the ones that deprive them of the needed resources on the ground, and that's a risk we must keep in mind. If people keep seeing these things that are failures, then the moment that we tell them, here's how it can actually work for them, they'll be like, "That's the thing that made sure I didn't eat for three months," because you all were running with a flashy thing, as opposed to doubling down on the basics. Now, that's actually a risk we're going to see across the world because some countries have decided to do the same thing, are trying to really pin the opening up of the economies to these apps.

The very basic questions like, "Okay, once I'm connected and I get to know that I may have been exposed, then what? Has the hospital been built on the app that I should I get my treatment?" These are the downsides of not getting the principles right, that could actually contribute to a digital technologies backlash if we're not careful. And this could be possible if we're not careful going forward.

Richard: It also revealed a lot of issues about data privacy and security issues. And already people have issues when their data is being taken. They want to know who is taking the data, how it's going to be stored, and if it could be used in some way against them. And now we have seen all of these contact tracing apps coming in, but also without a full plan to really educate citizens on how this data will be utilized. And so, in the future, if we come back and say we need some data for health purpose, to improve your health outcomes, what will be the trust level of people, if current trends are showing that we are not using the right approach, so people are not trusting government taking my data? Technology or health data can be used to improve your health outcomes, which is the case but how we are doing it is causing people to lose trust in where their data is going and if indeed, it will be used for the health benefit. We should have used this opportunity to really design technologies with the user in mind and include the user to have regained that trust in the fact that if we are able to collect your health data, we can improve your health outcomes.

But now we are collecting it in a way that is making people lose that trust. And so, how do we go back to them again in the future and say, "We want that data and we want to use it for your health outcome." COVID-19 has revealed that maybe a lot of the current frameworks or approach may not work in the long run. And so, we may need to revisit some of the conversations.

Claudine: Yeah, the whole point about privacy and security, I think that's also part of building digital literacy skills. Do people understand what their data is being used for, how it's stored? What happens when that data is no longer needed? Including the design with the user, it's really also about educating the user on what actually happens with their information when they share that. So, talking about COVID-19, digital literacy, and youth currently, how involved are youth when it comes to designing programs and policies for education and health? What kind of barriers do they face?

Richard: As for the barriers, I would say there are a lot of them. Last year, I had an opportunity to be at the Global Health Digital Forum in DC. And there was lack of youth representation in all of the conversations going on. It took me to, like, fight my way through to, like, grab the mic and pointed out that a lot of the

conversations you are having in the high-level panels are all referring to young people, young people, and really where are they in the conversation? And so, it shows that at different levels, the conversation is not engaging young people. And I think when we say engaging young people, it's not also about just bringing us to speak. Like, you can take me to DC I will talk about all these problems but then when you're actually doing the follow-ups and designing the document, or the implementations planned that would affect people, that is where you need us to also be in there. And again, if you want to bring me in there to contribute to the discussion, don't assume that because I'm young, I should understand what coding means and what technology is. You need to also build my capacity to understand the conversation.

We are not being engaged, but also when we are being engaged, we are thrown into the room expecting that if I should be in a room with Nanjira, as a young person, I should be at her level of understanding. No, it's not possible. The older generation and when we are put into these spaces, these are aspects and we acknowledge that, they know the issues, they know what the trends are. And so when you want young people to get in there, take your time, let us understand, build our capacities to understand the issues. Once we understand them, then we come in and then make suggestions on how we think that we can move forward. So, there are two things, the barrier is that we are, first of all, not in these spaces. And when we do come there, it shouldn't be a tokenistic form of participation, where we sit on a panel with prepared speeches or taking notes. We should be made to understand that this affects our lives, and how can we contribute to this process. And so, I think that's where maybe young people like me currently being led for the Transform Health Coalition.

The Transform Health Coalition is looking at bringing all of these discussions we are having to get meaningfully engage young people. And that is why I said I was one of the facilitators for this Young Experts: Tech 4 Health, we contribute effectively to the health of the Transform Health Coalition. And that we are actively part of all of the cycles of the Transform Health Coalition, contributing to policies, campaigns, and how strategy should be designed to reach young people. And so, this is the beginning stage of how we want young people to be engaged, like, we are just not thrown into the spaces. But there is a careful process to make us understand and build our capacities on how to contribute. Then we can also reach out to the larger young people because I am only representing a population of millions of young people. Once I also have the understanding of how I should contribute, then I also know how to engage other young people, which is not in the tokenistic way. So, I think there are a lot of barriers, but we are beginning to recognize some progress. But that is not enough to address the current challenge that we face.

Nanjira: Richard took us to church there for a bit, it's a sermon. And young people are the ones inheriting this messy Earth right now. And we're not seeing left from right. We are not just tokens to be added. We are the freaking majority in the globe. But we do not have the tools of power or control the resources that we know how to put to use. We've been told, you know, if you can't find a job, go out there and entrepreneur. Now you can't go out, how are you going to entrepreneur? If you don't have the internet at home, to take on whatever you have the skills to entrepreneur, it's really sad to think about. And when you see to the gravity of what it actually means to be a young person today, whether it's the kids being born, or the ones who have, here in Kenya who have been told, "That's it for the school year." Stateside, we've seen that some schools have been, like, "No we're moving online, but the fees are remaining the same." And you're like, "What in the entire heck," you know.

It's a sad state of affairs and it's something that should be on the thought of everybody who considers themselves to be in charge of anything that's supposed to move toward going forward. You should not be able to lay your head at night and think this is going to be all right. As "The New York Times" article said, "The kids are not going to be all right, the kids are tired." They're tired.

Claudine: So, it sounds like the increased accountability for the inclusion of diverse perspectives has really been on the forefront of many people's minds and for good reason. It's a lot of work, but it's good work. We have a responsibility to find creative ways to include new viewpoints and present them to people who currently hold influence. Now, simply put, young people should be informed decision-makers when it comes to their own education and health. Now, before we wrap up, I have one more question for the two of you. What is the coolest youth-led initiative or tool that you've seen in response to COVID-19?

Nanjira: I think it's not even so much a tool but it's just the appropriation of technologies to make sure that these perspectives have not been forgotten, whether it's what we've seen in protests around Black Lives Matter or here in Kenya, one of the most exciting ones, I was...I felt alive so seeing students at the leading university saying this online education thing is not working, they blew open the whole lie about how they're supposed to easily transition and they had graphics and these really compelling narratives where they were like, "If the school will not hear us out, we're just gonna put it out to the public so that they know what's really happening." I am always about this widening the perspective where we think about tools or cool innovations, not just about necessarily starting something new up. I think the latitude people have to even set stuff up

has been tricky. Sure, there are apps that have come about but the appropriation of spaces, claiming of spaces by young people has been so cool to watch.

All the stuff we're talking about as recommendations has an urgency to it. That, for me, is the coolest innovation, and I can't wait to see what the perfect storm tides us to on the other side.

Richard: There are a lot of applications, different innovations out there, and I cannot just mention one and leave the other. But again, it has been young people's response. And I did a blog for Restless Development, we talked about generally how young people are taking leadership. And this attests to the fact that when we say invest in young people, it's not like a cliché, it's not like, we are just talking about it. So, many young people from all over the world are on the front lines. And we think of this initiative by young people came overnight, no. It is because it's taken years for some organizations to build these capacities of these young people, to train them about how to intervene in the community, to train them about how to engage. And at this moment when we do need them, a lot of them are doing exactly that. And so, it shows that when we begin to say, "Engage young people," it means that we really need the capacity, we need the skills to work. And there are spaces where young people are being given the opportunity to input into interventions but it's not enough.

And I think I will not do justice in this topic if I don't also mention the fact that in this movement of Black Lives Matter, and the issue of talking about civil society, NGOs, it's important to recognize that when we invite young people, particularly from the global south, to participate in event and to make input and to contribute, it is not a favor that organizations are doing for young people. We deserve a seat at the table. And I have felt that I have gone through that. I don't sit here to speak today because I was privileged or had access. Yes, I have had organizations provide opportunities for me and supported me, but it's been done as if we should be lucky for having those opportunities, we were not treated as equal partners. And so, when we say engaging young people, if you have the resource to engage us, you are not doing us an opportunity. We are contributing to the solution. And I think this is how when it comes to digital technology and digital health, the engagement should go.

And they should not only engage those of us who might have the privilege to have a visa or to travel, we should make sure we are bringing everyone to the table. If it means going to the land of getting 10 people from Ghana, from South Africa, from Kenya, who are affected to be there in the conference, get them there, and not a few of us who have the opportunity to be in spaces and we are there all the time, then what is the benefit that comes for other young people?

So for me, development agencies, working in the field of digital technology in general, if you want to engage meaningfully reach out to everyone, and that is where I think we will be doing justice.

Claudine: When you engage young people, it's not doing them a favor. It's really making your solutions more effective and making sure it has the best impact on the people that you are trying to build the future or solution for.

Nanjira: We'll have to build a new table. If the present one isn't working, we'll break it down and build a new one.

Richard: And I think in some spaces, we already see it that young people are breaking tables because they were not invited to the conversation, they were not engaged and they may be taken for granted. We see that they are taking up via social media platform and demanding for accountability. So, it shows that we should be taken seriously and that when you provide us with the skill and training and you are not doing what you say, we would come back at you. We should be taken seriously.

Claudine: This has been a fantastic conversation. Richard and Nanjira, thank you so much for joining me today.

Nanjira: Thank you so much for having me.

Richard: Thank you so much for having me as well.

Claudine: And to those of you listening, if you would like to give us feedback on this episode or any other topic in our episode lineup, you can reach out to us at principlesadmin@digitalimpactalliance.org. You can also visit us anytime at digitalprinciples.org and follow us on Twitter @digiprinciples. That is @digiprinciples. You can also use #digitalprinciples. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time.

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