For women to act and challenge the status quo in Malawi is huge. Many are perceived as sex objects, belittled, underestimated, and are said to lack quality leadership. These issues motivated one phenomenal young lady to join her local youth activism organisation to get her fellow women out of their shackles of gender-based violence and promote women empowerment.

Twenty five year-old, Patience Munyenyembe, graduated from the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), where she obtained a bachelor’s degree in Gender and Development Studies. She also volunteers with the Africa-Asia Youth Foundation (AAYFO) as the Deputy Country Director for the Malawi chapter, and she’s a Youth Advocate for Activista Malawi under the Action Aid project. But wait, there’s more! She’s currently doing her internship with the Ntha Foundation as an Advocacy Programming Officer. This recognised gender activist started making noise in 2018 through Youth Activista and Pepeta Malawi. She was also able to sensitise and educate her fellow young women on the forms of gender-based violence and the available reporting mechanisms. “I noticed a lack of information was the biggest challenge which hindered young people from being as influential as they should be. I made it a point to apply and attend a couple of training sessions on feminism, Femi-economics as well as neoliberalism and macroeconomic policies to build my capacity so I could advocate and represent young people in my community,” she explains.

Patience believes that activism is not about creating or forming a new organisation or movement but rather about scaling up existing organisations or individuals who share the same goals as you. Considering the root causes that perpetuate and uphold inequalities in certain areas of focus and then finding solutions, that’s what Patience believes social change should be about.

The next five years

You can’t afford to dream small when your calling is this important. Therefore, Patience envisions AAYFO Malawi as well established with a strong working partnership with the government and AAYFO district focal persons in all 28 districts in Malawi. “We would have formed a consortium with local youth networks and clubs so that together we push for the youth agenda. The organisation will be employing young people and not voluntarily. Young people need to start earning financially so that they can invest in themselves at an early age,” she continues.
Patience still wants to achieve so much, including:

- Affording young people the opportunities to engage in activities for deeper societal involvement, better leadership skills, and higher technical qualifications
- Alleviating various problems among underprivileged communities by providing training, initiating conferences, and raising funds
- Creating safe spaces for young people where they can have candid conversations on issues that matter.

Among the national and international platforms on which she represents young people, she also engages her community on issues affecting young people. These issues include increased access to SRHR issues, sexual gender-based violence, meaningful youth participation, women empowerment, and advocating for legislation like the Termination of Pregnancy Bill (TOP), among other laws and policies. There is simply no doubt that this young lady will achieve all she sets her mind to – fearlessly and with boldness.

Follow Patience on:

- Facebook: @Patience Munyenymbe

About Africa-Asia Youth Foundation

Africa-Asia Youth Foundation as a dynamic youth network was founded to seek pathways in fostering collaborations between youths of both continents having identified key areas of exchange in Education, Culture, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Entrepreneurship, Research & Development to spur sustainable youth growth in pursuant of the attainment of Agenda 2030.

Learn more about Africa-Asia Youth Foundation here:

www.aayfo.org

- Facebook: @Africa-Asia Youth Foundation
- Twitter: @Africa-Asia Youth Foundation Malawi