

# VOICES FROM THE SOUTH

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THE  
**KARIBU**  
FOUNDATION

## African Renaissance: The Next Generation Interview with a new S2C Ambassador

In June 2015, 33 young people from across the African continent came together in Senegal for a week-long “Youth Advocacy Summit”. The training session in advocacy strategy and planning was part of the African Alliance of YMCAs “Subject 2 Citizen” (S2C) Ambassadors initiative. S2C aims to move youth to a state of citizenship where they are able to identify the root causes of problems in their own societies, and to make positive change at various levels of decision-making. A select group of young leaders from across the continent are invited to participate in the two-year intensive program, designed to unlock their potential to transform themselves and other young people in their countries.

This month’s “Voices from the South” features a conversation with one of the new S2C Ambassadors, 28 year old Cedric Dzelu from Ghana. He speaks of his experience with the African Renaissance, his views of Africa’s place in the world, and how young people of the continent are ready to transform the systems around them for the better of their people.



**Interview with  
Cedric Dzelu, Ghana**

*Karibu: As a young Ghanaian, what does the African Renaissance mean to you?*

The African Renaissance has so many meanings. Maybe 80 years ago, the renaissance was not called “the renaissance”. It was a discussion about how to come out of the hands of the colonial powers. We needed to free ourselves from colonization, and this shared vision spread quickly across Africa.

After this, there was a new wave of “renaissance” related to issues of peace and political stability. We saw genocide, poverty, and coup d’état. So the renaissance became a message of peace – that we are one people. It was an effort to cre-

ate one unified voice for the road ahead. The next wave of “renaissance” was how to streamline African governments in terms of development and trade, mainly in the 1980s and 1990s. This was mainly dictated by the World Bank and the IMF.

Today, however, we are moving into a new time of African renaissance. We have freed ourselves from the colonial masters. We have come closer to political stability. Our governments have mainly embraced the concept of democracy. Yet, we are still under the influence of foreign powers in everything we do. Economically, politically, and internationally.

So for me as a young person, I am particularly happy to see the philosophical and practical emergence of this new “Renaissance” happening in my time. We now have an opportunity as young people to ask the question of “do we as Africans believe in ourselves as people, and can we rise to the occasion?”

The Karibu Foundation is an independent foundation that supports voices from the Global South that provide alternatives to the dominant paradigms of power, distribution, and development.

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The Africa Alliance of YMCAs (AAYMCA) is a leading pan African youth development network on the continent, representing national movements in 22 countries. AAYMCA gives marginalized youth the opportunity for personal development and empowerment, and equips them with the skills to develop into leaders to make an impact on future generations.

More info:  
<http://www.africaymca.org/>

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Are we able to embrace and move forward with pride in the solutions and experiences that come from the African continent? Africa should be able to write its own history, and enjoy the many resources that the continent has been endowed with. Foreign powers or multinational companies should not dictate this. The idea of an African renaissance gives a new boost of life into Africans, and a sense of awakening for us to rise up to confront the challenges ahead with a shared African voice.

***How would you describe this African voice?***

The voice of Africa on a global stage is not one that tries to raise Africa against the world. It is a voice of partnership. It's a voice that shows that Africa is an equal partner in innovation, international relations, economics, and development.

We want to come to the table with a set of values and skills to work for the development of our continent. We no longer want to see an Africa that is dictated to. We want an Africa that contributes to the process.

We want to bring our resources in order to help to create. We want to bring our rich history, because the history of Africa is so much part of global history.

We want to help engage the world in politics, in business, human relations, partnership. This is what we come to the table with.

***What do you need from older generations in order for you to be an equal partner in the struggle for the African Renaissance?***

I hope that they will see that our contributions are an accumulation of the struggle of people; as part of a chain of people that offer their skills and voice into the efforts for dignity and justice for all people. We are concerned about the same issues as they are concerned about. In that sense, we ask them to give us the space and voice to be part of the journey. We ask them to keep us close in terms of information and capacity building, and that they have a shared sense of what we can do together. We can breathe new life into the engagement together.

***You are just starting the two-year "Subject 2 Citizen" program. What are your hopes or expectations for the next two years?***

For me, I see this experience as a joyous invitation. Many people have heard of the African Renaissance, and most know of the challenges we as Africans face, but very few

young people get the chance to be part of the development of the pan-African vision. For me, to be part of the program – it gives me great joy. At this young age, to be invited to be a voice and stakeholder on the pan-African renaissance is great. This joy will trickle down to the many people who are looking up to me, and are wondering what I am doing. I hope that they can take an example from me.

So for the next two years of my life, this is a course that I aim to fully, completely engage myself in. I want to commit myself fully to the process. I see these next two years as a foundational stage for me, in order to get my roots in the issues of Pan-Africanism. After this, I hope to be a credible voice that groups, institutions, and governments can call upon in the struggle for Africa's dignity and freedom. I hope people will, one day, consider me and my colleagues from across the continent as experts on issues on Pan-Africanism. We are dedicated to the Renaissance, and are excited to see where this journey goes! ■

*Cedric can be contacted at [cedricdzelu@gmail.com](mailto:cedricdzelu@gmail.com).*

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