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African voices for Africa's development

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HOW CAN WE LEVERAGE THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE PROMOTION OF A SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

#SocialMedia4Good a passionate conversation between Maps Maponyane, Amanda Black and Ayanda Borotho that trended well over 3 hours

JOHANNESBURG African Monitor hosted the first of its kind #SocialMedia4Good event at SterKinekor Rosebank, on Wednesday, 25 September 2019. An interactive debate moderated by a global moderator, Nozipho Mbanjwa was held, in which South African role models Maps Maponyane, Amanda Black and Ayanda Borotho discussed the UN Sustainable Development Goals and how every day South Africans can use their social media influence to build awareness and ignite positive change.

The event was attended by dignitaries, business leaders and members of the press as well as selected social media influencers with a track record of doing good in their communities. Attendees were invited to interact and share the event on social media. The discussion was live-streamed on African Monitor's Facebook page using a 360-degree camera and reached South Africans from all over the country, ultimately concluding in the hashtag #SocialMedia4Good trending on twitter for more than 3 hours.

Before the panel discussion with the A-List influencers, Ms. Namhla Mniki, the Executive Director of African Monitor, drove a thought-provoking conversation to present real examples of social media activations in South Africa. One of the guests, as the fire-starters of the day's conversations was Sibabalwe Sesmani – a young woman who founded #WithoutUs and CEO of Unorthodox PR. She shed light on her journey as an activist and explained how she is actively using social media as a tool to make sure that every woman is economically emancipated.

The fire-starter was followed by a passionate 90-minute debate in which our influencers shared their experiences and pearls of wisdom on the following subjects :

1) Social Media: Good or Bad?

In this section of the debate, participants discussed what role social media plays in today's world when it comes to justice and what it meant for them, personally.

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2) Social Media: Education

How can social media be used to educate people? How can the conversations be stirred? Is educational content as popular as "glossy" content? Why are people more inclined to follow funny meme accounts or celebrities and socialites rather than educational institutions, politicians, etc.

3) Social Media: Reduced Inequality

Social media plays no favouritism. It uniquely is the only medium to touch all levels of society, in townships, you'll find that some homes may not have running electricity, but they will have a smartphone with WhatsApp and Facebook on it. How can we use this to their advantage?

4) Social Media: Decent Work & Economic Growth

How can social media play a role in giving access to decent work and economic growth?

5) Social Media versus Traditional media

What is the catalyst for real action in media? Do hashtags really influence people to action for e.g. #MeToo #BlackLivesMatter #SayNoToXenophobia #WithoutUs? Which strategies work in media to activate real social change?

The panel of influence indulged in the conversation:

Amanda Black emphasized there is a shift needed in how we educate our youth and we need to critically think the way we change our environment and make use of new technologies to do so.

Ayanda Borotho addressed the issue of relatability, warning that if we only have conversations in English, we are closing the dialogue to many. She stressed : ' It's important to have dialogues on social media in indigenous languages. '

Maps Maponyane made the point that social media is powerful but still reflects inequalities in South Africa where many don't have access because of data costs.

Building on Maps call to action to ' make caring cool ' Nozipho urges the public: ' Do not give up caring, because caring is contagious. And when people see you care beyond the hashtags it will make a real impact. '

In closing, the panel of influence resonated that all of us have a role to play. We don't have to overthrow governments to make a difference. We can start something small and it can explode into a movement. Social media has the power to disseminate information and create influence in a way we've never seen before.

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ABOUT THE SHARE YOUR STORY CAMPAIGN

The #SocialMedia4Good Debate was the launchpad of the “Share Your Story” campaign by African Monitor, a campaign with the goal of making the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals a part of the national dialogue. The purpose of the campaign is to incite everyday South Africans, youth specifically, to not only take note of the goals but to take ownership and help in the efforts of realizing them in their communities.

The campaign invites social media users to share & post their stories showcasing how they are participating in the SDGs through a competition. At the end of the campaign period – exactly one month from now - Maps Maponyane, Amanda Black and Ayanda Borotho will each choose the story that resonated with them most. The winners will enjoy a special meet ‘n great and social media shout out from the influencers.

ABOUT AFRICAN MONITOR:

African Monitor is an NPO with the goal of promoting sustainable development in Africa as well as building the capacity of civil society.

Find out more about African Monitor on <http://www.africanmonitor.org/>

Follow the campaign on African Monitor Social Media: @AfricanMonitor

ABOUT NONZĒRO AFRICA:

Firmly rooted in South Africa, we are a purpose-driven agency passionate about changing the narratives emerging from the continent and providing active support in driving socio-economic change.

Find out more about NONZĒRO Africa on <https://nonzero-africa.com/>

NONZĒRO is implementing the #ShareYourStory Campaign for African Monitor.

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