*Kristeena, you produce a public radio programme tackling global social and political issues with a staff of young people under the age of 25 years old in Jamaica, and have produced other media with an aim of empowering children and youth and developing and supporting solutions to social issues in Jamaica and globally. In your experience, how can education help children and youth reach their rights and address such social issues?*

Good afternoon everyone and thank you for this platform.  My name is Kristeena Monteith, I’m Jamaican, a postgrad student, a media for development specialist focusing on civic media and a United Nations Young Leader for the Sustainable Development Goals. I lead Talk Up Radio, a public radio programme in Jamaica with a team of young people under 25 tackling major social issues around the world and I'm going to share some insights from my experience.

If you work closely with young people for long enough you notice some common concerns. Young people are concerned about the future. Will we be able to have decent jobs? Or fresh air to breathe? Will we be able to live without the threat of violence and war? Many of us are also critical of the lack of representation of the youth voice on these and other defining issues at influential decision-making levels. We believe we have a part to play beyond sharing our experiences. We have insights that if taken seriously, can be used to improve society.

So how do we address these issues? How do we meaningfully engage the youth voice in sustainable ways that can change the future for the better? And make real progress in human rights and other major issues like climate change.

At Talk Up Radio we've been experimenting with this problem. Firstly our radio show is designed to be a soft transition for high school students who are interested in media to figure out if they want a career in media. They learn the production process and gain confidence in their abilities to contribute to a viable product. Secondly with the content of the programmes we challenge their points of view, encouraging them to think about the issues they are affected by and those affecting other young people from their peers to young people from countries they've never heard of. Thirdly, our platform is open to young people from all backgrounds because we believe they should all have the opportunity to experience civic media.

In our experience, these young people are then able to take their concerns for the future, and their renewed belief in their own voice and civic agency, to build solutions. From Kevaughn Ellis, a young man from a volatile community in Kingston who created the Innercity Youth Development Association and now uses sports to unite communities and create opportunities that encourage children to focus on education instead of the quick money of violence. Or Chelsea Wright who created Girls Who Know an organization promoting sexual and reproductive health information while advocating for srh rights. Or Najeeb Spence, uniting young Jamaicans with the power of reggae music. Or they get involved in advocacy, like Dainalyn Swaby, resident climate activist who won a green ticket to the recent youth climate summit.

The problem of human rights is a massive one, and so it requires massive solutions that result in systemic change. We already know that education is one of our major resources in empowering young people. Young people spend most of their lives in school, and we know that statistically education absolutely transforms lives, whether it's the benefits an educated mother brings to her children or the benefits a country enjoys when it's government invests in education.

But we're not just talking about math and english, sciences, arts and tech. How we view, design and access education must reflect the scale of the problem we're trying to solve. And we can achieve this.

We've already updated STEM education for the digital future we're building. We need to take the kind of active design process to building education resources that prepare young people for the problems of the future and the problems of now. We have a climate crisis, civic apathy, a media fuelled trust deficit, health epidemics, wars, famine. We're dealing with loneliness, economic shocks and we foresee more of this uncertainty for the foreseeable future.

Education systems, from academia to the informal spaces in which young people acquire knowledge, skills and experience such as Talk Up Radio, must be designed with the goal of protecting and improving humanity through, as Martin Luther King Jr said, building intelligence and character. We have to create opportunities for young people to build resilience, verve, a global awareness of their own agency within societies and the impact of their actions and words. If we want them to vote and protest and get involved civically then we need to build mechanisms for their active participation into their education as a means of practicing citizenship.

And finally we must continue to endeavour to open doors, engaging the most vulnerable and those left behind. Imagine what we could achieve if every child had access to an education, deliberately designed for them and their future. Imagine if the kind of investment in math that took Americans to the moon, and physics and chemistry that propels CERN, was taken to the study of history so we could learn from the mistakes of our forefathers, literature so we could better understand humankind and civics so we could learn to live together and work together with dignity and justice for all.

The time is now and there's not a moment to spare. Even as those of us who believe in and work for human rights, equality, the SDG's etc, continue to this hard work, there are people actively working against us. People who do not believe in the UN, who have no vision of the future that includes reduced inequalities, women in leadership or empowered minorities. And the future includes us all so we're going to need to build partnerships, inspire, change hearts and minds. We're going to have to learn to make friends, and talk to people we disagree with in ways that empower them to take the scary path towards change. For that we need communication skills, storytelling, organizing and conflict resolution.

If education is going to continue to play a key role in who we are as a human race, then it must be human centered as opposed to economically centered, research driven, more flexible and brave in the face of these and emerging challenges young people are inheriting. Talk Up Radio is one of many examples that prove that engaging young people is a worthwhile and necessary undertaking that will take us into the future we are all trying to build. But it's also an example that young people are not simply afraid of the future, and angry that we are not included. We are building it better and we're prepared to work for change. We're inviting you, activists, policymakers, academics and educators to play your part in preparing the youth to advance the welfare of the whole human race. Come mek wi dweet, or let's get it done.