



Meet the YALI Alumni

Kwena Mpheroana

Education Changemakers Cohort 1 (2020)

South Africa

Kwena Mpheroana wanted to help his fellow South Africans who have trouble speaking in public

Kwena conceptualised his Mabizo speakers project during his YALI training as a Trevor Noah Education Changemaker participant in 2020 at the USAID Regional Leadership Center for Southern Africa in Pretoria.

The project is aimed at empowering young people to become better public speakers. Kwena realised that some learners were unable to effectively participate in class due to speaking anxiety and low self-esteem.

After piloting the project with 25 learners in Pretoria, other learners from different schools asked to be a participant, as well.

Kwena works in partnership with the schools, where they host public speaking competitions for learners to showcase their skills. Participants also get to celebrate their achievement in a graduation ceremony.

During his YALI training, Kwena won a grant and coaching sessions funded by the Trevor Noah Foundation to expand the programme.

He acknowledges that having a coach was tantamount to having a thinking partner, someone he could rely on for advice when things got difficult.

“When the journey gets tough, you need someone you can talk to and reason with, and that is what I got from the mentoring and coaching sessions,”



Kwena said. “I am forever grateful to YALI for giving me the opportunity to be part of a transformational programme that has expanded my horizons and vision.”

For more information on USAID's Young African Leaders Initiative visit www.usaid.gov/yali

