

Cameroon presents Commonwealth Point of Lights award

Fadimatou Noutchemo Simo, is the founder of the [Young African Aviation Professional Organisation\(YAAPA\)](#) which supports girls and underprivileged children in rural areas forge careers in aviation. Founded in 2014, YAAPA has helped over ten thousand young people, hosting career events, visits and mentorship programmes where young people can meet professionals in the industry. YAAPA's Heleta Aviation Scholarship Programme has supported more than 500 children to continue their education and they are also planning a programme to build community centres in rural locations to provide access to libraries and computers.

As part of the legacy of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London 2018, Her Majesty The Queen – as Head of the Commonwealth – is thanking inspirational volunteers across the 53 Commonwealth nations for the difference they are making in their communities and beyond, by recognising one volunteer from each Commonwealth country each week in the two years following the summit.

By sharing these stories of service, the [Commonwealth Points of Light awards](#) celebrate inspirational acts of volunteering across the Commonwealth and help inspire others to make their own contribution to tackling some of the greatest social challenges of our time.

Fadimatou Noutchemo Simo said:

I am so happy to have won this award as it comes as a great and pleasant surprise for me. The work I have been doing in promoting aviation, travel and tourism has become my passion as inspiring the next generations and mostly giving to the underprivileged youths the opportunity to see what the world offers is my determination. Some years ago, I was moved with discovering the important role aviation has in developing all economies and realised how many especially in the rural areas could not think about a career in aviation. I started with a team of volunteers to raise awareness through youth events and building bridges with other African countries to share best practices and partner to promote both our countries and share our experiences.

We launched the Youth Aviation Forum for Africa in 2016, and as we found out the needs in schools in these rural areas and the underprivileged, we initiated programs to support them; the Heleta Aviation scholarship that provides school bags to kids with a good average, The YAAPA Act for Change that supports the construction and furnishing of classrooms from local materials in the villages, the YAAPA 54 Exchange program to encourage professional vacations within Africa for on the job experience.

With the growing number of youths interested with no facilities we are working on launching community centers with the launch of the Youth Aviation Tech Africa program. We want these youths to learn about aviation and ICT for them to use their creativity on impacting the change we would like to see.

Receiving this award makes my team of volunteers and myself proud and determined to do more outreach and raise more awareness to youths for no one to be left behind. A great thank to her Majesty the Queen of England for this great initiative.

Rowan Laxton, UK High Commissioner to Cameroon said:

Fadimatou's ceaseless efforts to support young women and underprivileged children have helped hundreds of individuals, drawn fresh talent into the aviation industry and served as an inspiration to thousands of others. Her work is a shining example of the impact that dedicated and skilled volunteers can make to brighten people's lives

The Commonwealth is a diverse community of 53 nations that work together to promote prosperity, democracy and peace. The Heads of Government meeting brought together leaders from all the 53 Member countries to reaffirm common values, address shared global challenges and agree how to work to create a better future for all citizens, especially young people. Voluntary service is a vital part of this agenda, which is why Her Majesty The Queen has chosen to recognise outstanding volunteers across the Commonwealth in this special way.