Profile summary: A software designer who advocates for gender representation in technology and is keen on deepening developer communities locally.

Meet Purity Birir

"My impact as a developer is mostly around communities," software developer Purity Birir explains. In her career, Purity has worked with emerging tech talent recruiter Andela, which connects Africa's emerging engineering and development talent with some of the world's largest tech companies. She now works with the BBC as a software developer. Despite an impressive resume at a relatively young age, Purity's focus is largely on contributing to her community of African female developers and changing the narrative around women in STEM, so that women like her can thrive. In all aspects of her field, Purity is able to step back and see the larger picture.

On a macro level, she considers the importance of what her success means to other young girls who may be interested in science. "If more people would see that women can actually be in careers like this, it would inspire others to do it." This is a path that she sees herself following in the future, where her interests will guide her towards being a leader in her field and inspiring more young women like her into careers in science.

"A lot of people get into STEM, but so many don't end up staying, Purity says. "The numbers keep reducing. By the time you get to the top positions and heads of industries, [women] have chosen other careers." She cites Dr Chao Mbogo as a Kenyan woman in STEM who has done a lot to encourage other women to stay in the field. Her model of mentorship and support is one that Purity aspires to create in the future. Her positivity and genuine excitement for software development and her industry encourage others to feel similarly. She has revelled in connecting with new people and networking amongst like-minded women. During Purity's time at Andela, she became the first Kenyan community leader of AnitaB.org, an international social enterprise that supports women in computing and that hosts the Grace Hopper Celebration, the world's largest meetup for women in technology. Her experience speaking at events and attending the Grace Hopper Celebration cemented her desire to create more opportunities for Kenyan women in tech to network with each other.

Even as Purity progresses in her career, she continues to reflect on the wider context of privilege and access. "Without [developer communities] a lot of people would not have access to information," she explains. "Information is limited by privilege. If you come from a privileged background, you are able to have access to the internet and you are able to get information. Through the developer communities, people are able to find out so much information."

In August, as part of AnitaB.Org, Purity hosted a seminar for African women in tech with over 100 participants. An achievement in itself, Purity has since vowed to step back from planning, making room for other female future tech leaders to have the same opportunity to grow.

She believes in the power of saying yes to opportunities. This philosophy has served her well in her academic journey and career. "One thing leads to another. In January I didn't know that I would be working for the BBC as a journalist coder. But I find myself in such spaces because I always try to explore different opportunities." Still in the nascent stages of her career, Purity's future seems bright and wide open. One thing is sure though, she will continue to celebrate the achievements of women in her field and inspire those lower in the STEM pipeline to confidently step into their dreams.

Kenya's progress in renewable energy is something to be proud of, Wangari emphasizes, "Africa's largest wind farm has recently opened in Turkana, the move to incorporate solar power has been widespread and Kenya is one of the world's leaders in terms of the percentage of renewable energy in our energy mix [80%]."