



INTERVIEW WITH SOUTH AFRICAN EXCHANGE STUDENTS

Between September 23 and October 7, five students from the University of the Free State (UFS) in South Africa visited the University for Humanist Studies for an exchange program. At the end of their stay, Kosmopolis interviewed them about their stay and about their future perspectives. "After my visit to the Netherlands I am more confident with myself."

The UFS students have diverse backgrounds. They have different skin colours and speak different languages. They also have very different schools of secondary education and study within different departments within the UFS. The program at the University of Humanistic Studies was provided by Kosmopolis Institute, in collaboration with the education department.

Below you can find an excerpt from the interview. The entire interview can be found [here](#).



I: Your generation is sometimes referred to as Mandela's Children. What does this mean to you?

The period in which Mandela was freed was the period where we were born. That is why he is referred to as our father, as the man who made it happen for us. He made it possible for us to be born in a time where things became different. When he was released, the era of post-apartheid started. So, yes I do feel like one of Mandela's Children.

I: Is it something you feel proud of?

Yes, I do. We are his children. We are born in a time in which we don't have to experience the things our parents had to experience. For me, as a black woman, it has become easier. If you have a good example of a father, you

want to follow in his footsteps. That is what Mandela means for me. I want to grow up to be like him.



I: Don't you think that being labeled "Mandela's children" is unnecessary pressure on you?

No, it is pressure, but very necessary pressure. There has to be a specific drive or focus for us to follow. So the pressure is very good, because now we know that the way South Africans did things in the past is not the way to go. It refers to a time where we don't want to go again.

I: What did you learn about yourself on this trip?

I realized during the dialogue about the movie Skin, that I can, without bragging, use my mouth: I can talk! I learned that I can change things by talking. After this experience in the Netherlands, I am much more confident using my mouth. I might not be the smartest person alive, but if I can help people to change things, I might as well use my talent to speak. So I am going back to South Africa with more confidence.



I: Do you think that you are going to take these changes back home? Because, obviously, you are going back to your old lives and the people you already knew.

I think if you make it a priority, and for instance set yourself only 3 goals, then it will become part of your life. I think that is possible. So in a way, it is about turning bad habits into good habits and make a shift in the way you do things. Somehow you will find your way. Some things might be difficult to change, but with the right mindset and the right habits, it will be possible. Definitely if you stick with people who are inspiring and who push you. Then, you won't feel like you are doing it all alone.

<http://www.uvh.nl/kosmopolisinstitute/interview-with-south-african-exchange-students>

