

The Office for International Affairs attends the G20 Outreach Programme

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SEOs: DHET, G20 Presidency, G20 working group, North-West University, UFS Office for International Affairs, Prof Jacobs

A delegation of students from the University of the Free State (UFS) made a powerful impact at the recent G20 Outreach Programme by confronting a central question: *Is South Africa's [G20 presidency](#) truly inclusive, or does it serve only a privileged few?* Hosted by the [Department of Higher Education and Training \(DHET\)](#) at [North-West University's](#) Potchefstroom Campus from 22 to 23 May 2025, the G20 Outreach Programme aimed to democratise the G20's influence by bringing its relevance to young South Africans. The initiative formed part of DHET's broader effort to centre the youth in higher education transformation and engage them in the decisions that affect their lives.

The G20 Outreach Programme brought together students, academics, and policy makers to reflect on issues directly affecting young people. Lively panel discussions explored how international study opportunities have transformed student outlooks, with participants expressing appreciation for the doors opened through global exposure. Among the UFS student delegation were Kananelo Radimakatso and Lekiti Rantsane from the Office for International Affairs, as well as Portia Mtawarira from the UFS ISRC Bloemfontein Campus and Nkeletseng Tsimile from the Qwaqwa Campus. Their co-debaters came from Sol Plaatje University and North-West University, reflecting the collaborative spirit of the outreach initiative.

The highlight of the event was the debate under the motion: *Perspectives on South Africa's G20 Presidency: Is it for the Good of All or Only for the Privileged Few?* UFS students made convincing arguments, and Radimakatso delivered a compelling presentation on youth unemployment, grounding the conversation in lived realities of socio-economic exclusion. Efforts and arguments from UFS students contributed to the team's victory. The [Office for International Affairs](#) at the UFS commended the students' participation as an example of what it means to embody global citizenship. "We are proud to support young leaders who are not only seizing opportunities but challenging power structures to make those opportunities accessible to others," said [Prof Jacobs](#), Acting Director of the Office for International Affairs, in a statement.

The programme marked a significant step towards amplifying student voices in shaping national and global policy discourse. As South Africa's G20 presidency continues, the voices of students such as those from the UFS are emerging as a critical force for accountability. Through platforms such as the G20 Outreach Programme, their message is clear: real transformation starts when those on the margins are brought to the centre of decision-making.

The Office for International Affairs at the UFS remains proud of its role in preparing young people to engage meaningfully in global dialogues. Platforms such as the [G20 Education Working Group](#) provide opportunities not just for participation but also for influence, ensuring that transformation in higher education includes the voices of those it serves most directly. DHET representatives echoed this sentiment, reaffirming internationalisation as a strategic priority that is aligned with the G20's education agenda.

Links:

G20 Presidency: <https://g20.org/g20-south-africa/g20-presidency/>

University of the Free State: <https://www.ufs.ac.za/international>

DHET: <https://www.gov.za/departments/higher-education-and-training>

G20 Education Working group: <https://www.facebook.com/DHETinSA/posts/in-pictures-g20-education-working-group-provincial-outreach-programme-at-nwu-nor/1098403505642568/>

North-west University: <https://www.nwu.ac.za/>

Prof Jacobs: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lynette-jacobs-b0623a34/?originalSubdomain=za>

Caption:

Department of Higher Education G20 working group takes the G20 presidency to the people

Social media blurb:

UFS students made their mark at the G20 Outreach Programme hosted by DHET at the NWU in May 2025. The event, focused on inclusivity, youth unemployment, and internationalisation, culminated in a powerful debate where a joint student-staff team featuring UFS delegates won against DHET representatives. The outreach brought the G20 to students for the first time, highlighting the importance of youth voices in shaping global and national education agendas. #UFSInternational #G20Outreach #StudentVoicesMatter #DHET