

Global Youth Leaders Unite in Cape Town to Champion Compassion, Ubuntu, and Interfaith Action at Youth IF20

In preparation for the Cape Town 2025 G20 Interfaith Summit, a gathering of 55 young adults, representing 25 countries and 15 faiths met on August 10, 20205

CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA, August 11, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- In preparation for the 2025 G20 Interfaith Summit in the vibrant city of Cape Town, a gathering of 55 young adults, representing 25 countries and 15 faiths met together for the Youth Interfaith Forum (YIF20) on August 10, 20205. This forum was hosted by A Common Word Among the Youth ([ACWAY](#)) and the theme was: "Leading with Ubuntu: At the Heart of Interfaith Action." This meeting launched a transformative week of dialogue, advocacy and innovation, bringing together young changemakers to create a co-created space rooted in Ubuntu, compassion, and collaborative impact. The collaborative efforts of The Stirling Foundation, United Religions Initiative, Charter for Compassion, and The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers made YIF20 possible.



“

You cannot be
compassionate and not do
something”

*Babalwa Ngcongolo, Charter
for Compassion*

From personal storytelling to strategic planning, the event marked a powerful convergence of values-based leadership, intersectional justice, and real-world action. With a shared commitment to dismantling barriers and building bridges, participants engaged in sessions that challenged assumptions, celebrated diversity, and

equipped them to lead with integrity and empathy.

Opening Ceremony: Ubuntu as a Living Ethos

Jabari Khalid Smith opened the Forum with a heartfelt invitation to co-create the space, framing the week through the African philosophy of Ubuntu—"I am because we are." ACWAY Director Liliya Khasanova and Forum Manager Uzair Ben-Ebrahim joined Federico Kähnlein of the Stirling Foundation and Katherine Marshall of the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20) to outline the program's goals: to inspire, equip, and mobilize youth leaders for sustainable interfaith action.

In her welcome, Katherine Marshall pointed out that we are not looking for a NATO meeting based on No Action Talk Only. Instead, she proposed two other possible acronyms for this meeting. One is GRACE: Go Resolutely Acting Creatively with Endeavor. The second is BRAVE: Build, Results, Action, Vision, and Endurance. She concluded that what should be the result of this meeting is a plan of action that brings forth change "with a spirit of grace and commitment to those who are vulnerable, hearing their voices, and helping to create lasting change"

The Charter for Compassion: From Reflection to Action

Led by Babalwa Ngcongolo of the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative, the Charter for Compassion session set a powerful tone for the meeting. Quoting its guiding belief that "the principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves," Babalwa challenged participants to move beyond passive empathy.

"Dethroning ourselves from the center of our world and putting another there," she said, "is the essence of compassion." Acknowledging that fatigue often accompanies compassion work, she urged persistence: "In this tiredness, we must continue to act, we must continue to fight... even in our exhaustion."

The session drew on Karen Armstrong's assertion that "compassion is a principle of action rooted in empathy and a commitment to alleviating suffering, not just a feeling." Participants explored the Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life, including mindfulness, humility, and balancing care for others with self-care.



G20 South Africa 2025

Ubuntu in Action: Intersectionality, Storytelling, and Humanitarian Integrity

Moderated by Rodge Lelis, the “Ubuntu in Action” session featured compelling presentations from global youth leaders. Raquel Bennett, a gender and race specialist from Brazil, introduced intersectionality as a lens for justice. “Listen to the voices who are most impacted,” she urged. “Ubuntu reminds us that our liberation is collective,” Bennett emphasized. “Gender justice will only be real when it includes social justice and dismantles all systems of aggression.”

Sibu Szymanowska, a humanitarian and content creator, encouraged participants to use social media authentically. “Why lean into the sensationalist when you can lean into the stories?” she asked, urging youth to amplify marginalized voices with integrity and cultural sensitivity.

Advocacy Through Action: Reflecting Back, Moving Forward

In a dynamic plenary moderated by Sara Rahim, ACWAY alumni shared personal journeys of interfaith activism. Jyuri Michino, a Buddhist from New York, spoke about her work in Northern Ireland, where her interfaith potluck initiative continues to thrive. “Interfaith work is integral across all sectors,” she said, “from health to disaster risk reduction.”

Jabari Smith reflected on his work in Japan, Kenya, and Slovenia, supporting marginalized communities like the Roma. “Diversity is not just based on race. It is based on one’s passions [and] interests,” he shared, crediting ACWAY for shaping his commitment to intercultural exchange.

Uzair Ben-Ebrahim spoke of how studying Hebrew deepened his engagement with Jewish communities. “It’s allowed me to see a particular grouping of people not just as the other, but as a person in front of me... with a valid experience.” He emphasized the importance of honest dialogue and mutual representation.

Preparing with Purpose: G20 Interfaith Forum Integration

Led by Jyuri Michino, the “Preparing with Purpose” session walked participants through the G20 Interfaith Forum schedule. Fellows explored key sessions and partner-led excursions designed to enhance learning and deepen engagement. With a focus on refining pitches and aligning projects with the Interfaith Development Goals, participants began preparing to amplify their voices during the Forum and beyond.

A Shared Commitment Moving Forward

Across all sessions, a unifying theme emerged: compassion and interfaith understanding are not passive ideals but active commitments. They require listening deeply, challenging stereotypes, standing alongside marginalized communities, and translating principles into sustained action.

As Babalwa Ngcongolo summarized: "You cannot be compassionate and not do something."

By blending philosophy with practice, ACWAY continues to empower a global network of young leaders to take meaningful, context-sensitive action in their communities, advancing a more compassionate and connected world.

For media inquiries, interviews, or more information about ACWAY and the Interfaith Development Goals, please contact:

✉ info@acway.org

✉ www.acway.org

Marianna Richardson

G20 Interfaith Forum

+1 202-460-9070

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[YouTube](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/838619792>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.