

Yolokazi Mfuto' FHAS Graduation speech.

To the Director

Our Guest speaker

Our FES staff

Fellow FHAS Graduates and last but not least The FHAS new Cohort.

Good evening to you all.

My name is Yolokazi Mfuto, Masters Student in Political Science at the University of Fort Hare in Alice. It gives me a great pleasure to share my experience with you. When I was told that I will be sharing my experience this evening, I could not say no because FHAS has done a lot for me in terms of growth.

I remember the first module, it was amazing everyone wanted to show why they were chosen from their Universities. I, too felt a little pressure. The module was great, the facilitators Khwezi Mabasa and Nompumelelo Runji challenged us intellectually. By the end of the first module, we made friends, we helped each other with our research projects. I came to the module with just a half done topic, I got help through those night sessions. To attest to the amazing work that they do, I managed to get a distinction on my research.

It is very important that when you come to spaces like this, you don't only make friends, for instance I was helped by Londiwe on my research, her readings led me to a distinction. Yes we should have friends for laughing and all that, friends for Essentials!!. But hey we must prioritize friends that will help us progress in life.

Module 2 was great, we had phenomenal speakers like, Virginia Wenjinj Ka Magwaza, she is a gem of a feminist, the Deputy Minister John Jeffrey was also good, its seldom that we get to be in such proximity with our governmental leaders. He was easy to interact with and challenge. Oh the Policy Brief by Mr Iphrahim was amazing, it was a drool but hey I learnt a lot. Today I can safely say, I can do policy brief.

Probably module 3 was everyone's favorite. It was out of the ordinary, our trip to Liliesleaf farm, Soweto and Moyo Zoo lake. We learnt a lot from our tour guides too. We had robust discussions about how we are tourists in our own country, how much

of our history is narrated by other people. We marvelled at the intelligence and exquisite story telling from our township tour guide.

FES FHAS has given many of us great opportunities, being chosen for this program is not easy and it must not be taken for granted. Each one in this room deserves to be here, yes you might see or think that other people are better than you, but being chosen for this prestigious program was not a mistake.

After being selected for the program last year, I then applied for another program from United Nations Population Fund Africa (UNFPA), which I got accepted. Because of all the stuff I have learnt in FES, my discussions in UNFPA meetings were elevated. Now, this year they have nominated me to go represent South Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in the Pan African Youth Forum. Who would have known that a young black girl from kwaZixinene, kwa Matole would get such opportunities?

Im very gratefull for all that FES has done for and I call to all of you make it what you want. Because FES is like, its what you make out of it. Please use this opportunity wisely.