

1. Introduction and Context

Values 20 (V20) is a global umbrella body that seeks to create a global awareness of values, operating alongside the G20 framework to integrate values and values-based leadership into global strategic conversations. Since its inception in 2020, V20 has evolved through successive presidencies: Saudi Arabia (2020), Italy (2021), Indonesia (2022), India (2023), and Brazil (2024).

In 2025, under South Africa's Presidency of the G20, the V20 South Africa (V20 SA) chapter has adopted the theme of 'Living Values'. This theme is both an aspiration and a call to action, inviting individuals, institutions, communities and nations to not only articulate values but to embody them consistently, visibly, and courageously. As the first African host, V20 SA has positioned itself as an important contributor to embedding an African values lens in global discourse.



Figure 1: Enabling the G20 agenda through 'Living Values'.

Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainable Development is South Africa's theme for its G20 Presidency, emphasizing the interconnectedness of nations and people to address global challenges through unified support, fair opportunities for all, and meeting current needs without compromising the future. Building on the three-pronged theme.

At the heart of V20 SA's work are five aspirational values: dignity, ubuntu, agency and accountability, integrity and ethical governance, underpinned by values-based leadership. These values serve as both a moral compass for our society and a practical framework for action. They provide the lens through which we pursue South Africa's G20 priorities of solidarity, equality, and sustainable development.

V20 SA has worked through two primary channels to drive awareness of these values: research culminating in a formal communique, and advocacy aimed at raising awareness and embedding values into society. The communique, developed by our solidarity, equality and sustainable development research teams, provides evidence-based policy recommendations that are presented for consideration at the G20. Alongside this, the advocacy streams engage with civil society, government, and business stakeholders to create dialogue, partnerships, and public engagement.

The synergy between communique development and advocacy is designed as a positive reinforcing loop: research provides evidence-based policy recommendations that guide action, while advocacy ensures that these values are embodied in practice. The experiences and insights from advocacy then inform further research and refinement of recommendations. This dynamic cycle ensures that V20 does not only speak about values but also actively shapes how they are lived and anchored in society.

It is with this in mind that strategic partnerships were onboarded. The initial intent was to support the work of creating an awareness of values but as the V20 SA initiative has matured, these partnerships now carry a deeper responsibility, which is to respond to the policy recommendations by aligning their strategies and influence towards embedding and advancing “Living Values” in South Africa. Their continued engagement ensures that values are not confined to dialogue but are translated into practice, gradually shaping institutions, organisations, and communities.

2. Achievements to Date (January 2025 – July 2025)

2.1 Research Stream Achievements

The V20 SA research teams¹ have developed draft policy recommendations, which will be presented at the October V20 Summit and the G20 Social Summit. To bring awareness to the findings, V20 has partnered with Brand South Africa and the T20 to emphasize the importance of values in the G20 ecosystem.

In addition, the research stream initiated a case study methodology to identify and document values-based organisations in South Africa. This approach is intended to demonstrate how values are practically embedded and can drive positive societal change and will form part of ongoing efforts to enhance our understanding regarding ‘how’ we enable the policy recommendations.

2.2 Advocacy Stream Achievements

Advocacy work has grown considerably since the first stream leaders were onboarded in March 2025, and now comprises 14 streams², each focused on embedding values within different sectors of society.

¹ Prof Camaren Peter (research custodian), Dr Njeri Mwagiru (Solidarity), Dr Ruwayne Kock (Equality), and Dr Shamim Bodhanya (Sustainable Development)

² The advocacy stream leaders for Solidarity include Thembaletu Seyisi and Dr. Dumisani Magadela; Mr Ndlovu and Nyeleti Magadze on Equality, Thabani Mlilo (Environmental and Social sustainability) , Alex Motshwanetsi Mathole (Economic

The advocacy streams have centred on two key priorities. Firstly, to identify strategic and influential partners already active in the field, whose existing strategies can amplify and enable the work of Values 20 South Africa. Through these collaborations, the goal of “Living Values” is being embedded across multiple sectors, reaching diverse constituencies through trusted networks. Secondly, to create broad public awareness of values through events and campaigns. To date, V20 SA has co-hosted more than 50 events, alongside numerous strategic engagements that have integrated values messaging into the G20 ecosystem. Social media campaigns have also been launched to build national awareness, with particular emphasis on youth and other key groups.

3. Forward Strategy (August 2025 to December 2028)

As we prepare to hand the V20 baton to the United States, we acknowledge that the work of V20 South Africa has just started. While we understand the non-linear nature of this work, our focus over the next three years builds on values awareness created this year:

2025: Create awareness of values and their impact on solidarity, equality and sustainability through research and advocacy

2026: Foster a collective responsibility for embracing and living these values

2027: Strengthen commitment by embedding values into policies, institutions, and everyday practices

2028: Sustain and institutionalise change by reinforcing values-driven behaviour and embedding them in long-term societal structures.

1. Operations

Ensuring operational sustainability remains the foundation for driving the Values 20 agenda. The primary challenge has been funding, which directly impacts continuity, staffing, and the ability to scale activities. Over the next period, the focus will be to:

- Secure sustainable funding through diversified channels, including philanthropic support, corporate sponsorships, and alignment with global partners.
- Determine a new operating infrastructure beyond the ambit of the V20 Presidency, allowing the research and advocacy work to continue in South Africa after the Presidency transitions to other G20 host nations.
- Establish partners and fundraise to enable the research and advocacy agenda and fund the secretariat.

2. Research

The research stream continues to provide the intellectual foundation of the V20 initiative, ensuring that values are not only discussed but translated into practical frameworks that support behavioural change. Key areas of focus include:

- Policy Recommendations: Finalising and presenting the communique at the October V20 Summit and G20 Social Summit in November.
- Case Studies: Continuing to document organisations already embedding values, producing practical examples of how values can shift behaviour and culture in South Africa.
- VCorp Scorecard: Developing a measurement tool to assess the extent to which organisations integrate values, in partnership with the South African Institute for International Affairs.
- Values Charter: Working with partners (Centre for Social Justice, Nelson Mandela Foundation) to design a National Values Charter that anchors values in legislation, civic life, and organisational culture.
- Aspirational Values Scorecard: Designing a values scorecard that tracks the journey from low values awareness to high values consciousness for each of the core aspirational values (dignity, ubuntu, ownership and agency, integrity and ethical governance, and values-based leadership).
- Thought Leadership: Producing publications and convening dialogues that frame values as a lever for behavioural change, institutional transformation, and long-term resilience.
- Development of a national and global (in partnership with V20 global) values compact.

3. Advocacy

Advocacy is the mechanism through which the values agenda is activated — translating ideas into awareness, ownership, and practice. It is designed to create visibility, foster consciousness, and build public ownership of values. Drawing on the streams and the strategic partner mapping that we've done in each stream, the priorities for the period ahead will be to:

- Continued Strategic Partner Engagement: Activate organisations and umbrella bodies to integrate "Living Values" into their existing strategies, such that values are driven through different pillars of their operation and are thus systemically imbedded.
- Social Media Campaigns: Deepen online campaigns, with a particular focus on youth and civic groups, to build a values-conscious generation in partnership with strategic organisations.
- Participation in the National Dialogue: V20 SA will contribute to the Presidency's National Dialogue through the South Africa Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA) and the Centre for Social Justice, ensuring that the values agenda is represented at a national level and integrated into the broader conversation on South Africa's future.
- Anchoring of the Values Charter: Working with the Centre for Social Justice, this initiative seeks to create an awareness of the National Values Charter that anchors values within civic life, legislation,

and institutional culture, creating a shared framework for ethical leadership and collective responsibility.

- The National Purpose Project is a V20 driven collaboration between Brand South Africa and Joe Public. It aims to define and articulate a unifying national purpose for South Africa, rooted in solidarity, equality, and sustainability, to guide societal renewal and inspire collective action.
- The Higher Education Project is a collaboration between V20, Universities South Africa and the South African Business School Association. They will examine the role of higher education in influencing values- by examining the role of leadership, curriculum, institutional culture and how we influence the world of work.

5. Conclusion

V20 SA remains unwavering in its purpose: to shine a light on Living Values consciously. The synergy between research and advocacy continues to serve as a positive reinforcing loop, with research generating the evidence and recommendations that guide action, while advocacy brings these ideas to life in communities, organisations, and institutions.

As South Africa's G20 Presidency unfolds, the upcoming V20 Summit and G20 Social Summit are opportunities to place values at the centre of national and global dialogue. In looking ahead, the work of the organisation will be to nurture this momentum, so that Living Values are woven into the daily fabric of society. In this way, South Africa can model a path of values-conscious leadership that resonates across the continent and inspires the wider global community.

6. Acknowledgements

I would like acknowledge the continued effort of the entire Values 20 team of volunteers, including the V20 founding team, the V20 India team (TGELF) for their support with social media, our Sherpa, Prof. Bonang Mohale, the V20 Shepherds who have provided credibility to the project, the Steering Committee for their oversight of the project, the researchers who have been actively working on developing the communique, the advocacy stream leaders who have been meeting stakeholders from across the globe to establish areas of collaboration and drive advocacy events, and the strategic partners who have shown a willingness to partner and find a place for values advocacy in their work. Onward and forward, towards our vision of 'a world where values are lived consciously, enabling social justice, solidarity and sustainability'.

With thanks,



Dr Preeya Daya
V20 South Africa Chair