

PE woman to represent SA at Girls 20 Summit

Hard-working Motherwell student chosen to participate in Beijing event

Siyamtanda Capa
capas@timesmedia.co.za

HARD work and persistence have paid off for a young Motherwell woman, who will represent South Africa at this year's Girls 20 Summit (G20) in Beijing, China, next month.

Third-year Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University BComm accounting student Amanda Hobana, 20, is excited to be among 24 young women chosen to participate in the annual summit.

The two-day summit places girls and women at the heart of the economic decision-making process by advancing the notion that increasing the number of women in leading positions will generate growth and stabilise communities.

The former Masiphathisane High School pupil first heard of the programme through the Opportunities for Africans website and, after numerous applications and countless rejections, was "over the moon" when she was accepted for this year's summit.

"When I received the news I was still dealing with the fact that I would be repeating my third year and won't be graduating, but this opportunity has reminded me that I am still that big dreamer," she said.

To prepare for the summit, Hobana is training online and reading up on the participating G20 countries.

Hobana, whose passion lies in advancing women's rights, said she wanted to give township girls a voice.

"Attending this summit will give me a platform where I can talk about gender inequality in the township and be heard. I want to show other girls in the township that the world is your oyster and you can go anywhere."

Through skills building workshops and panel discussions with local and global experts, the summit will focus on entrepreneurship, financial preparedness, communications, digital literacy and leadership.

"The summit also makes sure that when we return we will be [better]



RARE OPPORTUNITY: NMMU accounting student Amanda Hobana, 20, has secured one of only 24 available seats at this year's Girls 20 Summit (G20) in Beijing next month

Picture: EUGENE COETZEE

equipped for contributing to the economy and paying it forward through initiatives that we already run," she said.

Hobana co-founded *Anagona* (Shona for "She can") in 2014 – a programme aimed at bridging the gap between young girls in township high

schools and university students.

The initiative will be officially launched after the summit.

Hobana's goal is to be one of Motherwell's youngest chartered accountants in 2020, at the age of 24.

Driven by her disadvantaged background and the need to make her late

grandmother proud, Hobana said she was looking forward to interacting with other young leaders.

"As young girls, such opportunities give us a voice and the platform to contribute positively to South Africa, and I hope that through this I can help create jobs as the unemployment rate

in the country is high," Hobana said.

Hobana, who is an Allan Gray Orbis Foundation candidate fellow and NMMU Beyond the Classroom graduate, said her life had been positively influenced by the Port Elizabeth-based Vision4Women mentorship programme.