

## **Institute for Global African Affairs (IGAA)/Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC), University of Johannesburg Trip to Brazil, Bahia.**

**Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), Salvador  
1-6 December 2025**



**Description:** IGAA/IPATC delegation at the Federal University of Bahia  
**Source:** IPATC

### **Introduction**

Representatives of the Institute for Global African Affairs (IGAA) and Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC) at the University of Johannesburg (UJ)<sup>1</sup>, along with a group of three master's students enrolled for the Development Studies Master's programme at UJ<sup>2</sup>, participated in an exchange programme to the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), in Salvador on 1 to 6 December 2025. The objective of this exchange initiative between the UJ and UFBA is to enhance academic collaboration, intercultural engagement, and research development.

The city is well known for its Afro-Brazilian culture, with the highest population of black people in the country. The primary objective of the IPATC's visit to the UFBA was to facilitate

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learning, research through collaboration, and networking. The visit offered the team to gain valuable insights into UFBA's work and areas of cooperation. Moreover, the visit offered insights into Brazilian culture, language, food, music, arts, local economic programmes, community engagement and social development initiatives, tourism, education, gender-based violence programmes, and government structures.

### **Day 1: Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais (CEAO) & MUNCAB Visit**

The delegation visited the Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais, Federal University of Bahia (CEAO/UFBA), and held a productive meeting with the centre's Director, Prof. Fabio Baqueiro. During the programme, the team had the opportunity to exchange knowledge and insights. The aim of the visit was to introduce the work conducted and offered at IPATC and hold discussions on possible collaboration with the centre, which is a great representation of African culture within Brazil. Specifically, the UJ team presented the current exchange programme with the University of the West Indies (UWI), Jamaica, that offers a joint Master's Programme (MA in Development Studies) which focuses on Global Africa in the twenty-first century, addressing historical and contemporary developmental, political, and socio-economic issues in Africa and the Caribbean.

The UJ team also had the opportunity to visit included engagements with the UFBA Afro-Brazilian Museum (MUNCAB), the Carnival House Museum, the Zumbi dos Palmares Monument, and the Cruz Caída Monument. These sites offered deep insights into Brazil's cultural and religious heritage, which can be directly linked to African religions. The continuity between Africa and Brazil is evident in shared spiritual practices. This historical and spiritual bridging illustrates the enduring presence of African belief systems within Afro-Brazilian society.

Monuments such as that of Zumbi dos Palmares demonstrated that museums and memorials serve purposes beyond preserving history; they actively shape political consciousness and foster community cohesion. The experience highlighted the role of universities and social movements as cultural mediators that translate knowledge into lived social realities, rather than functioning as detached or purely academic authorities.

### **Day 2: Federal University of Bahia (UFBA)**

Among the many engagements, the UJ team also met up with the University International Relations Department at the Federal University of Bahia to explore some areas of common interest. The team met with Prof. Victor Lage from the International Relations Department at UFBA. The team had an opportunity to share their research areas and to explore potential areas for cooperation. The team held discussions on South-South cooperation, particularly within the context of the four successive G20 presidencies, Financing for Development, and intra-BRICS cooperation.

### **Day 3: Salvador City Hall, Office of Social Governance**

The team visited the Office of Social Governance and the Office of International Cooperation within the city of el Salvador as shown below in Image:2. The meeting provided a practical

and policy-oriented dimension to the learning experience demonstrating how municipal and institutional structures can be designed not only to manage social challenges, but to respond to them in a coordinated, human-centred, and measurable way. The key focus of the meeting was on how the local office was putting in place programmes to achieve the SDG goals.

Image:2 - The IGAA/IPATC delegation visit to the Salvador City Hall, Office of Social Governance



Source: IPATC

A key focus of the engagement was the institutional commitment to addressing structural challenges faced by women, particularly those who are economically marginalised and socially vulnerable. The programmes presented recognised that women's vulnerability is rarely caused by a single factor; instead, it often emerges at the intersection of unemployment, caregiving responsibilities, limited access to education, housing insecurity, and exposure to gender-based violence. What stood out was the deliberate effort to design interventions that restore dignity and agency, rather than treating women as passive recipients of support.

The visit further highlighted the range of interventions implemented to support women, especially single mothers. These included skills development initiatives, entrepreneurship training, psychosocial support, and structured responses to gender-based violence. Notably, the programmes also included practical support such as providing babysitters for a particular duration, enabling single mothers to attend training sessions and learn skills they are enrolled in or interested in pursuing. This reflected an understanding that empowerment is not only about opportunity, but also about removing everyday barriers that prevent women from participating.

## **Conclusion**

During the visit, an invaluable insight into the structure of teaching, learning, and research at UFBA was gained. This knowledge will foreground our future engagements with the Brazilian counterparts. Overall, the trip was a success forming a stable foundation for greater research collaborations between UJ and the UFBA and more broadly Africans and the diaspora community in the America's.