

## **Rethinking Economics for Africa (REFA)**

### **Society Description:**

Rethinking Economics for Africa (REFA) is a student movement with chapters at several South African universities including the University of Cape Town and the University of Johannesburg amongst others. Wits REFA is a chapter of the national REFA movement and an official club and society at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg.

As a national movement we use the economics space in universities to explore pressing questions of economic justice and progress in South Africa. We seek to make a meaningful impact in this space by introducing plurality and critical thinking. Rethinking Economics for Africa has established itself as an organisation that advocates for critical engagement with economics as a discipline and uses economics in the university space to strengthen the answers to questions like that of free education, inclusive growth, land and wealth redistribution and radical economic transformation. As such, we welcome students from both economic degrees and others, as long as they share the same goals of decolonisation and transformation. The economy is something which impacts every aspect of our lives, so it is important we all know about and how it can be used to advance social change!

We recognise a gap in the ability of students to engage critically on solutions that are informed by principles of economics. This is a gap that we have aimed to fill through education programmes, student knowledge production and the establishment of task teams. Usually this takes place in the form of reading groups and discussion seminars, however we have moved to online initiatives with the rest of campus. We also have a handbook available to all members.

Wits REFA seeks to make economics more accessible to communities outside of the university space. Wits REFA was born out of the national #FeesMustFall movement. We came together as students in an organic manner, out of frustration with economics as a discipline in both our universities and in our society. Wits REFA is a society that aims to critically engage economic issues relevant to our current affairs and develop ourselves as social thinkers and social actors. Students using economics for social change While we have begun to diagnose the problems with the economics syllabus and problems with the discipline itself, we understand that we need to act in constructive ways to solve the problems at hand. As students, some of whom were active in the #FeesMustFall movement, we appreciate the power that is held by young people when our collective will pull in the direction of social and economic justice. As social actors we understand that we have the responsibility to both advocate for and actively create positive outcomes based on our diagnosis.

Wits REFA also holds the annual REFA Festival, with the Institute for Economic Justice. It's a national gathering of academics and REFA members, from all the REFA chapters in South Africa to have a weekend of seminars and workshops. Last year, the REFA Festival's theme was "practical action towards a pluralist economics curriculum". The Festival had also come at a timely moment as countries, globally, were realising the challenges and gaps presented by economic policies taken in response to COVID-19.

**Membership fee:** R50

**Social Media:**

Instagram: @witsrefa <https://www.instagram.com/witsrefa/>

Twitter: @witsREFA <https://twitter.com/WitsREFA>