

# Unisa is an Engaged University



Chance 2 Advance Dennilton Limpopo programme: Training for mothers in first trimester of pregnancy workshop titled Healthy Mother and Baby during Pregnancy facilitated by Professor Thanyani Lumadi, College of Human Sciences - Department Health Studies



Chance 2 Advance Alexandra Township Gauteng programme: Training for community participants intending to start businesses and community business support organisations facilitated by Professor Joseph Chisasa, College of Economic and Management Sciences - Department Finance, Risk Management and Banking

## Knowledge Mobilization to develop the agency of SA communities

If knowledge is indeed power, then those with the ability to access, create and disseminate knowledge will have the power or capacity to act. Over the past years, rising global inequality caused increased socio-economic and political instability. Nations are witnessing the increasing alienation of communities that struggle with access to quality education and training, health care and socio-economic justice. The poor are punished while the privileged are favoured. With this growing divide, nations around the world are witnessing the rise of public protests and violence leading to greater global instability. Solving global inequality can be achieved, in part through increased access to quality learning opportunities for distressed communities. At Unisa, our academics refuse to accept the world as it is, and work with communities to identify development gaps that can be addressed through high quality engaged scholarship.

As an institution of substantial size and reach, our local and international collaborations in community engaged scholarship produce benefits on scale. Collectively Unisa's colleges, apply their knowledge, skills and talents in over a hundred innovative and socially responsive projects, operating in diverse community contexts around South Africa. Unisa's avant-garde projects are designed to respond effectively to the development needs highlighted in the National Development Plan, the White Paper in Post School Education and Training, Africa 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Communities around the country are participating in a transformative process of relevant learning that liberates the consciousness, strengthens public discourse, stimulates social justice and democratises knowledge.

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Chance 2 Advance Orange Farm Gauteng programme: Training for community participants on career planning facilitated by Dr Lesiba Molepo, Unisa Deputy Registrar Student Affairs and Regional Services: North Eastern and Mr Fhatuwani Makahane, Unisa Directorate for Counselling, Career and Academic Development



Chance 2 Advance Gugulethu Western Cape programme

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We believe that academic scholarship must have an intentional public purpose and direct or indirect benefit to communities. Our academics work to create and mobilize knowledge that is highly responsive to the needs of society. We deploy science in the service of the public, serving the interests of the nation and specific communities, while consistently promoting a better quality of individual and collective life. Our collective action in partnership with communities across the country, seeks the transformation of people, places, policies, products and processes. Our scholars understand the value of working with communities to address the large, intractable and relentless challenges facing our nation through quality community engaged scholarship. One community engagement initiative that exemplifies this direction is Unisa's Chance 2 Advance programme. The programme designs, creates and disseminates learning initiatives that are relevant, practical, constructive and geared for public consumption towards the goal of positive change. This is done in response to the serious socio-economic and social justice challenges facing far too many South African communities. The programme seeks to reduce the distance between the university and communities. It facilitates a shared learning space where academics can interact with communities in a reciprocal learning environment. Community partners become co-creators of knowledge and knowledge outcomes. Through the mutual and reciprocal partnerships with communities we enhance and enrich the relevance and social responsiveness of academic teaching, learning and research.

The programme has developed a scalable and replicable model for knowledge mobilization that has been tried and tested in both rural and urban contexts. Working with communities across all provinces, since its inception the Chance 2 Advance programme has reached over 100 000 community participants from rural and urban communities, Government, Business and Civil Society. Over 400 Unisa academics from across Unisa Colleges' of Accounting Sciences, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Education, Human Sciences, Law, Science, Engineering and Technology and the Unisa Graduate School of Business Leadership have developed contextualised and relevant informal learning offerings for development contexts across the spectrum of South African communities. Chance 2 Advance has developed a mega learning campaign strategy to reach significant numbers within a community. We have adopted a preferential option for communities on the margins who are distressed by socio-economic challenges. By deepening the agency of South African communities, we believe that communities will develop an enhanced capacity to act, towards better social, justice, environmental and economic participation.



Chance 2 Advance Lusikisiki Eastern Cape programme



Chance 2 Advance Kwa-Zulu Natal programme: End-user computer training for community participants facilitated by Professor Peter Mkhize, College of Science, Engineering and Technology – School of Computing



Chance 2 Advance Siyabuswa Mpumalanga programme: Training for community participants on office administration skills required for the workplace facilitated by Professor Sumei Van Antwerpen, College of Economic and Management Sciences - Department Operations Management and Professor Edmund John Ferreira, College of Economic Management Sciences – Department Business Management

For more information contact: [dceo@unisa.ac.za](mailto:dceo@unisa.ac.za)