

Unisa empowers and learns from residents

ALEXANDRA – Unisa and residents join hands to improve themselves

August 29, 2016



Alex residents engage a Unisa lecturer at the Chance 2 Advance training programme.

A revolution of social consciousness may be emerging in Alexandria through a training partnership of residents and the University of South Africa's (Unisa) Chance 2 Advance programme.

The programme has already benefited more than 70 000 citizens nationwide and was recently conducted in Alexandria at the SanKopano Community Centre and attended by more than 300 residents.

The programme's coordinator, Genevieve James said the programme developed active, informed and empowered citizens to be able to engage personally and collectively in their own community development. "It's a tool to liberate knowledge from the... the elite

to the citizens. The process will be sustained by locals trained as ambassadors and who will receive continuous mentoring and coaching by Unisa,” she said.

She stated that the training addressed the needs of the community, provided them applicable and user-friendly knowledge and solutions to challenges on health, environmental health and education. It also motivated different interest groups to work together focused on economic development and entrepreneurship skills.



Alex residents engage a Unisa lecturer on creche operations at the Chance 2 Advance Programme.

The training exposed participants to the City, national and international imperatives on development and transformation such as the National Development Plan and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This, she said, would develop awareness and critical thinking among the residents on geopolitical, social and economic issues and also get the elite learning from the residents when planning community development interventions.

Faith-based groups were also targeted to make them view their roles as linked to broad needs of society. “[Faith-based groups], alongside others, are change agents which should fit into a bigger non-sectarian agenda of social justice and the shaping of a healthy and economically strong nation.”



Alex residents attend Unisa's Chance 2 Advance training programme at SanKopano Community Centre.

The participants were also exposed to information that will help them deal with their common and complex physical and mental health issues. They were taught how to start and sustain small businesses, ethical leadership and given skills to be champions and watchdogs within the community.