

Diepsloot takes the chance to advance

Prominently displayed on the N14 next to Diepsloot is a mega-billboard promoting Unisa's *Chance 2 Advance* programme. In amongst the traffic fumes and smog are six different venues where the young and old of the community took advantage of the learning opportunities brought by the university.

Dr Genevieve James, the Director of the *Chance 2 Advance* programme, said that she was overwhelmed by the response and commitment they received from the Diepsloot community. She said that a number of people took leave from their employment to professionalise themselves. "Most people saw an opportunity to upgrade themselves in order to do their jobs even better." The programme was attended by salon owners, receptionists, educators and other professionals. Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Narend Baijnath

came to offer support and motivate the course attendees. He told those attending end user computing training that the world was changing and technology was taking over the traditional way of doing things. "Unisa itself is changing the way it teaches, the way it does its registration, and the way it communicates with students," said Baijnath, as he highlighted the advantages of knowing the computer.

Speaking to the students attending the communication skills programme, he said that South Africa had a high youth unemployment rate. "We have youth that either did not go to school, dropped out of school, or dropped out of university, and that youth is sitting at home doing nothing." The *Chance 2 Advance* programme is meant for such people, especially in the marginalised communities. Baijnath said that the challenges of the Diepsloot community mirrored many other communities in society.

The Chance 2 Advance programme held its largest community learning initiative to date from 16 to 28 July in Diepsloot, with more than 100 classes designed to cater for the specific learning needs of the township. Dr Genevieve James (left) and Prof. Narend Baijnath (centre) are pictured with some of the student ambassadors.

