

Reaching 10 646 community participants through C2A in 2017



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The Chance 2 Advance programme has collaborated with academics in several colleges to reach a total of 10 646 participants in its community engagement initiatives held across South Africa. Through their interventions in both rural and urban contexts, they have noted that conditions of chronic poverty and unemployment prevail.

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Some second semester programmes hosted by the Chance 2 Advance are listed below.

1. Chance 2 Advance Mthambothini Programme

The Chance 2 Advance programme hosted a weeklong community learning and empowerment programme in Mthambothini – Siyabuswa in Mpumalanga from 11 September to 15 of September 2017. This programme was aimed at providing critical learning opportunities in the area of health and business. The programme consisted of 5 free workshops facilitated by Unisa academics. The programme reached 1701 participants.

The Chance 2 Advance programme worked closely with Mthambothini stakeholders. They conducted an intensive series of training with the community members who were equipped as Chance 2 Advance Learning Ambassadors. The Learning Ambassadors are members of the community who are active in various community sectors. They are in the position to influence and enthuse others about the significance of learning. They understand the advantages of learning and can clearly discern the link between learning and a better life.

Chief Sobungane Sliilo Mahlangu visited the workshops to encourage the community to seize the learning opportunities provided by Unisa. He thanked Unisa Chance 2 Advance for coming to assist his community explaining that Unisa is the only university that turned its gaze towards the development needs Mthambothini.

The Chance 2 Advance programme returned to the community to provide certificates of attendance on 5 October. Participants were in high spirits and felt a sense of achievement.



Positive participants' comments

Winnie Kgomo: "I feel like sharing my experience with my community about Chance 2 Advance. Since attending the programme I would still like to further my studies. If we can attend more it will equip us even more."

Sibusiso Moses Mabena, a community-learning ambassador: "I have learnt how to start my own small business and how to improve it. I became a learning ambassador to gain knowledge and skills, and have gained the skill of working as a team. It means changing lives of people."

Peter Mahlakula: "I asked myself how an institution like Unisa can bring us such a programme to this community. I waited with anticipation and shared the news. Many bought in to the programme with many did not believe the opportunity was [real]. I want to learn. What stood out in this programme is that I learnt that I must share the knowledge gained. I have called my community and explained what I have learnt in this programme."

Lindiwe Mahlangu: "I joined the programme because I wanted to extend my CV so that when I market myself I will get job opportunities. Unisa is greatly needed in our community because it will assist more youth to upgrade their CVs and make them more employable."

2. The Chance 2 Advance: Unisa academics advance Diepsloot's Health and Business skills

The Chance 2 Advance programme built a robust relationship with stakeholders in the community of Diepsloot. Unisa academics have been serving the community through involvement with Chance 2 Advance since 2012. Communities are empowered with critical knowledge to improve their circumstances, while academics discover fresh insight on social challenges and explore new research problems emerging in the community.

This year, Chance 2 Advance hosted a special programme at the request of Mr David Mabusela from the Zikuluseni Centre. The request from the community was that the programme should focus on Health and Business. The programme was held from 9 – 13 October at the Diepsloot Reformed Church. The initiative reached 646 members of the community.

Some comments from participants (SIC):-

Bongani Mhlanga: "[The programme] has given us light at the end of the tunnel, especially in the current state we are in South Africa. The workshops provided was of much worth and of much use".

Samson Masilo: "The programme is very informative and useful especially for those who cannot access education or can't afford it".

Sipho Mtluni: "This was a really important and profound programme. We need more of this. What I have learnt I will help and share with others".

3. Chance 2 Advance partners with Department of Correctional Services – Gauteng

Early in 2017, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), Skills Development Directorate enquired about a programme for offenders and parolees. The Chance 2 Advance programme customised its programme offerings for the specific needs identified by DCS.

A pilot programme took place from 23 – 27 October 2017.

The programme provided specific training for offenders and parolees at three different correctional facilities in Pretoria namely, Kgosi Mampuru II, Soshanguve and Mabopane. The programme served both male and female offenders and parolees.

The specific focus was on business and ICT (End User Computing). 75 participants were in attendance.

Chance 2 Advance has been requested by DCS to roll out further initiatives nationally in 2018.

Facilitators involved in the pilot had the following to share about their experience:

Nicky Tjano: “The experience of the programme was enlightening, offenders being released back into society encounter the challenges of financial strain and in most cases have to begin their life over, with the increased burden of a criminal record they can find themselves in serious financial jeopardy very quickly. The engagement has provided myself with an opportunity to identify and relate on matters that not only affect society in general but more specifically on parolees and offenders. They have limited access to financial support and very often have to survive on their own, resulting in the consultation with loan sharks. This happens especially when they have not been employed, this then becomes a means to start a business and earn an income. The consequences are not considered and the temptations of reckless spending are at its peak in such vulnerability. The programme takes them on a journey on how to not only manage their finances personally and in business but how to manage it responsibly and understand its value.”

Ephraim Bogopa: “Working with the offenders at DCS, I have realised that some of them have worked with MS Office but more can be done. It is evident that the skills obtained from our workshop and in the Correctional facilities will emerge as soon as they are re-integrated into the community where they will serve. The environment to us who present the End User Computing is like any other environment we have encountered, this indicates that offenders may have committed a crime but are capable of change.”

Sonti Chosi in observation was quite impressed to work with the group of female offenders and identified that they are very determined to learn and improve themselves. Most of the candidates' wish is to do more of these programs so that they can learn more but have limited access. Our interaction with them has revived their faith and hope to believe in their future once again.”

Nthabeleng Mmako: “I have enjoyed my opportunity to interact with the participants at the Correctional facilities. The participants were innovative, engaging and willing to participate. They showed potential in their entrepreneurial abilities. During their presentations of their entrepreneurial forecasts, a new hope emerged in the participants for their lives. Their display of a new life was very touching despite their circumstances.”

Fhatuwani Makahane: “Participants are seeking and hoping to achieve employment. Our work in providing the workshop provides the participant with the opportunity to understand the working environment and how to connect their potential to the right industry. Once participants undergo this journey from where they are to where they can be. They do not seem to regard their circumstance but rather want to pursue efforts that will assist in them achieving their desired jobs.”

Dr Lesiba Molepo: “The participants having been released back into society have to undergo severe adjustments for reintegration and this is often overwhelming. Participants expressed the very same realities of the unemployment crisis in our country however, they expressed that they are at a further disadvantage due to their history but not all hope is lost when they are guided and provided with opportunities and regarded as equal.”

Nhlanhla Radebe: “I was quite surprised to hear the stories of the participants and the journey they have undergone. Majority of them have commenced in starting a business and some are even expanding their business opportunities. The interaction with the participants was more advanced than my usual encounters in communities. They stimulated my academic knowledge and it made me realise that the potential the parolees have are endless. It is very inspiring to see that even though the efforts of Correctional Services for reintegration are evident the participants are working to being independent and not relying on support only.”

Dr James Hadji: “The group of 20 participants allocated to me, had some qualifications ranging from N6 and Degrees. It is commendable to learn that they acquired those qualifications in prison. Some had been there for more than 17 years. Meaning that, they are likely to be serving a life sentence. The discussions were lively and enlightening. The participants volunteered to present their various perspectives of life. They indicated that the

workshop helped them to increase their self-image in an effort to become better citizens and good communicators.”

4. Chance 2 Advance on the borders

The Chance 2 Advance conducted a programme in collaboration with the *Gratitude in Education* project, led by Dr Vussy Nkonyane of the College of Education. The initiative took place in the community of Mbuzini on the border of South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique. The programme provided a special social justice selection of workshops focusing on Gender Violence, Child Rape and Human Trafficking. 208 community members participated in the programme.

Participants' views

Siphiwe Doris Masilela said she will encourage youth to understanding how patriarchy and culture affects the wellbeing of woman. She wants to stop gender violence against woman and children.

Bheki Nkosi wants to organise a meeting so that as a community they can obtain change and work on combatting violence. He explained that he will raise his voice for those who fear reporting violence. The campaign will be called # Rape Must Fall. He stated, “our sisters and children deserve to live a normal life”.

Desmond Mbokodo said he wants to share the message about what to do in times of crisis. “We must stand at the crossroads look, ask for the right direction and take the good way. We need to stop and look what we are doing and make better choices to stop discrimination and violence in our community.”

5. Chance 2 Advance last stop for 2017: Cape Flats

The Chance 2 Advance is closing the year with a final programme in Cape Town, Mitchell's Plain. The programme is aimed at the youth, who need learning opportunities to improve their understanding of key social justice issues affecting their communities. The programme also seeks to support youth in improving their education prospects and their chances of employment. This final initiative of the year is a partnership with faith-based organisations in the Cape Flats and is supported by the City of Cape Town. The programme will run from 15 – 20 December.

See gallery below for images from the various communities that C2A made a difference in:





