

# Unisa trains young tourism ambassadors in Johannesburg

The City of Johannesburg launched a Tourism Ambassador Programme on 28 May 2019 to support tourism growth in Johannesburg. The aim of this programme is to improve the tourism experience at sites and attractions in the city, rendering them safe, pleasant, informative and memorable.

The Tourism Ambassador Programme envisages making Johannesburg a safer destination, leading to an increased number of tourists visiting the city for both leisure and business. This initiative has created 60 job opportunities. The nation is dealing with an excessively high unemployment rate, and therefore such an initiative aims to make a difference.

The tourism ambassadors have a minimum of a matric qualification and are between the ages 18-35. They were selected from the Department of Public Safety's unemployed youth database. The tourism ambassadors are trained by the City of Johannesburg and their relevant partners. These ambassadors will be trained to assist with tourism safety, to reduce the number of security incidents affecting tourists and residents, as well as provide tourism information to tourists and visitors. This programme will continue for three years.



Suvania Naidoo (Lecturer: Development Studies) & Dr Genevieve James (Deputy Director: Community Engagement and Outreach) with the Tourism Ambassadors.

The tourism sector is of global significance and is essential for the country's economic growth. For South Africa to develop rapidly, it needs to increase its GDP. One of the ways to do this is by making the country attractive to tourists, with the aim that they invest increasing amounts in South Africa. Therefore, the tourism ambassadors have a crucial part to play as South African citizens. Since this is a first time working experience for these 60 candidates, they require as much training and information as possible.

Suvania Naidoo, Lecturer in Development Studies in the College of Human Sciences, became aware of this initiative through her involvement as an Executive Committee member for the Klipriver Nature Reserve Sustainability Association (KLIPSA). She liaised with Xolile Maswanganyi, Operational Manager: Joburg Tourism at the City of Johannesburg to identify the

training needs that were lacking for the 60 candidates. She collaborated with the Chance to Advance Programme, Unisa, to find suitable facilitators. She planned and hosted a week of workshops from 14 – 20 August 2019. Five Unisans presented workshops in their area of expertise: Professor DJ Kotze (Professor: Department of Political Sciences) – Getting to know your Constitution; N Tjano (Lecturer: Department of Business Management) – Personal Finance; M Makgamathe (Community Development Practitioner: Community Engagement and Outreach) – Active citizenship; Prof S van Antwerpen (Professor: Department of Operations Management) – Cultural Diversity and Conflict in the workplace and Dr GL James (Deputy Director: Community Engagement and Outreach) – Workplace Effectiveness.



Suvania Naidoo (Lecturer: Development Studies) and Xolile Maswanganyi (Operational Manager: Jo'burg Tourism).

The workshops were held at a lecture hall at the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Centre in Braamfontein. The facilitators played a major role in supporting the Tourism Ambassador Programme by empowering the 60 Ambassadors with vital skills and knowledge through their workshops. The facilitators structured the content of their presentations to fit the needs of the Ambassadors. The 60 Ambassadors are placed at the different tourist attractions around the Johannesburg area. They are directly assisting JMPD with safety and security in the City of Johannesburg, and are directly involved with tourists. The workshops aimed to equip them not only with workplace skills, but also to strengthen and contribute to their personal development. Ms

Maswanganyi said that she was very surprised at the diversity of workshops and that each facilitator had something unique to offer to the 60 Tourism Ambassadors.

The newly minted tourism ambassadors showed enormous commitment and appreciation for Unisa's initiative. They said that they believe these workshops have brought a change to their mindset and will encourage team spirit amongst themselves and they look forward to more sessions.

They further commented that the workshops were really informative, because they were made aware of so many aspects that they had turned a blind eye to, they felt that they became aware of their great capabilities, and what they have learned they can positively use to their best interest.

Attendance certificates will be issued to the 60 Ambassadors during a feedback and reflection session that will take place in September.

*\*Submitted by the Department of Development Studies*

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