

Across country a chance to advance

Unisa's Chance 2 Advance (C2A) programme crosses borders and boundaries to provide learning and empowerment programmes to rural and urban communities, government, and civil society.



Participants of the entering the job market workshop

Diepsloot

Since 2012, C2A has continued supporting the community of Diepsloot through community learning and empowerment programmes. Recently, a workshop on entering the job market was conducted for 40 students from Rhiza Babuyile, an organisation that seeks to develop disadvantaged township communities through holistic community development. This includes programmes related to healthcare, skills development, enterprise development and education.

The programme took place at the Jozi Business Hub on 21 June 2018. Coordinators expressed their thanks and desire for the programme to return.



Facilitators Khatoon Gani and Sumayyah Fuad Mohamed (Human Resource Management, CEMS)

First-time facilitators Sumayyah Fuad Mohamed and Khatoon Gani from the Department of Human Resource Management in the College of Economic and Management Sciences (CEMS) had the following to say:

Sumaiyah Fuad Mohamed

“I thoroughly enjoyed facilitating the workshop in Diepsloot. The participants had a thirst for knowledge which was evident in their interaction throughout the workshop and the questions that they asked.

“Although I have experience and knowledge in the HR field, I realised that much of this knowledge is based on western context. While most of the concepts can be applied to the South African context, through interaction with the participants, I learnt about various concepts and areas that are unique to the South African context. These concepts need to be taught in HR courses to ensure that the content is relevant and thus capitalise on the diversity and uniqueness of our society.

“Through the interest shown, questions asked and the feedback provided by the participants, we learnt that HR skills *are* something that communities are interested in. These are essential skills for entry and progress in the job market and ultimately aiding in the reduction of unemployment in the country.

Engaging with the community is a reciprocal learning experience. Many participants indicated that they never attended such a workshop, despite its importance. I learnt from the participants as they shared their stories and experiences. Some things you simply cannot learn from textbooks or scholarly sources, but is learnt through interaction with the communities.

“It is so important to give back to the community as so many in our country were not privileged to further their studies. Through community engagement we realised how fortunate we are to have been given the opportunities that allowed us to develop as professionals. The onus is on us to give back to the communities so that they can start to make changes in their families and societies by teaching others what they have learnt. This will hopefully have a snowball effect and start to effect change in the communities and country at large.”

Khatoon Gani

“I had a wonderful experience. We were welcomed into a safe space where we felt comfortable to present and interact with the participants. Being my first experience I felt nervous; however, the Chance 2 Advance team supported us throughout the process to make sure we could successfully deliver a programme that is much needed within this community.

“I hope to use the engagement and experience to filter into my teaching and learning at Unisa. I endeavour to develop case studies for our modules based on the experience we had. I would like to use these workshops to conduct research.

“We had a lot of interaction and feedback from the community that showed us that the communities are interested in our presentations. The workshop was very hands on and we had active participation throughout the day. The workshop was very suitable for the group we facilitated, as most of the participants are currently involved in learnership programmes or studying and will therefore be looking to enter the job market soon.

“This opportunity enables us to reach out to communities and provide them with the skills and training they need to develop their employability skills.

“Having more academics involved in community engagement will allow us to offer more skills and training opportunities to communities in need. It will also enable us to learn from these communities and encourage research.”

Tafelkop

Tafelkop is a village in the Sekhukhune District Municipality in Limpopo. C2A provided a week-long learning programme on the theme of communities and social justice. This programme was aimed at providing critical learning opportunities in the area of health and social justice.

The programme consisted of five free workshops facilitated by Unisa academics. This initiative reached 1 879 participants. The programme facilitated a shared learning space where Unisa

academics from the colleges of Education and Human Sciences and the Department of Counselling were able to interact with communities in a reciprocal learning environment.

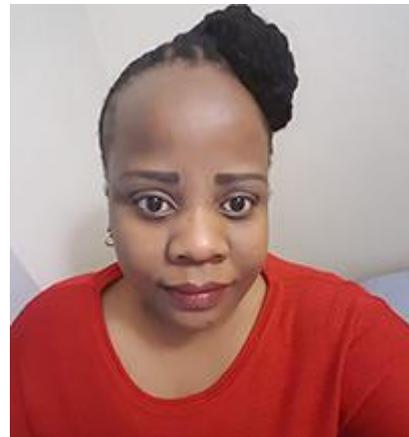
C2A worked closely with Tafelkop stakeholders. We conducted an intensive series of training with the community members who were equipped as C2A learning ambassadors. These are members of the community who are active in various community sectors. They are in the position to influence and enthuse others about the significance of learning. They understand the advantages of learning and can clearly discern the link between learning and a better life.

The principal of Mang le Mang Secondary School, who hosted the programme at the school hall, thanked C2A for serving the Tafelkop community. He lamented that his school and the community were isolated in terms of development and access to new learning opportunities. He mentioned that the C2A workshops were informative and timely, especially the workshop on combating child rape. He indicated that recently there were three rapes reported at his school.

Unisa academics who served as facilitators in Tafelkop shared their learning experience as they interacted with the community:

Kholofelo Matlhaba (CHS)

“Thanks to Chance 2 Advance for giving me the opportunity to interact with the community of Tafelkop through my presentation. My experience with this programme was really overwhelming. The number of people who attended the presentation showed that there is need for knowledge and information on lifestyle diseases. Overall, participation was good which shows appreciation to me as a presenter and the effort from the C2A team to come up with this important programme.



“The interesting part was the fact that people were talking about their real-life situations which made it easier for me as the presenter to get to their level of understanding and to provide them with more information. What I have realised was the fact that most of the people were youth. Despite the fact that they are living with elderly people who are diagnosed with hypertension and diabetes mellitus, they were interested in knowing how to prevent and teach other people about these conditions.

“However, as a presenter I had concerns with the number of young pregnant women among the people who attended the presentation. I realised that if C2A can make such an impact on the community at large on lifestyle diseases, more can be done on issues related to reproductive health and family planning. I believe that ‘it is better to build wellness rather than treating a disease’. As an academic and healthcare practitioner, I believe that we can do more through the collaboration with C2A to bring change to the community at large.

Mmapeu Manyaka (CEDU)



“The community initiative in Tafelkop, Limpopo, was both fulfilling and eye opening. In my view reaching out to communities is beneficial for both academics and the communities. Through this interaction, academics get to appreciate challenges faced by communities, while communities gain insight with regards to solutions and alternatives that can be applied in dealing with such challenges.

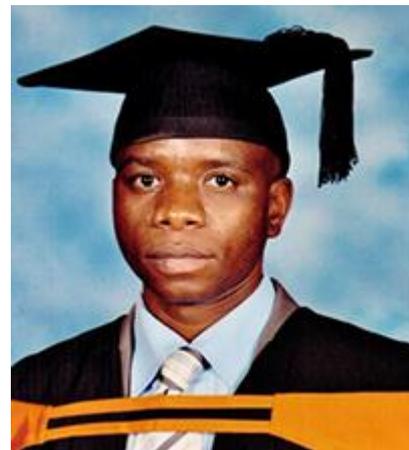
“I got to understand the challenges faced by ‘backyard’ crèche owners while crèche owners (including aspiring owners) got to enhance their knowledge on how to gradually convert their crèches into quality early childhood centres. There is a need for more of these interventions,

judging from the positive response received from participants and their turning up in numbers. Thumbs up to the C2A team for a sterling job in organising the programme. Keep the good work up.”

Fhatuwane Makahane (Department of Counselling)

“The Tafelkop workshop was unique and one of a kind considering the number of people who attended. There was a mixture of different groups, from those who have started their own businesses, and those who want to further their studies. It kept the participants interested on what was being offered. The interesting part is that despite the large number of participants which could have made it very difficult to present to them, they still kept focused without disturbing the programme. This shows that communities are willing to respectfully listen and actively participate.

“The facilitation created an opportunity for the participants to voice their thoughts and experiences. The mutual and reciprocal learning environment enabled the participants to take ownership of the workshop. Even before the end of the workshop, participants were requesting the same workshop to be repeated in the next term. Working together with the community was a good experience and eye opener. I have worked in different communities but the uniqueness of each community makes it a very interesting experience. Moving forward, I think we need to collaborate with local municipalities so that they may come up with strategies to help their communities.”





Enhance Your Employability workshop facilitated by Fhatuwane Makahane (Counselling, Unisa Ekurhuleni)



Children's Rights and Protection workshop facilitated by Dr Jane Sethusha and Mmapetu Manyaka (CEDU)



The community participants attending the Combating Child Rape workshop making a pledge that they will work together to make their communities safer for children



Crowd attending the Health and Wellness workshop facilitated by Kholofelo Mathane (Department of Health Sciences, CHS)

Bramfischerville

C2A collaborated with Gauteng Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) to host an exciting and empowering community learning initiative in Braamfischerville, Gauteng, from 14 to 18 May 2018. Bramfischerville is located on the outskirts of Soweto, between Dobsonville and Roodepoort.

Like many other marginalised communities in South Africa, Bramfischerville has a high rate of unemployment and poor service delivery, yet the community has a rich political history. It was named after Bram Fischer, a lawyer and anti-apartheid activist who rejected apartheid policies and defended Nelson Mandela and the other accused in the Treason Trial of 1956-1961 and the Rivonia Trial of 1964.

C2A and COGTA provided a week-long learning programme on the theme of preparing for the working world. The programme aimed at equipping the community with critical skills and relevant information to enhance their employability. The programme facilitated a shared learning space where Unisa academics from the colleges of Science, Engineering, and Technology (CSET), Human Sciences (CHS) and Economics and Management Sciences (CEMS) were able to interact with communities in a reciprocal learning environment.

Preparation for a learning programme

C2A worked closely with Bramfischerville stakeholders. An intensive workshop was held with them to encourage a culture of learning, regardless of socio-economic circumstances and to

understand the advantages of learning in order to clearly discern the link between learning and a better life.

During the programme

The programme consisted of five free workshops facilitated by seven facilitators who are Unisa academics. The workshops were hosted in one venue, the Bramfischerville Multipurpose Centre in phase 2. The programme reached 1 030 participants.



The Enhancing your Employability workshop was co-facilitated by Sadika Ismail and Maryam Moosa (both from Human Resource Management).

Feedback from participants in their own words

“C2A has provided a chance for our community members to develop their skills in seeking employment. This programme has been very helpful because the unemployment in our community is very high.”

–Lehlohonolo Dhlamini

“Attending the C2A workshops such as effective communication skills has provided me with critical information on how to become an effective communicator in my family and at work. This workshop was changed my mind and challenged me to work harder on my communication skills.”

–Emmanuel Nkosiphile

“Thank you so much for giving us the chance to learn. I was blind when coming to internet and social media. I thought Facebook was for the young but now I have learned that I can also use the internet and social media to learn more at my age.”

–Nngwanathole Mokaba

“I thank the Unisa facilitators for coming to our community and sharing their knowledge with us. I have learned and gain insights from facilitators. I will apply and share the knowledge gained with my family and community.”

–Valentine Ramashu

The enhancing your employability workshop was co-facilitated by Sadika Ismail and Maryam Moosa from the Department of Human Resource Management.



The administrative skills workshop was facilitated by Prof. Sumei van Antwerpen (Department of Operations Management).

What the Unisans had to say

Unisa academics who served as new facilitators also shared their learning experience as they interacted with the community:

Maryam Moosa

“I was despondent on the very first morning of the Bramfischerville programme due to the sudden change in weather. However, my heart warmed at the sight of at least 120 people who braved the cold and rain to attend the programme. I was humbled by the fact that so many people placed this much emphasis on education and I was happy to be a part of something like this.

“The two-day workshop which I co-facilitated was a success in my eyes. The community responded well and interacted brilliantly with us. We learned so much from them. One of the main reflections from my experience is that we should not take anything for granted when facilitating—always explain everything that is in the presentation and gear presentations specifically towards the target audience.

“Some of the concepts we spoke about were alien to the community, especially the online environment. I feel that this programme has better prepared me for any future programmes that I may facilitate as part of the chance to advance programme.”

Sadika Ismail

“I was in awe of the people who had availed themselves for the workshops we facilitated. I have learnt so much from them in terms of needs, opportunities, challenges and privilege. We often take for granted what we have and assume that everyone has the same, but this first initiative was really an eye-opener. Together with my co-facilitator, we have discussed re-designing the workshop material to tailor it to the users in the communities.

“I loved every minute of the workshop as it was a humbling and rewarding experience to work with people who are so eager and willing to learn. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with the C2A programme. We hope to be included in more events of this nature.”

Highveld Anglican Board of Social Responsibility

C2A has a longstanding relationship with the Highveld Anglican Board of Social Responsibility (HABSR), having provided high quality community learning opportunities for the civil society organisation since 2014. This year C2A conducted a programme in the month of May consisting

of participants from various HABSR networks and faith-based development organisations. A total of 533 participants were reached during the learning programme.

Unisa's Zainab Aziz, a first-time facilitator, and participants had the following to say about the programme:

Zainab Aziz

“The programme was uplifting and enriching. It was the first time I got an opportunity to facilitate a workshop with C2A. I am thankful I received the opportunity. I would like to encourage more Unisa academics and staff to get involved in such initiatives like this to share what we know. It is a gift we must give to the community.”



First-time facilitator Zainab Aziz (Operations Management)



Bishop Charles May (Anglican Diocese of the Highveld)



Workshop project management group work participants



Participants of the workshop Workplace Effectiveness: Learn how to keep your job

Feedback from participants in their own words

“I’ve come from the community of Noordgesig, Soweto, to attend this programme; what a well-worth-it investment. Knowledge is indeed power; thank you for making it accessible and for empowering us with it. I look forward to the programme visiting our community to enrich the lives of the hopeless.”

–*Stella Malgas*

“I have learnt so much and am going to apply the information gained, I think these workshops offered have the ability to empower and help sustain NPOs, NGOs and small businesses. The

facilitators know their subjects very well. Keep supporting the community at large; it is indeed making an impact.”

–Leah Nkabinde



Zainab Aziz (Operations Management), facilitator of Project Management, and participants

“What a wonderful experience, I will go out there and empower the people as much as I can. ‘If you feed a man a fish, he will only eat for a day, but if you teach him how to fish he will feed his family every day.’ Please continue to empower and make more learning opportunities available.”

–Wendy Klassen

“This is a great initiative that will help South Africans to deal with socio-economic factors that affect their lives. Thank you for affording us the opportunity to obtain valuable information.”

–Prudence Sithole



Nicky Tjano (Business Management), facilitator of Financial Management, and participants

Bishop Charles May from the Anglican Diocese of the Highveld had this to say:

“The value of learning is important because when you learn, you start to have self-confidence, self-worth, and become a person who lives in hope. With learning, you open yourself to opportunities. Through the organising of programmes like Unisa C2A, subject experts from Unisa inform and equip the social development efforts of the diocese. The C2A participants are

representing various congregations across the diocese and will filter the knowledge down to their respective congregations.

“Other denominations are also being impacted on through the programme and it is growing the faith network as we believe in ecumenism. The church is in the community and deals with people. For us to host the Unisa C2A programme is a way for the church to show that it is not just about the “Sunday” mass but that it is about empowering the community every day of the week. We are opening the doors for the community to see the church as a place not only of spirituality but also a centre of learning for the betterment of the people.



Prof. Joseph Chisasa (Finance and Risk Management and Banking), facilitator of Business Proposal Writing, and participants

“The church has a vital role to play in terms of higher education because without education, especially from higher learning institutions, people or communities will be limited in terms of access to information. The diocese plays an active role in assisting its youth in enrolment to formal education. Programmes like C2A assist the community greatly in their learning needs. It is providing a platform that can be most beneficial for bridging the knowledge gap being experienced across the country. The church has the facilities that enable the community to engage in the learning opportunity.

“We appreciate Unisa for providing the resources to empower the communities through the learning programmes. We trust that the relationship established will continue to grow and impact the lives of the communities. Our doors at the diocese are always open to enrich our community and be the church for the people as it always should be. We at the diocese are advocating to re-establish the church as a home of safety and a centre of learning.”

C2A looks forward to further engagements to empower civil society through learning. A follow-up programme will be held in October 2018 with a focus on social justice with specific reference to children.