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## **New UCT women’s leadership programme to improve public sector service delivery**

The University of Cape Town’s (UCT) Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance in partnership with Zenande Leadership Consulting – a consultancy committed to developing women in leadership positions – have developed the Local Government Women’s Leadership Development Programme, which targets women leaders in council and local government institutions.

The course aims to enhance their leadership capacity and amplify their impact as leaders in various roles in the public sector to improve service delivery outcomes. With the launch of the course, UCT is in pole position to develop a pool of women leaders who are empowered, skilled, capable and equipped to make authentic, innovative and sustainable contributions to the spaces they occupy in South Africa.

As part of the school’s suite of executive education programmes, the course offers training via a range of delivery modes including short courses, workshops and implementation labs, webinars and masterclasses, and individual and group coaching.

“Through this programme we hope to support women in middle and senior management positions to enhance their impact and increase the pool of women available for appointment to these roles,” said Hannah Diaz, programme manager: executive education. “This will advance transformation efforts at systems level, shift ways of work and improve the quality of work to ultimately improve service delivery.”

Diaz said The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) appointed the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance to develop this programme to help them build strong women leaders in local government organisations. “Public servants in our country face enormous challenges, especially when it comes to developing and implementing public development policies and delivering programmes that enable lasting positive transformation. Women in the public sector also face additional barriers, which include fewer access to leadership development opportunities to thrive and advance their careers as public leadership representatives,” said Diaz. She said there is a profound need for this type of training and development.

This leadership programme is designed as a journey of personal, interpersonal and organisational transformation. Delegates are encouraged to engage on all three levels to develop agency and increase their capacity and resilience.

“The programme was specifically designed for women who occupy roles in local government at both political and administrative levels. It has been designed to foster greater understanding and more effective collaboration between the two groups. The programme has not been designed on a one-size-fits-all basis. Instead, it’s based on a thorough needs analysis, which includes a context mapping exercise, and is designed to be highly responsive to the needs and context of the training audience,” added Diaz.

In the short-term delegates benefit from greater self-awareness and enhanced emotional intelligence. By implementing the skills they learned during the programme, these leaders should be able to positively shift their engagement within their workplaces and communities, and especially in their teams. In the long-term, by consistently implementing the strategic, innovative, adaptive and ethical leadership principles and skills gained through the programme, delegates will contribute to transformation and improved organisation processes and practices in local government organisations.

Diaz said the strong network of women leaders established during the programme also connects leaders from across the country and across cohorts, who now function as an important support structure for each other.

***ENDS***

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