

The Frederick van Zyl Slabbert Institutes' Short Course in Leadership and Community Interaction has given me valuable insight regarding community development and has helped me grow as a person this year. Through teaching the students the principles of community development, the course has allowed students to gain an understanding of the difference between charity work and community development. This in turn, has allowed students to envision a country where people are responsible for their own lives, where they take ownership of their circumstances and participate in creating a better society for themselves. The course has presented the students with the opportunity to see this "bigger picture" where a nation can engage in critical thinking, where citizens are active and no longer have passive attitudes or a sense of helplessness regarding their own lives, but rather accept responsibility for their own lives and take initiative in order to improve them, therefore furthering the notions of equal opportunity and social justice, as stated in the progressive constitution of South Africa. The short course has allowed me, personally, to truly "see" this bigger picture and to believe in it.

As the HK member in charge of the community interaction project of my residence, the short course has taught me valuable skills regarding project management. It has reiterated the importance of planning and continuous monitoring and evaluation of a project, while also emphasising the notion of flexibility and the need of being able to adapt. As I was completing this course while I was managing a community interaction project, I was able to apply the theory that I learnt during this course to this project, as well as to implement the practical tips that we were taught. This has made an enormous difference to the community interaction project. It has highlighted aspects that were hidden before, as well as allowed the project to become the community's own, where the community members determine the aims of the project and a "bottom-up" approach is followed, thus allowing the community members to take ownership of the project and to participate whole-heartedly in it.

The Short course in Leadership and Community Interaction that is presented by the Frederick van Zyl Slabbert Institute is an invaluable course that truly contributes to enriching the community interaction experience. I would recommend it to any person who has ever participated in any form of volunteering, and is interested in envisioning a "bigger picture" for our nation.