

**A message from The Sophia Foundation
at the JustLead! residency welcome dinner**

12 December 2018

The JustLead! Course is the result of the collaboration between various partner institutions to the University of Stellenbosch, who assisted with the marketing and recruitment of students and a number of departments within the University. I wish to extend a warm welcome from The Sophia Foundation to delegates from the Universities of Kwa Zulu Natal and Fort Hare, Prochorus, Boland College and Equal Education.

I also wish to thank the teams from The Division of Student Affairs, The Centre for Student Leadership and Structures and The Frederik van Zyl Institute for preparing for the Residency and this Celebratory Event and for all the work and thought you have put into the design and presentation of the JustLead! Course. I especially acknowledge Rehana, the programme co-ordinator and Mine and Alex from Telematics, who developed the on-line platform and provided technical support throughout.

And then to Tonia Overmeyer – the Dean of Students and the Director of the Centre for Student Leadership who to me epitomises authentic and inclusive Leadership and really walks her talk – thank you for your commitment to having the vision, values and ethos of The Sophia Foundation represented in the JustLead! Course but also for the many opportunities you have provided for me to grow and to learn more about myself.

Finally, a very special welcome to you our participants in the JustLead! Programme!

I make the assumption that most of you have enrolled as a participant in the JustLead! Course because you aim to become Leaders. We live in difficult and divisive times and this is because we have many Leaders but little Leadership. Never before has the integrity of Leaders been of such concern and has there been such a need for Leaders worthy of trust.

I'd like to quote from a song by Michael Jackson called Man in the Mirror. It goes like this:

*I'm starting with the man in the mirror
I'm asking him to change his ways
And no message could have been any clearer
If you want to make the world a better place
(If you want to make the world a better place)
Take a look at yourself, and then make a change
(Take a look at yourself, and then make a change)*

I believe that Leadership is about making the world a better place and that this can only happen through Self-Knowledge.

In my introductory talk to the JustLead! Course I asked you to reflect on a number of questions relating to your personal growth. The online part of the JustLead! Course is over. Have you learnt anything more about yourself through your participation so far?

The presentation of a Leadership Course in an online platform and to participants from other tertiary institutions and NGO's is a first for the University of Stellenbosch. It is also the first for The Sophia Foundation. Our vision is to raise consciousness for the good of the whole by creating situations where human beings can grow to take responsibility for the impact of their actions on themselves, society and the whole of the natural world. The vision of the University to promote academic excellence in an inclusive environment. This is innovative work in progress and we are working together to find ways of using academic content as a conduit for personal growth, transformation and development.

One of your modules gives the history of South Africa. I would like to highlight two Leaders whose Leadership had very different consequences – Hendrik Verwoerd and Nelson Mandela. If one looks at their Leadership, their personal histories and the consequences of the decisions they made, decisions that changed the course of the history of South Africa and had a huge impact on the rest of the world, can we learn something about ourselves? Do we see these tendencies playing out in ourselves and in the political landscape of today?

Have you noticed a change in your personal vision of Leadership through your participation in the JustLead! Course? Is it leading you to a greater or smaller humanity?

This is the first of 6 cohorts so you are our inaugural group. Course statistics show that a third of those enrolled participated fully, a third partially and a third withdrew. Obviously we would like to further design this course so that it inspires greater participation, deeper reflection and the development of visionary Leadership. We would value your honest feedback so that we can evolve a course that will meet what is wishing to be born in our time from the future.

Each one of you will be called to show Leadership in some way in the future - in your homes, workplace or community. There are still two days of the residency left. I call upon you to take this opportunity to unfold and develop further and to open your hearts and minds to a world of new possibilities, new perspectives and new solutions. It is through this consciousness you will bring about meaningful change in the world. Thank you.

Lorraine Forbes