



Stellenbosch

UNIVERSITY
IYUNIVESITHI
UNIVERSITEIT

SPL

School for Public Leadership
iSikolo sobuNkokheli boLuntu
Skool vir Publieke Leierskap

DIPLOMA IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

PROSPECTUS

Grounding students in sustainability & entrepreneurship for future social impact and ecological justice



This prospectus was originally created by our first student cohort during their final year in 2020. Thank you, Team One! This version was update in 2024.

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Do you want to contribute to sustainable, just futures?

A learning journey for a new generation of change agents and social entrepreneurs

The Diploma will build your **entrepreneurial** and **intrapreneurial** competencies. Entrepreneurs are independent thinkers who use their knowledge and skills to create employment opportunities for themselves and others. Intrapreneurs are innovative, action-orientated, self-motivated people who drive positive change in organisations and companies.

The Diploma uses place-based, applied learning in real world contexts to develop your skills and abilities. Our students graduate with focused knowledge and skills in sustainable development and social entrepreneurship.

Our desired graduate attributes



AN ENQUIRING MIND

Lifelong learner | Critical and creative thinker | Exercises responsibility for learning and using knowledge

"To be a reflective activist and a grounded philosopher. Curious, creative and passionate."

- Team 1, 2020



AN ENGAGED CITIZEN

Leader and collaborator | Social entrepreneur | Effective in a diverse environment

"To innovate with empathy and to advocate for socio-ecological justice. To be an authentic voice."

- Team 1, 2020



A DYNAMIC PROFESSIONAL

Problem solver | Uses sustainable and effective technology | Innovative

"To be a strategist, a facilitator, a planetary steward, a trail blazer and a professional communicator."

- Team 1, 2020



A WELL-ROUNDED INDIVIDUAL

Connected to head, heart and hands | Takes responsibility for own development | Takes informed and considered decisions.

"To live principles of Ubuntu, community, Earth and culture."

- Team 1, 2020

Why we learn

Sustainability and entrepreneurship for future social and ecological justice

"The top 9 skills that employers are looking for are communicational skills, problem-solving skills, leadership skills, organisational skills, teamwork skills, commercial awareness, analytical skills, digital skills and innovative thinking."

– Europe Language Jobs' The Top 9 Skills Employers Want In 2020

"We need to work together to combat challenges like climate change, poverty and inequality. This means we need to build networks that can tackle complex problems and create entrepreneurial opportunities for social change. We learn how to do this in the Diploma by working in groups to design and implement collaborative solutions as part of our practical work.

The Diploma teaches us how to understand and work in complex systems by immersing us in both theory and practical experience. We need to have an interdisciplinary approach to learning – and so we learn about many topics, tools and techniques. We attend workshops in different venues and go on field trips to meet innovative business owners, activists and change makers. We have guest lecturers that share their experiences of working in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world.

We learn both in and from nature to understand the interconnections between people and plants. Nature's wisdom helps us to create sustainable solutions through methods like permaculture and biomimicry. The Diploma teaches us systems thinking and how to think deeply about the actual, potential and unintended consequences of products, technologies and practices.

Most importantly, the Diploma emphasizes experiential learning through continuous reflection. This helps us to understand ourselves and others better. Emotional intelligence and empathy are key elements of successful collaborative partnerships – the kind of partnerships necessary to shift the world towards sustainable, just futures. Changemakers need to be aware of power dynamics, organizational culture, and worldviews to be effective leaders in different contexts.

The theoretical knowledge and practical skills empower us to find ways to create regenerative processes and sustainable solutions. We are taught how to think critically and creatively so that we can create meaningful work for ourselves and others that benefits society and the environment."

- Team 1, 2020



What we learn

The Diploma in Sustainable Development offers a series of interlinked modules over three years. These modules cover theory, tools, and practical skills to empower us as entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs in the working world. We learn how to develop our ideas and build campaigns to drive change in the world. Beyond that, we are equipped with the necessary personal skills, including facilitation, mentoring, heightened emotional intelligence and the ability to work in diverse teams.

"The top skills and skill groups which employers see as rising in prominence in the lead up to 2025 include groups such as critical thinking and analysis as well as problem-solving, and skills in self-management such as active learning, resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility."

- World Economic Forum, The Future of Work Report 2020

"I have learned how to master my emotions and to deal with those of others."

"We learn about the different types of leadership and how to lead by example, treating all people with respect and tolerance."

"The modules on entrepreneurship have unlocked a hunger in me. I have become opportunity obsessed."

- Team 1, 2020



YEAR 1

Regenerative Leadership (10)*
Worldviews (15)
Sustainability Perspectives (15)
Sustainable Design (20)
Strategic Communication (20)
Social Entrepreneurship (20)
Ecoliteracy (20)



YEAR 2

Green Economy (15)
Social Change (15)
Regenerative Leadership (15)
Strategic Communication (15)
Sustainable Design (20)
Social Entrepreneurship (40)



YEAR 3

Regenerative Leadership (10)
Sustainability Reporting (15)
Strategic Communication (15)
Social Entrepreneurship (40)
Internship (40)

* credit value indicated in brackets.

Values, Perspectives and Ways of Thinking

Throughout the programme we explore the narratives and paradigms that shape the concept of sustainability. We think about the complex interconnected relationships between ourselves, other people, and Nature. By learning about different worldviews and belief systems, we learn how to engage meaningfully across differences. This helps us understand how we can facilitate positive social change and ecological justice.

Sustainability Perspectives	Explore interrelated crises from Afrocentric perspectives Participate in a sustainability solution Interpret sustainable development in local and global contexts
Ecoliteracy	Develop ecological intelligence Learn about environmental ethics, complexity theory and systems thinking
Worldviews	Develop intercultural communicative competencies Increase your global self-awareness
Social Change	Investigate the impact of transformative social movements like #BlackLivesMatter and #FeesMustFall

Future of Work

The social and environmental crises we face call for economic reforms that provide opportunities for decent livelihoods for all within the ecological limits of the planet. To achieve this, we need to develop relevant skills for green economies. During the final year, we prepare for the professional environment by completing internships at companies whose work aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Green Economy	Identify green activities and green jobs Analyze sustainability strategies
Sustainability Reporting	Compare sustainability reporting tools Interpret Impact measurement reports
Internship	Identify your relevant skills, competencies, and experiences Develop your professional network

Sustainable Design

Design is one of the forces that can either drive or hinder our efforts to create a sustainable future. We learn about different design disciplines that enable us to understand the problem context so that we can develop innovative, sustainable solutions. We use these design disciplines to investigate urban sustainability challenges in their context before prototyping and testing simple solutions.

Year 1	Methodologies Apply Design Thinking, permaculture, and biomimetic design principles to generate sustainable design ideas.
Year 2	Urban Systems Use design thinking to test a solution prototype for a sustainability challenge.

Strategic Communication

During the programme we develop the communication skills we need to be effective change-agents. We build critical reading and writing skills, reflective thinking processes, and presentation abilities. This helps us with framing messages, understanding target markets, and developing communication outputs for social enterprises.

Year 1	Communication theories and skills Articulate ideas and learning through written, visual, and oral approaches.
Year 2	Strategies and outputs Generate multimedia communication outputs
Year 3	Strategic Communication for Social Enterprise undertake a real-life communications project for a social enterprise.



Regenerative Leadership

Regenerative leadership aims to transform communities, businesses, and organisations for sustainability. To become regenerative leaders, we first explore how we lead ourselves, before thinking about how we manage relationships so that we can help others achieve common goals.

Year 1	Personal Leadership Development Self-awareness Self-management Improve academic language proficiency Peer-to-peer mentorship Academic and personal development plans
Year 2	Facilitation and Leadership Social awareness Relationship management In-person and online facilitation skills
Year 3	Mentorship and Leadership Motivation Self-performance Mentor peers Find your own leadership style

Social Entrepreneurship

As a practice, Social Entrepreneurship involves thought leadership that is focused on transformational change. Social Entrepreneurship is also a solution-orientated process. In these modules we develop entrepreneurial skills and competencies to understand our passion and purpose towards change-agency.

Year 1	Process and practice Self-efficacy Creative competencies Entrepreneurship Intrapreneurship Ideation
Year 2	Business Tools Business models Basic financial management Action-orientated initiative Experimentation Business reporting Pitches
Year 3	Funding and governance Funding strategies Governance models Problem-solving skills



How we learn

"What you see and experience you can never unlearn, whereas what you jot down with no practical experience can easily be forgotten."

"In my second year, we designed a social media campaign on an issue of our choice. My group focused on body positivity with a campaign motto of 'My mind, My body, My choice' and aimed to encourage radical self-acceptance. In this process, working with these women, I learned to love myself. My team pushed me to voice my opinions. I grew as an individual in this process."

"Experiences become memories and cannot be erased."

- Team 1, 2020



How we learn has a profound effect on the kind of leaders that we will become and determines the kind of change we will make in the world. The Diploma uses a combination of learning styles and teaching approaches that enable us to explore and understand how we work best, what we have to offer, and how to handle complex challenges.

We learn through

- **Immersive and interactive face-to-face sessions.** Our modules are presented in blocks, which gives us the chance to engage deeply with the content. We typically have 2-3 days in-person class per week. Most days class is from 9.30 – 15.30, with breaks throughout the day. In class, we actively participate through facilitated discussions, debates, and group work.
- **Self-directed online learning.** While the bulk of our learning happens in-person, some days are presented online. We work through theory, lectures, reading and various activities in our own time to get the most from the in-person sessions. In-person sessions help us make sense of the module content and practice our skills.
- **Synchronous online sessions.** Synchronous online sessions allow us to stay connected and process content we have covered. Online sessions also develop our ability to work collaboratively in virtual spaces.

Experiential learning

We engage with real-world experiences through field trips and visits to local businesses and organisations. We learn through experience, which gives us a richer understanding of the theory that we learn in class. Learning in different environments, including nature, helps to broaden our understanding of the world. This, in turn, means that our work will be more effective. We actively put theory into practice in different contexts.



Group work and action learning

The world of work is rapidly changing and so are the skills we will need. One way that we learn skills like collaboration, negotiation and emotional intelligence is through group work. We work collaboratively on projects to develop our self-awareness, our leadership styles and sense of agency. In the Diploma, we learn by doing. To develop our creativity and critical thinking, we put theory into practice, take action and reflect on our learning. This allows us to gain competence by practicing what we have learned in real-time.



Co-creation

We learn from our peers and from our facilitators who are working professionals. We also meet expert guest lecturers. We exchange ideas, stories, and experiences with each other. There is a strong sense of mutual respect as our facilitators view themselves as knowledge co-creators rather than authority figures. This helps us to develop critical communication and critical thinking skills. This also offers unique opportunities to develop our professional network while we are studying.



Reflection

We record our personal thoughts, ideas, and experiences during the Diploma journey and, most importantly, reflect on them. This helps us connect our learning to our lives and to what is happening in the world. It helps us to find our voice and sense of agency. Journaling is a great tool that has contributed to our academic and personal growth.



Where we learn

"We learn in a diverse range of spaces. Our learning is placed in a living context so that we can understand how theory and practice impact real people, communities, and spaces. We learn in classrooms, online, in nature, or field trips and by working in groups. The places and spaces where we learn play an important role. These spaces inspire us to be more creative and to experiment with new ways of learning. "

- Team 1, 2020

Stellenbosch University

- Some of our classes are presented on Stellenbosch main campus. We make use of all the services available on main campus like WiFi, computer user areas, library services, academic services, campus health, psychotherapeutic and other support services. We can apply for accommodation in university residences and we can join private student organisations and societies, even if we do not stay in university housing.

Lynedoch Ecovillage

- Many of our in-person classes are presented at the Sustainability Institute's praxis hub in the Lynedoch Ecovillage. The ecovillage is home to a Montessori pre-school and primary school, a World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) centre and the Sustainability Institute. The ecovillage is 11 kilometers from Stellenbosch. Transport is provided to and from main campus. WiFi access is provided.



The Diploma programme uses place-based learning, meaning that the space we learn in is sometimes as important as what we are learning. Favourite spaces at the Sustainability Institute are the Amphitheatre where we meet every morning and host large outdoor events and the shaded grass under the oak tree. Lessons are often taught here in the middle of nature and it is a peaceful place to sit and think.

We also use the Green Café, library and work hubs in the main building. The café is a great place to relax, socialise and eat the delicious farm-to-fork lunches and drink freshly squeezed juices – while chatting about how to change the world! The library is a meeting and group work venue that overlooks the Lynedoch Valley. We can book a work hub to do individual and group work between classes.

At the heart of Lynedoch Ecovillage is the food garden, which we also helped design and maintain. Working in the garden provides us with emotional, physical and learning benefits. We go to the garden to reflect, at times of celebration and for community gatherings. We also go on fieldtrips to learn about projects. Content is not just theoretical but is placed in a living context so that we can understand how what we learn and how we apply it impacts on real people, communities and spaces.



Programme Information

Faculty: Economic and Management Sciences

Department: School of Public Leadership

- **Full-time (minimum duration of three years).**
- **120 credits per year, 360 credits total.**
- **NQF (HEQF) 6 accreditation.**

Most face-to-face classes in Year 1 take place at the Sustainability Institute's praxis hub. In Year 2 and 3, most face-to-face classes are presented on main campus, although some days are presented at the praxis hub. See the section on "How we learn" for more details.

Admission requirements

Overall National Senior Certificate average of at least 55%, excluding Life Orientation

+

English Home Language 50% **or**

English First Additional Language 60%

+

Mathematics 50% **or**

Mathematical Literacy 60% **or**

Mathematics 40% **or** Mathematical Literacy 50% **and** 60% for Business Studies **or** Economics **or** Accounting.

+

A completed departmental form.

Application procedure

Apply by the closing date of the year before your intended studies, and the application portal can be found on www.maties.com.

You must complete two applications.

1. Complete the official University application, via www.maties.com.

Choose the following options on your online Programme Selection:

- Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences – Stellenbosch
- Programme Type: Undergraduate
- Programme: Dip (Sustainable Development)

2. Complete departmental application, which will be sent to you via email once your official application has been reviewed.

Selection

A selection process is followed internally by the School of Public Leadership. The number of students selected will be influenced by, among other things, staff capacity and the availability of resources within the school, as well as academic merit and University transformation objectives.

A committee selects applicants based on a combined score. The combined score is derived from academic merit (NSC average), and the interest and experience you demonstrate in key areas (indicated in the departmental application form). Key areas include sustainable development, social and environmental justice, entrepreneurial mindset, creativity, and leadership.

Application enquiries

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Your departmental application:

Programme leader

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