

By DDP Team

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND LAW

Huntswood and DDP | June–October 2025

A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION: FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

At Huntswood, we believe that leadership is not just a title—it's a journey of healing, empowerment, and courage. Through our partnership with the Democracy Development Program (DDP), the SHE LEADS initiative has become a beacon of hope and transformation for women in our workplace.

Over five powerful modules, women from across our call centre have gathered to explore leadership, legal literacy, emotional intelligence, and workplace rights. These workshops have not only equipped participants with knowledge but have ignited a movement of sisterhood, resilience, and advocacy.



Pictured: DDP team with Huntswood team at the inaugural workshop of the She-Leads Program.

“Leadership is not about perfection; it is about courage, empathy, and the power to heal while building others.” D. Paul Kariuki

Module 1: Taking Up Space – Leadership & Emotional Intelligence

Held in June, Module 1 laid the foundation for personal and professional growth. Participants explored leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and trauma-informed empowerment.

Highlights:

- Defined leadership from a holistic lens.
- Explored emotional triggers and healing through the “River of Life” activity.
- Built personal development plans and peer support structures.



Pictured: Nokuthokoza Shezi, at the workshop held in Huntwood.



Pictured: Delegates during a group exercise

Now I know I am a leader, I just didn't understand the word. I feel important.”

“I need to take care of myself before I can lead anyone else.” Nokuthokoza Shezi

Key Takeaway: Healing is not separate from leadership—it is a vital leadership skill.

Module 2: Balancing Tradition, Law & Empowerment



Pictured: Xoliswa Jwili, Facilitating at the workshop.

In July, Module 2 tackled the intersection of personal stability and workplace performance. Women learned about family law, gender-based violence, and access to justice.

Focus Areas:

- Customary and civil marriage law.
- Maintenance, divorce, and child custody.
- Protection orders and domestic violence remedies.



Pictured: Delegates during group discussion.

Impact

“I will be able to fight for my rights and also for my children.”

“I did a group video call and showed my friends how to fill in maintenance forms.”

Key Insight: Legal literacy empowers women to make informed decisions and support others.

Module 3: The Working Woman – Labour Law & Workplace Rights

August's module focused on labour law, workplace fairness, and dispute resolution. Women gained practical tools to assert their rights and navigate disciplinary processes.

Topics Covered:

- Section 23 of the Constitution.
- Employment contracts and unfair labour practices.
- CCMA procedures and mock disciplinary hearings.



Pictured: Dr. Paul Kariki, Huntwood Management Team and Xoliswa Jwili



Pictured: Delegates during the workshop

Key Learnings: Knowledge transforms vulnerability into agency.

Impact

“I used to think the law was only for people who could afford lawyers.”

“Roleplaying the hearing made the process less intimidating. I feel prepared.”

Module 4: Access to Justice & Restorative Leadership

This module deepened participants' understanding of South Africa's justice system and introduced restorative justice as a leadership tool rooted in Ubuntu.

Key Themes:

- Understanding the court system and traditional courts.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): mediation, arbitration, conciliation.
- Restorative justice: healing, reconciliation, and accountability.



Pictured: Participants at Huntwood



Pictured: Dr Jenine Hicks, UKZN School of Law

Highlights:

- Guest lecture by Dr. Janine Hicks (UKZN) on gender justice and leadership.
- Mock mediation exercises and Ubuntu healing circles.
- Reflections on personal empowerment projects from Module 1.

Key Insight: Justice is not only legal—it is emotional, relational, and transformative.

Impact

“Justice starts when we decide to listen, to heal, and to lead differently.”

“Restorative justice helped me forgive without forgetting; it gave me peace, not just justice.”

Module 5: Cultural Diversity, Community Connection & Sustainability

The final module brought the journey full circle, integrating lessons from all previous sessions and grounding leadership in identity, culture, and community.

Focus Areas:

- Cultural diversity and Ubuntu in leadership.
- Ubungoma (traditional healing) and workplace inclusion.
- Public participation and civic engagement.
- Sustainability through She Leads Committees and mentorship



Pictured: Participants at the workshop.



Pictured: DDP's Suraksha Singh with Xoliswa Jwili

Activities:

- Storytelling circles and “Stories of Change.”
- Creation of the She Leads Referral Resource Pack.
- Personal and group sustainability plans.

Key Insight: Empowerment becomes legacy when it is shared, sustained, and rooted in community.

Impact

“I’ve realised that my strength as a leader comes from where I come from—my story.”

“Sustainability means we do not walk alone anymore.”

#Amplifying Citizens Voices

#SheLeads



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“When women understand justice, they do not only seek it—they build it.”



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Activate, Mobilize, Educate

