**NEWS ARTICLE**

Zutari’s Adaptive Leader Programme nurtures the next generation

**05 June 2023:** A lot can be learnt about an organisation where leaders grow other leaders and are willing to make the time to engage, encourage, and invest in those who want to make a positive impact and contribution. This is the view of **Shamenthree Naidoo**, Learning Experience Leader, [Zutari](http://www.zutari.com), whose team has successfully pioneered the Adaptive Leader Programme (ALP) at the leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory firm.

The first cohort of ALP candidates kicked off the 18-month programme in August 2021, with the last webinars and in-person sessions concluding in April this year. High-potential candidates were identified and then shortlisted, following which the final list of 23 was announced.

“It is noteworthy that the ALP is the first formal leadership programme under the Zutari banner and one that was launched during the Covid-19 pandemic,” notes Naidoo. It made the programme an essential test of hybrid learning and the application of digital technology. The ALP is “a signature Zutari flagship initiative” aimed to develop inclusive, agile, and owner-minded leaders to achieve rapid, sustained, and profitable growth by tapping into the five unlimited sources of energy of a vital organisation and pivoting around a centralised awareness of impact.

“Our aim was to develop adaptive leaders equipped to embrace change, navigate ambiguity and complexity, and harness an increasingly diverse workforce across a networked organisation,” explains Naidoo. The programme was delivered across a blended approach of face-to-face, virtual, and remote learning, including both team and individual assignments and assessments. It was co-created with Zutari leaders and in collaboration with a number of renowned global and local leadership development institutions, service providers, and external facilitators.

“The ALP looked to attract future leaders with an owner mindset, a passion for inclusive leadership, building Zutari’s culture, and a keen interest in developing ones’ agile leadership approach,” says **Blanché Hanstein-Kaber**, Country Manager: Namibia. Candidates from South Africa, the rest of the continent, and even as far afield as the Middle East met up at the Zutari head office in Centurion through various stages of the ALP.

**Ushantha O’Donnell**, a Commercial Lead at Zutari who empowers engineers to lead projects by troubleshooting complex contractual issues and unlock any disputes, typically between contractors and clients, is a successful ALP graduate. “It has been an important rung in my career ladder, not just within the organisation, but in terms of my own personal development. It was an intense experience that drew us out of our comfort zones, pushed us to new levels, tested our limits, and gave us the tools to become thought leaders.”

She continues: “Zutari is a large, living entity. For most of our careers, we have been concerned with that one function we operate in. Now we can look at the organisation in its entirety and how it functions holistically and perpetuates itself. The programme has taken away that microscopic lens and given us a macroscopic overview. It has fostered our trust in the organisation as individuals, knowing that we are part of something greater. It has been an incredible journey.”

“Leadership development will never be an isolated event, but rather a journey of meaningful connection, deep conversations, rigorous debate, realistic business challenges peppered with fun, and so much larger-than-life personalities and an attitude of making a difference for the greater good of the business,” says Naidoo.

ALP has leveraged off the Zutari codes of ‘We are One’ and ‘Foster Trust’. “As with everything, learning opportunity has reinforced the ability to be relatable, to be vulnerable, but also to build self-confidence and recognise the strengths within the core group. Undoubtably this programme has been inspirational, and this is how legacies are born. What I recognise and admire is how each of these future leaders have supported each other and been the cheerleaders on the sideline. That shows real-time respect and empowerment to each other,” concludes Naidoo.

***Ends***

**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this news article, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Zutari link to view the company’s press office.

**About Zutari**

As an engineering and advisory firm, we believe infrastructure has unparalleled potential to create enduring impact. Never more relevant, this potential can be realised only if we plan, design, deliver and manage infrastructure in ways that maximise its value. Our work in water, transport, energy, resources, and built-environment infrastructure does just this – helping to nurture thriving communities, growing economies, and healthy environments.

At Zutari we understand that radical impact doesn’t just happen; it requires more of us to connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted.

**We connect differently**. Our broad collective of in-house experts connects across traditional disciplines to provide integrated results. We collaborate with clients, partners, and end-users, leaning into diverse perspectives to create superior solutions - together.

**We work smarter**. Our people lead the industry. We draw from deep technical skills, accrued over decades, and embrace the transformative power of digital technology to find simpler, better, and more innovative ways to deliver value.

**We stay rooted**. Few can rival our local capacity and understanding. Building on solid foundations, now 90 years in the making, we are trusted to shape locally relevant solutions through our extensive footprint in Africa and the Middle East.

At Zutari our people connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted. Working in this way, we reliably deliver impact through infrastructure, making the world a better place – one project at a time.

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