



Metropolitan Center
325 Hudson Street, Fifth Floor

New York, NY 10013-1005

Phone: 646-230-1245

Debra.Kram-Fernandez.esc.edu

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To Whom It May Concern:

I learned about Inkululeko when I met Jason Torreano, the organization's CEO, over two years ago. Jason's vision and passion for identifying opportunities to support South African youth of color in overcoming barriers to success in higher education and employment was contagious. We explored ways we might work together to the benefit of Inkululeko youth and the adult and post-traditional learners at the college where I work, the State University of New York - Empire State College (SUNY-ESC). Our two programs serve different populations but share key beliefs: the transformative power of education, the social justice imperative of increasing opportunities for underserved youth and adults, and the importance of developing opportunities that increase a sense of hope, motivation, and meaning through energized and semi-structured group dialogue. Thus, we are working together on grant applications, and a unique online curriculum to support an International Education program we hope to begin to implement in the fall of 2021. We plan to engage Inkululeko youth and SUNY ESC students in online group dialogue, cross-Atlantic buddy systems, and provide basic research skills and theory so all who wish can join in a participant-action-research endeavor that will compare and contrast the challenges and opportunities to succeeding with higher education goals for people of color in South Africa and the United States.

I am writing this letter to support Jason Torreano in his tireless efforts to secure funding and opportunities to grow Inkululeko, this critically important program for young people, so that he may continue to identify innovative and creative ways of providing youth with the foundation to succeed.

Sincerely,

Debra Kram-Fernandez, Ph. D, LCSW


Associate Professor