

## Research Overview

Title:

Developing inclusive leadership education for sustainable societies: Investigating transformative and relational values in contemporary leaders

Research Representative:

ROUX Petrus Willem

Deputy Director of CIL, Associate Professor, Education Development and Learning Support Center, APU

The field of inclusive leadership is evolving and is becoming increasingly complex and elaborate, spanning several academic disciplines. While inclusive leadership may be seen as a relatively new concept in academic circles, its increasing use has spurred debate in areas where some consensus regarding the most suitable models for educational leadership has already been reached. For tertiary education, two models have emerged as valuable for the teaching and practice of leadership: the Relational Leadership model and the Transformational Leadership model. The current project focuses on the development of appropriate learning systems for developing sustainable leadership in higher education. To understand how such learning systems may be developed, the overall aim of this project is to investigate how inclusive leadership is practiced by focusing on the transformative and relational qualities of contemporary leaders in the field of sustainability. The project will incorporate two phases: firstly (AY 2024-2025), an investigative study targeting (at least) two organizations that are working towards building a sustainable society, and secondly (AY 2026-2028), drawing on phase one, designing a framework for leadership development and instruction at the tertiary level. Utilizing two well-known leadership models, namely the Relational Leadership model and the Transformational Leadership Model, the project aims to understand how leadership is practiced in such a way that it can be seen as inclusive through its transformative and relational qualities – and thereby positively impacting the continued sustainability of our global existence. Drawing on these studies and utilizing a qualitative research design, a grounded theory approach will be employed to investigate the transformational and relational elements of leadership in the identified organizations. The project seeks to uncover how these types of leadership are affecting and/or are driving social change for a sustainable future. The project is envisaged to span 5 years, with the first phase (AY 2024-2026) consisting of data collection through a literature review, on-site immersions, interviews, and short surveys. The second phase (AY 2026- 2028) will consist of data consolidation, analysis, and report writing, with the goal of conference presentation (CILC and AP conferences, among others) and publication in peer-reviewed journals by 2027-28. It is envisaged that eventual findings will guide the development of a relevant learning design for inclusive leadership training at APU, to the benefit of graduates who are aiming to effect change in the world.