

Spotlight on Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute Instituto de Liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir A.C. :

Transformation Through Knowledge

The Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute's mission is to contribute to the re-conceptualization and re-construction of alternative, tolerant and pluralist leadership in Mexico. This mission is particularly relevant given both the great cultural and historic richness of Mexico and its past undemocratic, authoritarian and corrupt practices.

The Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute seeks to fulfill its mission through social leadership education. Our programs have the explicit aim of providing theoretical-conceptual and practical tools to leaders which allow them to:

- 1) review and re-construct traditional models of leadership and
- 2) integrate a gender perspective and a respect for differences into their personal and professional lives.

We have developed a theoretical-conceptual model that is based on the idea that successful leadership is not only built through skill development, but also through self knowledge and reflection. Our model can be visualized as four separate, but overlapping concentric circles:

- knowing oneself
- knowing your team
- knowing the other

-knowing the world

This theoretical-practical model is the nucleus from which the interdisciplinary study and the interrelationship of four axes are integrated. Practically, these axes represent different themes that are addressed during the courses and diploma programs. They are:

- Society, Politics and Culture
- Subjectivity
- Communication and Image
- Advocacy and Negotiation

We consider leadership development to be a process of individual and collective construction. For us a leader is not someone who gives orders, nor someone that simply holds a position of power, instead a leader is someone who

wields influence because they have a vision that inspires, they open doors, they clarify and articulate, they are committed

to the group they represent and they create a synergistic environment.

Some of our principal institutional achievements have been:

Our diverse student body. Our students belong to diverse sectors that include indigenous women leaders from different ethnic

groups throughout the country, executive women and leadership teams from important national (Telmex) and transnational (Dupont) companies and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights advocates. In total 1,100 leaders have passed through our doors.

The academic recognition of our diploma courses. After a year-long process the prestigious Autonomous Metropolitan University (UAM) accredited three of our 11-month long diploma courses, Various Women, Multiple Leaderships, Women, Work and Leadership and Youth and Leadership. This accreditation is not only beneficial for our students but also demonstrates an important institutional recognition of the high academic quality of our programs.

Our new distance-learning program. Beginning in 2005 the Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute will embark upon a collaborative distance-learning project funded primarily by the MacArthur Foundation and carried out with the UAM and the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS). This project will allow us to lay the ground work for offering our diploma programs in at least 18 states in Mexico and eventually throughout Latin America.

