



South African Newsletter

November/December, 2013

Initiatives of Change

NELSON ROLIHLEHLA MANDELA 1918-2013



South Africans and citizens around the world mourn the loss of our great leader, Nelson Mandela - a servant leader and statesman, a man of humility and vision, who, through the choices he made became a bridge and reconciler in a country that has

been deeply divided by the decades of apartheid. Our highly respected and greatly loved former President wrote in his book **Long**

Walk to Freedom, *"I always knew that deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and*

generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than the opposite." He also wrote, *"A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred, he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity."* He continued, *"As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't*

leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison." May we in some

way take up where he left off, in building a better world. The long walk continues.

Nombulelo Khanyile writes:

"On the evening of 5 December 2013, Madiba, as he is fondly known, succumbed to the recurrent lung infection he had been battling with since his days in prison.

"For us South Africans, the news we had been dreading and painfully waiting for hit us. Madiba had departed to be with his Father and beloved friends, a generation of men and women from different political persuasions, who made us proud because they were truly leaders who not only honoured and respected the positions they held, but also enhanced the dignity and stature of those positions.

"Tributes have been pouring in for this son of Africa, from world leaders, the Dalai Lama, Aung San Suu Kyi, comrades, colleagues, biographers, as well as ordinary South African adults and children.

"Madiba knew my parents as well as my maternal grandfather, who was a respected Methodist minister. I only knew of him, and had never met him personally until Vusi, my husband, introduced me to him soon after his release from

Victor Verster prison in 1990. I recall Madiba telling Vusi then that our political freedom was a given, but that political freedom without economic freedom for the majority of South Africans was meaningless!

"In 1992, Madiba asked Vusi to think of a vehicle that would enable the majority of South Africans to become part of the economic mainstream, something they had been denied during the apartheid years. The result was that Vusi founded Thebe Investment Corporation in August 1992, with only R100,000.00, from Madiba and three

"I have learned that courage was not absence of fear, but the triumph over it."

other Elders of the African National Congress. Today, Thebe is a multi-billion private company. We were

also fortunate to attend Madiba's inauguration ceremony in Pretoria in May 10, 1994.

"When I heard of the passing of Tata, the first emotion that engulfed me was not that of shock. Instead, I was filled with a strong desire to reflect on his life, what he meant to us as South Africans, the legacy he has left, and the future we want to build. South Africa is at a crossroad. We have been blessed with so much. It is time for us to reflect and take stock of what we need to

do individually and collectively. To honour your legacy, I commit to uphold the values you held so dear. I commit to fill my heart with love, compassion and gratitude. As the rainbow nation of this beautiful land, South Africa, it is my fervent prayer that we take a leaf from your visionary leadership, and ensure that we root out greed and hunger for power.

“One of Madiba’s many sayings stays with me as I take stock: ‘What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.’

“Lala Ngoxolo Tata. May your soul rest in Peace.”

CHANGE IN PROGRESS

Cleopadia Mohlaodi writes: Six members of the first 2011 Change In Progress (CIP) camp, met over the weekend of 22nd – 24th November at Waaigrass conference centre, north west of Johannesburg. The reunion served as consultation to explore the viability and effectiveness of the programme and it’s future.



CIP participants after the nature walk. from left right: Lebohang Pule . Karabo Radebe, Koketso Tube Thapelo Ramphela, Tshegofatso Mpe

The theme of the weekend was “relationship and calling”. We reviewed what the relevant tools are that CIP has to offer. This review helped crystallise the vision for CIP as “young people being aware of, and practising their potential” We confirmed the objective of our mission which is to explore servant leadership, relationships, nature and inner development. During discussion sessions we developed our short term and long term goals.

One of the participants, Tshegofatso Mpe said of the time at Waaigras, “Thank you CIP for exposing me to a life I never thought I would enjoy but today I love it. And that’s a life of nature and quite, a life

that encourages me to grow and be responsible, away from the noise and pollution of the cities and sub-urban areas. I see that it’s not money only that can help me grow but being creative with everything around me.” Another, Karabo Radebe commented, “The weekend made me realise that a calling is a journey of many callings. Doing what feels right deep inside me will help me continue to reach my calling. At this moment to reach teenagers of different races through CIP, is my calling. Yet another participant Lebohang Pule said; “CIP is more of a family to me than my own family for it understands me, enables great friendships and there is always someone’s story to give advice and ideas helping me to move forward - for life is always worth living.” There was a strong sense of commitment to CIP from the team that met. Outcomes of the weekend are:

- ♦ to have a multi-racial camp in December 2014
- ♦ to engage the parents to help the teenagers in facilitating nation building discussions in their community, and inspire their peers with their stories and help alleviate the culture of violence at home and schools through presentations and skits.



Participants during reflection with Cameroonian Umarou Yaya, right, one of the faculty.

It was also clear that this programme is relevant to teenagers in our country. It’s on the right track. With its relevant content it must keep on “lighting a candle rather than cursing the darkness” for a generation trying to find their identity, and unconsciously living the pain and hurt of their parents as well as the post-apartheid era.

As Rosalyn Carter says: “A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don’t necessarily want to go, but ought to be”. This quote defines Change In Progress. I personally wish camps/weekends in character and skill development like this could happen more often and that the help of resources to make the programme expand and excel would become more readily available.

Photos by Cleo Mohlaodi

Farmer's Dialogue

The Governor of South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo (South Kivu is the size of Rwanda and Burundi combined) came to speak and bring to a close the International Farmers' Dialogue in Bukavu 18 - 21 November. Those who had taken part presented the conclusions of the event which were:

- ♦ not to wait and see what would happen but take personal initiatives
- ♦ *to work as a team*
- ♦ *to build cross border partnerships for the training of small farmers in sustainable farming, soil improvement and agro forestry*
- ♦ *to share community experiences*
- ♦ *to reverse the rural exodus of young people moving to the towns*
- ♦ *to honour and develop the role of women*
- ♦ *to bring healing to the scars caused by conflict*
- ♦ *the realisation that the people of DRC who have suffered and are finding healing, have experiences that equip them to bring solutions in other areas of conflict*
- ♦ *to encourage each person to give thought to stimulating the commitment of farmers to feed the world.*



The International dialogue of Bukavu stimulated this process, based on the individual search and motivations based on the principles of Farmers' Dialogue and Initiatives of Change.

Photo by Claude Bourdin

Workshop for Africa

Workshop for Africa (WfA) has completed its first year. Launched in January as an ambitious Pan-African programme to build a culture of ethical leadership and accountable citizenship across the continent, it touched thousands of people in outreaches in South Africa, Kenya (three times) and South Sudan (twice).

The statistics tell some of the story: US\$110 000 was raised; 11 people went through extensive training and preparation in January and February in South Africa; about 3 000 people were engaged



overall in workshops, presentations, small groups and one-on-one in Kenya and South Sudan. More than 350 people, some more than once, attended workshops in Kenya alone. From these interactions, a key group of 58 people were identified in Kenya for further engagement.

Huge experience was gained and lessons learned through this extensive exercise with some tough logistical challenges that had to be overcome.

When WfA was being conceptualised and planned, the Working Group* that coordinated it set a goal of making the programme self-sufficient, ie. developing a long-term, fundable programme that could generate support from international donor agencies. That was too ambitious for a young idea with many issues to resolve. But this has not stopped plans and preparations for the next phase - 2014 onwards. The new strategy has two elements - moving to a regional approach and building a partnership with Asia Plateau, the IofC centre in Panchgani, India. Running a Pan-African programme from one central point is very expensive and logistically demanding so the aim now is to establish three zones of activity - East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa. This means more decentralised leadership and accountability as well as more focussed action within the areas local people know best.

The partnership with Asia Plateau is being built around links with the five-month intern programme there. The idea is that some who will work with WfA in the three regions will undergo the excellent internship programme and then return to work for six months to a year - or longer - with WfA in their region.

So, as the first year wraps up, the Working Group is reflecting on the lessons of these past months - from the involvement in the training of the 200 Peace Mobilisers in South Sudan in March and April to the extensive outreaches around Kenya and the extraordinary personal stories of change and decisions taken that emerged from these experiences.



Audience at the launch of the training in South Sudan
Photo by Web Grafic

Workshop for Africa started as a vision:

Africa working for the wellbeing of all its peoples. Willing to challenge what is wrong
- corruption, greed and selfishness.

Encouraging what is right - integrity, unselfishness and accountability. Changing what can be changed immediately - oneself.

Working for a continent that nurtures its people - an Africa where leaders and institutions embrace good governance as the African Way and reject all that undermines this.

*Members of the Working Group: Pieter Horn, Nombulelo Khanyile, Anthony Duigan (South Africa); Paul Craig and Amina Dikedi Adjakaiye (UK); Steve Kimaru (Kenya)

By Anthony Duigan

There is an opportunity for anybody to contribute to the next phase of Workshop for Africa. Contributions can be sent marked 'Workshop for Africa' to:

Initiatives of Change
Standard Bank,
Northcliff branch
Branch Code: 006305
Account Number: 201679671

***Wishing you many blessings this Christmas and
for the New Year ahead***

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