

# ENGAGEMENT Office



# CONTENTS



- 07**      **YFM PRESENTER SEARCH**  
13 FEBRUARY 2025
  
- 10**      **SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS CONVERSATION  
SERIES**  
27 FEBRUARY 2025
  
- 12**      **HUBS OF CONVERGENCE LEARNER INCUBATION  
PROGRAMME**  
24 JUNE 2025
  
- 15**      **STRENGTHENING GLOBAL ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS  
THROUGH EPISTEMIC HUMILITY**  
07 MARCH 2025
  
- 17**      **THE HUGEST HAPPINESS BLANKET UNVEILED TO  
JOYFUL APPLAUSE IN GQEBERHA**  
20 MARCH 2025
  
- 22**      **CRL WORKSHOP**  
24 MARCH 2025
  
- 25**      **LEARNER INCUBATION PROGRAMME AT WESTVILLE  
SECONDARY**  
25 MARCH 2025
  
- 27**      **HOC AND DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC VISIT  
UMPHANDA FOUNDATION FOR AUTISM**  
26 MARCH 2025

# CONTENTS



- 28**      **TOURISM START-UP WORKSHOP**  
27 MARCH 2025
- 29**      **IMBIOSCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE SCIENCE  
ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME**  
15 APRIL 2025
- 30**      **SUPPORTING A PIONEERING OCEAN KNOWLEDGE  
INITIATIVE (AMEET)**  
17 APRIL 2025
- 31**      **IIASA AND HOC WORKSHOP**  
17 APRIL 2025
- 33**      **LAUNCH OF SAS KING ADAM KOKIII:  
CELEBRATING HERITAGE& RESORING DIGNITY**  
25 APRIL 2025
- 35**      **LEADER2LEADER PROGRAMME CATALYSES  
STUDENT INNOVATION AT NELSON MANDELA  
UNIVERSITY**  
12 MAY 2025
- 37**      **ZAIMANSHOEK PRIMARY GRADE 7S EXPLORE  
NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY AND BEYOND**  
15 MAY 2025
- 38**      **DEEPENING GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS: UNIVERSITY OF  
LIMERICK VISIT TO NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY  
AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES**  
23 MAY 2025

# CONTENTS



- 40**            **STAFF WELLNESS DAY**  
28 MAY 2025
  
- 41**            **STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESPONSES  
THROUGH SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION  
TRAINING**  
17 APRIL 2025
  
- 43**            **GRASLAAGTE SITE VISIT – ADVANCING ECO-  
PEDAGOGY AND COMMUNITY-LED ADAPTATION**  
9 - 10 JUNE 2025
  
- 44**            **CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STUDENTS GET  
PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH COLLABORATION**  
01 FEBRUARY - 30 JUNE 2025
  
- 46**            **LEARNER INCUBATION PROGRAMME AT NELSON  
MANDELA UNIVERSITY**  
24 JUNE 2025
  
- 48**            **GEORGE TRAINING (HOPE REVOLUTION)**  
24 - 25 JUNE 2025
  
- 50**            **GQEBERHA TRAINING (HOPE REVOLUTION)**  
27 - 28 JUNE 2025
  
- 54**            **MANDELA WEEK 2025 @ GELVANDALE HOSTEL OF  
HOPE**  
16 - 18 JULY 2025

# CONTENTS



- 58**            **FIELDMORE MAPETO WORKSHOP**  
24 JULY 2025
  
- 59**            **LIP AT TOISE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
25 JULY 2025
  
- 61**            **LIP AT PE COLLEGE DOWER CAMPUS**  
29 JULY 2025
  
- 63**            **THE GEORGE STUDENT HUBS OF CONVERGENCE  
CAMPUS GARDEN INITIATIVE**  
01 AUGUST 2025
  
- 64**            **COEGA CORPORATE SOCIAL INVESTMENT  
COLLABORATING WITH ENGAGEMENT OFFICE**  
13 AUGUST 2025
  
- 65**            **CONFERENCE IN SANDTON INTERNAL AUDITORS  
(ASIPHE)**  
11 - 13 AUGUST 2025
  
- 66**            **IARSLCE 2025**  
13 - 15 AUGUST 2025
  
- 67**            **CONFERENCE IN GHANA (BONGANI MOMOTI)**  
21 AUGUST 2025

# CONTENTS



- 68**      **EPP AT 2ND AVENUE WITH MINA FOUNDATION  
GIFT OF THE GIVERS**  
22 AUGUST 2025
- 69**      **ALS MEETING – ADVANCING ECO-LITERACY AND  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**  
26 AUGUST 2025
- 70**      **TOURISM IMBIZO**  
10 - 11 SEPTEMBER 2025
- 74**      **REIMAGINING LANGUAGE AS PRAXIS IN  
ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP 1**  
02 OCTOBER 2025
- 75**      **SHARING KNOWLEDGE FOR BETTER FOOD  
FUTURES**  
17 OCTOBER 2025
- 76**      **CEREMONIAL SIGNING**  
04 NOVEMBER 2025
- 78**      **SEEDS OF CHANGE: COEGA – MANDELA  
UNIVERSITY FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUE**  
19 NOVEMBER 2025
- 79**      **FIELDMORE MAPETO EVENT AT MISSIONVALE**  
19 NOVEMBER 2025

# CONTENTS



- 81**            **CAPACITY STRENGTHENING & ACTION PLANNING  
WITH ZDF**  
20 NOVEMBER 2025
  
- 82**            **ZDF OFFICE OPENING AND GBV SESSION  
ZAMUKUKHANYA PRIMARY**  
21 NOVEMBER 2025
  
- 83**            **SNAC**
  
- 85**            **ADDENDUM**

# YFM PRESENTER SEARCH

13 FEBRUARY 2025



## CARL LESHILO AND PHASE 3 RESIDENCE STUDENT LEADERS JOIN THE EXCITEMENT

The **YFM Presenter Search**, hosted by The **Students Hubs of Convergence (SHoC)** within the **Engagement office** collaborated with **YFM** and **Switch Energy Drink**, for an electrifying event held at **New Res Phase 3** on February 13, 2025. This initiative was more than just a competition, it was a platform designed to **empower students, encourage networking, and showcase talent** within our student community.

The event provided an **incredible opportunity** for aspiring radio presenters to step into the world of broadcasting, test their skills, and gain exposure in the industry. Students were given the chance to express their personalities, energy, and creativity while competing for the coveted role of a YFM presenter. Beyond the search for new talent, the event cultivated a strong sense of **camaraderie, engagement, and inspiration**, bringing students together in a shared celebration of ambition and passion.

This successful gathering would not have been possible without the unwavering support of **student leaders and residence managers**, whose dedication to fostering inclusive and dynamic student experiences played a key role in its execution. Their involvement ensured that students felt encouraged and supported throughout the competition.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to **YFM and Switch Energy Drink** for their partnership and commitment to **youth empowerment and development**. Their collaboration made this event not only possible but also a **memorable**

**and transformative experience** for everyone involved.

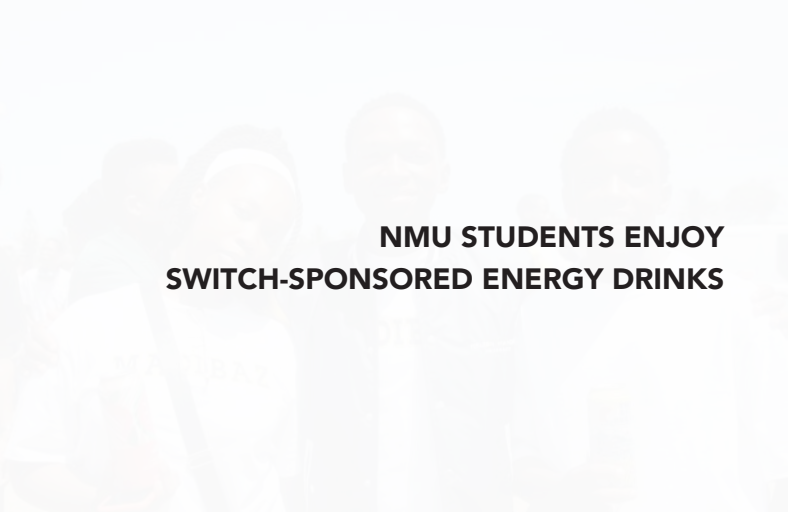
As we reflect on this event, we are reminded of the **immense potential** within our student community. This is just the beginning—more initiatives will continue to create **opportunities for growth, connection, and success**. Thank you to everyone who participated, supported, and contributed to this milestone event. We look forward to many more events that will **inspire, engage, and shape the future of young talent!**



**SUPPORTING STAFF PARTICIPATING  
IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DAY**



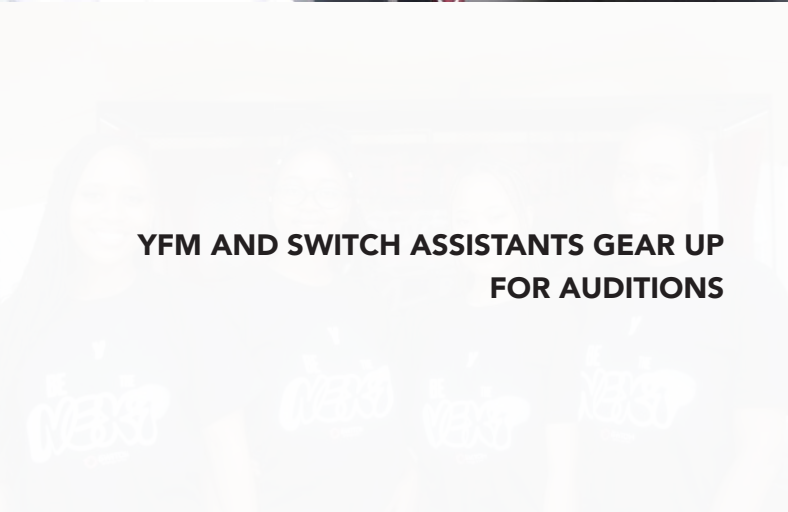
**NELSON MANDELA UNI STUDENT TALKS WITH THE YFM PRESENTER**



**NMU STUDENTS ENJOY SWITCH-SPONSORED ENERGY DRINKS**



**DR. DAMONS, DJ PEDABOTIC, AND YFM PRESENTERS TEAM UP FOR A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE**



**YFM AND SWITCH ASSISTANTS GEAR UP FOR AUDITIONS**



27 FEBRUARY 2025

# SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS CONVERSATION SERIES

On the 27th of February Student Hubs Of Convergence (SHOC) held a sexual assault awareness conversation series at Sarah Baartman and Claude Qavane dining hall. Sexual Assault Awareness is an international annual campaign which has aimed at raising public awareness about sexual assault. 2025 marks 24th Annual Sexual Assault Awareness Month Campaign which originated from the National Sexual Violence Center and has since become a global campaign. This campaign has been pivotal in raising public awareness about sexual violence incidents that occur in the day to day lives of members of communities. The Student Hubs of Convergence intends to use the Sexual Assault Awareness Series to begin a journey of making positive strides towards building a student community which is more inclusive, equitable, connected and can impact the student community both now and in the future.

The Student Hubs Of Convergence aim to host more conversation series that are student centric and willing to address the alarming issues of sexual assault and GBV in our university, through ideas presented by the students and programs that can be run in the residences to widen and deepen the work in addressing GBV.





# HUBS OF CONVERGENCE (HOC) LEARNER INCUBATION PROGRAMME

## WHY YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS IMPORTANT:

Bridging the knowledge gap between Westville High School Grade 11 and 12 learners and Mandela University through knowledge sharing, giving learners practical experience in a variety of career spaces and options, mentoring and career guidance for the upcoming generation of learners and enhancing community participation through the concept of social cohesion by exchange in Nelson Mandela University's Hubs of Convergence (HoC) cordially invites you to participate in the 2025 HoC Learner Incubation Programme, which is set for June 24, 2025. This initiative is in line with Vision 2030 at Nelson Mandela University. Aiming to establish a learning atmosphere that is engaging, inclusive and knowledge-sharing for both Mandela University Staff and Westville High School learners from Grade 11 and 12. By offering exposure to the learners' professional goals. The Learner Incubation Programme seeks to assist learners in Grades 11 and 12 from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. Learners as part of this programme will be assigned to various Mandela University Departments, Units and Faculties to interact with Mandela University staff, observe professionals, and obtain real-world experience in their potential career paths. They will further receive career guidance to assist them in navigating their academic and professional goals, this will be facilitated by the Student Hubs of Convergence (SHOC).g wide range of expertise.





# CALL TO PARTICIPATE

## LEARNER INCUBATION PROGRAMME

**24 June 2025**

Nelson Mandela University's Hubs of Convergence (HoC) invites you to be part of an exciting journey toward transformative and inclusive learning! This initiative is in line with Vision 2030 at Nelson Mandela University. Aiming to establish a learning atmosphere that is engaging, inclusive and knowledge-sharing for both Mandela University Staff and Westville High School learners from Grade 11 and 12.

We appeal to our Mandela University Departments, Units and Faculties to collaborate with us in hosting the Westville High School for the year 2025 Learner Incubation Programme. Your participation will play a key role in empowering young minds, building skills, and shaping future careers.

### PROGRAMME STRUCTURE FOR 2025

- Continued support for the 30 Grade 12 learners from the 2024 cohort.
- Introduction of 30 new Grade 11 learners into the programme.
- Activities include job shadowing, campus tours, and career guidance sessions.

### Contact information

For further information or to confirm your Departments, Units and Faculties participation, please contact:

Mr. Wensley Jackson

Hubs of Convergence – Learner Incubation Programme 2025

Email: [Wensley.Jackson@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Wensley.Jackson@mandela.ac.za)

Tel: 041 504 4609

# PROGRAMME STRUCTURE FOR 2025:

- Continued support for the 30 Grade 12 learners from the 2024 cohort.
- Introduction of 30 new Grade 11 learners into the programme.
- Activities include job shadowing, campus tours, and career guidance sessions.

We appeal to our Mandela University Departments, Units and Faculties to collaborate with us in hosting the Westville High School for the year 2025 Learner Incubation Programme. Your participation will contribute meaningfully to building capacity, equipping learners, and fostering informed career decisions.

We appreciate your support in creating opportunities for these young learners and look forward to collaborating with you.

*Dr Bruce Damons*  
**Director, Engagement Office**



# STRENGTHENING GLOBAL ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH EPISTEMIC HUMILITY



**DR RANGAN WITH DR MUMBI MWANGI,  
PROFESSOR AT ST CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY**

Nelson Mandela University continues to strengthen its global academic partnerships through thought leadership and collaborative research. As part of her work within the Engagement Office and in relation to the multilateral National Research Foundation (NRF) Grant and the Canadian collaboration, Dr. Noluvo Rangana recently had the opportunity to present at St. Cloud State University in the United States.

Her presentation, *Exploring Partnerships in the Global North, Global South, and Global Peripheries through Epistemic Humility*, was a key feature of the university's 25th-anniversary celebrations of its partnership with St. Cloud State University. Dr. Rangana engaged with colleagues on the importance of epistemic humility in fostering equitable and transformative academic collaborations between institutions in the Global North and Global South.

A central theme of her presentation was the African Calabash philosophy, which embodies epistemic humility through its foundational principles - deeply aligned with Ubuntu (*I am because you are*) and Harambee (*Let us pull together*). This philosophy promotes inclusive and collaborative knowledge-sharing, ensuring that academic partnerships are built on mutual respect, shared learning, and a recognition of diverse knowledge systems.



**WITH PRESIDENT DR LARRY DIETZ ST CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY**

Nelson Mandela University continues to strengthen its global academic partnerships through thought leadership and collaborative research. As part of her work within the Engagement Office and in relation to the multilateral National Research Foundation (NRF) Grant and the Canadian collaboration, Dr. Noluvo Rangana recently had the opportunity to present at St. Cloud State University in the United States.

Her presentation, *Exploring Partnerships in the Global North, Global South, and Global Peripheries through Epistemic Humility*, was a key feature of the university's 25th-anniversary celebrations of its partnership with St. Cloud State University. Dr. Rangana engaged with colleagues on the importance of epistemic humility in fostering equitable and transformative academic collaborations between institutions in the Global North and Global South.

A central theme of her presentation was the African Calabash philosophy, which embodies epistemic humility through its foundational principles - deeply aligned with Ubuntu (I am because you are) and Harambee (Let us pull together). This philosophy promotes inclusive and collaborative knowledge-sharing, ensuring

that academic partnerships are built on mutual respect, shared learning, and a recognition of diverse knowledge systems.

Dr. Rangana emphasised that embracing epistemic humility allows for the convergence of different ways of knowing, dismantling traditional power imbalances and fostering meaningful global engagement. Her contribution reinforces Nelson Mandela University's commitment to advancing socially responsive scholarship and knowledge exchange on an international scale.

This engagement marks another milestone in the university's efforts to build strategic, globally impactful collaborations that honor diverse epistemologies and promote equitable academic exchange.



**WITH MR SHAHZAD AHMED ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AT ST CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY**



20 MARCH 2025

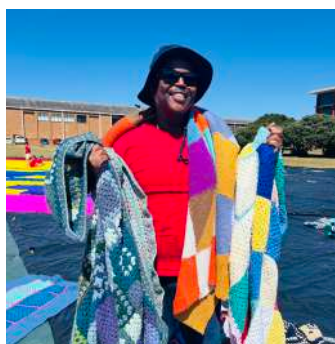
# THE HUGEST HAPPINESS BLANKET UNVEILED TO JOYFUL APPLAUSE IN GOEBERHA



2013. More than just a spectacular installation, the event served as a tangible act of compassion, with every single blanket destined to provide warmth to individuals and families in need.

## A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

*“The energy and love that filled the air today were absolutely electric. It was more than an installation, it was a celebration of humanity,” said Carolyn Steyn, founder of 67 Blankets for Nelson Mandela Day. “It was particularly meaningful to bring this event to the Eastern Cape, Madiba’s birthplace, where his legacy of service and kindness continues to inspire us all.”*



On 20 March 2025, Nelson Mandela University’s Second Avenue Campus was transformed into a breathtaking display of warmth and unity as the 67 Blankets for Nelson Mandela Day movement unveiled the world’s Hugest Happiness Blanket. Hundreds gathered to celebrate this historic moment on the United Nations International Day of Happiness, as a sea of vibrant, handcrafted blankets – meticulously stitched together by South African KnitWits created an unforgettable display of kindness in action.



The centrepiece, a massive yellow smiley emoji, radiated joy, embodying the spirit of giving that has defined this movement since its inception in





A quarter of the blankets have remained in Gqeberha, with special distributions taking place across the Eastern Cape, including to Bethesda Ministry in Nieu-Bethesda, Paterson High School (which received 100 blankets in honour of its centenary), Missionvale Care Centre, Umphanda Foundation for Autism, and Ekuphumleni Elderly Home.

Nelson Mandela University played a pivotal role in hosting the event. Oyama Soga, expressed her gratitude, stating "This collaboration has been a testament to what can be achieved when different sectors of society come together within a shared purpose. The University provides an inspiring space for engagement, and the enthusiasm from students and staff made the initiative even more impactful. It's been incredible to see how seamlessly everyone worked together to turn a simple act of knitting into a powerful gesture of care and solidarity."





## CREATIVITY, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY

The event was a feast for the senses, with moving performances from the Nelson Mandela University Choir, The Quintessentials Acapella Group, Toynbee Ballet Academy, and the Lawson Brown Steel Band. Acclaimed artists PJ Powers, Monique Hellenberg, and Tim Moloï brought their musical magic to the celebration, while renowned artist Muneeb Wassın captured the essence of giving with a live painting created on-site.

Adding to the excitement was a special moment for young creatives. A T-shirt design competition saw learners from Khulile Primary School – Daliso Amila, Khonzani Achumile, and Moyakhe Lathitha – honoured on stage for their winning design. Their artwork beautifully captured the event's message of happiness and unity, further proving that the next generation is already embracing Madiba's ethos of service and kindness.



## A GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The event garnered international support with United Nations Multi-Country Coordinator Ms Anthea Hurling saying: *"The 67 Blankets Giant Blanket of Happiness is a powerful symbol of unity, kindness, and shared humanity. As it ties into the UN International Day of Happiness, it reminds us that true joy comes from acts of generosity and compassion. In South Africa and across the world, this initiative weaves together diverse communities, proving that small actions – stitch by stitch – can create a fabric of hope, resilience, and warmth for those in need. It is a testament to the spirit of Ubuntu and the collective effort to build a happier, more inclusive world for all."*

General Bantu Holomisa, who delivered a powerful address, commended all those involved, saying, *"This event was a testament to the strength of collective goodwill. My deepest gratitude to every person who knitted, organised, and participated in this extraordinary day."*

Professor Andre Keet, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University, echoed this sentiment, stating *"Nelson Mandela University has a strong ethos of community engagement rooted in social justice, ubuntu and the transformative power of education. Our Hubs of Convergence (HoC) at Nelson Mandela University are a unique model of engagement, collaboration and co-creation aimed at fostering deep, transformative partnerships between the university and society. This initiative moves beyond traditional community engagement by creating physical and intellectual spaces where academia, civil society, government and communities come together to address pressing social issues."*

As the blankets were laid out and the giant smiley beamed across the campus, attendees were reminded of the power of small acts to create massive change. The Hugest Happiness Blanket has not only set a new benchmark for kindness but has left an indelible mark on the hearts of all who took part.





24 MARCH 2025

# REFLECTING ON THE CRL RIGHTS COMMISSION DIALOGUE ON THE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFER OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

Nelson Mandela University recently hosted an insightful dialogue in collaboration with the CRL Rights Commission, aimed at exploring the intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge. The discussion, held at the Ocean Science Conference Centre, was facilitated by Dr Bruce Damons and brought together esteemed panellists and members of the university community to engage on the importance of preserving and evolving cultural practices in today's society.



Commission, opened the discussion by emphasising the Commission's constitutional role in safeguarding and promoting the cultural, religious, and linguistic rights of South African communities. He underscored the need to study and embrace cultural traditions while ensuring that younger generations remain engaged in preserving and evolving these traditions.

Dr Bruce Damons facilitated a thought-provoking panel discussion with speakers including Bishop Themba, Mike Pantsi, Junior Shabangu, Likuwe Funani, Jonathan Joseph, and Junior Shabalala. The discussion revolved around the perceived decline in cultural interest among young people and the societal factors contributing to this challenge. Key themes included the struggle between academic and spiritual identity, the role of elders in cultural transmission, and the impact of modernisation on traditional practices.



## Among the key insights:

- **Youth Engagement in Culture:** Many young people expressed a strong interest in learning about their cultural heritage but cited a lack of accessible spaces and platforms for knowledge-sharing.
- **The Role of Elders:** Several participants emphasised that elders must take a more active role in educating youth about cultural traditions rather than assuming disinterest.
- **Modernisation and Tradition:** The discussion raised critical questions about how cultural practices can evolve to remain relevant while maintaining their authenticity. Students suggested that leveraging modern platforms like podcasts and social media could facilitate greater engagement.
- **Intersection of Religion and Culture:** The dialogue explored the ways in which religious beliefs and cultural practices intersect, sometimes complementing each other but also occasionally creating division.



Notably, younger participants called for greater inclusivity in cultural education, stressing that traditional knowledge should be shared openly and not withheld.

As a university committed to fostering social dialogue and cultural inclusivity, Nelson Mandela University remains dedicated to creating platforms where such important discussions can continue. We encourage our community to reflect on the insights shared and to contribute to ongoing efforts to bridge generational gaps in cultural knowledge.



# HUBS OF CONVERGENCE LEARNER INCUBATION PROGRAMME

## WESTVILLE SECONDARY SCHOOL VISIT 2025

Hubs of Convergence (HoC) is strengthening its commitment to closing the gap between high school and university education. As part of this aim, the HoC and Student Hubs of Convergence (SHoC) held a Learner Incubation Programme session at Westville Secondary School on March 25, 2025.

A key aspect of the 2025 program is the ongoing support for the 30 Grade 12 learners who participated in the 2024 cohort. This year, an additional 30 Grade 11 learners have joined the programme. This ensures a long-term influence on learners' academic and professional growth. Last year's participants, currently in Grade 12, described how the program sparked their interest in life after matric and helped them understand the processes required to accomplish their goals in school and in their careers.

One particularly noteworthy comment from a returning learner emphasized how one of the most important aspects of their experience was being able to enter the university's lecture buildings. They noted how it underscored the privilege of their generation to have access to

higher education, considering the historical context of the university.

The new Grade 11 group at Westville Secondary School received an orientation during the workshop, which gave them a rundown of what to anticipate during the year. Learners were given an overview of the initiative's goals and structure, with a focus on the assistance they would receive in getting ready for university.

A presentation on career decision-making was given as part of this session to help students comprehend the elements that affect their career decisions. A self-personality exam was also administered to help learners find possible career options that fit with their interests and strength. The goal of this participatory method was to allow learners to reflect on themselves and make well-informed decisions about their futures.

The Learner Incubation Program continues to be a key factor in forming the futures of learners by providing structured learning experiences, career guidance, and exposure to university life.

# Westville

*Sekondêre Skool*  
*Secondary School*



Moving forward, the HoC is preparing for June 2025 where learners will come to the university to shadow professionals and get insight into varsity life. This ensures they have the resources they need to succeed in their academic endeavours. With every new class, the program strengthens the groundwork for future leaders in South Africa to succeed academically and be prepared for the workforce.

We would like to express our appreciation to Westville Secondary School and all departments that helped make this project a success. We are creating a more open and knowledgeable route to higher education by working together and exchanging knowledge.

26 MARCH 2025

# THE HUBS OF CONVERGENCE AND NMU MUSIC DEPARTMENT VISIT UMPHANDA FOUNDATION FOR AUTISM

March 26, 2025, was marked by the Hubs of Convergence (HoC) and the NMU Music Department's visit to Umphanda Foundation for Autism at North End in Gqeberha. Umphanda Foundation for Autism founded by Miss Nomakhosazana Netnou as an intervention that accommodates learners with autism. Autistic learners struggle to cope with the standard academic curriculum and Umphanda Foundation's intervention allows their learners to have a tailored educational learning experience that caters for autistic learners by focusing on skills development and providing support for both learners and parents.

The Mandela University HoC and Music Department's visit was to engage with learner's parents and Umphanda Foundation staff on

co-constructing a music learning programme for Umphanda Foundation learners as the school recently received a donation of musical instruments by the Deputy President Mr Paul Mashatile and Hlumile Foundation.

The intended music programme's objective is to give the learners with autism an opportunity to develop and advance their musical abilities. The programme will be spearheaded and facilitated by the Mandela University Music Department and the Hubs of Convergence. The parents were deeply impressed and expressed their gratitude for the Mandela University's dedication to serving Gqeberha communities, especially for this initiative that will grant learners an opportunity to thrive in a different learning environment.

27 MARCH 2025

# Tourism Start-Up Workshop: FORGING A COLLABORATIVE PATH FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE METRO

Held on 27 March 2025 at Nelson Mandela University's Ocean Sciences Campus, the Tourism Start-Up Workshop marked the beginning of a strategic collaboration between the Mandela Metro, the School of Economics, Development & Tourism (SEDT), and the Engagement Office. The workshop aimed to reimagine tourism as a socially just and sustainable sector grounded in local realities and historical awareness.

Stakeholders from across the tourism spectrum - including university academics, municipal representatives, and community voices - proposed a foundational framework guided by values of inclusion, co-learning, and mutual respect. Key thematic pillars such as "Service to Society," "Equalised Engagement," and a "Quintuple Helix Platform" were developed

to foster equitable partnerships linking government, academia, civil society, communities, and the private sector.

Participants also named key challenges that must be addressed to ensure the initiative's sustainability: the demanding workloads of academic staff, the need for broader and ongoing stakeholder consultation - especially with those in grassroots tourism spaces—and securing dedicated funding to drive long-term impact.

The process now moves forward through Action Learning and Key Advisory Sets, laying the groundwork for a dynamic, values-led, and inclusive tourism research and development agenda for the metro and beyond.



# IMBioscience Research Institute Science Engagement Programme



four weeks for Grade 9 learners and eight weeks for Grade 10 and 11 learners. Sessions are held at the school from 9:00 to 12:00 and expose learners to fundamental laboratory techniques, data analysis, presentation, and interpretation.

As part of this initiative, IMBiosciences brought participating learners to visit the Nelson Mandela University campus on 15 April 2025. This visit offered learners an opportunity to experience a university environment, interact with scientists, and reinforce their learning through exposure to real-world applications of science in action.

Through the Nelson Mandela University Engagement Office's "Hostel of Hope" project, (Hub 4 of the Hubs of Convergence), the IMBiosciences Research Institute launched its Science Engagement Programme at Gelvandale High School in February 2025. Funded by CHIETA SETA, the programme is designed to spark interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) careers by empowering school learners with foundational knowledge and hands-on skills essential for success in science-related fields.

A key focus of the programme is to create meaningful and engaging experiences with science through interactive, practical learning approaches. Delivered by Dr Melanie Pereira, the programme includes Saturday morning sessions over



# Supporting a Pioneering Ocean Knowledge Initiative: ANKLE MARINE ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION AND TOURISM (AMEET)

On 17 April 2025, the Engagement Office convened a strategic engagement in support of Ms. Nosipho Gloria Sunduza, a 71-year-old maritime advocate and founder of Ankile Marine Environment Education and Tourism (AMEET), a 100% black female-owned initiative. Ms Sunduza is a Mandela University Alumnus, with a masters degree. This engagement sought to explore how the university could contribute to the establishment and AMEET as a community-rooted marine education and eco-tourism enterprise.

Central to the discussion was how to support Ms. Sunduza in formalising AMEET as a platform for intergenerational entrepreneurship—anchored in Indigenous marine knowledge and aligned with formal science, climate education, and indigenous knowledge systems. Her initiative speaks directly to the university’s goals of enabling community-led innovation and intergenerational entrepreneurship while preserving marine heritage and promoting sustainable ocean practices.

AMEET’s vision—focusing on school-based marine education, community tourism, and the documentation of ocean heritage—was identified as strategically aligned with an NRF (NFRF) grant project facilitated by the Engagement Office around the pillars of eco-pedagogy, cli-



**DR BRUCE DAMONS, NOMTHANDAZO PUKWANA, JONATHAN JOSEPH, MIKE PANTSIS AND NOSIPHO SUNDUZA**

mate resilience, and indigenous knowledge. It also holds transformative potential as a model for inclusive engagement that bridges generations and knowledge systems.

The Engagement Office, as part of the NFRF team, will now begin a co-design process with Ms. Sunduza to support the development of AMEET’s key pillars. Faculties and research entities engaged in ocean sciences, marine heritage, and community-based learning will be invited to contribute to this pilot.

This initiative seeks to further an institutional commitment to nurturing socially embedded intergenerational entrepreneurship, advancing inclusive environmental education, and elevating the voices of Indigenous knowledge-holders in shaping sustainable coastal futures.



17 APRIL 2025

# ENGAGEMENT OFFICE COLLABORATION WORKSHOP WITH THE INSTITUTION OF INTERNAL AUDITORS SOUTH AFRICA (IIASA)

NMU Hubs of Convergence is excited to announce a key collaboration workshop between the NMU Engagement Office and the Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa (IIASA), that took place on April 17, 2025, at the NMU Ocean Science Campus. The workshop was attended by faculty staff, IIASA Representatives, Internal Audit Professionals, and NMU Engagement Office staff.

The workshop marked an important step forward in strengthening the relationship between NMU and IIASA, with a shared commitment to enhancing professional development, bridging the gap between academia and industry, and shaping the future of the internal audit profession.

## THE FOCUS OF THE WORKSHOP WAS:

- To Align programmatic work timelines and define realistic action steps for ongoing collaboration relations between NMU and IIASA.
- Foster coordination between internal audit professionals and the academic community to create a seamless pathway for the “graduate of the future”—equipped with practical skills, industry insights, and a deep understanding of governance and accountability.
- Co-create knowledge-driven development projects that will empower students, professionals, and communities through the application of internal audit principles in real-world settings.
- Strengthen NMU’s Hub 5 (Knowledge Application) by leveraging IIASA’s resources, expertise, and global networks to address local and regional challenges through collaborative research, innovation, and practical application of internal audit practices.

25 APRIL 2025

# LAUNCH OF SAS KING ADAM KOK III: CELEBRATING HERITAGE AND RESTORING DIGNITY

On Friday, 25 April 2025, the South African Navy officially commissioned the Multi-Mission Inshore Patrol Vessel (MMIPV) P1593 as SAS King Adam Kok III. This historic event honours the legacy of King Adam Kok III—the last sovereign leader of the Griqua Nation, who tragically passed away in 1875 at Kok’s Hill near Rietvlei while journeying from Umzimkulu to Kokstad.

The Griqua Nation, a sovereign entity with its own flag, coat of arms, and anthem, welcomed the naming as a long-overdue act of recognition and a meaningful step toward the restoration of its cultural and political identity. Dr Maurice Vivian Kok, expressed confidence that the full restoration of the Griqua Kingdom and the Kok kingship is approaching.

Dr Bruce Damons, Director of Engagement at Nelson Mandela University, attended the ceremony as a guest of the Griqua Nation. Through the university’s Hubs of Convergence initiative—specifically Hub 7: Indigenous Knowledge Systems—Mandela University collaborates with the Griqua Nation.



During the event, Dr Damons also had the opportunity to connect with Durban Harbour Master, Captain Brynn Adamson, a distinguished maritime leader who hails from the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. Their meeting highlighted the vital role of local leadership in shaping national and global maritime spaces.

The naming of SAS King Adam Kok III stands not only as a naval milestone but as a powerful affirmation of South Africa’s indigenous histories and the collaborative efforts underway to restore and honour them.



# Leader2Leader Programme CATALYSES STUDENT INNOVATION AT NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

A BRIDGE BETWEEN LOCAL INNOVATION AND GLOBAL SOLIDARITY



**Back row:** Carl Leshilo (Student Hubs of Convergence); Nicole Louw (Naturally Nivana); Yolanda Magugu (Student Hubs of Convergence); Winston Letwaba (Advanced Academy) Lehlohonolo Molahlehi & (Clap and Tap Choir); Herschelle Howley (VIP Boxing); Wensley Jackson (Hubs of Convergence)

**Sitting:** Prof Veonna Goliath (Social Development Professions); Dr Bruce Damons (Director of Engagement Office); Ongeziwe Mamane (Comnet Hydroponics)

The funding and collaborative opportunities emerged through the L2LA programme—an executive leadership exchange connecting US-based civil society leaders with innovators in the Global South. The 2024 exchange was co-convened by Rev Dawn Sanders (US) and Pastor Jacobus Nomdoe, founder of The Hope Revolution Vision (THR), a partner of Mandela University.

Held from 7–9 October 2024, the L2LA visit brought together six US leaders from organisations such as: Alfred Street Baptist Church, United Methodist Inner City Mission, Clctivly (Funder)—a prominent Baltimore-based platform advancing Black-led social change.

“The L2L Abroad visit was not just symbolic. It opened real opportunities for collaboration, funding, and peer learning,” said Dr Bruce Damons, Director of the Engagement Office. “Our students are now part of an international ecosystem of innovation.”

The visit provided a space for deep reflection and alignment with Mandela University’s engagement philosophy, anchored in reciprocity, convergence, and the recognition of community knowledge. Faculty engagements and storytelling sessions illustrated how academic programmes and community-rooted innovations can intersect to tackle global challenges.

## THE SIX STUDENT-LED PROJECTS FUNDED UNDER HOC

These innovative student initiatives, incubated under Hub 1: Individual and Collective Wellness, include:

### 1. VIP Boxing – by Herschelle Howley

Uses boxing as a transformative tool to steer young people—especially boys—from drugs and violence toward discipline, identity, and community purpose.

### 2. Clap and Tap Choir – by Lehlohonolo

Revives traditional choral music as a means to preserve culture, inspire unity, and create safe, expressive spaces for youth in townships.

### 3. Naturally Nivana – by Nicole Louw

Promotes self-care, wellness, and natural hair product entrepreneurship.

### 4. Advanced Academy – by Winston Letwaba

Provides mentorship, tutoring, and academic support to high school learners, targeting gaps in access and confidence within under-resourced schools.

### 5. Comnet Hydroponics – by Ongeziwe Mamane

Introduces sustainable hydroponic farming systems to local communities to tackle food insecurity.

### 6. Art for Hope – by Keenan Damons

Elevates African creativity and heritage through visual storytelling, honouring local narratives and reclaiming space for cultural identity and healing.

These projects are poised for cross-cutting impact, with the potential to scale across other thematic Hubs in the HoC model.

## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Aligning project goals with institutional priorities
- Capacity building for student teams
- Laying the foundation for collaborative monitoring and evaluation

“This is not just about funding—it’s about belief in our students as community innovators,” said Wensley Jackson, National Program Coordinator for THRV. “It’s a turning point.”

As the Leader2Leader and THRV partnership deepens, Nelson Mandela University reaffirms its commitment to co-creating socially responsive, locally rooted innovations. These projects reflect a broader vision—one where student-led entrepreneurship is not only encouraged but integrated into the fabric of university engagement.

The success of these initiatives demonstrates that authentic, African-led innovation can thrive when nurtured within a values-based institutional ecosystem—where community, collaboration, and creativity converge.

# ZAIMANSHOEK PRIMARY GRADE 7s EXPLORE NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY AND BEYOND

On 15 May 2025, Nelson Mandela University's Engagement Office hosted Grade 7 learners from Zaimanshoek Primêre Skool, nestled deep in the Baviaanskloof, for an unforgettable campus visit as part of their three-day educational and recreational excursion to Gqeberha.

Accompanied by Headmistress Mrs Anamie Schoeman, Grade 7 teacher Mr Ruwayne Smit, Miss Zanne Reyneke from the Baviaanskloof Learning Centre, and Mrs Melanie Heckwolf of the Baviaans Growth Initiative, the learners journeyed to the coast, many experiencing the city and ocean for the very first time.

The campus tour, hosted by the Engagement Office, displayed a rich tapestry of opportunity. From our Sports Department and Fine Arts spaces to captivating exhibits in the Science Centre, the learners were inspired by the diversity of academic and career paths available.

Beyond our university, the learners explored Gqeberha's coastline and community-led initiatives:

Raggy Charters offered an educational marine safari on the bay, complete with wildlife sightings and ocean education under blue winter skies.

NSRI delivered life-saving lessons in water safety, complemented by an insightful tour of their rescue base.

At Woodridge College, the learners reconnected with friends from a previous wilderness exchange and stepped into the future with a thrilling direct drone technology session led by Mr Kok in the school's innovative lab.

This was not just a school trip. It was a transformative experience that nurtured teamwork and independence, cultural exchange, and confidence for high school and beyond.

**Colleagues from left to right: Ms Nomphele Makamu (Hubs of Convergence); Mr Ruwayne Smit (Teacher); Ms Zanne Reyneke (Baviaanskloof Learning Centre); Mr Nii Botchway (Visual Arts Department); Mrs Melanie Heckwolf (Baviaans Growth Initiative); Mrs Anamie Schoeman (Headmistress); Ms Phaello Tihaku (Hubs of Convergence); Grade 7 Learners from Zaimanshoek Primere Skool.**



# Deepening Global Partnerships: UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK VISIT TO NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

As part of the expanding collaboration under the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between **Nelson Mandela University** and the **University of Limerick (UL)**, the Engagement Office hosted a delegation from **UL Engage** to strengthen shared practices in engaged scholarship and transdisciplinary learning. The visiting team included **Dr Maura Adshead** (Head of Community Engagement), **Tracey Gleeson**, and **Niamh O’Sullivan** (Community Engagement Facilitator).

## FARM VISIT AND STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS

The visit began at the *Valley of Grace* farm in **Bronkhorstspuit**, where the delegation joined an engagement session with **The Hope Revolution Vision (THRv)**, **Central University of Technology**, and **Prof Paul Sutherland**, Honorary Professor at Mandela University and founder of the STEPi Foundation. The session focused on building translocal learning ecosystems, addressing youth vulnerability, and advancing wellness-oriented approaches to community support, in particular as it relates to substance abuse.

## CAMPUS IMMERSION: MISSIONVALE

At **Missionvale Campus**, the delegation was welcomed with an orientation by the Campus Director, who outlined the campus’s strategic

role in university-community convergence. Highlights included:

- A visit to the **Medical School** and **indigenous medicinal garden**
- Insights into free **STEM education** programmes supporting local learners and teachers
- Overview of Mandela University’s **seven engagement clusters**, which include:

1. EDUCATION

2. HEALTH

3. HUMAN RIGHTS

4. SUSTAINABILITY

5. CIVIL SOCIETY & GOVERNANCE

6. SPORTS, ARTS & CULTURE

7. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## ZWIDE ENGAGEMENT: PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE

In Zwide, the group visited the **Zwide Development Forum (ZDF)** and engaged with community leaders and residents. SAPS accompanied the delegation to ensure safety. Discussions focused on challenges such as:

- The repeated vandalism of the local library
- Deteriorating infrastructure at **Zwide Primary School**, risking its closure
- The expansion of a school food garden to meet growing needs

Community members expressed deep appreciation for the partnership with Mandela University, especially through ZDF—the first local organization to formally collaborate with

the university. At the same time, frustration was voiced over administrative delays in project rollouts. Programmes in **sports, arts, and culture** were highlighted as critical tools for steering youth away from drugs and crime.



## REFLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT: K4C, COIL, AND STUDENT PARTICIPATION

UL Engage also had the opportunity to meet with staff and students involved in the **EU-Limerick K4C online programme** (Oct 2024 – Jan 2025). This programme included a **residency component** at the University of Limerick, which was attended by Mandela University staff from:

- The **Engagement Office**
- Senior Director's Offices of **Missionvale, Bird Street**, and **Second Avenue campuses**
- Faculties of **Law, Science**, and **Humanities**



The session also welcomed **students involved in the Hubs of Convergence (HoC)** initiative, reinforcing the university's commitment to collaborative knowledge production across generations. Existing partnerships in **Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)** were revisited and new opportunities were explored for the **upcoming academic year** at UL.

## CLOSING APPRECIATION

The visit concluded with an **appreciation gathering**, honouring both the spirit of international collaboration and celebrating Engagement Office colleagues who have recently transitioned into **permanent positions** into industry and other sectors. The event offered a moment to reflect on the evolving journey of the Engagement Office and its ongoing contribution to building a university truly in service to society.

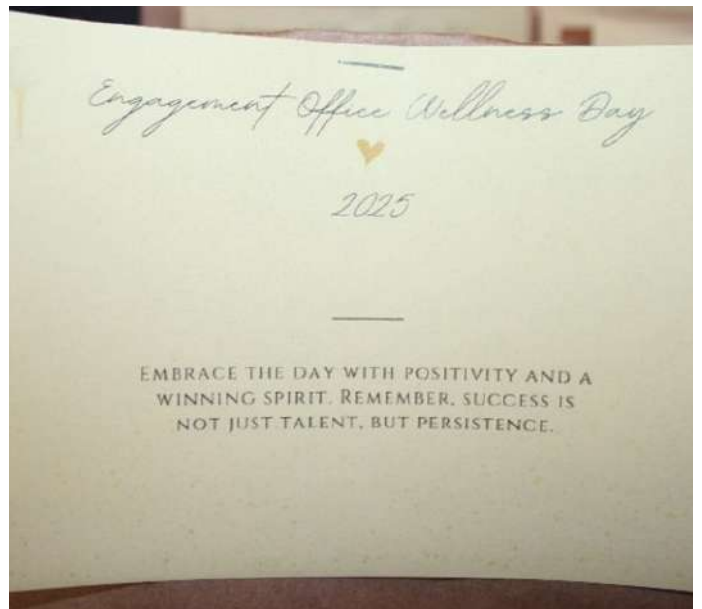
28 MAY 2025

# STAFF WELLNESS DAY

On 28 May 2025, the Engagement Office held a **Staff Wellness Day at Madibaz Clubhouse**, under the theme “Golf as a Tool for Personal Wellness.” The day offered staff members a much-needed break through a blend of mindfulness, light-hearted golf activities, and personal coaching sessions, playing, dominoes and UNO—all focused-on self-care and team connection.

In addition to golf driving challenges, participants engaged in wellness-inspired activities, including playing and learning to play dominoes and UNO, as well as wellness-inspired reflections such as a meditative walk, mirror affirmations, and team-based listening exercises. These activities encouraged staff to pause, reflect, and reconnect—both with themselves and with one another.

The Wellness Day affirmed the university's commitment to a culture of well-being, aiming to reduce stress, promote personal growth, and strengthen collaboration across teams. Staff left feeling refreshed, supported, and inspired to carry these practices into their daily lives. This initiative created a “space of being” for staff in keeping with the spirit and intent of the **Umtombo Institutional Culture Signature Programme**.



# STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESPONSES THROUGH SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION TRAINING

As part of the ongoing national roll-out of the Hope Revolution Vision (THRUV), two impactful SLP training sessions were held in June 2025. These sessions form part of the Hubs of Convergence (HoC) NRF-funded Global Change Social Sciences Research Project (GCSSRP), which falls under the DVC Engagement and Transformation at Nelson Mandela University and is facilitated by the Engagement Office in collaboration with Health Sciences, Dept of Social Development Professions and The Hope Revolution Vision.

From 12 to 13 June, Stellenbosch University hosted the training within the Master's in Educational Psychology programme, marking a significant milestone in integrating substance abuse prevention directly into the academic curriculum of trainee Educational Psychologists. The session emphasised the connection between psycho-educational practice and community engagement, grounded in THRUV's commitment to transformative learning.

From 18–19 June, the team facilitated a second session at the Welkom Campus of the Central University of Technology (CUT). This training

engaged student wellness mentors and broader campus stakeholders in meaningful dialogue around peer leadership and social influence. Student reflections underscored the power of lived experience, spiritual grounding, and community-rooted mentorship in confronting substance abuse and related vulnerabilities.

On 14 June, a significant engagement with over 20 Western Cape faith-based organisations and the Red Cross was hosted in the community of Elsie's River in Cape Town. This engagement focused on strengthening collaboration between universities and faith-based communities in addressing the intersecting crises of substance abuse, crime, poverty, and broader social dislocation. The meeting concluded with a landmark resolution: to convene a national summit in 2026 that brings together government, civil society, community-based organisations (CBOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), business, and academia to collectively respond to the deepening social challenges.

The next phase of the training rollout will take place through Nelson Mandela University's George Campus Hubs of Convergence, involving participants from both government departments and NGOs within the Garden Route District Municipality. This will be followed by a final training session in Gqeberha, targeting 50 participants from a range of local organisations. This session forms part of a Hub 4 collaboration between the Zwide Development Forum and SANGCO-CO, strengthening grassroots responses to substance abuse and social harm through capacity building and community-led action.



# GRASLAAGTE SITE VISIT – ADVANCING ECO-PEDAGOGY AND COMMUNITY-LED ADAPTATION



On 9–10 June 2025, the Key Advisory Set (KAS)—a transdisciplinary team of Mandela University staff (academic and pass) and youth representatives from the First Nations group—conducted a strategic site visit to Graslaagte Primary School. This visit formed part of an ongoing critical conversation with community stakeholders in Humansdorp, exploring the potential of Graslaagte as a key implementation site for the NFRF Multilateral Grant project, International Relational Accountability of Mother Earth: Revitalizing and Restoring the Land and Water. The grant is a collaboration with Canada, the UK, and Switzerland. It affirmed a refined implementation focus grounded in eco-pedagogy, Indigenous knowledge, and community-responsive climate adaptation.

The visit brought together school stakeholders, researchers, First Nations leaders, and

community members to activate four intersecting strands of engagement: establishing school eco-gardens with drought-adapted crops; integrating First Nations knowledge through intergenerational learning activities; supporting parent-led entrepreneurship via a school-based cooperative; and collaborating with Kouga Dam stakeholders to develop community education programmes focused on the dam’s role, local drought strategies, and water quality improvement. This engagement laid the groundwork for participatory curriculum development, community resilience programming, and deeper alignment with the grant’s vision of relational climate adaptation. The Graslaagte visit not only affirmed the school as a catalyst for environmental learning but also as a hub for community-driven transformation rooted in shared knowledge and care for the land and water.





01 FEBRUARY - 30 JUNE 2025

# CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STUDENTS **GET PRACTICAL** **EXPERIENCE THROUGH** **COLLABORATION WITH HUBS** **OF CONVERGENCE**

A podcast, posters, videos, logos, social media content and press releases. These are some of the media outputs Honours Corporate Communication students created for their "client": the Nelson Mandela University's Hubs of Convergence (HOC). From Beginning of February to End June 2025

In a collaboration with the HOC, the students gained valuable practical experience as part of a group assignment covering Corporate Social Responsibility and Media Relations, giving the students the opportunity to translate theoretical concepts into real-life campaigns with executable deliverables.

It was also a win for the HOC, who received valuable and strategic Corporate Communication input from postgraduate students, as a new undertaking for the university's engagement entity.

Mr. Klaas the Hubs of Convergence (HoC) project manager also commented "The corporate communication student media output has actually been an asset in informing improved communication strategy for the EOs intended

**"The students simulated a real-world PR agency where different personalities need to work together in groups, meet with the clients and come up with solutions for the HOC. The HOC was very supportive in accommodating the students and trialing this engagement project,"** said Corporate Communication Lecturer Cindy Preller.

audience, especially in communicating Hub 3 gender engagement and Hub 8 on sports, arts and culture related messaging to various stakeholders within the Hubs".

**"Our Honours students who elect to do the module Critical Approaches in Media Design, also do graphic design campaigns with the HOC which has led to incredibly creative outputs and valuable collaborations over the last few years,"** said Vermaak-Griesel.

Bernard Piater, one of the Corporate Communication Honours students' group leaders, said the team was able to gain valuable real-life experience working with their client, Hub 8 of the HOC.

**"This allowed us to apply theory into practice by assisting Hub 8 with the creation of a range of communication and marketing solutions, including collateral linked to existing and upcoming projects based on needs identified. This has been an incredible learning opportunity for me and the team, as we were able to use our skills and knowledge to create solutions for our client, whilst learning to adapt and pivot as the need arose. This was a great learning opportunity,"** said Piater.

# HUBS OF CONVERGENCE LEARNER INCUBATION PROGRAMME IGNITES HOPE AND CAREER AMBITIONS AMONG LOCAL YOUTH



From exploring renewable energy labs and psychology clinics to witnessing real-time naval demonstrations, the day gave learners direct exposure to a wide range of professional fields. Each site offered interactive sessions, campus tours, and department-led engagements supported by staff from faculties of Education, Law, Social Development, and Technology, among others.

***“The aim is to create enabling spaces where learners from previously disadvantaged communities can access resources, guidance, and career mentorship,” says Wensley Jackson, one of the programme coordinators. “We are not just showing them our campuses; we’re offering a glimpse into futures they can claim as their own.”***

On Tuesday, 24 June 2025, Nelson Mandela University, through its Engagement Office and the Hubs of Convergence (HoC), hosted the latest iteration of its Learner Incubation Programme. A transformative initiative aimed at bridging the gap between local high schools and the university. The programme welcomed 60 Grade 11 and 12 learners from Westville Secondary School in Gqeberha to experience a full day of academic immersion, career exploration, and mentorship.

Split across four dynamic campus and sites Missionvale Campus, North Campus, South Campus, and the SA Navy Base in Gqeberha the learners engaged in tailored programmes designed to incubate their career interests and expose them to the possibilities of higher education and national service.



This 2025 program also marked a milestone, as the programme deepens its long-term engagement with learners, continuing with a cohort of 30 learners who began their incubation journey in 2024. This continuity reflects HoC's commitment to sustainable, meaningful development and learner success.

The Learner Incubation Programme is part of Hub 6 of the Hubs of Convergence, which focuses on building education ecosystems and nurturing pathways into higher education. Through collaborative work with internal NMU departments and external stakeholders, the initiative mobilises institutional knowledge and resources to create a transformative impact in the local education landscape.

In the words of one Grade 12 participant:

***"Today I saw myself at university for the first time. I know now what I want, and I believe I can get there."***



24-25 JUNE 2025

# SMUTSVILLE HOSTS COMMUNITY-BASED SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION WORKSHOP

On 24–25 June 2025, the George Campus of Nelson Mandela University, through its George Hubs of Convergence (GHoC) and in collaboration with local youth from The Hope Revolution Vision (THRUV) who have recovered from addiction, as well as a community group partnering with the CNRS/REHABS Dune Project, hosted a two-day Short Learning Programme (SLP) in the community of Smutsville, Sedgefield.

The workshop was guided by a non-credit bearing short learning programme registered at Mandela University “Carefronting: A Community-Based Substance Abuse Prevention Approach,” which aims to support local communities in responding to substance abuse with empathy, practical tools, and collective insight.

Over the two days, residents, young people, and faith leaders came together to reflect on the unique challenges facing their community—including youth vulnerability, unemployment, and a lack of recreational opportunities. With storytelling, role plays, and open dialogue, participants explored early warning signs, co-dependency patterns, and alternatives to punitive responses. The youth from

THRUV who were co-facilitators in the training, shared critical knowledge of enabling patterns and social influence strategies that enhance drug use as well as strategies that can fast track someone’s readiness for personal transformation.

The Smutsville session carried a grounded, intimate tone—rooted in shared stories, laughter, pain, and possibility. It was not just a workshop; it was a reminder of community strength.

Participants received a practical implementation framework to guide next steps in schools, homes, and community spaces. As one participant shared:

***“This is not the end of the conversation—it’s the beginning of a new way of walking together.”***

This initiative reflects the George Campus’s commitment to meaningful engagement—where learning meets lived experience, and hope takes root in the everyday.



# COMMUNITIES RECLAIM HOPE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE: MANDELA UNIVERSITY HOSTS TRANSFORMATIVE TWO-DAY TRAINING



Nelson Mandela University (HoC and SDP, Health Sciences), in collaboration with the Zwide Development Forum (ZDF), the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO), and The Hope Revolution Vision (THRUV), hosted a two-day short learning programme (SLP) at its Missionvale Campus.

The non-credit bearing SLP brought together more than 70 participants, exceeding the original invitation of 50. Attendees included representatives from local NGO, the Metro's Local Drug Action Committee, school governing bodies, student leaders, parents, grandparents (gogos), individuals living with addiction, and faith-based organisations from across the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro.

The ongoing initiative forms part of a broader national partnership supported by the university's **Engagement and Transformation Portfolio's (ETP) NRF Grant**.

The training is designed to conscientize communities about destigmatising of addiction and locating the person instead of foregrounding the addiction. It demonstrates what a humanising carefronting approach to prevention, early intervention, secondary care, aftercare and prevention of relapse look like. Over two days, participants engaged with multisystemic drivers, developmental pathways and consequences of addiction, and co-developed contextually relevant Facilitators Rev. Jacobus Nomdoe (THRUV) and Associate Professor Veonna Goliath (SDP, Health Sciences) guided conversations and experiential exercises about understanding the self; early indicators of different levels of substance use (and other behavioural addictions), modes of social/peer influence, co-dependency, and models of prevention. Through storytelling and participatory engagement sessions, participants reflected on their lived experiences, laying the groundwork for collective healing; (from historical and intergenerational traumas) and the potential for reclaiming of hope and a new narrative.



On **Day 2**, the focus shifted to practice. Participants developed their capacity to respond with empathy and compassion through role-plays and scenario-based learning. Testimonies from two youth leaders from THR V in Cape Town offered raw, hopeful accounts of personal transformation—highlighting the importance of family and peer support and purpose in recovery. One of the youth leaders was a student at Mandela University and is in THR V recovery programme, where he is doing exceptionally well and hopes to return to the Metro to support the University’s work around substance abuse on our campuses and in our communities.

ing with drug-induced psychosis), safe spaces for creativity, mentorship, and leadership.

“We don’t just want to be told to ‘say no.’ We want to be equipped to say yes to something better,” said one youth participant.



## MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

The **Metro leg of the training** represented a significant step toward cultivating a more compassionate and community-driven response to substance abuse, not only within Nelson Mandela Bay but as a model for broader regional implementation. It reaffirmed the power of meaningful collaboration between universities, communities, and civic organisations.

Importantly, the programme led to the formation of a **multi-stakeholder working group** tasked with drafting a proposal to:

- extend this work into Kariega,
- Support an NGO working with incarcerated individuals,
- develop trauma-informed school-based prevention programmes, and
- Contribute to the establishment of the Home of Hope initiative in New Brighton.

This forward-looking agenda reflects a growing momentum for sustainable, community-led action grounded in care, restoration, and shared responsibility.



## COMMUNITY VOICES, SHARED VISION

Throughout the workshop, participants voiced both their concerns and their dreams. They named youth unemployment, family breakdown, and glamorised normalised drug culture; well-intentioned harm reduction parental strategies that stimulate harmful drug use as key challenges. At the same time, they called for positive alternatives—after-school programmes, mental health support (including a responsive public safety and healthcare system to assist with detoxification of persons present-



# MANDELA WEEK 2025: A CONVERGED EXPRESSION OF ENGAGEMENT AND SOLIDARITY IN GELVANDALE AND HELENVALE

16–18 JULY 2025 Led by: The Engagement Office, Nelson Mandela University  
Theme: Contributing Towards Dignity and Growing Hope



In honour of Mandela Week 2025, Nelson Mandela University demonstrated the transformative power of engagement through a three-day programme held from 16–18 July in the communities of Gelvandale and Helenvale. Facilitated by the Engagement Office, the programme foregrounded the University's commitment to co-creating spaces of dignity, inclusion, and hope affirming its role as a civic university that learns with and from society.

This year's Mandela Week was marked by overwhelming staff support from across faculties and PASS departments, all converging around a shared commitment to the Hostel of Hope as a living place and space of engagement. As one of the pilot sites for the Hubs of Convergence (HoC), the Hostel reflects a new paradigm of integrated university-community collaboration, where engagement is not a once-off act of charity, but a sustained, reciprocal process of social transformation.



## DAY 1: INCLUSION AND WELL-NESS AT HELENVALE RESOURCE CENTRE

The programme opened with a dedicated day for persons with disabilities. In partnership with community organisations, university departments including Sport and Recreation and Social Development facilitated inclusive wellness activities, movement sessions, and mental health dialogues. Helenvale Clinic offered health education and screenings, while the Mobile Law Clinic created accessible spaces for legal support particularly around issues of vulnerability and protection.

## DAY 2: ELDER ENGAGEMENT AT THE HOSTEL OF HOPE

Elderly members of the community were honoured with a day of care, conversation, and companionship. University staff and students Department of Social Development, Sports and Recreation Department and Mobile Law Clinic joined local partners in offering wellness services, including sessions on nutrition, legal rights, and personal well-being. The spirit of engagement was evident in every interaction—each conversation contributing to a deeper understanding of the needs, aspirations, and wisdom of the older generation.



## DAY 3: INTERNATIONAL MANDELA DAY A CELEBRATION OF CONVERGED ACTION

The 18 July 2025 commemorated Madiba's legacy with a powerful display of community-university solidarity. A formal programme brought together voices from the University and surrounding community, grounding the day in reflection and shared purpose. Engagement took many forms: staff, student Pharmacy department, Social Development Professions CRISHET, Law Clinic, SACO and Occupational Health painted and restored the hostel's dining space, prepared student dormitories, cultivated the garden, and offered vital services such as medical and legal consultations.



Over 650 essential items ranging from toiletries and food to cleaning materials were donated for students and neighbouring schools. These gifts, however, were not the heart of the day. What stood out was the learning that emerged from being in community: the stories shared, the partnerships renewed, and the seeds of long-term connection planted.



## A LIVING EXAMPLE OF WHAT A UNIVERSITY CAN BE

Mandela Week 2025 affirmed that engagement is not something the University does to communities but with them. Through the Hostel of Hope and the broader Gelvandale-Helenvale partnership, Nelson Mandela University is deepening its commitment to reimagining the university as a site of convergence where teaching, learning, and research are enriched through genuine relationships of mutual respect, listening, and action.

As one of the pilot community HoC site's in the Metro, the Hostel of Hope will remain a key partner in shaping a university that responds with care, relevance, and humility. Warm appreciation and gratitude is extended to all staff, students, and community collaborators who contributed to this important work.





24 JULY 2025

## NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICE – FIELDMORE MAPETO WORKSHOP

The Nelson Mandela University Hubs of Convergence (HoC) hosted a Fieldmore Mapeto workshop at NMU Bird Street Campus on 24 July 2024, involving representatives from Amandla, the Fieldmore Mapeto family representatives, and HoC, toward co-constructing a sustainable Engagement School in honour of Fieldmore Mapeto's legacy. The workshop aimed at celebrating the life of Fieldmore Mapeto (1956–2018) an intellectual from Gqeberha who embodied critical pedagogy and organised working-class struggles.

The workshop envisioned the co-construction of an Engagement School that seeks to honour his praxis as a platform for popular education and radical dialogue. The workshop engage-

ments entailed co-creating an engagement space rooted in community-led governance structure that integrates diverse perspectives (workers, youth, academics, organizers) to ensure that ideas lead to collective mobilization and socially-just alternatives. The workshop was concluded with the endorsement of an African Voices of expression Engagement School as an institutional community partnership. The workshop demonstrated strong energy, convergence, and shared purpose among all partners. Together, we are poised to build a living tribute to Fieldmore Mapeto's life and ideals through education, dialogue, and collective action set within an Engagement School model rooted in democratic, community-led convergence.

# LEARNER INCUBATION PROGRAMME AT TOISE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

The Nelson Mandela University Hubs of Convergence in collaboration with the Walter Sisulu University hosted the Learner Incubation Programme (LIP) at Toise Senior Secondary School in King Williams Town on the 25th of July 2025. The Learner Incubation Programme in Hub 5 focuses on bridging the gap between the university and high school through a co-ordinated programme as a response to challenges faced by previously disadvantaged schools in accessing relevant information and access to institutions of higher education.



The programme was attended by grade 11-12 learners from Toise SSS together with learners from Gasela High School where both universities made presentations, and shared university life information and experiences with the learners. The programme further engaged through a Q & A session where learners got in-depth knowledge and understanding and

expectations for their academic journey's next chapter. In closing Mr Okafor, the head prefect of Toise SSS gave an astounding vote of thanks speech expressing their gratitude and appreciation of the programme stating, "It is for the first time in history of our village school to have universities coming to us, than us going to the university".



# END PERIOD POVERTY AT PE COLLEGE DOWER CAMPUS



On 30 July 2025, the HoC and Engagement Office, in collaboration with Shincheonji and through the support of Higher Health, conducted an outreach visit to PE College Dower Campus. The visit focused on two critical issues affecting students: Period Poverty and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The session began with raising awareness about period poverty, a challenge faced by many students who are unable to afford basic sanitary products. To address this, a demonstration was conducted on the use of menstrual cups, highlighting them as a sustainable and cost-effective alternative to disposable sanitary products. Following this, the team introduced Theta Ndoda, an initiative aimed at

empowering men to actively speak out against GBV and challenge the stigma that prevents many from seeking help or engaging in conversations around violence and masculinity. The program promotes open dialogue to cultivate a supportive culture where all individuals feel encouraged to act against violence.

On 30 July 2025, the HoC and Engagement Office, in collaboration with Shincheonji and through the support of Higher Health, conducted an outreach visit to PE College Dower Campus. The visit focused on two critical issues affecting students: Period Poverty and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The session began with raising awareness about period poverty, a challenge faced by many students who are



unable to afford basic sanitary products. To address this, a demonstration was conducted on the use of menstrual cups, highlighting them as a sustainable and cost-effective alternative to disposable sanitary products. Following this, the team introduced Theta Ndoda, an initiative aimed at empowering men to actively speak out against GBV and challenge the stigma that prevents many from seeking help or engaging in conversations around violence and masculinity. The program promotes open dialogue to cultivate a supportive culture where all individuals feel encouraged to act against violence.

Shincheonji volunteers placed a strong emphasis on addressing GBV as a societal issue with far-reaching consequenc-

es, including domestic violence, sexual assault, femicide, and the emotional and economic toll these forms of violence impose. They highlighted the importance of tackling the root causes of GBV, such as gender inequality, harmful norms, and power imbalances.

The visit was well received, with enthusiastic participation from the students. The positive response underscored the importance of such engagements and the need to sustain momentum in addressing these social challenges. The HoC and Engagement Office remains committed to driving meaningful change through education, awareness, and collaborative action. Further follow-up activities will be planned in the coming months to build on the success of this outreach.



# SOWING JUSTICE: THE GEORGE STUDENT HUBS OF CONVERGENCE CAMPUS GARDEN INITIATIVE

In a profound and enduring commitment to addressing student hunger through transformative, student-centered interventions, the Engagement Office's Hubs of Convergence together with the George Student Hubs of Convergence have embarked on a pioneering journey: the establishment of a campus garden rooted in solidarity, sustainability, and food sovereignty.

With the visionary support of the Campus Management, the Office of the Campus Principal, and the collaborative expertise of the Departments of Agriculture and Horticulture, this garden stands as a living testament to what is possible when institutional will meets student activism. More than a garden, it is an act of justice, an ecosystem of healing, knowledge-sharing, and nourishment.



The produce cultivated here is not merely for sustenance; it is a symbol of dignity, of reclaiming agency over hunger, and of planting the seeds of a more equitable university experience. This initiative speaks directly to the University's Strategic Mission and echoes the spirit of Vision 2030, a future-facing aspiration grounded in ethical leadership, environmental stewardship, and inclusive wellbeing.

The George Student Hubs of Convergence have demonstrated unwavering resilience and radical hope in the face of complex social realities. This garden marks a step into uncharted but necessary territory where land becomes pedagogy, food becomes dialogue, and the university becomes a living site of convergence between knowledge, justice, and care.



13 AUGUST 2025

# HUBS OF CONVERGENCE AND COEGA CORPORATE SOCIAL INVESTMENT

On the 5th of August 2025, Coega Corporate Social Investment (CSI) hosted a Key Collaboration Workshop in partnership with the Engagement Office, through Hubs of Convergence (HoC) at the Coega Business Centre.

The Hubs of Convergence which aligns with Mandela University Vision 2030 seek to bridge the gap between Mandela University and its surrounding communities, by addressing societal challenges through co-constructed, sustainable solutions, grounded in reciprocity and inclusivity. This workshop served as a vital platform for exploring shared goals, collaborative programming, and strategic alignment between the two institutions.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP WAS TO:

- Share planned programmes and initiatives from Engagement Office (HoC) and Coega CSI.
- Identify potential areas of alignment and collaboration, particularly in the spheres of education, community development, and social impact.
- Lay the foundation for a long-term partnership that supports impactful, community-based engagement work.

The workshop was well-received, and there was enthusiastic participation from both entities. Colleagues expressed a strong willingness to begin programmatic work, and discussions revealed clear synergies that will inform the next steps of collaborative action.



11 - 13 AUGUST 2025

## **28TH INSTITUTE OF INTERNAL AUDITORS SOUTH AFRICA (IIA SA) ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Nelson Mandela University was proudly represented at the 28th Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa (IIA SA) Annual National Conference, held from 11–13 August 2025 at the Sandton Convention Centre.

The University was represented by Dr. Sizwe Nyenyiso, Senior Director of Internal Auditing at Nelson Mandela University and a serving board member of IIA (SA). His participation reflected the University's strong commitment to advancing governance, accountability, and internal audit practices within higher education. And Tonjeni Asiphe's attendance reflects the importance of involving and empowering young professionals in governance, accountability, and risk management spaces. Exposing the next generation to such platforms strength-

ens both their professional growth and the future of ethical, transparent, and sustainable practices in higher education and beyond.

The conference, held under the theme "Innovate, Integrate & Accelerate," provided a platform for learning, collaboration, and networking among internal auditors, risk managers, and governance professionals. Key takeaways included the importance of digital transformation, integration across units, agile practices, and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations. These insights are not only valuable for strengthening internal audit functions but also for enhancing the management, evaluation, and sustainability of engagement projects.

# IARSLCE 2025

Nelson Mandela University joined the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) Conference in Durban from 13-15 August 2025.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Sibongile Muthwa joined fellow VCs for the Opening Plenary: South African Perspectives on Community Engagement. Her address pointed to the need for universities to think differently about challenges around engagement, and shared the Hubs of Convergence as our University's approach to doing just that.

Our Engagement Office also hosted an exhibition table showcasing the work of Career Services, the Unit for Continuing Education, and the Hubs of Convergence – just some of the platforms Prof Muthwa spotlighted as demonstrations of Mandela University's commitment to co-creating solutions with stakeholder-communities.

Our participation at IARSLCE underscored Mandela University's purpose of being a university in the service of society—bringing our Vision 2030 to life through meaningful partnerships and shared knowledge, both locally and globally.



**Prof Muthwa serving on the opening plenary**



**From left: Dr Bruce Damons, Prof Sibongile Muthwa, Mrs Tracey Dissel and Ms Amy De Raedt, representing Mandela University**

21 AUGUST 2025

# 14TH ANNUAL SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT RESEARCHER'S CONFERENCE (SEDRC)

Mr Bongani Momoti attended the 14th Annual Sustainable Education & Development Researcher's Conference (SEDRC), held at the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, from 21st to 23rd August 2025, with the support of the Engagement Office, the Human Settlements &



Construction Department, and the Dean's Office. I was honored to present my research paper titled Exploring Access to Adequate Housing, Enhancing Basic Service Delivery, and the Eradication of Informal Settlements. The conference was a great success, bringing together scholars and practitioners to engage in meaningful discussions, exchange innovative ideas, and create opportunities for networking and building new professional relationships that will support future collaborations. A highlight of the event was receiving an honorary award for delivering one of the best presentations of the conference, a recognition that reflects both the relevance and quality of the research. Overall, this was an enriching and inspiring experience that contributed greatly to both my academic and professional development, and I look forward to future participation when the conference reconvenes next year in Ghana.



22 AUGUST 2025

# EPP AT 2ND AVENUE CAMPUS WITH GIFT OF THE GIVERS AND MINA FOUNDATION

On 22 August 2025, the Hub of Convergence, in collaboration with Gift of the Givers and the Mina Foundation, hosted an informative and empowering End Period Poverty (EPP) session at Nelson Mandela University's Second Avenue Campus. The event focused on raising awareness about the Mina Cup, its safe usage, and importance as a sustainable alternative to sanitary pads.



promotes health and dignity but also advances environmental sustainability. While sanitary pads take years to decompose, a Mina Cup can be reused for up to five years, making it both cost-effective and eco-friendly.

This event marked an important step in empowering young women with practical solutions and fostering a culture of awareness and care within our university community.



**Hlubikazi Ntshobane giving students Mina Cups**

Ms. Hlubikazi Ntshobane from Gift of the Givers and Mr Leshilo Pushetji from Engagement office delivered an engaging presentation, guiding students on how to use the Mina Cup and highlighting its benefits. This initiative directly supports the Hubs of Convergence's (HoC) project "End Period Poverty", equipping students and staff with knowledge that not only



**Mr Leshilo Pushetji and Hlubikazi Ntshobane**

# ALS MEETING – ADVANCING ECO-LITERACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

On 26 August 2025, the NFRF Action Learning Set (ALS)—convened through the Engagement Office and comprising Mandela University staff, school representatives, community leaders, First Nation Gamtouters, and partner organisations—gathered to advance the implementation of the NFRF Multilateral Grant, *International Relational Accountability of Mother Earth: Revitalising and Restoring the Land and Water*. The South African strand of the project is grounded in eco-pedagogy, the integration of Indigenous knowledge, and community-responsive approaches to climate adaptation.

The engagement reaffirmed Graslaagte Primary School in Humansdorp as the central site of exploration, with the Association for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Motherwell’s food garden project joining as partner sites. Work will unfold across five intersecting strands: establishing eco-gardens with drought-adapted crops; developing living classrooms and digital learning spaces; co-creating a virtual archive and storytelling platform; supporting parent

and community entrepreneurship initiatives; and embedding water stewardship through curriculum-linked activities.

Participants emphasised the importance of intergenerational learning, youth voice, and Indigenous knowledge as cornerstones of resilient food and water practices. Plans included curriculum alignment with CAPS, baseline community assessments, and the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities for learners and parents through school gardens, recycled materials, and cooperative ventures. The integration of digital storytelling and virtual platforms further underscored the commitment to amplifying community voices and broadening access.

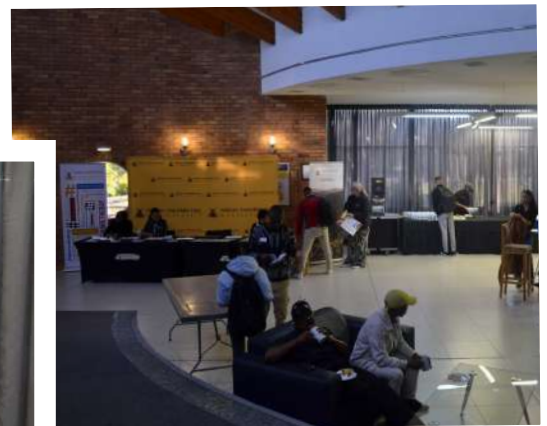
The gathering laid the foundation for participatory curriculum development, community resilience strategies, and cross-cultural knowledge exchange. It reinforced the vision of schools as hubs for environmental learning and socio-economic transformation, grounded in shared responsibility for the land and water.



# TOURISM IMBIZO

The Nelson Mandela University Engagement Office and Tourism Society in collaboration with the Gqeberha, Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Agriculture (EDTA) office, successfully hosted the Tourism Imbizo on the 10th –11th September 2025, at the North Campus Conference Centre. The two-day event convened government leaders, academics, tourism operators, entrepreneurs, and community stakeholders to address the challenges and opportunities facing the local tourism sector. This event was aimed at bridging the gap between the Nelson Mandela Bay Tourism (NMBT) sector and students. The Imbizo was held under the National Tourism Month theme, “Tourism and Sustainable Transformation” and served as a strategic platform to activate the city’s Tourism Master Plan, promote inclusive growth, and strengthen cross-sector collaboration.

The Tourism Imbizo was attended by 120 stakeholders from various organisations including, private tourism industry key role players and exhibitors, Nelson Mandela University tourism lecturers, tourism and hospitality students, Gqeberha local secondary school learners, EDTA staff members, and NMBT staff members. The event Program Coordinators for Day One was Dr Bruce Damons: NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY Engagement Office Director and Ms Lisakhanya Femele: NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY Tourism Society Liaison Officer. The event Program Coordinators for Day Two was Ms Siphokazi Ngombane: NMBT Director and Mr Simphiwe Dube: NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY Tourism Lecturer.



## EVENT PROGRAMME – DAY ONE

Day one of the event programme was scheduled as follows:

1. Executive Mayor Cllr Babalwa Lobishe opened the Imbizo with a keynote address emphasizing tourism's role as a vital economic engine. She highlighted that the sector's contribution to job creation, small business support, and community development, while acknowledging the recent decline in visitor numbers and economic impact.

2. Other keynote speakers and research academics in day one focused on tourism research-informed dialogue and the formal activation of the Tourism Master Plan. Key sessions included:

- Sustainable Transformation in Tourism, Presented by Professor Syden Mishi – Director of the School of Economics, Development Studies and Tourism. He indicated that too often, local communities see little benefits from tourism in their areas. He further stressed that tourism is a powerful driver



of jobs, GDP, and cultural exchange, but it faces pressing issues, including climate change. We must place environmental, social, and governance principles at the heart of the sector to ensure a sustainable and inclusive future.

- Community-Led Tourism, presented by Mr Mike Pantsi and Mr Lusanda Fibi.
- Data and Research for Inclusive Tourism, presentations by the university's researchers: Mr Athi Ndita, Mr Philasande Runeli, Mhlali Mbangeni, and Mr Masibulele Tabata.
- Open Dialogue on the Tourism Transformation Roadmap and partnership with Nelson Mandela University, led by Ms Siphokazi Ngombane and Mr Erenei Low from EDTA.



The day concluded with the endorsement of a transformation roadmap and the launch of the Research, Information, Knowledge Management and Governance cluster, aimed at aligning local tourism research with national priorities.



## EVENT PROGRAMME – DAY TWO

Day Two mainly focused on equipping tourism entrepreneurs, SMMEs, and start-ups with practical tools for compliance, market access, and business development

1. MMC for Economic Development, Tourism and Agriculture, Cllr Bassie Kamana, provided strategic oversight throughout the Imbizo, reinforcing the municipality's commitment to transformation, compliance, and inclusive growth in the tourism sector.

2. Deputy Executive Mayor Cllr Gary Van Niekerk delivered the keynote address, reaffirming the city's commitment to economic growth and youth employment through tourism.

Key themes and sessions included in day 2:

- Tourist Guiding Compliance, presented by Mr Duma Maqubela of the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA), addressing

legal entry requirements and regulatory oversight under the Tourism Act of 2014

- Tourism Transport, presented by Ms Nomsa Mtshwene from the National Department of Transport, clarifying certification and licensing under the National Land Transport Act of 2009.
- Cruise Season Update, delivered by Ms Andiswa Aba from EDTA
- Digital Marketing and Market Access, presented by Mr Erenei Louw, introducing the draft Nelson Mandela Bay Tourism Digital Marketing Strategy and offering actionable insights for small businesses:

The Imbizo concluded with closing remarks by EDTA Standing Committee member Cllr Sice-lo Mleve, who commended the collaborative spirit of the event and emphasized the importance of continued stakeholder engagement.



# REIMAGINING LANGUAGE AS PRAXIS IN ENGAGEMENT



The Hubs of Convergence (HoC), located within Nelson Mandela University's Engagement Office under the Engagement and Transformation Portfolio, has received funding from the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) to focus on the language of engagement. The project forms part of a broader institutional initiative administered through the Office of the DVC: Learning and Teaching and overseen by the Faculty of Humanities.

On 2 October 2025, the HoC and the Engagement Office hosted a workshop at the Ocean Sciences Campus as part of the project "Re-imagining Language as Praxis in Engagement." The initiative explores how multilingualism can deepen collaboration, inclusion, and trans-

formation within the university's engagement practices. Guided by the Language Policy and Vision 2030, the project aims to develop multilingual resources, strengthen inclusive communication, and enhance the linguistic engagement capacity of staff, students, and external stakeholder-communities.

Given Gqeberha's linguistic diversity, the project prioritises Afrikaans, English, and isiXhosa as working languages. A multilingual glossary of engagement terms and tools is being developed to promote shared understanding, laying the foundation for continued collaboration and capacity-building toward a culture of linguistic inclusivity.

# SHARING KNOWLEDGE FOR BETTER FOOD FUTURES



Nelson Mandela University's Student Nutrition Advocacy and Communication (SNAC) team was recently invited to participate in the "Nutrition Education: Sustainability Through Shared Knowledge & Realities" seminar, hosted by the University of Johannesburg (UJ) in collaboration with Lucky Star (Pty) Ltd on 17 October 2025.

The invitation followed an online dialogue that SNAC had hosted earlier in the year (25 June 2025), which brought together representatives from 10 South African universities working to address student hunger. The initiative aimed to build an inter-university platform for sharing experiences, exchanging ideas, and exploring collective approaches to student food insecurity.

Being invited to share this work at UJ affirmed the relevance of SNAC's efforts to develop sustainable, student-centred, and humanising responses to student hunger.

The SNAC team is located in the Hubs of Convergence in the Engagement Office, and the Social Development Professions Department, and comprises staff and students across disciplines.

The work of SNAC also forms part of a broader institutional response to student hunger, forming part of a Student Nutrition Working Group led by DVC L&T.

# CEREMONIAL SIGNING – PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY AND THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNAL AUDITORS SOUTH AFRICA (IIA SA)



Nelson Mandela University's Department of Engagement Office is proud to announce the successful Ceremonial Signing held in person to formalise a strategic partnership between the University and the Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa (IIA SA). This historic engagement signifies a strengthened commitment to advancing the Internal Auditing profession within the institution.

During the ceremony, Ms Arlene-Lynn Volmink, CEO of IIA SA, delivered an inspiring address

highlighting the purpose and vision of the partnership. She emphasised the importance of preparing students for a rapidly evolving professional landscape, where practical exposure and industry readiness are essential components of their development.

In his opening remarks, Dr Sizwe Nyenyiso, Senior Director of Internal Audit of Nelson Mandela University, provided a comprehensive introduction to the programme, sharing insights on the value of IIA student membership, the



professional pathways available, and how this collaboration will create meaningful opportunities for students across various levels of study. He further acknowledged the role this partnership will play in shaping competent, confident, and industry-ready Internal Auditors.

A symbolic ceremonial signing was conducted by both parties, represented by IIA SA leadership and Nelson Mandela University student representatives. This signing served as a formal affirmation of the shared vision to support student growth through mentorship, technical exposure, and participation in professional internal auditing activities.

This collaboration aims to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and industry practice. Students will benefit from:

- Access to IIA professional resources, guidance, and training opportunities
- Exposure to real-world internal auditing environments, standards, and practices

- Invitations to workshops, seminars, and professional networking platforms
- Opportunities to develop practical skills that complement classroom learning

The University firmly believes that this initiative will significantly enrich the learning journey of Internal Auditing students by giving them a deeper understanding of the profession beyond lecture rooms.

Special appreciation is extended to Mrs Soga Oyama, Acting Director of the Engagement Office, whose leadership, coordination, and facilitation ensured the success of this important milestone event. Her efforts played a central role in bringing together key stakeholders, students, and industry partners for this remarkable occasion.

Further information about student membership or upcoming activities under this partnership, will be communicated in due course. For enquiries regarding student membership please contact Mr Deroul Chauke.

# SEEDS OF CHANGE: COEGA – MANDELA UNIVERSITY FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUE

Shared challenges and opportunities for building a more sustainable and nourished future were discussed at the recent Seeds of Change: Food Systems Dialogue.



The event provided a collaborative space for learning, exchange, and strategic reflection on how to strengthen local food systems and community resilience in Nelson Mandela Bay.

The programme featured two panel discussions:

- Addressing the challenges of food security – understanding the root causes, which explored the intersections of climate, policy, and grassroots realities affecting food security.
- Pathways to a food-secure future – innovations, collaboration, and sustainable solutions, highlighting youth-led initiatives, agricultural innovation, and community-driven responses.

Speakers included representatives from the Department of Agriculture, local community forums, the University, and Coega Development Corporation, among others.

The event built on World Food Day 2025, aligning with the University's Hubs of Convergence approach and Coega's 2025–2030 Corporate Social Investment strategy, which both prioritise sustainable food systems.

The dialogue proved to be another demonstration of the University's commitment to engaged scholarship and partnerships that drive meaningful change in our communities - with our communities.

# THE FIELDMORE MAPETO ENGAGEMENT SCHOOL



On 19 November 2025, the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) Engagement Office, in collaboration with the Mapeto Family and Amandla, introduced the Fieldmore Mapeto Engagement School. This initiative was established to honour the legacy of the late Fieldmore Mapeto, whose lifelong commitment to education, grassroots mobilisation, and social justice strongly aligns with NMU's mission of being a dynamic African university dedicated to serving society. Through this initiative, NMU aims to carry forward his values by developing an annual programme focused on active citizenship, community-based learning, intergenerational dialogue, and inclusive development.

The purpose of the event was to introduce the Engagement School as a flagship programme of the NMU Engagement Office and to strengthen partnerships between the university, civil society, and local communities. The event highlighted the school's vision, objectives, and future programming, while also providing a platform to honour the memory and influence of Fieldmore Mapeto. By bringing together the Mapeto Family, Amandla, and university stakeholders, the programme emphasised the co-creation of engaged scholarship grounded in community experience and academic knowledge.



Ncumisa Langa the daughter of Fieldmore shared a heartfelt tribute, remembering her father as a devoted family man who deeply valued education and believed in its power to transform lives. She reflected on his passion for empowering young people and his lifelong dedication to supporting communities through teaching, activism, and compassionate leadership. Zwelinzima Vavi from the trade union delivered a powerful and historically grounded reflection on Fieldmore Mapeto's political and ideological contributions. He described Fieldmore as a fighter, teacher, commissar, revolutionary, and one of the finest working-class intellectuals produced by the liberation movement. Lastly Oyama Soga from the engagement office mentioned that the launch of the Fieldmore Mapeto Engagement School is expected to build long-term partnerships between NMU, the Mapeto Family, Amandla, and various civil society actors. It aims to strengthen the visibility of commu-

nity-engaged scholarship within the university and encourage stakeholders to support future programmes and collaborative initiatives. By establishing this school, NMU has created a platform that will inspire students, scholars, activists, and communities to engage meaningfully in social justice work, grassroots organising, and community-based learning

The launch event represented more than the introduction of a new programme; it marked the beginning of a movement grounded in the values and legacy of Fieldmore Mapeto. Through this initiative, NMU seeks to bridge academic knowledge with grassroots experience, reaffirming its commitment to active citizenship, inclusive development, and social justice. The Fieldmore Mapeto Engagement School stands as a testament to his lifelong contributions and will serve as a living platform for nurturing a new generation of engaged and socially conscious leaders.

# PLANNING SESSION WITH ZWIDE DEVELOPMENT FORUM: CAPACITY STRENGTHENING & ACTION PLANNING



On 20 November 2025 the Engagement Office (EO), through its Community Engagement Practitioner, Mongameli “Monga” Peter, hosted a strategic planning session with the partner NPO, Zwide Development Forum (ZDF) at Missionvale Campus. The session focused on identifying gaps and areas for improvement within ZDF’s institutional and organisational capacity. This process aimed to better position the organisation to achieve its objectives and deliver on its projects aligned with its four strategic pillars going into 2026 and beyond.

The session concluded with the development of a clear action implementation plan, outlining specific activities, designated responsibilities within the partnership, and defined timeframes. ZDF also used the opportunity to address several pressing organisational matters requiring resolution.

Members of ZDF expressed their appreciation to their mentor, Mr Mongameli Peter, for his guidance and for ensuring that the session provided meaningful reflection and direction on how the organisation should systematically address key issues.

# ZWIDE DEVELOPMENT FORUM OFFICE OPENING AND GBV COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION



The Engagement Office (EO), together with the Zwide Development Forum (ZDF), successfully hosted the official opening of the new ZDF office at Zamukukhanya Primary School on 21 November 2025. The event began with a formal handover of the office keys, followed by the symbolic ribbon cutting to mark the opening of the facility. This milestone strengthens ZDF's ability to serve the community and enhances collaboration between the organisation, local stakeholders, and Nelson Mandela University.

The second session of the event focused on a community-centred conversation on Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Parents, community members, and university representatives openly discussed concerns affecting students at Nelson Mandela University and within the broader Zwide community. Participants reflected on the root causes of GBV, with several highlighting generational patterns where children grew up witnessing domestic violence that was normalised due to silence and lack of education around such behaviours.

Personal testimonies were shared, and the dialogue created a safe space for honest reflection. The session concluded with practical suggestions for addressing GBV at community and university levels. Recommendations included strengthening awareness programmes, improving support systems for victims, enhancing early-intervention mechanisms, and fostering continuous partnerships between Nelson Mandela University and local organisations to combat GBV.

The event reinforced a collective commitment to community development, safety, and empowerment.

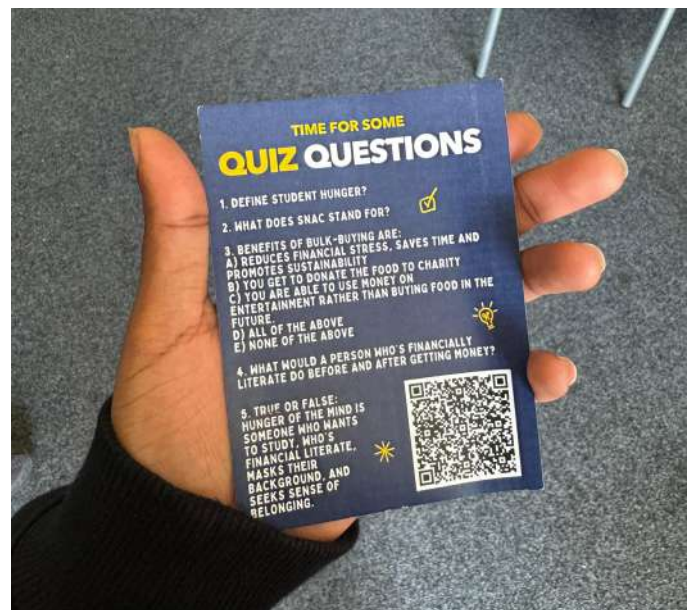


**Themba Sulo School Principal,  
Melumzi Nkata ZDF member,  
Oyama Soga Engagement Office**

# SNAC

## What is SNAC?

Many of our projects have taken on the name Student Nutrition Advocacy and Communication (SNAC). SNAC was an initiative started in 2020 by a group of students alarmed at the rising hunger amongst their peers. One of these students became part of the Student Hunger Subgroup, formed under the Mandela University Food Systems and located in the Department of Social Development Professions, linking our efforts with the original initiative. By using the name they developed we honour the work they did and our commitment to build on it going forward. And as our work has taken shape, our group itself has become known as SNAC, replacing the original Student Hunger Subgroup name.





In 2025, the work of SNAC – particularly the project work funded by the UCDG - continued to grow, both in Mandela University and beyond.

The second semester saw Social Work students refine and facilitate peer-led SNAC Sessions, drawing on last year’s feedback to make conversations more relevant and grounded in everyday student realities. These sessions—focused on financial consciousness, budgeting and bulk-buying—were rolled-out across eight residences, with discussions underway to extend them to off-campus student housing in 2026.

The gardens project also gained significant traction. Working with multiple departments and student groups, a practical planning visit to George Campus helped students visualise the possibilities of a sustainable campus-wide food system, while infrastructure procurement began for North and South Campus gardens. Despite social and administrative challenges, the gardens remain a tangible expression of community care and long-term resilience.

Awareness work expanded across platforms and disciplines. SNAC’s Instagram—now student-managed—reached new audiences,

boosted further through a collaborative giveaway with student-run business BC House. Dietetics and Graphic Design students continued to develop curriculum-linked campaigns, while Season 2 of the SNAC podcast (set to be launched in early 2026) kept conversations about food security accessible and student-led. SNAC also worked with Orientation to ensure that in 2026, first-years learn about the work of SNAC from the outset.

A highlight of 2025 was SNAC’s invitation to present at the University of Johannesburg’s “Nutrition Education: Sustainability Through Shared Knowledge & Realities” seminar, hosted in partnership with Lucky Star (Pty) Ltd. The invitation followed an online SNAC-led dialogue earlier in the year, which brought together representatives from ten South African universities to exchange strategies and explore collective responses to student hunger (view the report [here](#)).

We also presented SNAC’s work at the recent Mangosuthu University of Technology’s Scholarship of Engagement Conference, further signalling how the initiative is gaining recognition across universities for demonstrating what student-centred, sustainable and humanising responses to student hunger can look like.



# ADDENDUM

## THE YOUTH QUAKE 2025

The Youth Quake Tour 2025, now in its 12th year of empowering high-school learners from rural and disadvantaged communities, successfully completed Phase 1 from 30 June to 5 July with support from W&RSETA. Reaching more than 2,700 learners across seven Winter School Centres in the Amathole, Sarah Baartman, and Alfred Nzo districts, the Tour delivered an educational stage-play, career guidance sessions, health and wellness talks, application support, and sector presentations from partners such as FoodBev SETA, TETA, Lilitha Nursing College, AMTC, and STEM in Action. University student representatives from UCT, Nelson Mandela University, Fort Hare, WSU, UWC and others shared insights into campus life and study pathways, while partners like Mister Bread, Gradesmatch, and Clicks supported learners through stationery donations, free application services, and a new Sanitary Towel Drive. Building on this impactful outreach, Youth Quake is preparing to extend the Tour to Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo, continuing its mission to reduce career inequality and expand opportunities for young people across South Africa.



## NATIONAL INAUGURAL STUDENT INDABA ON MASCULINITIES – 10 & 11 OCTOBER 2025



The Transformation Office of Nelson Mandela University, in collaboration with the South African Union of Students (SAUS), Higher Health, the National Association for Student Development Professionals (NASDEV), hosted the National Inaugural Student Indaba on Masculinities, where students, scholars, practitioners and civil society representatives gathered to

interrogate and reimagine masculinities within the higher education sector.

The three commissions convened on day two of the Indaba resolved to:

1. Create deeper programmatic and behavioural change interventions on GBVF, Mental health and Men's programmes that promote positive masculinities across all institutions.
2. Convene an annual Student Indaba on masculinities in the sector on a rotational basis.
3. Higher Health to provide an accessible online repository to the sector of resources related to positive masculinities.
4. Develop a clear research agenda related to GBVF, masculine identities and perceptions, masculinity and mental health.
5. Closer collaborative projects between the SRC and other relevant institutional and external stakeholders.
6. Train peer facilitators to conduct positive masculinity programmes in the residence spaces.
7. Consult and adopt the anti-GBVF charter across the sector with recommitment by University Councils, USAf, Higher Health, SAUS, NASDEV, SASSAAP and all SRCs.
8. Conduct community engagement projects focussing on GBVF, positive masculinities and men's mental health.
9. Ensure gender inclusivity through advancing the 5 gender mainstreaming principles:
  - a) Gender-sensitive language.
  - b) Gender-specific data collection and analysis.

c) Equal access to and utilisation of services.

d) Women and men are equally involved in decision making.

e) Equal treatment is integrated into steering processes.

## SCIENCE AND SOCIETY: INNOVENTON

### Youth Career Summit Exhibition in Kariega at the Nelson Mandela Bay Science & Technology Centre (NMBSTC)

Nelson Mandela Bay Science & Technology Centre (NMBSTC) hosted the 2025 Youth Career Summit Exhibition in Kariega (ex-Uitenhage) on 17-18 September 2025. The theme of the summit was "Bridging the skills gap – building the workforce of the future". The summit aims to bring together learners, youth, TVET colleges and industry to address one of South Africa's most pressing challenges, the skills shortage. The Summit provided an interactive platform for learners and youth to explore career opportunities, understand industry demands and to gain the skills needed for future employability and entrepreneurship.



Youth and learners who were interested in science and engineering-based careers were encouraged to engage with representatives from industry and academia to consider future career options. InnoVenton was represented by Dr Melissa Gouws who facilitated a session with learners about opportunities around formulation science and the chemical industry. This was the first time some of them had heard about technological development, what support services are available and what training support can be provided by InnoVenton to SME's.

Topics covered included skills development training in the form of interactive discussions and presentations. Academic pathways, career guidance and careers in the motor industry were on offer to consider. Some institutions set up exhibition stalls to enable more interactions with the learners and their teachers. These included but were not limited to the PE TVET,

CHIETA, InnoVenton, Volkswagen, Eskom, the Retail Business SETA and Transnet. The three objectives of the Career Summit were to:

- a) Empower learners and youth with practical knowledge and experience to make informed career decisions.
- b) Provide a platform for knowledge sharing where learners and youth interact with industry and training institutions.
- c) Highlight opportunities in trades, TVET programmes, and other skills development pathways — particularly for Grade 9 learners making critical subject and career choices.

Some local Entrepreneurs who started their own businesses in the catering and clothing sectors were there to inspire learners to create their own opportunities with the talent and enthusiasm they have.



# Change the World

Engagement Office

Room 0022, North Campus  
J-Block, Building 226  
University Way, Summerstrand  
Gqeberha, 6019

T: +27 (0)41 504 3236

E: [Engagementoffice@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Engagementoffice@mandela.ac.za)

W: <https://engagementoffice.mandela.ac.za>



[mandela.ac.za](https://mandela.ac.za)