

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

REPORT: NELSON MANDELA WEEK

15-18 JULY 2024

Community (Come - unite):
In Love, Peace, Gratitude and Kindness



The 2024 Mandela Day activities took place over a period of three days: the 15th, 17th, and 18th July. The programme, led by Nelson Mandela University was conducted in collaboration with Zwide Development Forum (ZDF), Community Chest, and the KwaZakhele Police.

On the first day, 15th of July, time at Dora Nginza Hospital Paediatric Ward (Dream room) was spent on painting, motivational messages, playing games, and handing out party packs. The intention was to be present with the children and bring them throughout the event. The activities began with an icebreaker, where each child received a balloon. The children were asked to pop the balloons and read the note inside, which led to them providing interesting answers and questions. They were also asked to explain the meaning of the following words: Love; Care; Kind; and Joy. This was followed by art expression, where the children engaged in various art forms, and party packs were distributed to all children.

The second day, 17th of July, at Ekuphumleni Elderly Home, the activities mainly focused on entertainment (singing and games), words of encouragement, and yard cleaning. The staff at the elderly home expressed their gratitude for the visit. Speeches from representatives of the Engagement Office (EO), South African Police Services (SAPS), Zwide Development Forum (ZDF), Transformation Office and Nurses were delivered and well received.

On the third and final day, 18th July, activities at Zamukukhanya Primary School included school yard cleaning. Yard Cleaning and gardening were also done at the house of Mama Tancu, an elderly community member. Nelson Mandela University's Department of Pharmacy undertook a significant initiative to provide pharmaceutical services to the community of Zwide. Their aim was to enhance the health and well-being of the local population by offering essential health screenings and pharmaceutical consultations. The Faculty of Law provided essential legal assistance, while the Department of Social Work held a Substance Abuse Prevention Workshop. Dietetics students engaged with community members on the importance of nutrition and healthy eating habits. The Faculty of Education conducted a reading workshop, spearheaded by the literacy team led by Dr. Eileen Sheckle and Mrs. Nozuko Rhayi. Students from Nelson Mandela University conducted an informative workshop on the advantages of goat farming, emphasising its viability in drought-prone regions. Members of the Zwide community benefited from the dedicated support of the staff from the Nelson Mandela University's Social Work Department who conducted Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) Workshop.

There was well-rounded appreciation, from all beneficiaries of the programme and those who were part of the partnership, highlighting the power of equalising partnerships and the strength of diversity. This diversity was further revealed by how the different units from Nelson Mandela University came together to support community members from their respective areas of expertise. The celebration of Ms. Matyu's 76th birthday was a memorable and joyous event held at Zamukukhanya Primary School. Sharing the same birthday as the esteemed Nelson Mandela, Ms. Matyu's special day was filled with warmth, community spirit, and cultural pride.

The report underscores the power of equalising partnerships and the strength of diversity, as shown by the collaboration between different units of Nelson Mandela University, Community Chest, ZDF, and the community members of Zwide.

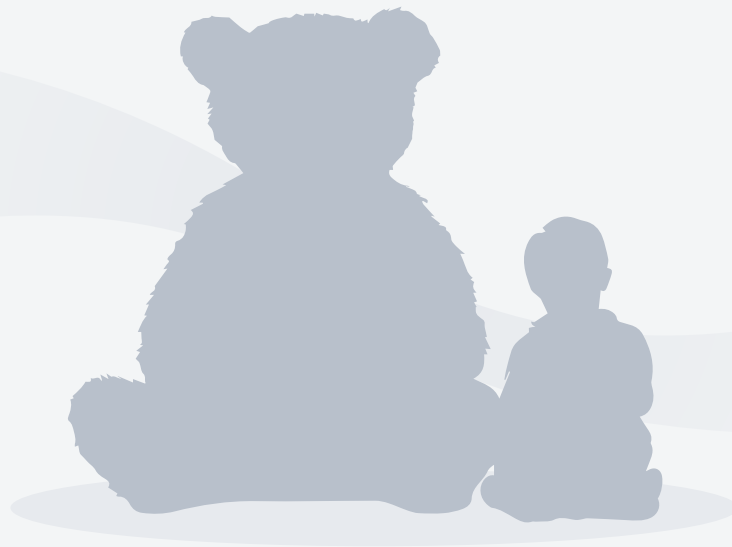
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1. DAY ONE: 15th JULY

Day one began at the Dora Nginza Hospital Paediatric Ward's Dream Room, with a total number of fourteen kids present. Mrs. Oyama Soga welcomed all participants to this event. She thanked everyone for coming and asked that each participant to introduce themselves and state where they were coming from. The attendees represented the departments from Nelson Mandela University: Engagement Office; Communications and Marketing; Graphic Design; Engineering; Dietetics; Medical School; Visual Art and the Science Centre. The stakeholders present were from the Zwide Development Forum and the Public Servants from the KwaZakhele Police Station. Mrs. Oyama Soga also extended her gratitude to all the departments, particularly the Department of Dietetics, for providing the party packs for the kids. Mr. Zongezile Klaas gave the opening Prayer and handed over to Mr. Wensley Jackson, who was program director for the day.



1.1 Introducing Mr. Snuggles the teddy bear

Mr. Wensley Jackson introduced Mr. Snuggles, a friendly, fluffy teddy bear who is full of love to the kids. Mr. Wensley Jackson explained that the intention was to be present with the kids and make them happy for the duration of the event. Mr. Wensley Jackson received a brand-new nickname, "Mr. Toddler," from the kids, a name he embraced throughout the activities. This was followed by an icebreaker.

1.2 Icebreaker

Each child had a balloon in front of them. Mr. Wensley Jackson, a.k.a Mr. Toddler, asked the children to throw the balloons to each other. Following this, each child was asked to pop the balloon that was in front of them and read the note that fell out. It is to be noted that all kids were assisted with the popping of the balloons to avoid any accidents.



Figure 1: Dora Nginza Hospital Paediatric Ward:
Dream Room

questions which fell out

- 1 What is your name?
- 2 What do you want to be when you grow up?
Important to mention is that the kid wanted to be a Police Office. This is especially mentioned as there were members of the Police present at the event.
- 3 What is Tata's name?
- 4 What is your best friend's name?
- 5 What is your favourite sport?
- 6 How old are you?
- 7 What is your favourite animal?
- 8 What is your favourite colour?

All the kids were animated and gave very interesting answers to the questions. Mr. Toddler had broken the ice, and all the kids felt safe and free.

1.3 Connecting with the kids

The festivities continued with Mr. Wesley Jackson asking the kids to spell out the following words that he had in front of him: (i) Love; (ii) Care; (iii) Kind; and (iv) Joy. Wesley Jackson asked the children what their understanding of love was. The answer was "Heart" and Mr. Wesley Jackson explained the importance of showing love to mothers, fathers, nurses, doctors, security etc.

The next question was about the word care, Mr. Wesley Jackson asked the kids to share how one shows care, and the kids said through "Respect" Mr. Toddler gave examples of how one shows care, for example, knowing a person's name. Mr. Wesley Jackson also explained how nurses care for the kids. Greeting the kids and interacting with them each day with the utmost love and care.

Kind, Mr. Wesley Jackson asked whether the children were kind to the doctors, and further explained that when the doctor gave an injection and it hurts, the doctor does it out of love. By giving the injection even though the kids perceived it as painful, the doctors are only doing it to help them get well.

The word Joy was accompanied by real joy, where all participants and the children engaged in a joyful moment through song and dance. The song:

"I am Mulamula" x2

**"We are the best;
we beat the rest"**

"Too strong"

"Ooh Aah"

The singing and the dancing brought out the inner child in each participant in the room. This activity was followed by plenty of laughter, hip swaying and dance. Everyone was joyful.

The kids with the adults in the room participated in various forms of arts such as painting, drawing, play dough. Following these activities, the party packs were handed over to all the kids. The kids were led back to their ward rooms.



Figure 2: Dora Nginza Hospital Paediatric Ward:
Dream Room





Figure 3: Kids arts expressions



Figure 4: Participants from Nelson Mandela University and the kids

2. DAY TWO: 17th JULY

Day two started at the Ekuphumleni Elderly Home in Zwide. The attendees for the second day, were from EO and Transformation Office, there were also stakeholders from the ZDF and the Police from KwaZakhele police station. The team from Nelson Mandela University and staff at Ekuphumleni gathered in the Ekuphumleni Elderly Home boardroom and Mrs. Oyama Soga did a briefing of the activities that were going to take place on the day.

Ekuphumleni is a home for the elderly, with both female and male residents. The residents stay in separate houses, with males on the one side of the facility and the females on the other side of the premises but at one facility. However, all residents do come together when there are some activities that are taking place- like our visit. The Staff from the elderly home expressed their gratitude for the visit. The taking of photographs was not allowed inside the rooms of the premises, however, the elderly residents could take photographs outside.

All the elderly were asked to come out of their rooms and to sit outside. Those who were in the wheelchairs were assisted in getting outside, and everyone gathered in a circle. Ms. Ntombovuyo Linda greeted all the elderly and explained the purpose of the team's visit. She shared that various activities were planned for the week in honour of Tata Mandela, and this day was chosen to spend with the elderly here at Ekuphumleni.

The elderly were excited and looking forward to the day. They all indicated that they appreciated the visit and were really looking forward to it. Mr. Mawethu Matyu from the ZDF also gave an introduction and explained the purpose of the visit. The team began having one-on-one conversations with the elderly. Some who were still strong played netball while others sat in their wheelchairs. The team started to have some one-on-one conversations with the elderly. They also did some light exercises, and it seemed they enjoyed all the activities. Below we share some of the elders.



2.1 Getting to know the elderly

The residents are elderly, generally aged sixty and above, with the current total number of residents at sixty. It was mentioned that some residents came to the facility because they are old and have nowhere else to go. Specifically, some residents came to reside at Ekuphumleni Elderly Home because they were left in the care of male children who might not be able to provide full care. On the other hand, some ended up at the elderly home because they do not have children to care for them. Some are brought by social workers who assess their situations and determine that it would be better for them to be in an elderly home.

We also learned that, in some instances, the community makes recommendations for elders to be admitted to Ekuphumleni Elderly Home. This way, the entire community recognises the elderly and ensures they have a shelter and requisite care for all frail individuals.



2.2 Interactive sharing session with the elderly

Mr. Zongezile Klaas from the EO offered words of encouragement to the elderly and to everyone present. He emphasised the importance of remembering who you are and where you come from. Mr. Zongezile Klaas mentioned that Nelson Mandela represents the essence of freedom in South Africa. He explained that we are all here to celebrate each other and the spirit of Nelson Mandela Day. He noted that the team is visiting as a gesture of gratitude for giving birth to us, fighting for us, ensuring our freedom, and providing us with education as a reflection of ubuntu. He shared a verse from John Chapter 16, preaching that love is action, which is why we are here today. Love is not just spoken about but it is also demonstrated through actions. It was clear that the elderly needed to hear this message.

Figures 5 & 6: Mama and Tata residing at the Ekuphumleni Elderly Home



Another speech was given by SGT Xola from SAPS, who explained the unit she is part of at SAPS. She detailed the process for reporting gender-based violence (GBV) and spoke extensively about domestic violence, specifically outlining the options available to victims. The elderly were grateful for this information. Another SAPS representative, CST Boltina, emphasised how encouraging it is to see elders being well cared for. She highlighted the vital role of nurses in looking after the elderly and encouraged everyone present to “Break the Silence,” noting that there are nurses and police available to help. She urged individuals not to remain silent when suffering but to speak out. She concluded by saying, “We are here because we love you,” with love being the recurring theme in her speech.

A representative from ZDF, Ms. Zenani Klaasen, explained that the elderly and the children are important in society. She mentioned that we should all strive to stay well together. Another representative from the ZDF noted that nurses play a significant role in caring for the elderly. There are unfortunate realities affecting the elderly, and it is crucial that they do not remain silent but instead raise any challenges they face. She also hinted that the theme of the day is gratitude and love. Additionally, Mr. Mlondi Bhangu from the Transformation Office gave a speech emphasising that our primary focus is to ensure people’s happiness. He reiterated that we should all show love to one another, not just on one specific day of the year, but as a continuous practise and virtue for everyone.

One of the nurses from Ekuphumleni Elderly Home mentioned that she is grateful for the visit. She explained how they live and support the elderly, highlighting that they give the elderly independence and allow them to continue doing things they used to at their homes. The elderly’s lives should not be disrupted much by relocating to the Elderly Home. She indicated that these are our parents and they should be taken good care of. She asked one of the elderly residents to stand and present an entertainment item to demonstrate that meaning of life still exists and that even at older age, there are many things one can still do and many lessons can be drawn by the younger generations. One female resident gladly volunteered to sing and perform “When Moses passed the water, the sea got away. Children are you ready?” The remembrance of the lyrics and her co-operative behaviour touched everyone present, uniting various generations in reflection of the love and care that Tata Mandela exemplified. After all the speeches and the opportunity for all stakeholders’ representatives to speak, or participate in the sharing, the next activity was to clean the yard.



2.3 Cleaning of the yard

The facility is meticulously maintained, with the grass neatly cut, providing a peaceful environment for the elderly to relax. The team was equipped with gloves and black plastic bags to facilitate the cleanup process. Each member diligently engaged in various tasks: some focused on removing weeds using spades and rakes, while others concentrated on collecting broken glass scattered around the yard. Additionally, papers and other litter were picked up to ensure a thorough cleanup. As a result of these coordinated efforts, the yard was left in pristine and sparkling condition.



Figures 8: Nelson Mandela University Staff

2.4 Closing of session

After the clean-up, the team of all stakeholders thanked the home for the initiative and care provided to the elderly, as well as for the opportunity to visit the home. As a team, there was shared excitement about the opportunity, considering it a day well spent, and they were appreciative of what others are doing every day to ensure that the elderly have shelter and requisite care. Shelter, food, safety, and security, among many other needs, are

fundamental rights that the elderly should also be afforded. Facilities like Ekuphumleni Elderly Home, that the elderly themselves appreciate, as well as community and other institutions within the community (like SAPS, ZDF) are special gifts and blessings. This is a place where safety and comfort help sustain a quality of life.

All stakeholders were reminded and/or taught of the need to give our time to others, and the session reinforced the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships to build a better society. The Home is an important stakeholder where individual disciplines like social work, health, and psychology can engage in collaboration beyond Mandela Day.

Mandela Day should be viewed as a day for planting seeds, so that activities like those at this home occur not just once a year but become a regular part of university staff and students' guide to engagement, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. These visits open opportunities for contacts and provide insights into community needs, which can further be examined through research with the aim of providing recommendations.



Figures 9: Elders from Ekuphumleni



3. DAY THREE: 18th JULY

On the third and final day, many people from different faculties and departments (students and staff, both academic and PASS) arrived at Zamukukhanya Primary School on time. They were directed to park their cars at the back of the school grounds for safety, as safety remains a major issue in our communities. To live in peace and fully enjoy freedom, there is a need for guaranteed safety and security for all. The Nelson Mandela University team was led by Dr. Damons, the Director of the EO.

The day started with a devotion in the school corridors, with all stakeholders, including learners, joining in. Representatives from Nelson Mandela University and other stakeholders were given an opportunity to come forward and to say a few words about Mandela Day and to offer some words of encouragement to the learners. Rev. Themba Mahuwa was invited to the front to deliver the word of God. He started by singing "Nelson Mandela akekho fanaliyena.". He read the scriptures from John 14 vs 25-27 and emphasised that we should remember that Mandela as a peacemaker and strive to be the same in our communities.

He explained that Tata Mandela spent 27 years in Robben Island prison and left a legacy of peace. We should trust Jesus Christ for the future, he said noting that while people may change, Christ does not. In the name and spirit of Mandela, we will have peace. He concluded his session with a prayer. Dr. Damons thanked Rev. Themba Mahuwa and reiterated the call for peace, urging everyone to serve with peace.

Zamukukhanya's Principal was given the opportunity to greet and welcome all the visitors to the school. He thanked everyone in attendance on behalf of the school's governing body (SGB), parents and the kids. The principal expressed his appreciation to the crowd. Ms. Sharon from the Nelson Mandela University's Senior Director of Missionvale Campus, Bird Street Campus and Second Avenue gave a message of support, emphasising that we are here to serve, to be in-service of the community. She thanked everyone for showing up for Mandela Day.

Ms. Sharon Masiza explained that, together with our stakeholders we are trying to understand what it is to be in-service of the community. She went on to say that love is the common denominator for today. Representatives from Port Elizabeth (PE) Community Chest, ward Councillor, ZDF, and an international student were given opportunities to share a message of support to Mandela Day. Zamukukhanya Primary School choir was given the opportunity to showcase their talent. They sang two songs, and all everyone joined in singing and dancing with the learners, showing togetherness and celebrating the legacy of Tata Mandela.

3.1 Come-Unte in the activities of the day

3.1.1 Yard Cleaning and gardening

Mr. Zongezile Klaas led the group that was going to clean at the house of Mama Tancu, an elderly community member at number 40 Makhuphula Street, Zwide. The yard was littered and overgrown with long grass, which posed a health risk due to the potential for mosquitoes breeding and other crawling creatures coming closer to the house. The yard was left very clean. and overhanging trees pruned.

The Zamukhanya school garden was uplifted through weeding and watering of the plants. It is crucial for the school to continue maintaining this garden, as it provides some of the vegetables used to prepare meals for the learners. The learners receive food at school, and some of the food they cook has ingredients coming from this garden. The school yard was also cleaned, and new flowers were planted. A well-kept garden brings peace of mind and encourages admiration of environment in which we must live in harmony.

The visit helped the stakeholders to see the conditions under which some children are learning. Some classrooms need repairs, as ceilings are falling off, some buildings need re-painting, chalkboards need replacement, and windows are in need of repair. It is encouraged for all stakeholders to continue supporting this school even after the Mandela Day because the situation at this school is not very pleasing.



Figure 10: Yard cleaning by Nelson Mandela University Students



Figure 11: School Garden uplifting by Nelson Mandela University Staff





3.2 Pharmaceutical services

Nelson Mandela University's Department of Pharmacy undertook a significant initiative to provide pharmaceutical services to the community of Zwide. They aimed to enhance the health and well-being of the local population by providing essential health screenings and pharmaceutical consultations. The services provided during this initiative included blood pressure checks, blood sugar tests, and cholesterol tests. These screenings are crucial for the early detection and management of conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and hyperlipidemia, which are prevalent among the elderly population.

In addition to these health screenings, the department also provided valuable pharmaceutical advice to community members. This aspect of the service was particularly focused on educating people about the proper use of their existing medications. The pharmacists on-site took the time to explain how to take medications correctly, the importance of adherence to prescribed regimens, and the potential side effects and interactions of various drugs. This kind of pharmaceutical counseling is essential for optimising therapeutic outcomes and ensuring patient safety, particularly in populations with a high prevalence of chronic diseases. It is important to note that the Department of Pharmacy did not distribute any medications during this Mandela Day event. Instead, the primary goal was to offer expert advice and share knowledge about different medications. This approach helps empower patients to manage their health more effectively and make informed decisions about their treatment options.

The initiative was particularly impactful for the elderly members of the Zwide community. Elderly patients often have multiple comorbidities and are typically on complex medication, making them a priority group for pharmaceutical care services. By providing advice and conducting health screenings, the pharmacists helped address the specific health concerns of the elderly, improving their quality of life and potentially reducing the burden on the local healthcare system.

Overall, the Department of Pharmacy's site at Zamukukhanya Primary School exemplifies a proactive and preventive approach to healthcare. By focusing on education and early detection, the department not only supported



3.3 Mobile Law Clinic

The Nelson Mandela University's Faculty of Law was also at Zamukukhanya Primary school helping the Zwide community. They provided essential legal assistance in various domains, including civil law, labor law, and other legal matters pertinent to the community's needs. The engagement process involved several critical steps designed to ensure that community members received appropriate guidance and support.

- **Consultations and database development**

Firstly, the faculty organised consultations with the people to understand their specific legal issues. These consultations were crucial in identifying individuals who required legal assistance. Each case was documented and added to a growing database. This database served as a foundational tool for tracking the legal needs of the clients and facilitating follow-up actions.

- **Referral to legal aid**

In addition to compiling a database, the faculty also played a pivotal role in directing community members to appropriate legal aid. Recognising that access to free legal services is vital for many individuals, the faculty advised community members on where they could find such services. This often involved referrals to organisations and institutions that provide free legal assistance. The goal was to bridge the gap between the community's legal needs and the available resources, ensuring that people get the opportunity to receive the help they required.

- **Means testing for free legal services**

A key component of the consultation process was the implementation of means tests. These tests were done to assess the financial eligibility of individuals seeking free legal services. By conducting means tests on-site, the faculty could determine whether the person qualified for free assistance. This step was crucial in ensuring that the help is given to those most in need.

- **Household spending information**

Moreover, the Faculty of Law also collected comprehensive information on household spending during the consultation process. This information provided valuable insights into the economic challenges faced by the Zwide community. By understanding household spending patterns, the faculty could better advocate for systemic changes and policy interventions that address the root causes of financial hardship.

Nelson Mandela University's Faculty of Law exemplifies a proactive approach to community legal support. By consulting with community members, maintaining a detailed database, conducting means tests, and collecting household spending data, the faculty ensured a thorough understanding of the community's legal and financial needs. This initiative not only provided immediate assistance but also laid the groundwork for future support and advocacy.





3.4 Substance Abuse Prevention Workshop

Nelson Mandela University's Department of Social Work was also on site delivering an engaging workshop focused on substance abuse. The aim of this workshop was to co-generate and share knowledge and skills development in demand and harm reduction strategies for substance use/abuse amongst primary school learners at the school, based on the Keep it REAL methodology. There was a full classroom of eager learners, showing the high level of interest and importance of the subject matter. The workshop commenced with an interactive session where learners were asked to identify various types of drugs they were familiar with. Their ability to accurately name most of the drugs indicated a significant level of awareness and understanding about substance abuse issues among the learners.

The facilitators introduced an icebreaker game to energise the learners and foster teamwork. In this activity, learners were required to form groups of three. The leader of this game was one of the social work students from Nelson Mandela University. He would call out different prompts, such as "elephant," "palm tree," and "toaster." For each prompt, the groups had to collaboratively create the shape of the named object. When the leader called out "elephant," the learners creatively assembled themselves to mimic the shape of an elephant. For "palm tree," they adjusted their formation to represent a tree, and for "toaster," the person in the middle of the group would jump, simulating a piece of toast popping up. This exercise not only provided a fun start to the workshop but also encouraged physical movement and cooperation among the learners.

Following the game, the workshop continued with an educational segment featuring a ten-minute film on the consequences and realities of drug abuse. The film served as a powerful visual aid to deepen the learners' understanding of the topic. After viewing the film, the facilitators engaged the learners in a discussion, asking them pertinent questions about what actions they should take if someone offered them drugs. This interactive questioning session was designed to reinforce the critical thinking and decision-making skills necessary to resist peer pressure and make healthy choices.

Throughout the workshop, the learners displayed a high level of engagement and enthusiasm. Their active participation in discussions and activities highlighted their interest in the topic and their readiness to learn and adopt preventive measures against substance abuse. The workshop not only provided valuable information but also created a supportive and interactive environment where learners felt comfortable expressing their thoughts and questions.

The substance abuse workshop organised by the Nelson Mandela University's Department of Social Work was a resounding success. The combination of educational content, interactive games, and visual aids effectively captured the learners' attention and fostered a comprehensive understanding of substance abuse. The positive response from the learners demonstrates the effectiveness of such workshops in educating young individuals about the dangers of drug abuse and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices.





3.5 Reflections on the prevention of substance abuse by students from the Department of Social Work workshop



The program focused on the prevention of substance abuse among school learners. It was based on two preventative aspects which are demand reduction and harm reduction. These aspects were implemented in a way that allowed the learners to interact, share their views, and allow them to engage and think deeply about the topic. This was an effective way to share the program with the learners because it was engaging and fun.

The learners knew what drugs are and the different types of drugs. Due to that, they engaged with the video very well and were able to summarize it very well. They understood what the purpose of the video was. When it came to answering the questions, they gave good and well-thought-out answers. What was helpful in engaging more with the learners was making the questions personal which allowed them to share their own opinions on substance abuse and not only focus on the video but real life as well. Some learners understood English very well and could articulate their opinions very well which is something that I did not expect. What was also helpful was, after asking the questions that were based on the video, probing more allowed them to engage their thinking.

Learners indicated very positive signs to have the highest level of discernment as they could easily identify bad characters in the video and were able to provide additional assumptions such as that Jimmy and Gerry were likely jealous of Timmy for been a good football player therefore, they tried to sell him drugs to sabotage his chances and become like them. They identified that if Timmy decided to sell the stolen Jewellery from his parents and brought those drugs, he was going to adopt this criminal behaviour once he got addicted and eventually lose his potential as the soccer player and become a homeless person. They have a brilliant understanding and ability to summarize their observation well this entails that they are aware of the drug issues existing even within their surrounding areas. My recommendations are for the government to offer extra talents activities within their learning such as arts, sports, debates etc. to develop their young and brilliant minds to focus more into things that will promote growth for them to see a need to have more fun in passion and talents.



Our programme was designed and planned to accommodate the available time. It was simple and straightforward, with a clear focus. We were able to engage with learners by guiding them through questions and providing explanations in IsiXhosa when needed. The programme focused on substance abuse, and we encouraged learners to share their knowledge on this topic and the resources and skills they have. The learners were able to engage freely on all topics, demonstrating that they are knowledgeable about substance abuse and the factors that contribute to it, such as peer pressure, bullying, and the negative influence of trying to fit in. This was easy for them to identify because it was reflected in the movie, which is something they are familiar with. The challenge was that they didn't know much about ways to deal with bullying and peer pressure, which was evident from the silences when being probed further about what they would do if they found themselves in a similar situation. To them, watching the video became an enlightenment, as they were now able to extract concrete actions, they could take based on what Timmy and Spider-Man were discussing.

I feel that the outcomes of our programme were partly reached, but there is still a lot of work to be done in informing learners about the strategies they can use to avoid peer pressure and bullying. This also suggests that bullying and peer influences remain one of the most enduring and difficult challenges we face today. Observing the interactions in class, I noticed that some students were laughing and making side comments, which reinforced the need for continued education on this topic. Unfortunately, such behaviours often lead to the challenges we face today, including substance abuse among young people.



On Mandela Day, we collaborated on a program at Zamokuhle Primary School in Zwide, which was a rewarding experience. However, the poor condition of the school was disheartening, making it difficult for children to learn. Our Social Development Professions Department focused on drug education, specifically demand reduction, as part of the national framework to reduce drug use. We engaged with grade 6 and 7 learners, who actively participated in our interactive program, which included games, education, short anime film, and learning activities. Despite the challenges we faced, including the school break interrupting our program, we believe that the education we provided had a significant impact on the learners' lives. It would have been helpful to know about the break arrangements beforehand to plan accordingly.





3.6 Food insecurity and mental health

Dietetics students from Nelson Mandela University were on site, and engaging with community members and learners from Zamukhanya Primary School about the importance of nutrition and healthy eating habits. The students led informative discussions focusing on foods that are beneficial for the body, highlighting essential nutrients required for optimal health. They provided practical advice on selecting a balanced diet, emphasising the consumption of whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, and vegetables. The sessions aimed to empower participants with knowledge to make healthier food choices, thereby improving their overall well-being and preventing diet-related illnesses.

Moreover, the dietetics students emphasised the numerous advantages of planting and cultivating one's own fruits and vegetables. They detailed how home gardening can be a sustainable source of fresh produce, ensuring a steady supply of nutrient-rich foods while also promoting physical activity and environmental stewardship. By demonstrating gardening techniques and offering tips on soil preparation, planting, and maintenance, the Nelson Mandela University Dietetics students encouraged community members to take an active role in their food production.



3.7 Storytelling and reading



Figure 12: Faculty of Education
Nelson Mandela University

The Nelson Mandela University's Faculty of Education conducted a reading workshop, spearheaded by the literacy team led by Dr. Eileen Sheckle and Mrs. Nozuko Rhayi. The team dedicated an entire day to engaging with learners through storytelling and interactive reading sessions, aiming to instil a love for reading among the young learners. Their commitment extended beyond mere engagement, as they generously donated reading books to the learners, providing them with valuable resources to continue their literacy journey. The workshops began with early childhood development sessions, targeting children around the age of three, fostering an early appreciation for literature and storytelling. This resonates with Tata Mandela's statement that: "Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine; that

a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation.” Indeed, a child of an informal worker, of an informal settlement dweller, of unemployed parents can become an agent for change and providing ethical leadership to the community and world at large through education. This initiative by Faculty of Education goes a long way towards building of strong children.

Following the initial sessions, the literacy team proceeded to work with Grade 3 and 4 learners, incorporating books in both isiXhosa and English. This bilingual approach emphasised the importance of literacy in multiple languages, highlighting the value of cultural and linguistic diversity. Dr. Sheckle and Mrs. Rhayi reinforced the notion that no language holds supremacy over another, advocating for equal importance and respect for both isiXhosa and English. Through these efforts, the workshop not only enhanced the learners’ reading skills but also promoted a deeper understanding and appreciation of multilingualism, underscoring the Faculty of Education’s dedication to fostering inclusive and comprehensive literacy education.



3.8 Goat farming

Students from Nelson Mandela University conducted an informative workshop on the advantages of goat farming, emphasising its viability in drought-prone regions. The workshop highlighted goats’ resilience to arid conditions, making them a sustainable option for communities facing water scarcity. The students provided detailed explanations on the practical steps necessary for starting a goat farming venture, including selecting suitable breeds, preparing adequate housing, and ensuring proper nutrition and healthcare. Their presentation underscored the adaptability and hardiness of goats, positioning them as a practical and reliable livestock choice for enhancing agricultural productivity in challenging environments.

In addition to discussing the setup and maintenance of goat farming, the students also elaborated on the significant products derived from goats and their nutritional value. They detailed how goat milk, meat, contribute to food security and generate income for farmers. Goat milk, known for its nutritional benefits, and goat meat, valued for its lean protein, were highlighted as essential dietary components. The workshop not only provided practical knowledge but also inspired community members to consider goat farming as a viable and beneficial agricultural practice.





3.9 Gender-based violence and femicide

Members of the Zwide community benefited from the dedicated support of the staff from the Nelson Mandela University's Social Work Department. The department, renowned for its commitment to social justice and community engagement, mobilised its resources to address the diverse needs of the community. The staff members, equipped with extensive training and experience, provided comprehensive assistance to individuals. Ensuring that the community's most pressing concerns were addressed. Their involvement not only offered immediate relief but also contributed to fostering a sense of trust and collaboration between the academic institution and the local community.

A notable aspect of this initiative was the involvement of a professor from the social work department, who conducted one-on-one sessions with community members experiencing acute issues. These sessions were addressing urgent needs, offering professional guidance and support tailored to everyone's circumstances. By focusing on immediate concerns, the professor and the social work team were able to provide critical interventions that could prevent further escalation of problems. This approach underscored the department's dedication to practical, real-world applications of social work principles, highlighting the essential role of academic institutions in addressing and alleviating community challenges.



4. Birthday celebrations with **Ms. Nobuntu Matyu**



Figure 13: Ms. Nobuntu Matyu on her special day

The celebration of Ms. Nobuntu Matyu's 76th birthday was a memorable and joyous event held at Zamukukhanya Primary School Hall. Sharing the same birthday as the esteemed Nelson Mandela, Ms. Matyu's special day was filled with warmth, community spirit, and cultural pride. Residing in the community of Zwide, just a few minutes from the school, Ms. Matyu is a well-respected figure known for her kindness and generosity. The hall was adorned with beautiful decorations that set the tone for the celebration. A stunning cake, carefully crafted, served as a centerpiece, drawing admiration from all attendees. The event began with a heartfelt prayer led by Zongezile Klaas, invoking blessings and gratitude for Ms. Matyu's life and contributions to the community.

A member of the ZDF formally welcomed all the guests, emphasising Ms. Matyu's role as a beloved community member. In his speech, he highlighted Ms. Matyu's unwavering kindness and the positive impact she has had on everyone around her. This set the stage for a series of events that not only celebrated Ms. Matyu but also showcased the rich cultural heritage of the community.



Figure 14: Zamukhanyana Primary School kids entertaining on Ms. Nobuntu Matyu's special day

The school's traditional dance troupe performed a series of dances that captivated the audience. The performances were vibrant and engaging, reflecting the community's cultural heritage and the learners' dedication to preserving it. The traditional dances were a highlight of the celebration, demonstrating the community's appreciation for its roots and traditions.

Ms. Matyu received presents, a testament to the love and respect she has garnered over the years. Among the gifts were sweets, which she generously shared with the learners, embodying the spirit of giving that she is known for. Her actions throughout the celebration reflected her nurturing nature and commitment to the well-being of the younger generation.



Figure 15 & 16: Ms. Nobuntu Matyu's handing out sweets on her special day

Ms. Taffie Chizu played a crucial role in ensuring the event ran smoothly by managing the learners and maintaining order. Her efforts ensured that the children remained seated quietly, allowing the program to proceed without interruptions. This level of organisation contributed significantly to the success of the event. Mr. Wensley Jackson, who served as the Master of Ceremony, guided the proceedings with grace and enthusiasm. His management of the event ensured smooth proceedings, keeping the audience engaged and the atmosphere lively. A representative from the Community Chest delivered a speech, extending heartfelt birthday

wishes to Ms. Matyu. The speech recognised her contributions to the community and highlighted the collective admiration for her enduring spirit and generosity.

In summary the celebration of Ms. Nobuntu Matyu's 76th birthday was a remarkable event that highlighted the strong sense of community in Zwide. It was a day filled with joy, cultural pride, and heartfelt tributes to a woman who has touched many lives with her kindness. The event not only honoured Ms. Matyu but also reinforced the values of unity, generosity, and cultural appreciation within the community.

5. Conclusion

Mandela Day 2024 was filled with deep connectedness of different stakeholders, culminating to a well-organised day, providing opportunity to the community members in general and the school to draw from the expertise, time, and love of the Nelson Mandela University; and for the latter to draw lessons and encouragement in everyday work through seeing relevance and appreciation of each one's role in society. May each day, be a Mandela Day in how we engage with each other showing "Love and Peace".



**THANK YOU FOR VIEWING THE
NELSON MANDELA DAY REPORT.**

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