



## **Time Travel, Mqhekezweni Great Place**

### **Goal**

Awareness on the legacy of Nelson Mandela, grooming of a leader  
Reflecting on issues on traditional democracy and community building  
Inspire to programs for tourists at the site  
Introducing the Time Travel method

### **Facts**

The “Great Place” palace situated at Mqhekezweni is a royal Mtirara homestead to the Regent King Jongintaba Dalindyebo and known to the abaThembu community as a grooming place for the future chiefs. The place became a home to the father of democracy Ubaba Nelson as he was trained there.

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela known as the father of the nation and or the father of democracy was born in 18 July 1918 at Mveso in the Eastern Cape. He was born to the chief councilor- to the paramount chief of abaThembu and a member of the Madiba clan Nkosi Mphakanyiswa Gadla Mandela and to Nongaphi Nosekeni Mandela. He’s father met his death when Mandela was only 9 years and before his passing he had already had a wish for Nelson to be placed under the guardianship of his cousin, Chief Jongintaba.

Mandela’s mother took him from Qunu to grant his father’s wish and placed him at Mqhekezweni. He lived and shared his hut which is traditionally known as Intanga just after initiation together with his cousin Nkosi Justice Mtirara. He was then registered to an old mission school and education centre called Wesleyan and then furthered his high school studies at Healdtown Methodist Boarding School. He was the only one entrusted to go into the Chief’s hut to iron his clothes and would also be called during the elderly gatherings in order to learn and observe the African court system. He demonstrated the principles learned at Mqhekezweni during his university years at Fort Hare. He had refused to take a seat at the university’s Student Representative Council as he did not agree with the SRC election process. He’s decision of upholding principles compromised his studies and was expelled. The norm of arranged marriages within the royal homestead led to another rebellious trait of Mandela and his cousin. The Chief arranged for the two young men to get married and instead they stole two cattles from the Chief as a means of raising funds to head to Johannesburg.

The hut and housing structures built by the Chief are still standing within the Mtirara royal homestead which were part of the influence to be graded as a national heritage grade 1 site by the South African National Heritage Resources Agency. The tall gum tree situated next to the housing structures is also standing as it was used by Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo to address the community cases. Mandela would be near the tree observing proceedings of those cases and the current reigning Chief continues with the same tradition.

## **Scenario, Grooming of a leader. Preparation for an Imbizo, a community meeting in Mqhekezweni 1934**

Tomorrow is an important meeting in the community. The chief has called for an Imbizo. The elderly will come together, discuss important matters and find ways for the future. The chief will listen and take decisions following the advice from the elderly.

There are several challenges in the community: destitute persons and families, crime. There is no employment, so the young men leave for the mines. And always these arguments on keeping the traditions or modernizing. What do the elders say, the young people? This and more will be discussed in the Imbizo.

The chief is grooming new leaders, his son Justice and also a boy of 16 called Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, that came to Mqhekezweni seven years ago. Nelson and Justice listen to the stories of the elderly, learn skills and traditions. In secret they also listen to the elders when they have their imbizos and take decisions. They are learning every day how to act as a future leader in an inclusive way, the way of Ubuntu. All boys of their age have recently undergone the ulwaluku initiation ritual, the transition from boys to men.

Today is a day of preparations for the Imbizo. The place has to be cleaned, food needs to be prepared, some new jewellery made, to look good. Because it's spring, vegetables will be planted. The children play and train stick fighting, as always,

The men talk to their wives and other women for their opinion on the matters in the Imbizo. Also young people will raise their views. As usual Nelson and Justice walk around, listen, talk and of course practice stick fighting.

Everybody is involved in the future of the community. How do we address the challenges? What are the actions? Traditions/modernize? People talk and discuss. The chief will come in later to check that everything is prepared for tomorrow and of course he will listen to the voice of people. The sensitivity for Ubuntu is strong. The chief will bring his two sons, future leaders.

### **Roles**

Participants are members of the community, women and men, girls and boys.

Elderly

Chief Jongintaba Dalindeybo. Chief's wife Noengland

Nelson Mandela, Justice and Nomafu

Everybody keeps their age and sex

### **Key questions**

Democracy, community development and future leaders

- What are the challenges in the community? How to address them?
- How to engage women and men, young and old, in the development of the community?  
How to continue practicing Ubuntu?
- What do we expect of future leaders?

### **Activities**

- Making beads – *Pumeza, Gulshera*
- Face painting – *Lesego*
- Gardening, planting vegetables – *Mama, Andy*
- Stick fighting, games – *Phiko, Ebbe*
- Songs, dances, games - *Unati*
- Clean the site – *Solomzi*

### **Time plan**

14.00 Welcome, short presentation of the place, rules and roles

14.30 Initiation. Announce the imbizo.

Activities and discussions. Nelson and Justice walk around.

15.20 The chief arrives with his sons. Presentations, discussions and the chief's speech

15,50 Praise song. Story-telling. Time Travel ends

16.00 Reflection

16.30 End

25 September 2018

Nelson Mandela Museum

Bridging Ages team