



## Time Travel on Solomon Mahlangu

### Goals

- Create awareness of the life of Solomon Mahlangu and his contribution to the struggle
- Reflect on the importance of human rights, in the 70s and today
- Promote the Time Travel method

### Facts, Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu

**Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu** was born on 10 July 1956 in **Doornkoop, Middelburg** which was then known as Eastern Transvaal. He was the last born son of Martha Mahlangu's six children of three girls and three boys. His middle name **Kalushi**, given by his uncle means *"one who leads boys into manhood"*.

Solomon Mahlangu attended Mamelodi High School up to Standard 08, but his education was interrupted in 1976 by the Soweto uprisings that resulted in school closure. This fuelled him to join and pursue the struggle. In 1976 he fled to Mozambique and spent six months in a refugee camp near XaiXai. From there he was taken to an ANC training camp called "Engineering" in Angola, where he received training in sabotage, military combat, scouting and politics. After their training at Funda Camp; Solomon Mahlangu and his comrades George Lucky Mahlangu and Mondy Motlounge went to Swaziland where they crossed the border into South Africa heavily armed. They made their way to Johannesburg to assist in the student protests.

On the 13 June 1977, Solomon Mahlangu and his companions Mondy Motlounge and George Lucky Mahlangu, were accosted by police in Goch Street, Joburg. In the gun battle that followed, Lucky Mahlangu escaped, resulting in two civilian men being killed and two wounded. Solomon Mahlangu and Mondy Motlounge were incarcerated.

On the 02 March 1978, Solomon Mahlangu was found guilty on two counts of murder. Even though he didn't fire the shots, he was also charged with three counts under Terrorism Act. His response was a defiant shout of "**Amandla**". He appealed for his sentencing to the Rand Supreme Court as he pleaded not guilty. He was refused again by a different court, which led to his death sentence.

Many appeals were made for amnesty including the means to approach the then President of the Republic of South Africa. Amongst the people who were organized by the UDF and ANC to approach the government for amnesty was Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu whom was to be

accompanied by his mother to Cape Town. Surprisingly at the airport, his mother was prohibited at the entrance.

That led to his day of execution confirmed as the 06 April 1979. A day before his execution when visited by his mother, his last words to her were: "Mother don't cry, go and tell my people I love them. My blood will nourish the tree that will bear fruits of freedom. They must continue the struggle, Aluta Continua".

On the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> April, only the lawyer Priscilla Jana and the Mahlangu family were allowed to see him. The apartheid security forces delivered the message that Solomon Mahlangu would be hanged at six o'clock in the morning.

The international community especially Netherland was amongst the countries that protested against his execution including USA where former President Jimmy Carter issued a strong message against Solomom's execution but this fell on apartheid regime's deaf ears. As he ascended the gallows, he was singing revolutionary songs. Upon arrival at the rope, he refused to be cuffed before being hanged and shouted "I want to die standing attention as I am the soldier of OR Tambo".

Students protested throughout the country and his death influenced the establishment of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) by the founding President – the late Ephraim Mogale. He was buried in Attredgeville while his family and comrades were waiting for his corpse in Mamelodi.

### **Scenario, (Secret) Community meeting in Middelburg, 2 March 1978 for the support of Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu**

People in Middelburg, the place where Solomon Mahlangu was born, have gathered. Friends, relatives and students have come together to find ways to support Solomon Mahlangu. He has been charged with two counts of murder, two counts of attempted murder and several charges under the Terrorism Act. There has been a long trial started already in November last year. The arrest and trial have received national and international recognition and there have been many protests in the country. Solomon Mahlangu pleads not guilty, but does it help?

Today is the day of the decision from the court. What will be their judgement?

The people who have gathered in Middelburg are concerned and anxious. If Mahlangu is found guilty, he might even be sentenced to death. What will we do? Can we appeal? Can we engage other people in South Africa and abroad?

A messenger with the decision from the court is expected any minute. What will he say? What will be our next move?

#### **Roles**

A community group in Middelburg. Friends, relatives, students.

Everybody keeps their age and gender

Leader of the meeting, Community leader. Other leaders.

Messenger

Security spy

Swedish representative

## **Key Questions**

1. What do we do to save Solomon Mahlangu and make changes in the country? Protests, letters, violence, no violence?
2. What do we fight for? (What do we mean with human rights, equal rights, freedom and security, social cohesion? Challenges and opportunities to reach the goals.)
3. What is the legacy of Solomon Mahlangu? His life and achievements, so far.

## **Activities**

- Prepare protests to support an appeal. Five groups, 12 persons in each group: 1/Official appeal. 2/National support and demonstrations. 3/International support. 4/Local protests 5/Petitions and demonstrations – Make placards, songs, slogans, poems, petitions, prepare marches, a formal appeal and ask for national and international support.
- Celebration of the life and legacy of Solomon Mahlangu (1956-1979). Interviews. Five groups with 12 persons in each group. Each group make an illustration, the groups also write sentences, key words, poems, on the various stages and key moments of his life. 1/his childhood and teens (1956-1976). 2/ Soweto uprising (1976). 3/ Military training abroad (1976-1977). The gun fight and arrest (13 June 1977). 5/ Imprisoned and trial (Nov 1977-March 1978).
- Freedom songs, develop songs, dances (25 people).
- Games, morabaraba, cards, skipping rope...(20 people).

## **Time Plan**

- 14.00 Common song. Welcome  
Solomon Mahlangu, life and death.  
Oral history research and Time Travel.
- 14.20 Time Travel scenario, key questions and characters.  
Time Travel event, rules
- 14.40 Initiation, drum.  
Messenger, deliver the decision from the Court.  
Arguments. Calling for order.
- 14.50 Activities and discussions
- 15.30 Gathering. Song. Presentations. Common solutions.
- 15.50 Freedom song. Ceremony/ prayer.  
Ending of the Time Travel. Drums.
- 16.00 Reflections on the Time Travel and the key questions.
- 16.30 Video. End

## **Reflections afterwards**

The Time Travel, reflections.

To what extent have the dreams of 1978 been achieved/ not achieved?

Links between Oral history and the Time Travel method?

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Mpumalanga Department of Sport, Culture, Arts and Recreation, Themba Shilubane and colleagues

Gulshera Khan and Ebbe Westergren, Bridging Ages, Bridging Ages South Africa,

The Rand Supreme Court has made its judgement. I have brought the official document from the court all the way from Pretoria, as your messenger from Middleburg. Here is the judgement from the court:

“The court has found that Mr Solomon Mahlangu and Mr Mondy Motlaung have acted with a common purpose and that it does not matter who did the shooting and the killing.

Mr Solomon Mahlangu is found guilty on all counts: two counts of murder, two counts of attempted murder and three charges under the Terrorism Act. Mr Mahlangu has failed to prove any mitigating circumstances. Consequently, in terms of the South African law, Mr Solomon Mahlangu is sentenced to death. He will be hanged by his neck until he is dead. The date and time of his execution will be announced later”

Signed by Judge CDJ Theron