The Nelson Mandela Foundation was established in 1999 when its founder, Mr Nelson Mandela, stepped down as the President of South Africa. We mobilise the legacy of Nelson Mandela to create a more just society by dismantling intergenerational poverty and inequity.

Our vision is a society which remembers its pasts, listens to all its voices, and pursues social justice. Our mission is to contribute to the making of a just society by keeping alive the legacy of Nelson Mandela, providing an integrated public information resource on his life and times, and by convening dialogue around critical social issues.
INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

Integrity
We are committed to being ethical, professional, reliable and authentic.

Passion
We care deeply about the world and the work we do in it. We aim to go the extra mile.

Respect
We listen carefully, honour difference and embrace inclusivity.

Service
Work for us is a calling. We strive for excellence in serving our publics. We work to build the world of Nelson Mandela’s dreams.

Transformation
We are determined to fight injustice in all its forms. We are committed to continuing self-renewal. We welcome creativity.

Transparency
We believe in freedom of information. We strive to share information resources as widely as possible. We respect legitimate restrictions on access.
Our Early Childhood Development (ECD) work was inspired by the Mandela Initiative on Poverty and Inequality, which published its Report in 2018. The report identified universal, quality ECD provisioning as one of the potential gamechangers in dismantling intergenerational poverty and inequality.

The focus of our ECD work now is on supporting the state to increase rates of ECD registration in the country. This is because when ECD services are registered, they are better equipped and supported to provide a safe environment, healthy nutrition and quality developmental support to the next generation.

The work we do in the sector enables us to contribute to meeting the immediate needs of the most disadvantaged communities at the same time as positioning us to do effective public policy advocacy work.
One in four six-year-olds suffer from stunting in South Africa due to insecure access to food. Further, out of the 4.9 million households with young children, 683,221 of those households reported experiencing hunger in 2021. From 2020 with its Covid crisis lockdowns, the Nelson Mandela Foundation worked to provide secure access to food to the communities we serve, initially providing emergency food packs before moving into a phase of capacitating community gardens and planting fruit trees. We are committed now to undertaking the advocacy work required to address underlying systemic causes of food security.
In many parts of the world as well as in South Africa, failures of public governance and leadership directly undermine strategies for dismantling intergenerational poverty and inequity. We are committed to promoting leadership development in all the work that we do.

Our flagship partnerships:

• The University of Cape Town’s Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance.
• Our partnership with Columbia University on the leadership development programme “Atlantic Fellows for Racial Equity.”
While much of the discourse on land in South Africa has focused on rural arable land, there is a pressing need to address the transformation of urban spaces to make them more inclusive and accessible to the poor and marginalised. In our work in this area, we look holistically at land issues, prioritise the unfinished business of Nelson Mandela’s presidency, and do the following:

- Litigation - supporting key cases which can advance land reform, in particular land redistribution.
- Policy advocacy - advocating for public policy that enables the achievement of more just cities in relation to land redistribution, access to housing and other necessary outcomes.
MEMORY FOR JUSTICE

NELSON MANDELA INTERNATIONAL DAY 2024

NELSON MANDELA ANNUAL LECTURE

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES
The Nelson Mandela Foundation has under its custodianship an archive of the life and times, works and writings of its Founder, the late Nelson Mandela. The physical collections include the handwritten papers, official records and unique artefacts from the personal archive of Nelson Mandela in addition to records from the Office of Nelson Mandela after his retirement as President of South Africa in 1999, as well as a growing number of related collections.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation works to make this archive accessible to the public through the permanent exhibition on the life and times of Nelson Mandela, which includes many original archive materials such as calendar entries and letters belonging to Madiba, as well as through our extensive digitisation work to make these resources available online.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation uses this archive to develop and deliver the tools necessary to understand the historical roots of the struggle for equity and justice.
It’s Still in our Hands to Combat Poverty and Inequity

Nelson Mandela International Day was launched in 2009 in recognition of Nelson Mandela’s birthday on the 18th of July. The campaign is an opportunity for families, schools and organisations to roll up their sleeves and contribute to their communities by supporting local and sustainable social initiatives in honour of the legacy of Nelson Mandela.

Our global theme for 2024 is “It’s still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity.” The context, of course, is a world in which inequity continues to grow and in which we are still reckoning with the destructive impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which exposed existing disparities and damaged vulnerable communities in all kinds of ways. Climate change, war and conflict are leading to the displacement and impoverishment of many communities and whole societies.

The call to action is as broad and as inclusive as possible – identify those in need around you and do what you can to make a difference for them.

“IT IS IN YOUR HANDS TO CREATE A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL WHO LIVE IN IT” – NELSON MANDELA
The Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture series invites distinguished speakers to drive debate on critical social issues. The lecture series is an important event on the Foundation’s calendar and encourages people to enter into dialogue – often about difficult subjects – in order to address the challenges we face today.

Previous speakers include Pakistani Education Activist, Malala Yousafzai; former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Madame Fatou Bensouda; United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, former US President Barack Obama; Archbishop Desmond Tutu; Chilean-American author and human rights activist Ariel Dorfman; Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai; former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan; social entrepreneur Muhammad Yunus; Director of Egypt’s Library of Alexandria Ismail Serageldin; former Irish President and philanthropist Mary Robinson; philanthropist Mo Ibrahim; as well as economist Thomas Piketty.

The Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture reaches over 11 million people through our social media platforms, over 2 500 in-person attendees, and over 150 000 views on our bespoke online dialogue platform, over and above being broadcast live on major news networks.
Ran Nelson Mandela's post-presidential office from 1999 to 2011

Oversaw large parts of Nelson Mandela's intellectual property and continue to do so

Supported Madiba's peacemaking work in Burundi (1999-2001)

Have hosted the prestigious Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture since 2003

Working closely with Madiba, we assembled, catalogued, deacidified and digitised his personal archival collections (2004-2010)

Partnered with the Apartheid Museum to do a major retrospective exhibition on the life and times of Nelson Mandela to mark his 90th birthday in 2008 – it subsequently became a permanent feature at the Museum and has travelled internationally

Undertook the advocacy work which resulted in Madiba overseeing the return to the South African state of official Rivonia Trial records in private custody (2008)

Launched the Nelson Mandela Day campaign in 2009 and supported its adoption as a United Nations International Day the same year

In 2013 we launched the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory as a multi-purpose public facility, including permanent and travelling exhibition spaces, a public reading-room, dialogue and conferencing infrastructure, and customised archival storage spaces

Worked closely with Madiba initially, we have published a number of books from his personal archive, including Conversations with Myself (2010) and Prison Letters (2018)

Between 2013 and 2016 we partnered with Global Leadership Academy (Germany) in running the international Mandela Dialogues on reckoning with oppressive pasts, which has flowed into a range of subsequent transitional justice work, including, for instance, our training Central African Republic truth commission representatives in information, records and archives management (2022)

In partnership with the University of Cape Town, we ran the Archival Platform project and co-published the project's seminal reports on public archives services in South Africa (2014) and on activist archiving in the country (2018)

We partnered with a think-tank of state and academic institutions on the Mandela Initiative on Poverty and Inequality, the final report for which was published in 2018

At the beginning of 2023 we released a successful seven-episode documentary series on Netflix, Live to Lead, featuring role models for good leadership from different parts of the world

Our 15th campaign saw us work with 150 organisations and other partners of every kind to mobilise the movement to end violence against women and girls, and to build a safer world for all girls, women and children

Between 2013 and 2015 we partnered with UN Women and the Nelson Mandela Foundation to pilot the world's first of its kind Leadership Academy for Women (Nelson Mandela Foundation) on creating sustainable economic empowerment projects and new women parks, which has forced a range of significant transformations in the work, including, for instance, the Nelson Mandela Foundation's establishment as a Functional Department of the United Nations system and the launch of The Mandela Centre for Ethics and Global Justice

In 2017 we partnered with Columbia University (New York) to launch the Atlantic Fellows for Racial Equity, a transnational programme aimed at developing more effective strategies for combating racism, which continues to thrive seven years later

Before 2017, 2010 and 2018

For 25 Years

Achievements for 25 Years of the Nelson Mandela Foundation

In 2024, the Nelson Mandela Foundation marks a quarter of a century mobilising Nelson Mandela’s legacy for initiatives which make a difference in people’s lives.

Support the work we do to enable us to build the country of Madiba’s dreams.
SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE NELSON MANDELA FOUNDATION

The Nelson Mandela Foundation is a human rights-oriented not-for-profit organization. The Foundation delivers to the world an integrated and dynamic information resource on the life and times of Nelson Mandela, as well as promotes the search for sustainable solutions to critical social problems through memory and dialogue.

The Nelson Mandela America Fund of the King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS) raises funds to support the Nelson Mandela Foundation in the United States. As a registered 501(c)(3), all donations are tax-deductible to the limit of the law.

On behalf of our late Founder, Mr Mandela, we extend our warmest thanks and appreciation for your support of his vision and the importance of memory and dialogue for social justice.

SECURITY CODE
EXPIRATION DATE

Donate here

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Be Part of the Legacy

Donate Here

The Nelson Mandela Foundation is a human rights-oriented not-for-profit organization. The Foundation delivers to the world an integrated and dynamic information resource on the life and times of Nelson Mandela, as well as promotes the search for sustainable solutions to critical social problems through memory and dialogue.
“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”

– Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela dedicated his life to the making of a just world. As he stepped away from public life, he gave his Foundation a mandate to keep working for the realization of his dream.

Support us to fulfil the mandate.

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