

Nelson Mandela International Day

“Action without vision is only passing time, vision without action is merely day dreaming, but vision with action can change the world” - Nelson Mandela

The EDI committee would like to spotlight Nelson Mandela on a day that is dedicated internationally to honouring his achievements, July 18th. On this day, we are reminded of Mandela’s incredible legacy and inspired to make a difference in our own communities. This day marks a global call to action to use our individual power to transform the world. Nelson Mandela believed that every person has the power and responsibility to change the world for the better, and that every small action is important.

For ideas about how **you** can inspire change, we encourage you to visit the [Mandela Day website](#).

Spotlight Nelson Mandela



Nelson Mandela, was born Rolihlahla Mandela on July 18, 1918 into the Madiba clan in the village of Mvezo, in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Mandela’s father was the principal counsellor to the acting King of the Thembu people. In primary school, Rolihlahla was renamed Nelson by his teacher, as it was customary at that time to give school-aged children “Christian names.” Mandela went on to attend the University of Fort Hare, the country’s only university for Black people, where he was working to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree. Mandela was expelled in his second year after participating in a student protest against the lack of power that the student government held. Mandela later completed his B.A. and J.D. at the University of South Africa.

In 1944, Mandela joined the African National Congress (ANC) and helped create the ANC Youth League (ANCYL). The ANCYL’s efforts were instrumental in the more radical mass-based policy, the *Programme*



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of Action (1949), made in response to South Africa's segregationist policies put in place by The National Party of South Africa. The National Party of South Africa, came into power in 1948 and instituted a system of legislation that enforced racial segregation, known as [apartheid](#). In 1952, Mandela joined the Defiance Campaign, which was a campaign of civil disobedience against the unjust laws of apartheid. This campaign was in partnership with the ANC and South African Indian Congress. Mandela and 19 others were arrested for their organizing under the *Suppression of Communism Act* and sentenced to nine months of hard labour. But this did not stop Mandela. He continued his career to end apartheid in South Africa and move towards a multiracial democracy. He was a leader of both peaceful protests and armed resistance against the oppressive white led regime in a racially divided South Africa. Mandela was imprisoned for nearly 30 years as a result of his protests against apartheid. Upon his release in 1990, he participated in the eradication of apartheid and became the first president of South Africa in 1994. During his presidency, he formed a diverse government to ensure the country's transition from its dark history of segregation to a more democratic future. He retired from politics in 1999 but continued to advocate for peace and social justice throughout his life. This work has continued long after his death, keeping his memory and legacy alive.

The EDI committee is pleased to spotlight Nelson Mandela for his lifelong pursuit of equity and justice. If you would like to learn more about Nelson Mandela and his amazing life please visit the [Nelson Mandela Foundation's website](#).