

# NOMINATED

# Nelson Mandela



**Graça Machel and Nelson Mandela are married. They are the best friends of the children of Mozambique and South Africa. They speak out against the violation of children's rights and both run organisations that promote the rights of the child and help children in need.**

**G**raça Machel never met her father; he died three weeks before she was born. So Graça was given the middle name Despidida, which means 'farewell' in Portuguese. The family was poor – even before her father died – and Graça's mother had to provide for seven children: Graça and her six brothers.

Before he died, her father said that his unborn child was to go to school. So when Graça was seven she

started the first grade in Inhambane. Her teacher was called Ruth and was a missionary from the USA. All the children were afraid of her and didn't dare speak to her – with one exception: little Graça! She wrote a letter to Ruth thanking her for everything she'd learnt.

"We couldn't believe our eyes when Graça stood up, handed the letter to the teacher and said that she loved her. That was such a brave thing to do!" says



## Nelson Mandela:

Nelson Mandela was honoured by the WCPRC 2005 and 2010 for his lifelong struggle to free the children of South Africa from apartheid and the immense support he gives to their rights. After 27 years in prison he became the first democratically elected president of South Africa, a country where children of all colours today enjoy equal rights for the first time.

Nelson continued to help South Africa's children and demanded respect for their rights. He ran his own children's foundation, the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund (NMCF), which helps children whose parents have died of AIDS, street children, disabled children and poor children. As president he donated half his salary to poor children and when he received the Nobel Peace Prize he gave part of the prize money to help street children. Nelson not only wanted all children to feel loved, he wanted to give them a better future. That's why he also gave children the chance to develop their talents.



# & Graça Machel



PHOTO: LOUISE GUBB

Florentina Litsur, who was in the same class as Graça.

## Girls' rights

Graça won a scholarship to study in Maputo. On Sundays when she went to church, Graça thought that it was unfair that only boys could become chairman of the church youth group.

“She stood up in church and demanded equal rights for girls. No one else would ever have dared to,” says Manuel Fifteen.

Today, boys and girls have equal rights in Mozambique, and girls can be chairperson of the church group. Manuel says this is all thanks to Graça.

When Graça was growing up, Mozambique was still a Portuguese colony

and nearly all the Africans were poor. This was unfair too, thought Graça, who began fighting for the country's freedom. The Portuguese wanted to throw her in jail but she escaped to Tanzania.

On a secret mission in northern Mozambique she met Samora Machel, who was the leader of the liberation front. They got married in 1975, the same year that Mozambique gained its independence.

## Children at war

Samora became Mozambique's president



## Graça Machel :

Graça Machel was honoured by the WCP 2005 and 2010 for her long and courageous struggle for children's rights, in Mozambique and beyond. She has fought for the rights of girls to go to school. When she was Minister of Education, the number of schoolchildren rose by 80%. Today, 45% of all schoolchildren are girls, but Graça's goal is to have as many girls as boys in schools. In rural regions, most girls have to work and are married off at an early age. Graça therefore started a theatre group to teach parents the importance of education for girls. She has had schools built where there were none or too few. After the floods of 2000 Graça and her FDC organisation gave students new schoolbooks and re-housed families in new homes. Graça and the FDC also fight against all forms of violence and abuse against children. Internationally Graça has worked to help child victims of war and to stop the trafficking of children.





and Graça was made Minister of Education. Many children were able to start school. But soon a new war erupted. Samora died in a mysterious plane crash in 1986. Graça suspects that the apartheid regime of South Africa was behind it.

A couple of years later, Graça took a job at the UN and told the world about the plight of children affected by war. Most of all she wanted to help child soldiers and children that had been injured by landmines.

Many people in the UN

were impressed by Graça's courage. When it came to children's rights she would stand up to anyone! Her hard work paid off. As soon as a peace treaty was signed in Mozambique, the UN began clearing the mines. They've almost all been cleared now and child casualties are on the decline.

Ten years ago Graça helped found the FDC, an organisation in Mozambique that aims to protect children against life-threatening diseases.

"We buy vaccines and make sure that children

don't die of preventable illnesses," she says.

Graça also helps children who are too poor to go to school.

"I know exactly what it's like. I was just as poor when I grew up," says Graça.

Thanks to her efforts, half the children in Mozambique's schools will soon be girls. Before, many parents could only afford to send their sons to school. The girls had to stay at home and work.

#### **Salary to the children**

Graça Machel married

Nelson Mandela on his 80th birthday. It was a perfect match; they both love children and have fought for children's rights for most of their lives.

Nelson grew up in poverty too. His father died and he went to live with his uncle who wanted to marry him off to one of the village girls.

But Nelson had other plans. He ran away to the big city of Johannesburg and it was there that he came into contact with apartheid, which means 'apartness'. Blacks were separated from





PHOTO BY: GIACOMO PIROZZI / PICTURENET AFRICA

the whites and they were treated badly and unfairly. Nelson hated injustice and could not accept the way that people were treated differently because of the colour of their skin.

He didn't want his children – or any South African children – to grow up with apartheid. He said that he was prepared to die to give the children a better future. His struggle against apartheid and for the freedom of South Africa's children cost him 27 years in prison.

Nelson was 72 when he

was released. But despite being so badly treated, he did not want to take revenge on those responsible for apartheid. He wanted blacks and whites to live in harmony and to build a better future together.

On receiving the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize, Nelson said:

“South Africa's children shall play in the open veldt, no longer tortured by hunger or disease or threatened with abuse. Children are our greatest treasure.”

Nelson Mandela became

president of South Africa in 1994. He made sure that all the unfair laws were abolished. Today, black and white children can be friends and they all have equal rights.

But Nelson Mandela didn't stop there. As president he donated half his salary to poor children and when he got the Nobel Peace Prize he gave part of the prize money to help street children.

Today, Nelson has retired and runs his own children's foundation, the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund

(NMCF), which helps children whose parents have died of AIDS, street children, disabled children and poor children.

His dealings with children and young people give Nelson energy.

“Whenever I'm with vibrant young people, I feel like a recharged battery,” he says. ☺

*Read more about Nelson's exciting life in the picture story on page 87.*



PHOTO: LOUISE GUBB

# We ♥ Graça and

**“Graça Machel is the world’s bravest woman. She’s not afraid of anybody and always helps children – especially those in need, such as street children and single mothers. I read in the newspaper that Mandela is just as good. He’s helped South Africa a lot!”**

**Faustino Quissico, 10, Maputo**



**“Graça Machel really loves children. She protects them from AIDS and builds schools. She’s also got lovely clothes. Once she came to our school. We sang for her and she was so happy she started dancing!”**

**Lina Massaveé, 13, Changalane**



**“Mandela has proved that everything’s possible. He went from being a prisoner to president. He had a hard time at home and found himself a nice wife. His new wife Graça Machel has done well to make him so happy!”**

**Ntando Mhlanga, 11, Soweto**



**“Mama Graça has showed us the way forward. She’s proved that girls can do everything boys can. She’s helped me become the person I am today.”**

**Anabela Nkalinga, 14, Chaukwe**



**“I love Mandela. We have the same birthday. I once sent him a birthday card and asked him if he wanted to be my extra dad.”**

**Kefiloe Oliphant, 10, Soweto**



# Mandela

“Mandela fought for our rights and saved our country. It would’ve been terrible for us if he hadn’t. If I met him I’d say, “Pleased to meet you – and thanks for our freedom!”

Zanele Gama, 12, Soweto



“I wish Mama Graça and Nelson Mandela good luck. They’ve helped many children go to school. Mama Graça’s a real hero. She spreads happiness to everyone!”

John Zacksom, 9, Maputo

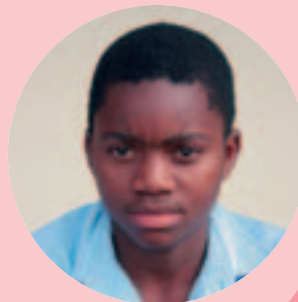
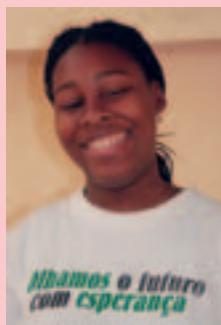


“Everything about Nelson Mandela is fantastic. I wish that I could wake up one morning with the same kind heart as he has. Then I’d make the whole world happy. I’m really proud of him.”

Gabatshwane Gumedede, 11, Letabong

“Graça Machel loves children and we love her. It’s great that she’s married to Nelson Mandela. They always help others in need. Now they can help each other if they have problems.”

Ilda Rodrigues, 13, Maputo



“Graça Machel inspires people to be better. There’s a man in our village who’s following in her footsteps: he’s going to buy a TV for everyone here to watch.”

Leoildo Maeome, 14, Chaukwe

“Nelson Mandela has a good heart. He helps disabled children and has shown that people can improve themselves. He was in prison for 27 years, but he didn’t want revenge. He wanted peace and to show that black and white people can live in harmony. Awesome!”

Phumeza Qwasha, 14, functionally disabled, Alexandra



“When Graça got married to Nelson Mandela in South Africa I was worried that she’d never return to Mozambique. But she didn’t forget us and always comes back to see how we’re getting on.”

Guida Coutinho, 14, Chaukwe

“For me Nelson Mandela’s a hero. He always thinks the best of people and he trusts children. He knows that they have talent and that they can succeed if only they get the chance. We’re lucky to have him.”

Abae Selaocoe, 12, Sebokeng

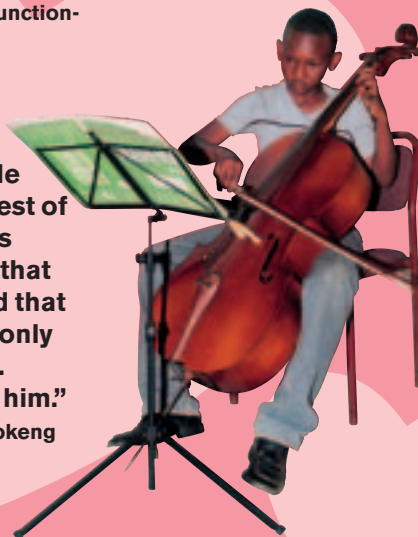


PHOTO: LOUISE GUBB

TEXT: ANNIKA FORSBERG LANGA PHOTO: BO ØHLEN, VICTOR MATOM & LOUISE GUBB



**Leoa Abdul, 14**

**Lives:** In the village of Metuge in northern Mozambique.

**Worked as:** A nanny when I was seven, far from home.

**Chores:** Fetch water, do the cleaning, wash up, prepare breakfast, go to school, work in the fields and do my homework.

**Worst nightmare:** To be married against my will.

**Calls her school:** Graça Machel.

**Hero:** Graça Machel.

# Leoa goes to Graça's school Avoided arranged marriage

One evening a man came to Leoa Abdul's house. She had never seen him before, but she knew exactly what he wanted anyway. Two years before, a stranger had called at a friend's house and asked whether he could marry her. Her friend's parents said yes, and so she was married against her will.

"It was awful. She was only twelve. Now she has a baby and her husband won't let her go to school," says Leoa.

Leoa usually visits her friend in the afternoons when her husband isn't home. Both girls are afraid of him. He gets very angry whenever they talk about school. He thinks

that girls should stay at home and do the housework.

Leoa's worst nightmare is being married off to someone. She'd much rather go through school so that she can get a job. But Leoa's par-

ents are poor and she was afraid that they would accept the man's marriage proposal.



Leoa always has plenty of housework to do.

Leoa pleaded with her parents, telling them that all she wanted to do was go to secondary school so she could get a job. Leoa's mother never went to school and can neither read nor write and her father only went to school for a few years; yet they understood. They explained to the man that Leoa was far too young to get married.

Leoa breathed a sigh of relief. She felt free. And she'd be able to stay on at school.

**Graça Machel's schools**  
Leoa lives in the village of Metuge in northern Mozambique. As many of



Leoa and her best friend Juliana on their way to school.

# hool

## Look at all the girls!

Ten years ago, only a few girls in Metuge went to school. If you could have peeked into a classroom you would probably have seen 40 students: 30 boys and 10 girls. What's more, only half the girls, i.e. five, actually finished junior school.

If you look into the same classroom today, you'll find about 23 boys and 17 girls.

the parents in the region are poor, very few girls over 12 were allowed to go to school. When Graça Machel heard about this she decided to build four new schools. This way no one could say that the classrooms were too crowded and that there was only space for boys.

Graça Machel grew up in a poor family. Without the help she'd received, she'd never have been able to finish school. She knows just how it feels to face being married off or to be forced to go to work. That is why she's so keen to help Leoa and the other girls in Metuge.

But building new schools

wasn't enough. Some of the parents were not convinced that girls really had to get an education. So Graça started a theatre group to perform plays about how important it is for girls to go to school.

For Leoa's best friend Juliana Adolfo it made all the difference in the world. She'd nagged her parents to let her start school, but they simply couldn't afford it. But after they saw the play they changed their minds, and Juliana's dream became true.

Juliana and Leoa now go to school together every day. But they don't call it going to school, they call it going to Graça Machel, because

even though the schools in Metuge have names of their own, that's what they're all known as.

### The pain inside

Leoa almost never started school at all. When she was seven she started working as a nanny for a family in Pemba. Pemba is also in northern Mozambique, which is where they speak Macao, Leoa's language.

But soon the family moved to Maputo, taking Leoa with them.

Leoa was really upset. The family lived in a high-rise block where there were many children. But no one could speak Macao and Leoa couldn't understand a word they said.





# Graça solves the homework problem

Many of the girls in Mozambique work really hard. Leoa gets up at five in the morning to fetch water. Then she cleans the house, washes yesterday's pots and – if there's food – she makes breakfast for the family. After that she washes and goes to school, which is over an hour away. On top of this, Leoa has to find time to help her mother in the field before she does her homework. The boys don't have to do any chores at home.

"After school they can do what they want. They usually play football," she says.

Sometimes the girls do so much housework that they don't have time for homework. As soon as they get home, there's some job to do. When they finally have time for studying they're so tired that they fall asleep over their schoolbooks.

Graça Machel solved the problem. She built a youth centre where girls could go after school to do their homework and take different courses. Today, Leoa and her friend Juliana play football and do drama.



Leoa and her younger sister Gilda, 12, help their granny peel the manioch for the evening meal.



"Graça Machel is my hero. She cares about us girls and comes to visit the school to see how we're getting on. She does a great job – and I hope she'll carry on doing it. The best thing is that she's managed to explain to people why it's so important that girls get an education. If it hadn't been for her I might not even be able to write my own name."  
Leoa Abdul



"The worst thing was that I was the only one who wasn't allowed to start school. The other children laughed at me and I used to think that the Portuguese language they spoke to each other sounded so clever and sophisticated. They'd learnt it at school," says Leoa.

Leoa cried almost continually and it hurt her to see the other children run off with their schoolbooks under their arms. She asked the woman she worked for whether she too could start going to school:

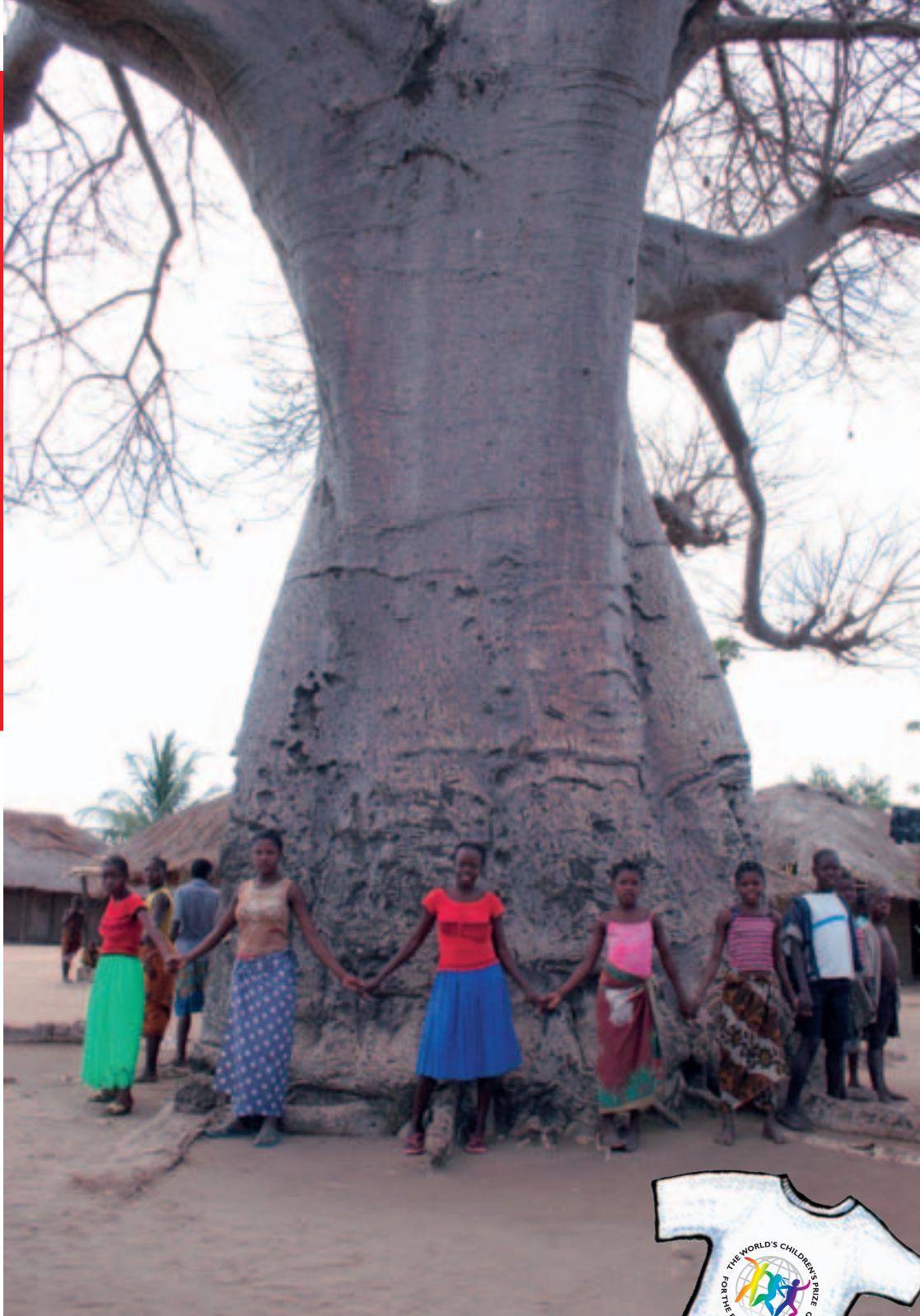
"You're here to look after the children, not to read

books," answered the woman.

When Leoa's parents found out that the family had moved to Maputo, and had taken Leoa with them, they arranged for her to return home to Metuge. Leoa's mother said that she would learn to read and

write. Leoa had never been so happy!

"On the morning of my first day of school, I woke up long before sunrise. When my mum and dad got up, I was already dressed and stood in the doorway waiting with a book under my arm," she chuckles.



# Tree-huggers galore

Huge Baobab trees grow in Leoa's village. They can grow to be at least a thousand years old. Some say that the Baobab trees have magical properties and that spirits live inside them. That's why you should never cut one down or even snap off a twig.

There's a Baobab tree close to Leoa's house. Because it's so old, Leoa thinks it has seen a lot of things. All the important meetings in the village are held under the tree because the tree might remember what's been said, so no one can ignore the decisions that are taken.

## How many tree-huggers? Win a prize T-shirt!

Sometimes Leoa and her friends just want to play under the tree. Guess how many of her friends it takes to hug the Baobab's thick trunk. We will draw 100 winners from those who have given the correct answer.

Answer in the form on [www.childrensworld.org](http://www.childrensworld.org) or to [prize@childrensworld.org](mailto:prize@childrensworld.org), fax +46-159-10860 or Children's World, Box 150, 647 24 Mariefred, Sweden. Enclose your name, address and age.



### A poem

Today Leoa and her friend Juliana are in the sixth grade and can already speak fluent Portuguese. It sounds just as clever and sophisticated as when the children in Maputo speak it! Leoa likes to borrow books of poetry from the public

library and two weeks ago she wrote her very first poem – in Portuguese. It's about school and happy children. For Leoa the best sound in the world is the echo of her friends' laughter.

But Leoa doesn't think she'll become a poet. She's not sure that you can make

a living from it. She wants a job where she can earn money. Most of all she wants to be a technician. Not only so that she can help her family, but also



# No cream for the headmaster

**I**t's taken Sifa Made and Rosinha José, both aged 12, several hours to make their face masks.

First they had to find a decent musiro tree. Then they cut off a big branch which they ground down to a fine powder. Finally they mixed the powder with water, put the cream on their faces, where it'll remain for two days. It's tough, but it's worth it: when the girls finally rinse it off they have the softest

skin imaginable!

Everyone will be really impressed, except for headmaster Carlos Nampava, that is. He worries about these creams. Particularly if the girls have rubbed them all over their bodies. This is a sign that they're coming of age and will soon be married off.

To Carlos this just means another girl that has to drop out of school. No wonder he dislikes the facial cream so much...

**Powdered musiro is good for the skin.**



**Sifa and Rosinha must keep their musiro facial masks on for two days to get nice, smooth skin.**

➔ because she doesn't want to be a burden to anybody. To marry the man of your choice you have to be independent and have your own money.

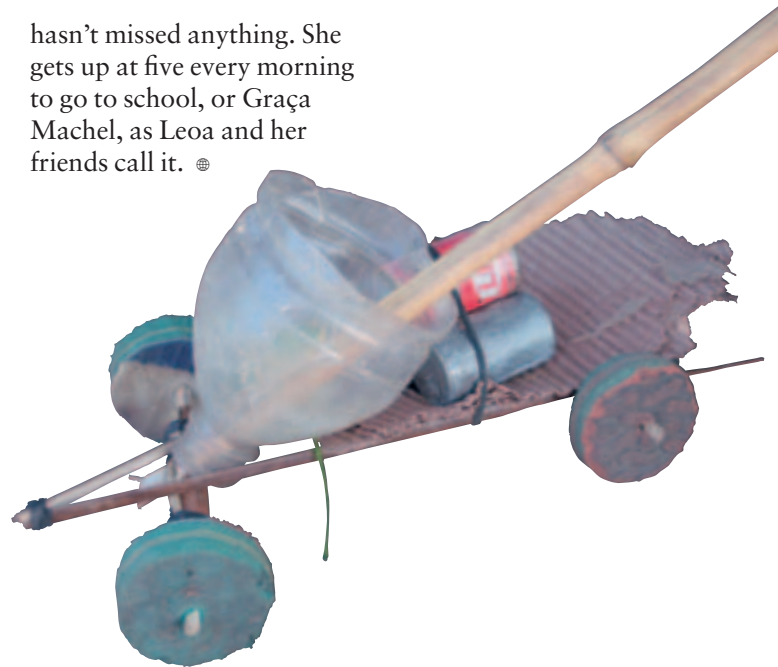
"I plan to marry a man who's nice and who I love, not the first person who happens to knock on the door," says Leoa.

But first she must finish school. In Metuge there are no upper secondary schools;

when you finish the seventh grade you have to move to the city. And Leoa's family can't afford it. But each year Graça's organisation, the FDC, awards five scholarships to the top girls in the seventh grade.

Leoa wants to get her hands on one of those scholarships. She works hard and sometimes does her homework while the others are asleep, just to make sure she

hasn't missed anything. She gets up at five every morning to go to school, or Graça Machel, as Leoa and her friends call it. ☺



**Fernando, José Louise and Alice are three children who have endured beatings and abuse. Graça Machel and her organisation FDC want to put a stop to it and are protesting vigorously against violence and child abuse.**

# Teacher broke Fernando's arm

**O**nce my teacher got so angry that he started beating my hands with a stick," says Fernando Machiane, 13, who lives in Maputo.

Fernando had been talking to his classmate and the teacher flew into a rage. He hit him relentlessly, eventually missing his hands and striking Fernando on the lower arm. It was extremely painful. Fernando couldn't move his right hand and had to go to hospital.

A doctor examined the arm and saw that it was

broken. When Fernando returned to school with his arm in plaster, the teacher apologised. He said he hadn't meant to hit him quite so hard. But Fernando is still frightened of him and can't wait for the day he leaves school.

Fernando's friends Helder, Rafael and Ernesto, who are in a parallel class, feel sorry for Fernando. Their teacher doesn't hit them. She just yells, orders them out of the classroom and gives them detention. The boys consider this to be much more

acceptable.

All four boys, however, get beaten at home just for forgetting to do a chore, like washing up, or if they accidentally break something.

"It's stupid. Grown-ups only have to tell us if we do something wrong. They don't have to hit us to make us understand," says Fernando. His friends agree.

They wish that all teachers could take the anti-corporal punishment laws seriously and that there was a law forbidding parents to hit them. ☹



## Graça helped save Alice

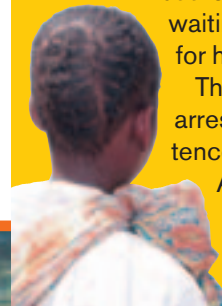
Alice's mother has a small restaurant in Maputo. Most afternoons a man came in to eat. He was nice, thought Alice, and he always had time to talk to her. Sometimes he helped her with her homework.

Alice therefore didn't find it strange when the man asked her to go for a walk with him. But the man had a much more sinister motive. He kidnapped Alice and took her to Johannesburg in South Africa, where she was made a slave and was sold to other men.

Alice's mother was beside herself with despair. She went to Graça's office and asked for help. Graça called the police and demanded their help. Three months later, the man returned to Maputo to kidnap more girls.

But the police were waiting for him.

The man was arrested and sentenced to prison and Alice was reunited with her mother.



## One day Graça will come ...

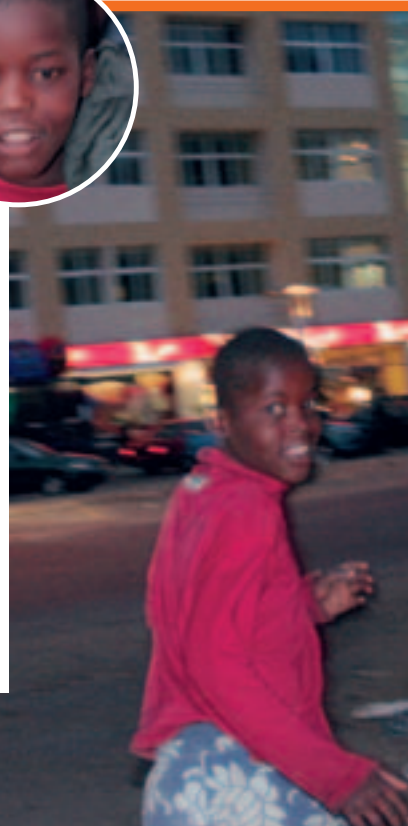
**José Louis Bila is 11 and has lived on the streets of Maputo for so long he can't remember how many years ago he ran away from home. It all started when his parents got divorced and his father remarried.**

"My new mother didn't like me. She hit me nearly every day," says José.

After José had been homeless for a while he was accepted into a home for street children. But it was even worse there; José was beaten even more frequently and he ran away again. His friends know exactly what he's talking about - they too have run away from the same centre.

Today the six boys live by a wall which runs along one of Maputo's busiest streets. José has heard about Graça Machel and about her kindness to children.

"I pray that she'll pass by. If she does I'm sure she'll help us," says José.



# Floods destroyed everything

**G**ildo Zefanias Chichongue, 14, wakes with a jolt. The water, he thinks. The water's coming! But the floor is dry. He sits up in bed and sighs. It was just the same old nightmare that he has almost every night – even though it was five years ago that his village was flooded.

Back then, in February 2000, it rained every day in Mozambique until the rivers burst their banks.

Meanwhile tropical cyclone Eline was approaching from the Indian Ocean, and soon the houses and school in Gildo's village (Chaukwe) were under water.

"The waters came so suddenly; we didn't have time to take anything with us. Everyone panicked," he says.

There wasn't room for Gildo and his family in the cars that were evacuating

people from the village, so they had to wade through the water until they came to a hill 25 km away that was still above water. "We stayed on the hill for a month before we dared return to the village," says Gildo.

By then the water had gone – and almost everything else too. The flood had destroyed everything. The school, which was old and rundown, had collapsed and the headmaster told the children to stay at home.

This was bad news for Gildo. He was especially upset that his schoolbooks had been ruined.

"Everything had gone



**Gildo's school is one of four schools Graça Machel had built in Chaukwe after the floods.**

wrong and I was afraid that I'd never get the chance to go to school again," he says.

But Gildo's story has a happy ending: Graça Machel's organisation built four new schools in Chaukwe, and gave all the

children new schoolbooks and their own library.

Gildo agrees: the terrible flood really did have a happy ending. 🌍



**Carlitos weaves a rug for his new home.**

## Thanks for the house!

**C**arlitos Sitoi, 13, was at home alone when Chaukwe was hit by floods. It was so awful that he'd rather not think about it. Luckily he was saved by a neighbour who came and took him to safety on the back of his pick-up.

"I was so worried about my brothers

and my mother. Many people didn't make it and drowned," he says.

But Carlitos's family survived and Carlitos felt happy and sad at the same time. His family was alive, but the floods had taken their house.

They couldn't afford to build a new house and Carlitos had to live in a

# “Mama Graça never lets you down!”

the trees and made charcoal to sell in town. In the end, sand was all that remained.

When Salvador Raul Basket, 13, was born, the war in Mozambique was coming to an end, and his parents, who’d been hiding in the mountains, decided to return to the village. They were worried. All the trees had been chopped down and the soil was too barren to grow anything. How would they survive?

“There’s only one person

who you know won’t let you down,” says Salvador, “and that’s Graça Machel. She was the only one who could help us.”

‘Mama Graça’, as the children in Changelane call her, planted trees in the village and had a chicken farm built where the parents were given work. When the other war refugees heard about how well things were going they wanted to come back too.

But there was a problem: the school was impossibly small, having only one classroom for 663 pupils. So the older children went to a school in a neighbouring village, but it was 14 km away and the children didn’t come



**Salvador Raul Basket.**

home until ten at night. Those who weren’t able to walk so far had to stay at home.

Once again, Mama Graça came to the children’s rescue and had five new schools built for Salvador and his friends. 🌍



**Ready to throw the home-made ball.**

**N**ot so long ago, Changelane was a ghost town. Nobody lived there and the soil was parched. But it hadn’t always been that way. The war had forced people to flee from the village and environmental damage had changed the whole climate. When the soil became too dry to cultivate, the people cut down



**A hit!** The yard at one of the schools Graça Machel had built for the children of Changelane.



small tent made out of sticks and plastic bags. That was his home until last year when Graça Machel had 206 houses built for the poorest families.

Carlitos and his mother got a two-room house and, as his older brothers had already moved out, Carlitos now had his very own room.

“We’re so happy,” says his mother, hugging Carlitos, who’s busy weaving a rug for his new room.

**Houses Graça had built for those whose homes were destroyed by the floods.**





PHOTO: LOUISE GUBBS

# Mandela's gre FREEDOM A

**Nelson Mandela's greatest gift to South Africa's children is his long struggle for their freedom and equal rights. This struggle cost him 27 years in prison.**

**Peliswa's story tells us how it was during apartheid in South Africa. Black children were treated badly, went to poor and ill-equipped schools and had to live separated from their parents.**



“ My name is Peliswa Gzaza and I am 12 years old. I live in Khayelitsha, near Cape Town in South Africa.

My mother says that these days HIV/AIDS is the new apartheid. I did not understand what she meant, so I asked her and my Gogo (granny) to explain this to me. It became a very long story. You see, I do not feel apartheid in my life. There is nothing I cannot do just because I am black.

### MY GRANNY'S STORY

Gogo says she came to Cape Town a long time ago. She came from the Transkei, a poor “homeland”, which was what the apartheid government called the areas

where they forced the black people to live. In those days all black people had to carry passes if they left the “homeland”. This pass gave them permission to move around in white people's areas. My Gogo did not have this pass, she just took a bus to Cape Town and found work with a white Madam. This is what Gogo told me:

“Every morning I left the township at six o'clock, because after eight the inspectors checked everybody's passes on the bus. If you did not have a pass, they would beat you and put you in prison. Then you'd have to go back to the Transkei to starve.

“During the weekends, I

never went out because I was too afraid to get caught.”

### Like a dog

“One day, I saw the pass inspector outside in the street, going around checking the maids' passes. I phoned my Madam. She told me to hide away in the cupboard until she got there. Then I heard



## CHILDREN UNDER APARTHEID

### Racism by law

There is and always has been racism throughout the world. But in South Africa, during the last century, racism became a way of life. Here, in 1948, racism was actually legalised and named *apartheid*.

### Apartheid

Apartheid means “seperateness” or “being apart” in Afrikaans. Blacks and whites were kept separate from each other. Apartheid was racism by law and the government, the laws and the courts supported racism.

### Forbidden families

It was illegal for black and white couples to marry. If a black and white couple had a baby, the baby was called a “coloured” and had to live with his or her black parent. If the police found the parents living together, they were charged and sometimes jailed.

# Best gift to the children AND EQUAL RIGHTS



A young boy working hard in the field in one of the areas ("homelands") where the blacks were forced to live. However, he was not allowed to move around freely in the areas designated for whites.

her telling the inspector that there was only a dog inside.  
 "This is how it was during those days. We black maids were the white people's dogs. We carried their babies on our backs and raised them, while our babies had to stay behind in the "homeland"."

## MY MOTHER'S STORY

My mother grew up in the Transkei with my Gogo's mother, my great grandmother. She died while Gogo was working for the white people and then my mother stayed with neighbours. She only saw Gogo at Christmas. Then she brought my mother old clothes from the white

children she looked after. This is my mother's story from when she was a little girl in the Transkei:  
 "I did not get close to my mother in the way that you are close to me. I missed her and when my own Gogo died I was just like an orphan. I knew that my mother was looking after the white children far away from me. Then, when I was eleven years old, I went to live in the squatter camp with her.

"One day, I went with her to work to help her polish the Madam's silver ornaments. When we got to

Mowbray, the train station in the white people's place, I saw signs everywhere that said: 'Whites Only', on buses, doors, shops, benches and all kinds of places. It was so strange to me that white people did not want us blacks to sit on their benches. My mother said that we should never disobey these signs because the police or the white people will beat us. My mother also forbade me to drink from any of the cups in the kitchen. She said that she would be fired. Instead I drank water from a jam tin that my mother cleaned for me."



## Illegal homes

South Africa was divided into black and white areas. Millions of black children and their families had to leave their homes in "white" areas and go and live in the "black" areas. Here there were no proper schools, hospitals or jobs. The children were left with family members while their parents went to find work in the white people's homes, farms and factories. Many children only saw their parents at Christmas.

## Poor separate schools

The schools in the black areas were very poor. Children had to share small desks and, often, more than sixty children crowded into one room or sat under trees. Black children were not allowed in white children's schools. The black schools were poorly equipped and had a separate curriculum that prepared them for practical work as labourers for the white people. In 1975 the government spent 42 rand per black student and 644 rand (15 times as much) per white student.

My Gogo Somlayi

My cousin Babalwa



Me, Pelizwa

My mother Nomonde





**There was great poverty in the "black" areas, while in the "white" areas there were fine houses with tap water and toilets, cars and good transport, plenty of food and other commodities, decent schools and recreational facilities.**



**Nelson Mandela shows his "passport". The blacks in South Africa were forced to carry "passports" when they were in areas designated for whites.**



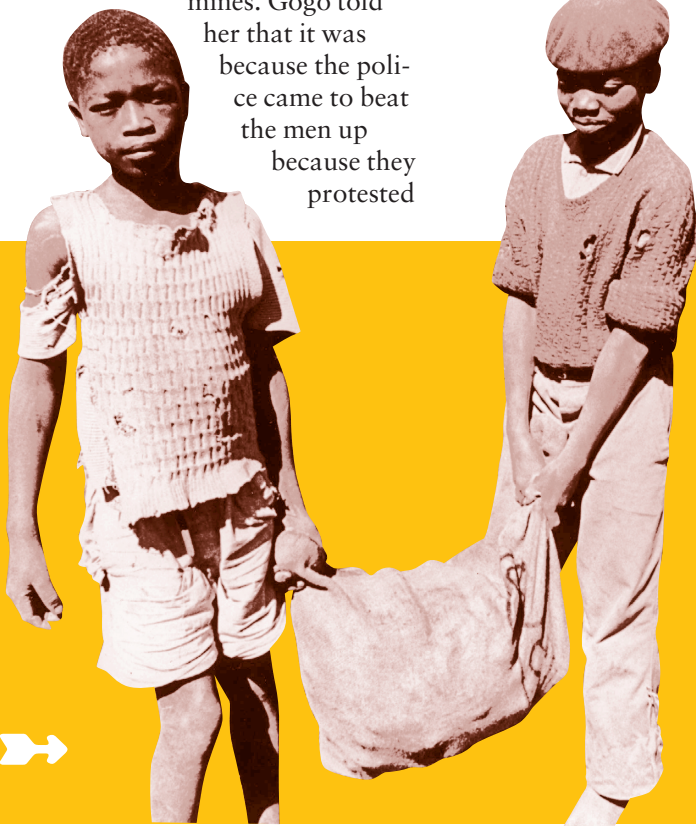
### Angry teenager

It was during this time that my mother first heard about Nelson Mandela. She saw a photograph of people falling out of the hostels for black men who worked in the gold mines. Gogo told her that it was because the police came to beat the men up because they protested

against the apartheid pass laws. The men jumped out of the windows to escape. Gogo said that my grandfather worked in the mines and this was why we never saw him.

These mine hostels were like a prison for slaves. Gogo said that Mandela was the chairperson of the anti-apartheid organisation that organised these protests.

My mother told me that she grew up feeling all these terrible things that apartheid did to children, so when she became a teenager, she was very angry. In 1976, she and thousands of other children protested against black



### Child labour

Tens of thousands of children became labourers on farms or in factories. They got little food, were badly paid and never attended school.

### No pass meant jail

Black parents had to carry a passport – which they called a Dompas, meaning "a stupid pass" – when they worked in the white areas. If blacks were found without this pass, they would be jailed or sent back to their "black" area, without work.



education. Their schools were very poor, overcrowded and they were forced to learn in Afrikaans, the white people's language.

"We made petrol bombs," my mother tells me, "We were so angry that we decided to fight with everything we had to stop this apartheid. Early on the morning of June 16th 1976, my friends and I huddled together behind our shack and made bombs from sand, petrol, matchsticks and a piece of cloth that we put into a 750 ml coke bottle."

### MY COUSIN'S STORY

My cousin Babalwa is much older than me. Her mother was a member of the ANC and often left them alone at home to go to underground



Child labourers spray the field without any protection for themselves against the pesticides.



Mandela burns his "passport" as a protest.



The white girl in the picture was allowed to sit on the bench, but her black nanny was not.

Beach only for whites.



### Parents jailed

The black parents in South Africa were angry at the unjust treatment. They found it impossible to support their children properly. There were few hospitals in the black areas for children who fell ill; schools were bad, housing was poor and there were no recreational facilities for the children. Parents organised themselves into anti-apartheid groups and protested against the apartheid laws. Thousand of children lost their parents, who were killed or jailed for protesting.



### Children jailed

Thousands of children ended up on the streets because they had no homes. They formed street gangs and created families without adults. In desperation they began to steal food and were then jailed for theft.

### Petty Apartheid

A law dating from 1953 made it illegal for black children and their parents to use buses, park benches, public toilets, hotels, shop entrances and many other services designated exclusively for white people. The signs said "White Only".





meetings, because the ANC was banned. Babalwa tells: “When she went to Johannesburg for a meeting she told us not to open the door to anyone. We were so often afraid then, because we knew how many people just disappeared because the police took them. What if they came and asked us where my mother was? If we did not tell them, would they put us in jail? We knew so many

children who had been beaten and thrown in jail when they did not do what the police wanted them to do.

“My friend Thanzi’s mother did not come back from that underground conference.

They said she was in prison. We never heard from her again after that, so my friend came to stay with our

family. My mother said she was just like another child in the house and that we had to support her as she had lost her mother. She said that apartheid had made many children into orphans.”

#### The Mandela trick

Babalwa loves to tell this story:

“I remember one day in 1981, when I was six years old and still in crèche. I must

**Often there were 60 students in each classroom in the schools for black children. The government spent 15 times as much money educating a white child than it did a black child.**



#### Exiled parents

The black people’s political organisations, including Mandela’s ANC, were banned. Hundreds of black parents fled the country and thousands were jailed. Many adults had to live on the run in order to escape the police. Consequently thousands of children were left in the care of grandmothers, while their parents fought against apartheid.

#### School protests

On 16 June 1976, black students protested against apartheid education. Police responded with teargas and live bullets. 13 year-old Hector Pieterse was shot dead. Today, 16 June is a public holiday in South Africa; it honours all young people who lost their lives in the struggle against apartheid.

have been influenced by my granny's political activities, because one morning we refused to eat. The teacher said: 'Why are you not eating?' We said: 'We're on strike because Mandela is not free and we want Mandela. That's why we are rioting.' And then we danced and sang the freedom songs we learnt on the streets. The teacher shook her head. Then she grabbed an old man who was passing by on the street, brought him in and said: 'This is Mandela.' We all cheered and ate. Only when I was nine years old did I realise that she had tricked us and that Mandela was still in jail."

### MY STORY

I did not riot or hide away or lose my mother in apartheid. By the time I was born, Mandela was released and the ANC was unbanned. I grew up to enjoy the freedom my parents had fought for.

### The new apartheid

So why does my mother say

**A friend carries away the dead Hector Pieterse. Alongside runs Hector's sister Antoinette.**



PHOTO: SAM NZIMA

**Hector Pieterse posthumously received The World's Children's Honorary Award in year 2000.**

PHOTO: LOUISE GUBB



**Nelson Mandela together with children who today enjoy equal rights. Here the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, NMCF, is inaugurated.**

HIV/AIDS is the new apartheid? I wrote it all down so that everyone can read it:

*AIDS make children into orphans because their parents die. AIDS makes us afraid, because our family and friends get sick and may die. AIDS makes us poor, because the breadwinners in our families pass away.*

*AIDS makes us strong because we have to stand together and fight it.*

*AIDS brings us together, because we have to support our sick people. AIDS teaches us how to take care of our sick family members.*

When I was seven, my brother became ill with HIV/AIDS.

My mother was a domestic worker and had to go to work every day. It was me who gave my brother medicine and food. Every night I told my mother everything about his health.

Now I am a member of 'Rise and Shine', which we started to support other children who are infected or affected by AIDS.

Nelson Mandela is also my hero because of HIV/AIDS. He speaks up for children and families who are affected by the virus and because he is so famous, everyone listens when he talks.



**Children who have been arrested for their protests against apartheid.**



### Violence against children

The protest by the school children continued for 15 years until the end of apartheid. Police and soldiers used violence against the children. Many children were jailed, tortured and killed.





# Gabatshwanes song

**“Thank you for your magic...,” sings Gabatshwane in her song to Nelson Mandela.**

**She thanks him for all he has done for the children of South Africa, for her freedom, for the chance to go to school and for his respect for children’s rights. But she thanks him particularly for the help he’s given to her and other children who’ve lost their parents to AIDS or who have AIDS themselves.**

**Gabatshwane helps the poor people of the village and orphaned school friends. She buys food for them with the money she earns with her band.**

**O**ne morning, Gabatshwane’s mother didn’t wake up. Gabatshwane shook her but nothing happened. She thought that maybe her mum was just tired. But her father and big brother Vusi knew that she’d died in her sleep. She’d had AIDS.

A year later, her father also died of AIDS and Gabatshwane, her sister Zodwa and Vusi were orphaned. No one would take care of them.

They had to manage by themselves in the small family house in the village of Letabong in northwestern South Africa.

“I used to look up at the sky and ask mum to come back home. I got very upset when she didn’t answer. Finally I understood that she was still around but couldn’t talk to me in the usual way,” says Gabatshwane.

After the deaths of her parents, many of the villagers



**Thank you for the magic, Madiba!**

This is the chorus of Gabatshwane's song about Mandela, or 'Madiba' as he's known in South Africa:  
**"Hey Madiba, you take me up. Hey Madiba, you take us to school, you respect our rights. Hey Madiba, you make me proud. Thanks for your magic!"**

Listen to Gabatshwane's song to Mandela at [www.childrensworld.org](http://www.childrensworld.org)

## Her other hero, Nkosi

Nelson Mandela is Gabatshwane's biggest hero. But she also has another hero: Nkosi Johnson, the boy who fought for the rights of children with AIDS in South Africa to be treated with respect. Nkosi died of AIDS at the age of 12 on 1 June 2001 – the same day that South Africa celebrated International Children's Day. In April 2002 Nkosi was posthumously (after his death) awarded the Global Friends' Award by the children of the world. He also shared the jury children's World's Children's Prize with Maiti from Nepal.

Read more about Nkosi at [www.childrensworld.org](http://www.childrensworld.org)



PHOTO: AP

# to Mandela

were afraid that she, too, was ill and thought that they could be infected by her. But a test showed that she didn't have AIDS. Even so, Gabatshwane remained without friends. When she was little she fell into a tub of boiling water and was burnt on her right arm and leg.

"Everybody at school laughed at me and I was always alone," she says.

When the other children were out playing, she stayed





**Gabatshwane and her big brother Vusi do not only shop for themselves...**

## Prison number became AIDS campaign

Nelson Mandela supports children and families with AIDS through his children's foundation, NMCF, and his 46664 campaign. The numbers come from his time in prison on Robben Island: his prisoner number was 466-64.

Many celebrities, such as Beyonce and actor Brad Pitt, support Mandela's work with AIDS. Mandela's goal is to help children who have lost their parents to AIDS. He doesn't want the world to forget AIDS sufferers and orphans. So he's requested the artists who support the campaign to make a record called 46664.



**...with the money she makes from the music, Gabatshwane buys food for the poor in the village and gives food parcels to her orphaned school friends. The woman receiving a bag full of groceries today is very happy.**



**Now that their parents are dead, it is Gabatshwane's big brother Vusi who takes care of the family.**

at home and listened to the radio. Soon she knew the words to all the popular songs, and one day her brother heard how well she could sing.

### A hug from Mandela

Her big brother Vusi formed a band and called it Gabatshwane, with Gabatshwane as the singer. The first song she wrote was

about Nelson Mandela.

"I wanted to thank him for everything he's done for our country. Life was terrible in South Africa during apartheid, and people died full of rage in their hearts," she says.

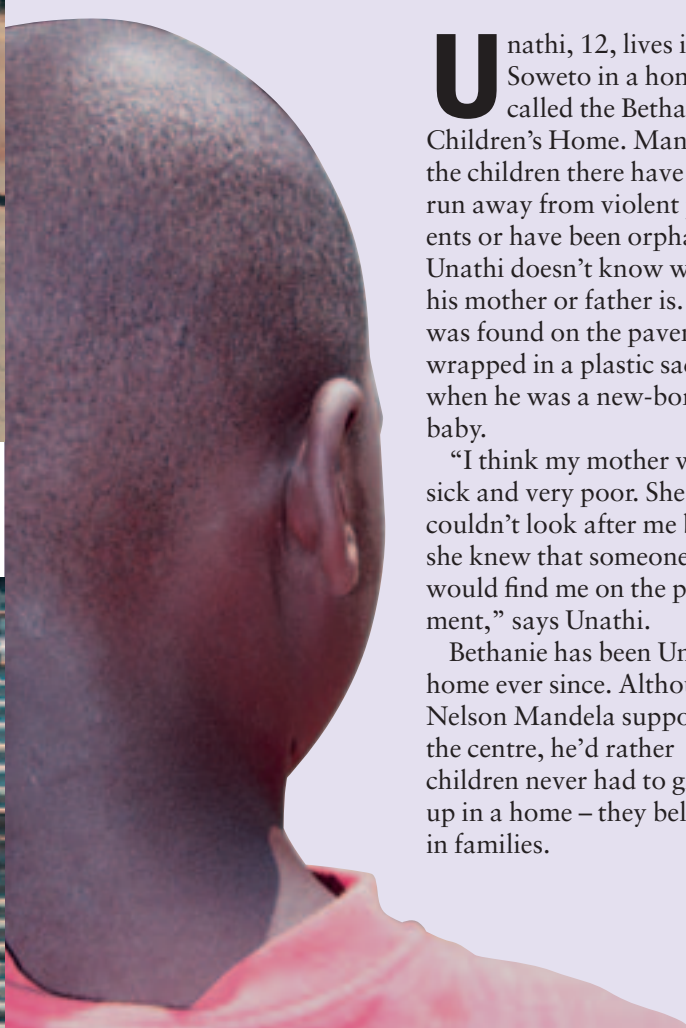
When Nelson heard about Gabatshwane he invited her to sing at a concert in Cape Town. He really liked the song about him and he

thanked Gabatshwane with a big hug. Since then he has helped spread the word about the band, which has resulted in more concerts. Today, Gabatshwane performs nearly every weekend.

"I wish that I could wake up one morning with a heart as good as Nelson Mandela's," says Gabatshwane.

Like Mandela she tries to help children in need. With

# 'Grandad' Mandela helps Unathi



**U**nathi, 12, lives in Soweto in a home called the Bethanie Children's Home. Many of the children there have either run away from violent parents or have been orphaned. Unathi doesn't know who his mother or father is. He was found on the pavement wrapped in a plastic sack when he was a new-born baby.

"I think my mother was sick and very poor. She couldn't look after me but she knew that someone would find me on the pavement," says Unathi.

Bethanie has been Unathi's home ever since. Although Nelson Mandela supports the centre, he'd rather children never had to grow up in a home – they belong in families.

With the support of Mandela's children's foundation, the staff at Bethanie either look for new parents or help to deal with the problems in the children's families so they can move back home. But as yet no one has adopted Unathi. Maybe it's because he has AIDS. But he's not as ill nowadays; four years ago, Unathi and the others began taking AIDS medicine. Before that it had been too expensive.

## Going to summer camp

Unathi and his friends have planted a tree in memory of friends who have died of AIDS. No children have died at the home since they started taking the medicine. Unathi thinks this is great, and says it was Nelson Mandela who helped make the AIDS medicine cheaper.

"Sometimes I don't understand why 'Tata' Mandela is so kind. But it's lucky for us that he is. Otherwise things wouldn't be this good for us," says Unathi and explains that 'Tata' means 'Grandad'.

After school Unathi enjoys roller-skating and playing football or cricket. Then he watches TV and does his homework. In two months' time, during the school holidays, Unathi and his friends will be going on a summer camp – all arranged by Mandela. They're indeed very lucky to have such a kind-hearted grandad! ☺

*(Unathi's name has been changed for this article.)*



the money she earns she buys food for the poor people of the village. She also brings food parcels to her orphaned school friends.

"When my mum died I felt like I was all alone in the world. Nobody should have to go through that," she says.

## Sings about AIDS

Gabatshwane used to hide her scars under long skirts and long-sleeved tops. Now she doesn't bother.

"It's so hot here that you can die from heat stroke. And after all, it's my body!"

says Gabatshwane.

But she still doesn't like it when other children get teased. Especially if it's about AIDS. Gabatshwane thinks that people should be nice to children with AIDS. She tells her classmates that you can't get AIDS just by playing with infected children.

Gabatshwane thinks that AIDS is South Africa's biggest problem, particularly as there isn't enough medicine to go around. Her parents couldn't afford to buy AIDS medicine and when they became ill they

died almost immediately.

"If it goes on like this, the world's population will soon be halved. It makes me mad just thinking about it," says Gabatshwane, who's written a song about AIDS. She usually sings afro-pop, but her song about the children of Iraq is a rap number.

"I saw on TV how the children cried. They'd lost their parents in the war. It made me think what a real pity it is that more people don't have a heart as good as Mandela's." ☺

## Gabatshwane Gumedede, 11

**Lives:** In Letabong in South Africa with my brother and sister. We're orphans.

**Sings:** My own songs about AIDS and Nelson Mandela in Gabatshwane, an afro-pop and rap group.

**Her earnings:** I buy food parcels for orphaned school friends.

**Hero:** Mandela and his good heart. Nkosi Johnson, the boy who fought for the rights of children with AIDS.





# Mandela and the street children

**N**elson Mandela enjoys walking. He likes to get up early in the morning and go out before the sun rises. One morning something significant happened. It was in the days before he became president. He was out walking in Cape Town when he suddenly saw some street children waking up on the pavement.

Nelson went up and talked to them. He had just won the Nobel Peace Prize and had donated a large portion of the prize money to street



children. The boys asked him why he loved them so much. Nelson thought this rather a strange question. He replied that everyone loves children; that's why

all children are loved.

But the boys didn't agree. After all, they lived on the street precisely because no one did love them. Nelson thought this was tragic. He couldn't stop thinking about the boys and wanted to do more to help them.

When he became president in 1994 he started his own children's foundation to help abandoned and orphaned children. Brenda Shongwe and Phule Lechoba are two of the children.



**Brenda Shongwe was eleven when her mother disappeared. Brenda lived alone on the streets of Johannesburg until a social worker found her and took her to a home for street children.**

**"I was really sad. Not once did my mum ever say that she loved me. I thought I was the only child in the whole world who was unloved," says Brenda.**

# Brenda speech to the President



When Brenda's mother disappeared she was forced to live alone on the streets. Now she goes to school and she wants to become a politician and fight to make South Africa a good country for all children.

At the Usindiso Shelter there are hundreds of children who have run away from home or have lost their parents in some way. Although Brenda realised that she wasn't alone after all, it didn't stop her from feeling disappointed and angry.

"I just couldn't understand why my mum didn't want me. She drank and got into fights and sometimes I was kept away from school."

Brenda doesn't have a father either. She's never met him. Her mother didn't want to tell her his name. She eventually found out, however, by then it was too late:

he'd already died.

After Brenda moved into the Usindiso Shelter she started going to school again, but it didn't work out so well. She didn't do her homework. She'd been abandoned by both her mother and her father, and life seemed generally hopeless. She took

painkillers and sleeping pills to forget.

## Cardboard dreams

Everything changed the day Brenda discovered the world of theatre. She was given a part in a musical called "Cardboard Dreams", which was staged at the

Nelson Mandela Theatre in Johannesburg. The lead role was played by the South African TV actor Desmond Dube.

"He used to be a street child, too. When he told us about his life on the street I understood that there's still hope," says Brenda.

The musical is about a girl who lives in a cardboard box on the streets. Whenever she begs for money, the grown-ups tell her to go home to her mother. But the girl is an orphan and doesn't have a mother. It's a very sad story on the whole but it all ends happily for the girl. And that's the most important thing for

*Brenda on Nelson Mandela:*

**"He's amazing. There'll never be another president like him. For me he's already a living legend. When he was released from prison he didn't want revenge, he just said: 'OK, I'm black but I can be friends with anyone'.**

**He's taught us that you can have friends that are white, brown or yellow."**

*Brenda Shongwe, 14, a former street child.*



# Phule – a writer in the m



**Phule (to the left) chats with his school friends. For two years he lived on the streets. The book about Mandela's life inspired him to start writing a book of his own.**

**P**hule Lechoba goes to the same school as Brenda. He's a street child too and for the last four years he has been living at a boys' home in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. His story is similar to Brenda's: his mum drinks and he's never met his dad.

The last time Phule met his mother, she was so ill that he thought she was going to die in front of his eyes. The neighbours phoned for an ambulance, which came and took her away. Today Phule doesn't even know if she's still alive.

Phule had to live on the



Brenda: Life's not about where you've come from but where you're heading.

Today Brenda is really going places; she's doing well at school and has decided to become a politician. She wants to help South Africa

become a better country, and last year she even made a speech in Parliament in Cape Town.

#### **Give us a chance**

"I talked about what it's like to be a street child and asked

the politicians to give us a chance. If adults start to care about us, we'll also have a chance to get on in life."

All the politicians, including President Thabo Mbeki, were so impressed that they gave her a standing ovation. And they asked her to come back and speak again.

Brenda nods: if you want to change something you have to work hard, just like her hero Nelson Mandela has done. Not only has he helped make South Africa a better place for all children, he's also donated money to Brenda and her friends so they can go to school and perform on stage. If it hadn't been for him, Brenda would still be living on the street in a state of despair.

"I don't despair anymore, although I still get sad sometimes. When I see children together with their parents in town it makes me want to cry. Then I quickly think about

Desmond Dube and Nelson Mandela. They've worked so hard to achieve their dreams, and that's exactly what I'm going to do too." ☺



#### **Brenda Shongwe, 14**

**Lives:** At the Usindiso Shelter home for street children in Johannesburg, South Africa.

**Used to be:** A street child.

**My mum abandoned me.**

**Likes:** Drama.

**Hero:** Nelson Mandela.

**Best friend:** Petronella, who moved here from Zimbabwe.

**Is sad:** When I see children with their parents.

## Brenda's friend from Zimbabwe

The next time Brenda gets asked to hold a speech in parliament she'll ask the government to help the children from Zimbabwe. Many of them are orphaned and have fled across the border into South Africa. To Brenda the situation seems terrible. She says that Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe, has ruined everything for the children there.

Brenda's friend Petronella comes from Zimbabwe and also lives at the Usindiso Shelter. But not everybody

gets a place there. Many of the children come to South Africa as illegal refugees. They're frightened that the police will send them back to Zimbabwe, and so they hide on the streets of Johannesburg.

It's no easy life, and the children have to sell illegal things like drugs to get money.

"It's worse for girls. If they can't find a home there's only one way to survive. To become a prostitute and sell your body," says Brenda.

# aking

streets and couldn't go to school. Two years later a social worker found him and asked him if he wanted to go to a home for street children. He did.

"Life without parents is hard. You have to look after yourself the whole time and

know exactly what you want," he says.

And Phule knows exactly what he wants. A year ago he read a biography of Nelson Mandela called *The Long Walk to Freedom*.

"I was so impressed about what he managed to achieve," says Phule, who wants to be just like Mandela.

But Phule doesn't want to be president or a politician.



**"Nelson Mandela is almost like Jesus. He gave half his life to give us a better future. I believe that there's a great deal to be learnt from him."** *Phule Lechoba*



He wants to be an author and write books that can help other people change their lives. He's signed up for a course arranged by the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund to help people learn how to research information

and write.

But Phule has already started. He writes a little every evening and will soon have filled a whole notebook with the stories that he hopes will one day be published as a real book. ☺



Children who live on the streets of Johannesburg.

## Street children disappear

There are at least 10,000 street children in South Africa. Most are black. There are also white kids who've run away from home or who've been abandoned by their parents. Once they lived in different homes. Now black children live there too but during apartheid they weren't allowed to live in the "white" homes.

Under apartheid, the police would beat any black children they saw living on the street in the cities. Street children frequently "disappeared", and sometimes it was the police who'd taken them away and killed them.

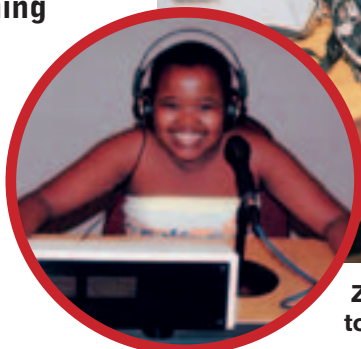
When South Africa became a democracy and Mandela became president several new homes for street children were built. Children can now live together regardless of colour.

Although conditions have improved for South Africa's street children since apartheid, many people believe that HIV/AIDS will increase the number of street children. In five years there could be as many as one million AIDS orphans in South Africa, and many of those who don't find a home will end up on the street.



# Just say no to bullies

“Hey! Yo! Yes, yes, yes! It’s me again!” calls Zanele Gama, 12, into the mike. It’s Saturday morning and the radio show **Rebound** has just started. **Rebound** is broadcast all over the Johannesburg region, and Zanele can hardly wait to have her say. Today’s show is about peer pressure and bullying – something that Zanele knows all about.



**Zanele Gama (to the left, and above with the orange hat) gives ideas on how to make new friends if your existing ones want you to participate in bullying.**

“Listen up! If your best friend tries to make you do something you don’t want to – dump him or her. You can always make new friends,” Zanele tells her listeners.

Zanele isn’t sure exactly how many children listen to their show on Jozi FM each week, but Soweto has more than one million inhabitants so there must be a few thousand, at least.

“That makes me a celebrity,” she laughs.

The best part about radio is that no one can see what she and her friends look like. Only their voices can be heard, which helps the girls pluck up the courage to discuss all kinds of topics, however sensitive. The girls are professional – Nelson

Mandela has arranged for them to attend a course on making radio programmes about children’s rights.

## Thanks for the tip!

They play records too. Zanele is a big fan of pop diva Brenda Fassie, and they all start dancing and singing ‘Yeah, let’s go, let’s go’ around the little studio when the DJ puts on one of her songs. But then it’s time to return to serious matters; it’s these discussions, after all, that make their programme so special.

Zanele sits down at the microphone and tells the listeners about the time her friends tried to get her to smoke. When she refused

they bullied her and told her that she couldn’t be in their gang.

“You know what I did? I stood my ground and made a new friend that respects me for who I am,” she says.

A little later a listener phones in. Her name’s Kutloano and she’s eleven years old. She has a similar problem. Her friend wanted her to steal crayons and pencils from a shop.

“Thanks for the tip,” she says. “Now I have the courage to say no.”

Airtime is running out. Next week’s show will be about children who ‘disappear’ and what happens to them. The DJ, who’s the only adult on the programme,

says that Soweto girls are the bravest because they tackle issues that grown-ups don’t even dare talk about. ☺





The radio girls Kutloano Tsoamotse and Kgomotso Diphoko have a special greeting between friends.

# Nokuphila helps a friend in need

Nokuphila, 12, lives in Soweto and hosts the radio programme Rebound.

“The best thing about Rebound is that you don’t only help children, you also learn a lot yourself,” she says.

One morning her friend was very troubled. She didn’t want to go to school that day. When Nokuphila asked her if she wanted to share her lunch box, she started to cry. Nokuphila realised that something terrible had happened. Her friend said that she’d only tell her if she promised to keep it secret.

Nokuphila promised and her friend told her that some older girls had been trying to make her get a boyfriend. She didn’t want to, but they didn’t listen. The boy was several years older and Nokuphila’s friend was afraid of him.

“I didn’t know what to do,” says Nokuphila. “I’d promised to keep quiet.



**Nokuphila Simelane.**

My friend was afraid that the boy would come after her if he found out she’d told on him.”

After Rebound the following week, Nokuphila knew just what to do. The programme was about where people can turn if they need help. Nokuphila told her teacher and they met the friend in secret (so no one would see). Then the parents, teachers and a police officer spoke to the older girls and the boy. Nokuphila’s friend is now left in peace.

# Hello friend!



The radio girls Lesedi Makoane and Palesa Mphambane have a different greeting.



# A café for everyone

**When Mpho, Constance, Phumeza and Dylan opened a café, they proved something important. “There are some people that still think we are useless just because we’re disabled,” says Mpho Mafazca, 15.**

**M**pho and his friends go to a school for the disabled called Forrest Town in Johannesburg. Mpho has a problem with his neck. It gives him trouble, but he says he can do just about anything. So he wanted to prove it to all those who say that disabled people are useless. Opening up a café next to the school was the perfect answer.

“We don’t only serve coffee and tea, but bake muffins and pies and look after the money too. Everyone is surprised how

well it’s going,” says Mpho.

The café is open every day and has had many celebrity guests. The former world boxing champion, Baby Jake, is Mpho’s favourite.

“Just imagine – I served a world champion! And I didn’t spill a drop!” he says proudly. His big dream is to serve Nelson Mandela. He would be the café’s special guest of honour. He has donated money to their school and has persuaded several large companies to support disabled children. During apartheid there wasn’t one single school for dis-



abled black children.

For Mpho, Constance, Phumeza and Dylan, this is the best school in the world. Phumeza Qwasha is so happy there that she never wants to leave. Mpho,

however, can’t wait to finish secondary school. He has learnt a lot about business at the café and wants to start his own firm – maybe selling cars. ☺