

Mthatha pupil proves world is her oyster

LULAMILE FENI

A pupil from Mqhekezweni village in Mthatha, where Nelson Mandela grew up as a boy, has joined 10 university students from across SA on an exchange programme to Germany to learn about the European nation's history and culture.

Like Qunu and Mvezo, Mqhekezweni is one of the important footprints left by Mandela.

Jongintaba Senior Secondary School grade 11 pupil Andiswa Hlobo has joined 10 youngsters from universities in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape on the Germany trip.

Esihle Ndwangu, a Bachelor of Arts student from Walter Sisulu University, and Mhlahi Nicole Jara, a postgraduate student at the University of Fort Hare, are part of the tour.

The programme is part of a partnership between the Nelson Mandela Museum and Anne Frank House in Lower Saxony, Germany.

The students are attending the Annual Educational International Youth Camp, held at the Anne Frank Haus Museum, which started on Tuesday and runs until September 22.

Hlobo is from Lower Mjika village in Tsolo.

She failed matric in 2021.

"I was disillusioned, angry, disappointed, and I lost hope," she said.

"But I knew I would return to school and my parents encouraged me.

"So this year I returned to the class," she said.

Hlobo is now redoing grade



The JET SET: Eleven South African youth including, Jongintaba Senior Secondary School pupil Andiswa Hlobo, will attend the annual educational international youth camp being held at the Anne Frank Haus Museum in Lower Saxony, Germany from September 9 to 22. Picture: SUPPLIED

11 before tackling grade 12 again.

"This is because I have changed subjects," she said.

"I had been doing physical science and maths because I wanted to be a nurse, but I have since changed my mind.

"I am now doing history and I want to study law.

"I am now much more focused and mature.

"The essay I wrote on our 30 years of democracy as a country and presented to the Nelson

Mandela Museum was applauded by the adjudicators and this is the ticket that [got] me selected for on this trip.

"I feel so humble.

"I still cannot believe that I, a girl from a remote rural area like Tsolo, and a grade 11 pupil who has been back in school for just eight months or less, is in camp among university students, including postgraduate students, all studying and researching the history of a country like Germany.

"This boosts my decision of going back. I made a good decision to come back to school.

"This exposure is strengthening my conviction that education is the key to many doors in life," Hlobo said.

Ndwangu, who hails from Siqikini village in Libode, said: "This is very exciting. Both these countries have been affected by ... apartheid and segregation and it is interesting that youth from these two countries will share experiences and learn

how each country has embraced democracy and dealt with challenges, and what milestones regarding development the Germans have achieved."

Nelson Mandela Museum chief executive Dr Vuyani Boozi said the institution had been collaborating with Anne Frank House since 2007.

"The partnership between the Nelson Mandela Museum and Anne Frank House has benefited more than 200 young South African students.

"Through the existing exchange with the Anne Frank Haus Museum, selected youth from various provinces of SA travel to Germany annually to engage in each other's cultural and social backgrounds, democracies and human rights issues," Boozi said.

The camp will expose the young participants to the atrocities of the Holocaust, helping them to understand the consequences of oppression endured by the Jews under Adolf Hitler.

"The camp seeks to encourage participants to foster social cohesion, cultural tolerance and nation-building within their countries to attain peace, human rights and justice," Boozi said.

The main objective of the camp is to groom young leaders and expose them to the social ills and dangers of the Nazi ideology in Germany, as well as apartheid in SA.

The students will get to visit concentration camps, where millions of people were tortured and killed, and listen to the testimony of survivors.