Freedom Park: National Consciousness

Freedom Park belongs to the South African nation. To ensure public ownership, broadbased consultative processes are not only entered into, but protracted. These consultative processes are ultimately two-pronged. On the one hand, it comprises processes aimed at providing closure to the outcomes of past conflicts, while on the other, instigating a dialogue on the project with the broadest possible sectoral spectrum of organisations in the country.

To provide closure to the outcomes of past conflicts and to compliment the Truth and Reconciliation outcomes, Freedom Park initiated Cleansing and Healing and the Return of Spirits nationally, internationally and continentally. This process culminated in ceremonies where the spirits of those who have died in struggles for humanity and freedom have been brought to be laid to rest at Isivivane within Freedom Park and to transform the individual, group and community pain into a shared national pain.

## Community challenges and purpose of centre

A key Presidential Legacy Project, Freedom
Park was officially launched on 1 June 2000
as a response to the need identified by the
Truth and Reconciliation Commission for
symbolic reparation of past conflicts in the
history of South Africa. It is the product of the
many processes engaged in by Government
since 1994 to create and foster a new
national consciousness of the common legacy
that binds the people of South Africa. The
foundation of Freedom Park is thus based
on the South African nation's reconciliation
process as well as the advancement of the
various rights entrenched in the Constitution
from a heritage perspective.

As you may well know, a visit to Freedom Park allows you to experience our rich and vibrant liberation heritage, history and culture as South

Africans and Africans. Freedom Park is a celebration of the achievement of democracy, founded on the values of human dignity, human rights and freedom. One of the crucial and innovative aspects of Freedom Park is its integration of history, culture and spirituality, all foregrounded on indigenous knowledge systems.

The need to create spaces for critical dialogue, learning and engagement with the youth of this country is centred on the dual mandate of Freedom Park, which is to honour our heroes and heroines in the struggle for freedom and humanity and to foster reconciliation, social cohesion and nation-building in post-apartheid South Africa. Freedom Park has indeed established itself as a hub for research and knowledge in its quest for the emancipation of the African voice.

One of the Park's objectives is to become a major visitor attraction capable of securing substantial numbers of visitors locally, nationally, continentally and internationally. The Park will thus add to the critical mass of internationally known attractions in Gauteng and brand Tshwane as a cultural tourist destination.

## Community engagement opportunities and impact

Underpinning Freedom Park is the articulation of an inclusive, multifaceted heritage that will represent, in a visible, experiential and interactive manner, South Africa's national consciousness, thus substantiating its culture and deepening its identity.

In carrying out its mandate on nation building and reconciliation, Freedom Park, through the protracted consultative process, has developed an interpretive framework that underpins and provides the intellectual structure for all its elements. The framework is based on the following key principles:

- emancipation of the African voice;
- corrective action in rewriting the South African history;
- lifelong learning and social inclusion;

- promotion of "parity of esteem" in official languages;
- foregrounding Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as a way of knowing the world;
- bearing witness to historical events; and
- integrating history, culture and spirituality.

## Below is a list of some community projects that were successfully implemented:

- Youth dialogue in partnership with the Voortrekker Monument and the Thabo Mbeki Foundation
- Solomon Mahlangu fundraising gala dinner
- 67 poems for Mandela in partnership with University of South Africa (Unisa)
- Mahatma Gandhi Freedom Walk
- I Can Be launch
- GALP classic cars
- Soweto Gospel Choir
- Lefofo Primary School visit
- Storytelling festival
- TUKS University of Tourism students research
- 67 minutes 2019
- Learnership programmes
- Community cleaning campaign
- Donations of food parcels
- Dialogues
- Educational programmes
- Involvements of other stakeholders in community involvement
- Donations of reading material

## **Community partners**

Ditsong museums, City of Tshwane
municipality, Marketing Department of
University of Pretoria (UP), Architecture
department UP, TUKS Residence UP, Tshwane
University of Technology (TUT), Investec,
Voortrekker Monument, Breaking down borders
(dialogue) and Growing up without a father
(event and dialogue)

