

Relate Bracelets, Mandela Bangle launch #My67Beads

Relate Bracelets, collaborating with the Mandela Bangle, has embarked on a campaign for national hope and solidarity to mark Mandela Day 2016.



Relate CEO Neil Robinson

The Mandela Bangle, an initiative supported by Zenani and Zindiswa Mandela, supports the Mandela Day Library Schools project. Through the sale of these bangles, old containers are refurbished and stocked to be a library donated to underprivileged schools across South Africa. The Nelson Mandela School Library project, funded by the Mandela Bangle program, aims to change the face of literacy in schools across South Africa. The deployment of refurbished shipping containers converted into libraries has been ongoing since 2011 with more than 80,000 children benefiting daily.

For the past two years, Relate Bracelets has used Mandela Day as an opportunity to celebrate senior citizens and remind the general public of the vital role they play in our society. But this year, the organisation felt the need for something different.

Relate CEO Neil Robinson explains: "South Africa has had a challenging time of it lately – socially, politically and economically. And whilst our country faces many difficulties, I believe there is an underlying spirit of *ubuntu* which is alive and well in millions of us. It is with this belief that we are embarking on the #My67Beads campaign initiative this year to honour Mr Mandela's legacy in helping to build and connect our great nation."

"Connect the beads, connect the nation"

With Relate Bracelets in mind, the campaign calls on South Africans to "connect the beads, connect the nation". Involving the public, celebrities, and corporate partners, Relate has invited individuals to each thread 67 beads, which will then be

joined together with other threads of 67 beads to create one long, united thread. This thread of beads created by a united South Africa will then be transformed into an installation artwork to be unveiled at the V&A Waterfront ahead of Mandela Day.

Founded by Lauren Gillis who recognised that we are all connected, and each of us has the opportunity, responsibility, and privilege to be agents of social change today, Relate Bracelets makes handmade beaded bracelets in support of more than 80 causes. Proceeds from the sale of each bracelet support not only the relevant causes, but also senior citizens in impoverished communities who supplement their pensions by threading the beads. Many of these senior citizens care for their grandchildren and others orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Relate's younger staff members, who close and pack the bracelets, also benefit with training in their chosen fields to further their careers beyond Relate. Relate Bracelets are recognisable by their signature "R" bead, a sign of their transparency and accountability.

With millions of South Africans coming together to each do a little, a lot has been achieved. To date, through the sale of these bracelets, Relate has raised more than R35m for causes related to health, education, conservation, social upliftment, children, and empowerment, and created earning opportunities for more than 350 people.

Bespoke Mandela Bracelet

An additional element of the #My67Beads initiative, through which the public can get involved, will be the launch of a bespoke Mandela Bracelet, made by Relate. Available exclusively at Tourvest stores countrywide, beginning at the end of June, the bracelet will be sold for R67. Proceeds from the sale of these bracelets will go to the Nelson Mandela School Library project. With each bracelet sold, members of the public will also receive a pack of 67 beads so they can also "connect the beads, connect the nation".

The public is also invited to get involved by visiting select Protea and African Pride Hotels across the country where Bead 'n Go stations will be available starting 17 June. At these Bead 'n Go stations packs of beads to be threaded will be available. Additionally, in Cape Town, at the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, public Bead 'n Go activities will be happening from 28 June to 4 July. In keeping with former president Mandela's vision for South Africa, to ensure that this campaign is as inclusive as possible, these bead packs will be available for free.

Leading the way for other South Africans, celebrities like footballer Matthew Booth, former Miss South Africa Nicole Flint, and presenter Tracey Lange, have pledged their support for the campaign and already threaded their #My67Beads. Recognising the key positions they hold in our society as proudly South African brands, Protea Hotels, Nando's, Clicks, Fedex, Deloitte, and the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront have also undertaken to have their leadership and staff thread their #My67Beads in support of the campaign.

For more information on the campaign and further details on how to get involved, go to www.relate.org.za.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>