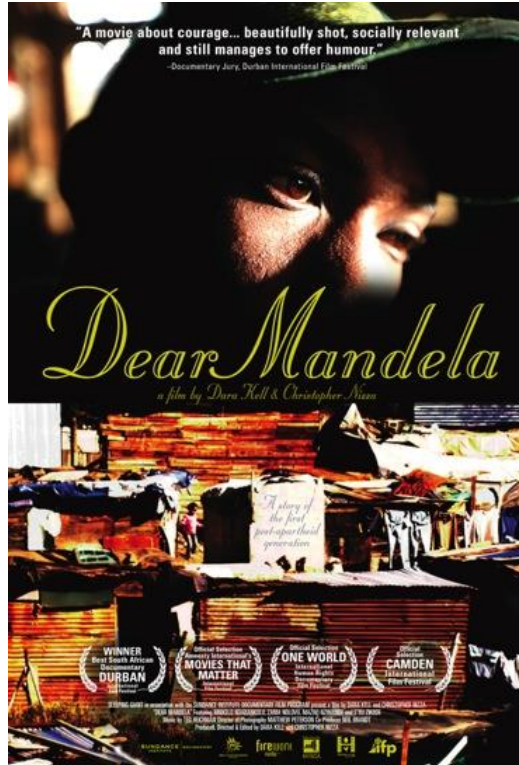


## FILM DISCUSSION GUIDE



### **Before viewing the film:**

1. Do you know who Nelson Mandela was? Write at least one fact about him.

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2. What do you know about poverty in Africa?

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3. Do you know of any social movement that has used the court system in the United States to make a change?

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***During the Film:***

***Identifying Characters***

Match the character with the appropriate description:

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|---------------------------------|---|
| ___ Mnikelo <b>b</b>            | a) Minister of Housing  |
| ___ Dr. Nelson Mandela <b>g</b> | b) Election spokesperson for Abahlali baseMjondolo  |
| ___ S'bu Zikode <b>c</b>        | c) President of the Abahlali baseMjondolo   |
| ___ Zama <b>e</b>               | d) Youngest member of the Abahlali baseMjondolo organization but has a leadership position    |
| ___ Dr. Lindiwe Sisulu <b>a</b> | e) Helps run food distribution program at a community center started by Abahlali baseMjondolo |
| ___ Mike Mabuyakhulu <b>f</b>   | f) Provincial Housing Minister  |
| ___ Mazwi Nzimande <b>d</b>     | g) Former South African president and anti-apartheid revolutionary                            |
| ___ Stuart Wilson <b>h</b>      | h) Lawyer for Abahlali Headquarters in the Slums Act Case                                     |
| ___ Jim Browne <b>j</b>         | i) Journalist, Mail & Guardian  |
| ___ Niren Tolsi <b>i</b>        | j) Lieutenant Police Commissioner   |

***Comprehension Questions***

1. The film begins with a protest that turns violent. What was being protested? Who was doing the protesting? How many people were injured?

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2. How many years was Dr. Nelson Mandela kept in Robben Island according to Mnikelo? Why does Mnikelo say he was there?

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3. Mnikelo shares a Zulu expression about building shacks. What does it mean?

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4. In your own words, what is Abahlali baseMjondolo?

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5. Mnikelo regularly responds to calls from communities facing eviction. What does eviction from the shacks look like? What does Mnikelo promise to do for the evicted person?

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6. Describe the Abahlali baseMjondolo committee meeting. Give at least three details about what you see and/or what is discussed.

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7. Zama's job allows her to work with the shack dwellers. What group is referenced that particularly needs help, that cannot help themselves?

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8. Dr. Lindiwe Sisulu acknowledges the endless struggle against poverty. In your own words, why is poverty still such a large problem and what has the government committed to do to help?

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9. What is the name of the ruling political party in South Africa of which Nelson Mandela was once president? When was the first democratic election?

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10. Why are shacks spray-painted with numbers around election time?

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11. What does Mnikelo write on his ballot?

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12. Why does Mike Mabuyakhulu want to eradicate informal settlements by the year 2014?

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13. Explain the Slums Act in your own words.

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14. What is Mnikelo's opinion of the Slums Act? Be specific.

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15. Who or what are the “Red Ants”?

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16. Why Dr. Lindiwe believe that the Slums Act is constitutional?

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17. Mazwi is discussing the informal settlements in his high school class. What two examples does he cite for why informal settlements are dangerous?

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18. Mazwi’s family is interviewed about their housing situation. His mother says, “We will go to the tins over our dead bodies.” What are the tins and why does she fear being brought there?

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19. What is Apartheid? How is the Slums Act similar?

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20. How long does mike say “transitional homes” are used? How long have some people living in Ridgeview Transit Camp been stuck there?

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21. The Constitutional Court in Johannesburg is presiding over the Slums Act case. How long are they expecting to wait to hear the verdict?

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22. What is Mazwi expected to do when his family celebrates him becoming a man? Does he do it? What does Mazwi consider the responsibility of being a man?

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23. There is a large party at the Kennedy Road Informal Settlement where the Abahlali baseMjondolo are rousing the crowd to be angered at the Slums Act and their living conditions. What does Mazwi do wrong? Why is it wrong? What does Mnikelo do to fix it?

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24. Mazwi must take some time away from the movement to focus on school. What does he want to do next year?

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25. 5 months later, what happens at the Abahlali Headquarters that forces S'bu to go into hiding? Give at least three details.

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26. How do the Police and ANC City Counselor respond to Niren Tolsi's questions about the violent event at Abahlali Headquarters? Who was arrested?

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27. What does Mazwi say happened that night in the settlement?

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28. The Abahlali, wearing primarily red, conduct a peaceful protest at the court to support those arrested. What other major group arrives? What sorts of things do they shout at the Abahlali? How do the Abahlali react?

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29. What famous figure does one newspaper compare S'bu to? How do the men reading the newspaper react?

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30. What is the court's ruling? How do the Abahlali present react?

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***Post-Viewing Discussion Questions:***

1. Why does S'bu Zikode suggest that the Abahlali tackle the problem politically and legally? What other ways might they have dealt with the Slums Act? Would those ways have been as successful do you think?

2. Zama works in part with AIDS orphans. What are AIDS orphans? What help might they need? Why does Zama feel close to them? Do we have a group in the United States that similarly could use a program like those seen in the community center?
3. Zama says that it is difficult to go to school, be a mother and have a job. Is this a problem common throughout the world? Is it a problem at all? Discuss the social concept that a woman must be able to “do it all”.
4. Debate the general issue of informal settlements in and around urban areas. In what ways do you understand the position of the government? In what ways do you understand the position of the shack dwellers?
5. Mnikelo says that “Electricity is life.” The government calls what they do an illegal connection but the communities call it the “peoples’ connections”. Do you think it is wrong for the shack dwellers to hook into the city’s electricity without paying? Do you understand why Mnikelo would say “Electricity is life”?
6. Consider the following quote; “For too long the promise of housing has been downgraded to the forced removal to a transit camp. These transit camps are more like prisons.” Do you agree? Why or why not? Are the transit camps better than the informal settlements? Why?
7. Mazwi introduces himself at college by saying that people look at him and think he is a boy but he was never a boy, he has always been a young man. Why do you think he has this view of himself? Do you agree with his view?
8. Consider the following quote: “You don’t need to be old to be wise. That is why we think we need to show our character while we are still young. So that when your life ends it mustn’t be like a small obituary that said *You were born, you ate, you go to school, you died.* You know when you are dying you must die with credibility. The people must talk about you, especially the good things, saying you were the man amongst the men, not just an ordinary man.” Do you agree? Why? How can this be achieved in *your* life, *your* community, *and your* youth?



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