Our mandate

The institute seeks to address Africa’s development challenges by focusing on the following three strategic pillars:

- **Culture issues**: What is, should be, the role of Africa’s cultures in shaping the development and governance debate?
- **Governance issues**: Are the models of government and governance, that most African countries are trying to operate appropriate for the African?
- **Economic issues**: How does Africa effectively address the issue of closing the development and economic gap that exists between most of Africa and other world regions?

Our core values

- Openness
- Inclusiveness
- Collaboration
- Dialogue
- Rigor

“It is my hope that the Mandela institute for Development Studies (MINDS) will make a real difference in the resolution of the challenges that confront Africa through vibrant and robust debate, interrogating current paradigms and offering new approaches.”

- Nelson Mandela 2010 -
The Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS) established in 2010, emerged out of a simple and rather obvious observation that development efforts in Africa have hitherto failed to meet expectations with respect to social, institutional and economic outcomes in comparison to other regions.

In most African states, it would appear that policy formation and implementation could be greatly enhanced through the creation of an institution that is independent from government and political parties. Such an institution would be resourced to have capacity for formulating policy proposals for public debate in a non-partisan manner.

The central hypothesis in setting up MINDS is that effective and sustainable development can only be achieved if development policies and practices are founded on the cultural heritage, value and knowledge systems and institutions of the people who are the subjects or beneficiaries if the development interventions. MINDS seeks to address the short-, medium- and long-term development challenges in Africa.

Board of Trustees
The current Board is composed of Founding Trustees

- Dr. Nkosana Moyo,
- Mrs. Graça Machel
- Mr. Ali Mufuruki
- Sara Menker
- Jumoke Oduwole

Our focus
MINDS programmes will focus on three thematic areas.

- **African Heritage:** This programme area will encompass all learning about African people and their heritage. The overall aim is to gain a better understanding of ‘Africanness’.

- **Governance:**
  - **Institution Formation/Development:** This programme area will explore effective ways of strengthening African institutions in service to the well-being of citizens.
  - **African Democracy:** This programme area will be used for the advancement of democracy.

- **Economic Development:** This programme will be implemented to generate new perspectives, approaches and models for advancing economic development in Africa, with particular emphasis on broad-based use of African heritage to create ownership of development interventions.

What we do

- **Research:** Undertake and commission all aspects that will lead to a better understanding of ‘Africanness’. This understanding should lead to better results relative to those achieved to date.

- **Dialogues based on research findings:** This is a very central programme for MINDS. Dialogues will provide the opportunity for knowledge generation and dissemination, networking and influencing public policy formulation and practice specifically in the areas of governance, economic development and institution development.

- **Dissemination of knowledge:** Findings from the research will be used either as input into dialogues whose proceedings will be published, or published directly. MINDS will also make existing knowledge more accessible through reviews and consolidation of that knowledge.

- **Networking:** Dialogues will also create a platform for different stakeholders to meet and learn from each other. This is an important channel for dissemination of knowledge and influence of public policy information and practice. MINDS will also facilitate the formation of think tank networks.

- **Fellows in Residence:** MINDs will provide African scholars with an opportunity to spend reflection time as fellows in residence. The fellows will be expected to conduct research into areas of interest to themselves, but relevant to MINDS. Moreover, these fellowships result both in publications and dialogues based on findings of the research.

Our mission
The mission of MINDS is to provide a forum for dialogue, information dissemination and networking, underpinned by rigorous research on the different elements of ‘Africanness’ in order to shape policy and practice on governance, economic development and the evolution of African institutions.

Our vision
The vision of MINDS is to have African societies attain democracy, economic prosperity, social inclusiveness as well as their rightful place in the global community on the basis of a keen self-awareness.