

Time out	Source	Content
0:07	Narration	I am in Makhanda, a small town in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. I am meeting Masande Mthethwa who studies at Rhodes University
0:21	Music	<i>A Zulu cultural song plays in softly.</i>
0:20	Masande	<i>Says her clan names</i>
0:29	Narration	I have come to interview Masande Mthetha about her experience of being part of Umkhosi WoMhlanga also known as the Reed Dance, from the year 2014 to 2018.
0:55	Masande	I am Masande Mthethwa from KZN kwaNongoma. I started going to UMkhosi WoMhlanga when I was 15 years old. it was my personal choice. I used to envy my peers in my village who were part of uMkhosi Womhlanga. They carried themselves of a certain way, they were well groomed, had good morals and respect. I liked it, so I decided to also join. Also, my grandmother kept on talking about it, so that also grew my interest to attend.
1:31	Narration	UMkhosi WoMhlanga is a ceremony celebrated by the Zulu nation of South Africa every September. The purpose of this event is to celebrate traditions, culture and the purity of maidens of the Zulu people. And even though it is a Zulu ceremony, over 30 thousand girls from all over South Africa and in Africa attend this event. The main event of this ceremony takes place at the royal palace, eNyokeni in KwaNongoma and the subsequent part takes place in eMachobeni Royal Residence in Ngwavuma.

1:47	Actuality	<i>A clip from UMkhosi WoMhlanga</i>
1:51	Narration	But before this big event, maidens undergo selection and training
2:20	Masande	Few months before we attend uMkhosi Womhlanga in September. We first attend practice where you are examined if you are really a virgin. The reason for that is because only virgin girls are allowed to join uMkhosi WoMhlanga because it is a campaign to celebrate a girl's purity. So, after they have identified the virgin girls, they then give them dates to come back for bootcamps.
2:23	Zisanda	Tell me about your first time being examined.
3:23		My first time, even though I was a virgin I was scared. I was with my four friends, but we got inside one by one. So, you get inside, you see a few old ladies who are sitting down and have pillows in front of them. Then you go to one who will instruct you to lay on the pillow and open your legs. And then the lady will examine you. If you are a virgin, the lady ululates after examining you, if you are not a virgin, they fine you because they believe you are wasting their time.
3:33	Narration	After the examination of the maidens, those confirmed to be virgins are given a date to come back for a bootcamp where they are taught how to behave and dance.
3:55		The bootcamps are usually over the weekend before the Reed dance event depending on the village you are in. So, there you meet other maidens because we are maidens from different places and learn how maidens from different places are taught, their Zulu dances and songs. There, we are taught how a girl should behave and how to do Zulu traditional dances.
4:01	Zisanda	So, you are taught how to behave when you finally attend the Reed dance?
4:20	Masande	No, you are just given life lessons, I guess. We are taught how to dance for the ceremony of course, but the teachings are just to

		develop you and guide you as a girl child as to how you have conduct yourself.
4:37	Zisanda	Could you please mention the teachings you received at the bootcamp as to how a girl child should carry herself?
	Masande	When I was still attending, we were told that a girl is only allowed to break her virginity with her husband. A girl should be respectful. A girl does not drink alcohol, a girl does not smoke. You should love your body.
5:07	Zisanda	Did the teachings you received at UMkhosi WoMhlanga clash with the teachings you received at home?
5:26	Masande	No, they did not. They were almost the same, they complemented each other. It's just that in UMkhosi WoMhlanga they made me practice it. At home they only spoke telling me that a girl should love her body, must not have multiple sex partners.
5:42	Narration	After the maidens' finish attending the bootcamps they, wait for the big day. On their last day at the camps, they are given a list of traditional clothes that they need to buy. They will wear these clothes on the big weekend of the Reed Dance. Colours of the attires vary depending on the village the maiden is from.
6:47	Masande	We have allocated buses that will take us to eNyokeni. At eNyokeni, there are tents put in place there for maidens to sleep in. Some maidens arrive there on Thursday night, and others on Friday. The first day which is Friday, we put our clothes on our tents and then we go to greet the Royal family. They sit on a field, so we go there to greet them. We greet then dance for the royal family; we do everything that we were taught at the bootcamps. Some members of the royal family choose wives amongst us while we are dancing.
7:18	Actuality	<i>Girls singing Zulu songs (Masande speaks over the song)</i>
7:12		After that we go back to our tents. Then the next day, which is Saturday, it's the day for the main event.

		On the day of the ceremony, we go to the river to bath early in the morning. The river is under the bridge so people who pass there see us. We strip naked and bath while people are passing by and taking photos and videos.
7:22	Actuality	<i>Water splashing</i>
7:26	Zisanda	You do not feel insecure or exposed now that everyone, even strangers passing by can see you?
7:42	Masande	No. At the bootcamps we are told that we are virgins we should be proud of our bodies. Another thing that made me feel free, and I think I speak for every girl who was once a maiden. You feel good by seeing other body types and girls who are just comfortable with their bodies. So, in that process you also get to have body positivity.
7:51	Narration	After the maidens' bath at the river, they then head back to their tents to get dressed and then after, they head to the royal palace. They are led by a princess, the king's daughter.
8:20	Masande	We wear our traditional clothes. But they vary depending on the village you are from. Us, from KwaNongoma, we wear red and white, a red skirt and white top and then beads on your head, arms, waist and sometimes on your legs., and then have your boobs out then we head to the royal palace carrying Reeds. when we reach the Royal house, we present the Reeds to the King and then processed to the stadium where the King will address us, and we perform in.
8:51	Actuality	<i>A plays a clip fromUMkhosi WoMhlanga and the king talking about the event.</i>
8:59	Zisanda	So now you are there in the stadium there are a lot of people do you not feel somehow insecure or unsafe because your boobs are outside for everyone to see?

9:10	Masande	No. In the tents when we are dressing, we are told the royal palace is a safe space. The older women tell us that we do not need to wear panties if we do not want to because we are virgins, and no one can do anything to us because no one gets an erection while attending the ceremony.
9:17	Narration	These days, Masande no longer attends UMkhosi WoMhlanga. She feels that the teachings she had received from UMkhosi WoMhlanga were enough for her to face the world.
9:29	Masande	Now, I no longer attend UMkhosi WoMhlanga. I felt as though they had given me all the teaching that I needed to live my life as a young woman So, for me it was time to face the world as a young woman without my matron's guidance, but with her teachings. I stopped started my University. I was 17 years and I had just moved here to the Eastern Cape to be a Student here in Rhodes University. So, it clashed with my school calendar. So, I just watch it on television now.
9:37	Narration	Nevertheless, Masande believes that UMkhosi WoMhlanga was the best way for her to learn how a girl should behave. It was an important part of her transition to being a young woman.
9:48	Masande	UMkhosi WoMhlanga did not only groom us to stay virgins. They also encouraged us that when we start participating in sexual activities to use protection and not have multiple sex partners so that we do not get diseases or infections. Those teachings have groomed me and gave me good morals. Even today they still live with me I do not want to lie, UMkhosi WoMhlanga was one of the best experiences of my life. I found friendships, we get built as girls and how we which carry ourselves in societies. I am the woman I am today because of the teachings I got from UMkhosi WoMhlanga. I thank those ladies for making me the woman I am today. I wish a lot

		of young girl could join UMkhosi WoMhlanga and be moulded like I was and get the good morals that I have received.
9:55	Narration	This is a story is a story of Masande Mthethwa, who in her teenage years decided to make a brave choice and join UMkhosi WoMhlanga because she saw the programme as a good structure to mould and groom her. Indeed, she got exactly what she wanted and more. Now Masande is a proud product of the UMkhosi WoMhlanga who wishes that young girls could also join so that they can get to be moulded as she was.
10:01	Credits	The audio used on this clip was taken from iTV Yabantu and from a song by Mfazi Omnyama called Ngisebenzile mama. I am Zisanda Solwandle. Thank you so much for listening