

'Forgotten' Voices in the Present

Alternative, post-1994 oral histories from three poor communities in South Africa



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Alternative History Project – South African History Archive

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By Dr. Dale T. McKinley & Ahmed Veriava

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, to the South African History Archive (SAHA) and its former Director, Piers Pigou. SAHA is a courageous and progressive non-governmental organisation that, over the years, has been at the forefront of researching, recording and archiving the activities and lives of ordinary South Africans and those who continue to wage struggles for political freedoms and socio-economic equality and justice. Besides its immensely productive and useful research/archival work, SAHA has also taken the lead in the struggle for public access to information as part of deepening societal accountability of both the government and the private sector. We would especially like to acknowledge the unflagging support, assistance and patience of members of the SAHA staff: Olga Pickover, Catherine Kennedy, Peta Song, Fritz Schoon and Charlotte Young. The expertise, insight and feedback of the following individuals as this project progressed over the last two years was immensely useful and greatly appreciated: Prishani Naidoo, Noor Nieftagodien, Phil Bonner and Ineke van Kessel. The enthusiasm and hard work of our community liaisons/translators – Emmanuel Mokgoga, Bramage Sekete, Bafana Makhanya and Joseph Matutoane – was central to the interviewing process and ultimate success of the project. Without the financial support of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (South Africa office) and the Sephis Programme of the International Institute for Social History (Amsterdam), the project would never have proceeded. And last, but by no means least, all of the residents of the

Maandagshoek, Rammolutsi and Sebokeng communities who gave of their energy and time to participate in the project and openly share their life stories/experiences and views.

Context and purpose

The key impetus behind this project is a desire to contribute to an ‘alternative history of the South African transition’. ‘Alternative’ in the sense of offering a different kind of history than that which has constituted the dominant trope of South Africa’s historiography since the democratic breakthrough of 1994. As such, our main purpose is to produce a collection of individual oral histories from residents in selected poor communities that can constitute a meaningful representation (‘collection of stories’) of South Africa’s post-1994 political, social and economic history as lived and experienced by the oppressed and marginalised majority.

The fact is that South Africa’s post-1994 history has been largely constituted as a ‘history from above’, created and told from the perspectives and experiences of a small and powerful minority. It is a history that predominately emanates out of the institutional frameworks and processes within which elites operate, constantly being told through the voices and agencies of those who possess political, economic, social and cultural power and position. Effectively then, it is a ‘history’ of, by and through an elite that relates mainly to state and corporate institutions, elitist societal processes and macro-nationalist narratives. It’s telling has, and continues to be, constantly refracted through the lens of the pre-1994 past (i.e., the ‘liberation struggle’, the negotiations process and/or leading figures and movements in them).

The counter-desire is to provide a ‘history from below’, an alternative to this elitist construction and telling, a history that can capture a strong representation of individual and community perspectives and experiences of the majority of South Africans who are politically marginalised, economically oppressed and socially forgotten. It is an attempt to give ‘direct voice’ to those who have been marginalised and/or excluded from the production and telling of South Africa’s post-1994 history. Here, those voices are not solely ‘seen, heard and told’ as the ‘public’ responses of the poor to practical exigencies (as has been the dominant case since 1994) but come directly and

voluntarily from the very space and place within which such voices are themselves constructed, experienced and related .

However, it is not only South Africa's post-1994 'history' that is problematic. On a more theoretical/analytical note it would appear, if available research and literature is anything to go by, that South African 'history' itself is presumed to be something that relates predominately to the pre-1994 era. It is as if, 1994 drew a line across the 'map' of historical discourse/narrative and understanding, that the 'new' South Africa does not belong to the country's overall exegesis of history since it is a 'story' that is unfolding and whose only 'identification' is its beginning. Analytically then, the post-1994 period, since it remains fluid and 'contemporary' (in the classical historical sense), is thus seen as having no end and therefore no basis for enjoying historical status.

Further, and in specific relation to oral history, the serious lack of post-1994 oral history studies/research points to a serious gap in the theoretical and practical approach to, and understanding of, oral history itself. In other words, it is as if oral history is something that only can apply/be applied to the 'forgotten' past, with the method of orality being the mechanism to revive and tell that 'forgotten' history.

A literature search/review of scholarly and other research work relating to both pre and post-1994 oral histories of the poor/working class individuals and communities, social movements and organisations is most instructive. Literature that could be legitimately characterised as 'oral history' is predominately located within the pre-1994 period. While there are several relevant works that have been conducted and published in the post-1994 period, the central subject matter is taken with issues and struggles that occurred in the period prior to 1994, with particular emphasis on the period from 1976-1994. Additionally, the focus of most of this literature is on one geographical (e.g., a particular community or area), organisational (e.g., a specific community/political structure) and/or social (e.g., a group of individuals with common experiences or relations of life) 'unit' of analysis. Official government documents relating to projects, problems and interaction with/in some poor communities etc. do exist but these are not, by and large, constitutive of any meaningful history of the community since 1994.

While there is a sizeable literature dealing with the political, social and strategic character and struggles of various social movements and organisations in poor communities in the post-1994 period, none of this can be seriously classified as falling under the methodological rubric of oral history. Much of this literature derives from advocacy and academic work by participants in, and observers of, such movements/ organisations and is predominately analytical in content and relies heavily on written ‘histories’. It should also be noted that the ‘targets’ of this literature are politically and socially active individuals and movements/community organisations who are engaged in active social and political struggles, mainly centred around the delivery of basic services such as water, land, housing, education, health etc. What then this reveals clearly, is the general dearth of literature that would provide sustained comparison with the purpose, approach and content of this project. Annexure ‘A’ (included at the end of this publication) provides a select bibliography that was consulted during the course of the project.

All of this raises several fundamental issues/questions: Where does more recent history (in this case, South Africa’s post-1994 social, political, cultural and economic etc. history) fall in relation to the telling and capturing of history itself?; Is not history a ‘thing’ that becomes history as it happens and is thus best understood, shared and has impact, not as something that has already happened but that remains in motion, from one ‘history’ to the next?; Can oral history be solely applied (as a methodological tool) to an ‘alien’ or ‘forgotten’ past that can likewise, only be resurrected/told through the oral genre? What about contemporary memory and experience counting as history and being related through oral testimony/stories as a means of ensuring that it does not become (generically) ‘alien’ and is not ‘forgotten’?; If ordinary people are not encouraged (and facilitated) to tell their stories as they have been/are happening, does this not point to some kind of inherent desire to create a ‘history’ that can then be ‘told’ at a later stage, when it has no impact other than as an act of, and exercise in, academic memory recording and societal remembrance.

This project implicitly confronts such issues/questions. It is both useful and honest to directly record and ‘tell’ how people make their own truths and their own meanings of history, wherever and whenever that history is to be found/located. This is especially the case in relation to poor

communities in the post-1994 era, where the human/social relationships engendered by marginalisation and poverty create a popular, individual and collective ‘public’ memory of life – a ‘living heritage’. This project does not suffer from the problem of ‘forgetting’ precisely because the history recorded and ‘told’ is being lived in very meaningful and practical ways.

The present is the lens through which narrators view their past – this project thus allows for that connection to be immediately linked and real – i.e., there is an inter-connectedness that will be there which is most often not the case when dealing with the more distant past/history. The reality is that oral ‘traditions’ undergo change, located in things such as physical security, material well-being, social dislocation and shifting socio-economic relations within/amongst the community and external influences/impacts. In other words, historical change itself is crucial to understanding oral history.

Approach and scope

History, and more particularly recent history, is a contested concept and reality. In whatever way it is conceptualised, accessed, told and recorded, there are universal questions/challenges. How and why are certain individuals ‘chosen/not chosen’ to tell their stories (gender, race, class)? Can there be a separation of personal stories from the broader socio-economic and political narratives/histories that might be dominant at the time of telling? How might the positionality and purpose of those doing both the accessing/recording and telling, inform the character of the subsequent interaction and content of what is told? There might also arise the issue of negative past experiences with researchers/historians and how this affects the ways in which stories are shared/told. Can oral ‘texts’ be treated as raw material that will necessarily yield historical information that goes beyond a simple historical narrative?

In this project, we have not tried to ‘run away’ from these crucial questions/challenges. From the beginning, we have been completely open and upfront with all involved about who we are, what we are trying to do and why we are doing it. We did not, and do not, present our project as representing the full panorama of post-1994 lived experience and views of the poor majority in South Africa. Likewise, we make no claim that these life stories constitute a particular historical

‘truth’, simply that they are living ‘voices’ that have largely been ‘forgotten’ and which form part of a history that has been so selectively constructed and told.

There are, and will always be, competing interests, perspectives and experiences, and thus histories told even when it might appear that those sharing/telling their histories are more socially and economically homogenous (i.e. within a poor community). As such, those interviewed in each of the three poor communities we chose for this project, represent a variety of voices from within that community and cut across age, gender, social status, work situation and political position/affiliation.

Given limited human and financial resources, it was never going to be possible to include a large number of ‘target’ communities and equally, a much larger number of interviewees in those communities. While doing so would certainly have provided a greater quantity of histories/stories, we do not think that this is necessary in our attempt to ‘capture’ a representational cross-section of ‘voices’ from poor communities in post-1994 South Africa that cover rural, urban and peri-urban realities. In the context of the identified constraints, we felt that the best way to go about this was to identify a community from each of these three realities that encompasses (‘represents’) differing but crucial/key historical, geographical and socio-political ‘characteristics’ of the post-1994 period.

Those ‘characteristics’ include, but are not wholly limited to, issues of: land (its ownership/distribution, usage and associated relations of production); basic services (availability, affordability and provision); social/productive and representational relationships with/to the state and the private sector; levels and content of political and social activism (vis-à-vis the dominant political trends/activities in both pre and post-1994 South Africa); and, geographical location/ethnographic make-up. Underlying all of these is the larger issue of the ways in which the development of the specific community has been effected by the dominant (macro) post-1994 political and socio-economic trajectory and how this development is linked to the pre-1994 character of that community. It is axiomatic that there are many poor communities across South Africa that encompass such ‘characteristics’, so the choice of targeted communities should be seen as a selected, representative sampling.

The first phase of the project was a ‘scoping’ exercise. This involved brief, on-site visits to each of the three selected communities in order to identify and liaise with community organisations/structures and some residents, as well as choose a community liaison. This liaison then became responsible for assisting in identifying a cross-section of community residents and organising for future interviews with them (and when necessary, simultaneous translation during the interview). In the second phase, much longer on-site visits were made to each community to conduct in-depth interviews with those residents previously identified as well as to capture additional video footage of the community and its surrounding areas. Prior to the commencement of each interview the narrator signed a consent form agreeing to participate in the project and giving permission for both audio and visual recording. Narrators were able to do the interview in the language of their choice (when necessary, simultaneous translation into English was provided by the community liaison/translator). All interviews were recorded both on a digital audio recorder and on a DV-camera

A third phase was given over to a second round of interviews with selected individuals chosen from the first round. A fourth phase involved a brief return visit to each community where those interviewed (and, in some cases family members) were provided with a hard copy of their interview and shown a draft version of the video documentary alongside selected audio-visual excerpts from their interviews. A feedback discussion ensued which then informed the final (fifth) phase of production of both this publication and the documentary.

Interviews were conducted using the ‘Life History Method’. This method seeks to conduct the interview more as a conversation, with any specific, directed questions put to the narrator flowing from the general conversation and/or issues the narrator’s raises. Within the context of the narrator’s post-1994 life/ history, this allows the individual to better define and shape the story that is being told. Annexure ‘B’ at the end of this publication contains the ‘interview guide’ that we used.

Over the course of an eighteen month period, we conducted a total of fifty five (55) separate interviews. Of those, eight (8) were second round or return interviews. All interviews were

conducted in 2007-2008. Where narrators gave interviews in a language other than English, such interviews were later transcribed into English from the original audio recording. The breakdown of interviews in each community was as follows:

- Maandagshoek (rural community in Limpopo) – seventeen (17) first round interviews and two (2) second round interviews
- Rammolutsi (peri-urban/small town community in Northern Free State) – fourteen (14) first round interviews and three (3) second round interviews.
- Sebokeng (large urban community in Gauteng) – sixteen (16) first round interviews and three (3) second round interviews

Outcomes

- a) Written archive and publication: As far as we are aware the project has produced, for the first time in the post-1994 era, a formal and open archived collection of such oral histories, housed with SAHA, which is now available for researchers, policy-makers, academics and ordinary South Africans. This written archive is a modest contribution to ‘contesting’ and supplementing the existent ‘history’ of the South African transition and provides a foundation upon which further – linked - advocacy, research and oral history work can be pursued. It is our intention to make as much of this archive available online.

This publication itself is an attempt to provide a more popular and accessible representation of the full (written) archived oral histories. Here, selected excerpts from the collection of interviews have been organised according to each ‘target’ community from which they were taken and further highlighted by reference to key subject matters. An index also provides a more easily referenced guide to ‘accessing’ these subject matters. Besides all those involved in this project, the publication will be made available (in both hard copy and dv formats where applicable) to key government departments at various levels in South Africa, non-governmental organisations, research institutes, libraries/resource centres, individual researchers/activists, social movements/community organisations (the key focus will be in South Africa but will also include a selection from abroad).

- b) DV archive and documentary: While written versions of the oral histories recorded can undoubtedly contribute significantly to the history of the South African transition being made today, and to the ways in which the individuals and communities involved in the project imagine and conduct themselves, there is a lot that written histories foreclose in their re-presentation of oral histories, having limited choices available in terms of what the act of writing permits. Recent experience has illustrated how other forms of media, such as video, often allow for information and experiences to be shared amongst much wider audiences, with much greater appeal and effect, and often serve to complement the written word. Video records not only serve as a 'living' archive of events and ideas, but also provide a space through which histories may be made to speak differently in and to the present.

A video archive of all interviews, alongside the written one, is also now available through SAHA. Additionally, a documentary has been produced which brings together key components of selected interviews, alongside additional footage, as another way of 'telling' the stories recorded. It is hoped that this documentary provides a powerful alternative visual history of the transition that can counter mainstream versions which tend to silence, sensationalise, or criminalise 'voices' of the poor and of those critical of the project of nation-building and reconciliation. Likewise, we hope that it will provide a means through which people can interact with their own histories as collectives and use these visual representations for their own purposes of mobilisation/strategising, and so on. The documentary (alongside additional excerpts from selected interviews) will be placed on a dv and distributed in conjunction with this written publication. It is our intention to make the documentary available online as well as to be shown at public screenings.

- c) Information requests: Flowing from the interviews and trips to each community, a list of issues/areas related to possible information requests (under the aegis of the 'Promotion of Access to Information Act' and directed at various levels of government as well as specific private sector actors) was compiled. Such requests relate, and are directly linked,

to issues and challenges raised during the individual interviews with specific attention being given to the needs and struggles of the targeted communities as evinced through the oral histories collected. While there have already been several information requests submitted – through SAHA - in respect of the Maandagshoek and Rammolutsi communities, this will be an ongoing area of work which can hopefully assist, in very practical ways, the targeted individuals/communities in their ongoing struggles and activities as well as contribute to more transparent and deeper relations of democratic accountability and practice between poor citizens and those state/private sector actors who represent/engage with them.

A note on presentation

When dealing with almost six hundred (600) pages of interview material, detailing a wide variety of life experiences and personal views, it is extremely difficult to make choices about selection and organisation. Given that each community has its own distinct history and character, we have chosen to organise the selections according to community (as they were visited). We hope that this allows the uniqueness of the ‘story’ of each community, and the individual residents, to come through whilst simultaneously reflecting both the diversities and commonalities of life experiences/stories of individuals within as well as across/between each community.

Every individual interviewed (and in a couple of cases, a group of individuals) has been included. Clearly though, some individuals have a great deal more to say than others while some are able to express themselves better. We have tried to reflect this reality in the specific selection of quotes from each of the interviews, while at the same time being as inclusive as possible. Every quote taken from each individual interview is ‘identified’ by a distinct heading related to the key theme-issue and/or view contained therein.

Like any life story, the selections here are best read, from within each community section, from beginning to end – there are both visible and invisible threads that connect them together. These are stories of the past, the present and the future. There are old stories, new stories and stories in the making and they must be told.

CHAPTER TWO

Maandagshoek

Community profile

The community of Maandagshoek is located approximately 30 kilometres west of the small town of Burgersfort in the south of Limpopo province (this area is part of what is historically known as Sekhukuneland and was also formally part of the apartheid homeland of Lebowakgomo). Several thousand people inhabit this community, the vast majority of whom rely on small-scale farming or state grants to survive. In the early-1990s platinum was ‘discovered’ on land in the community and for the last ten years two large and extremely profitable mines (Modikwa and Tweefontein) have been in operation, despite the fact that there was no meaningful consultation with the community and most employees of the mines come from outside the community. As a result, relations between large sections of the community and the mines (which are jointly owned by Anglo-Platinum and African Rainbow Minerals) have been mostly hostile. In the last few years, other mining companies have been active in prospecting for further platinum deposits in the community. Unemployment is extremely high and the state of basic services in most of the community is deplorable. Like many rural areas with similar pasts, the community is formally governed by a district municipality (located in Burgersfort) but informally governed by traditional chieftainship authorities who consider the community’s land to be held in collective ‘trust’. The ANC is dominant in the area but there is also the presence of smaller political ‘players’ such as the UDM and regional (Limpopo-based) parties.

Article on Maandagshoek

The Development Jump of Capital ... How to further impoverish and disempower a poor rural community

The Maandagshoek community, nestled in a valley just outside Burgersfort (a booming mine town that straddles the Mpumalanga-Limpopo border), is one of the richest places on the planet. Here, where platinum rises up from the bowels of the earth to empower a new breed of capitalist, the people of this valley still wait for the illusive dream of a 'better life' for all'.

In the heart of Maandagshoek, lies one of South Africa's most profitable mines - Modikwa Platinum Mine - established in 1999 as a joint venture between Patrice Motsepe's African Rainbow Minerals and Anglo Platinum. Publicly presented as the poster child of a Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) that supposedly marries capital investment with the meaningful development/ empowerment of the surrounding community, the apposite reality is that Modikwa is a classic case of a different kind of BBBEE – Broad Based Black Economic Exploitation.

In theory, Modikwa is supposed to represent the kind of capital investment – in this case, in a 'historically disadvantaged' rural community – that brings with it the full spectrum of associated developmental benefits (i.e., social, economic, cultural etc.). However, the key assumption underlying this theory – that invested capital will flow down into, and through, the community – is a chimera. As well-known political economist James Ferguson points out in his recent work on globalised capital, "the movements of capital cross national borders, but they jump from point to point ... (they) do not cover the globe, but connect discrete points on it. Capital is globe-hopping, not globe-covering." When placed within the context of the core rationale for the South African state's overall approach to socio-economic development – i.e. that the state should not deliver directly but rather pursue development through the facilitation of private capital investment – the results of the kangaroo character of larger-scale capital investment becomes all too apparent.

In rural areas of South Africa, like Maandagshoek, the nature of the capital investment is most always a mining operation, so it is the mine that effectively takes the place of the state. Such developmental substitutionism is further enhanced when the mining operation comes with its initial BEE credentials, and with the promise of further BBBEE initiatives to benefit the

surrounding community, as is the case with Modikwa. Residents logically orient towards the mine and it is the mine which then becomes the central focus of the community's and, by proxy, the state's developmental expectations.

In order to 'meet' such expectations, Modikwa quickly rolled out its BBBEE programme in the form of two Section 21 companies and a host of so-called 'developmental' companies. Ostensibly designed to establish 'joint-ownership' of the mine with the neighbouring community and to provide job-creation through the mine's subsidiary activities, these BBBEE efforts just as quickly 'disappeared' down the proverbial mine-shaft. As the Maandagshoek Development Committee, the only body that can legitimately claim to represent the collective interests of the Maandagshoek community, recently stated in a letter to ARM's CEO, K.S. Mashalane: "The section 21 companies are toothless powerless and unaccountable, they are controlled by the mine which has a complete monopoly over knowledge and skills. The companies are not at all independent and they only function through ARM's management and control."

These are not idle allegations by a minority group of trouble-makers, as ARM management has, with such self-assured dismissiveness, repeatedly claimed. After spending nearly two weeks in Maandagshoek interviewing a cross-section of community residents, it became clear that the overwhelming experience/feeling is one of complete anger and disillusionment with Modikwa and its BBBEE initiatives. The recent wave of vigorous and hostile community opposition to the mine and its various operations – opposition which has included the burning of mine equipment and active mobilisation around Modikwa's conscious efforts to divide and confuse the community through its patronage of some local chiefs and politicians – provides ample evidence.

The practical, developmental inheritance of Modikwa's seven year-old investment residence can be 'seen' everywhere. Where there are decent roads, all lead to the mine – the rest are little better than widened cow tracks. Most clean/piped water points, accompanied by Modikwa-built water towers emblazoned with the ironic moniker 'Modikwa Cares' – and which are supposed to be within a 200m reach of all residents - are broken. So, large numbers of people still access their water from polluted streams, which they share with their animals. Many houses are straining from cracks caused by explosions from mine operations. Previously plentiful grazing

lands have either been taken over by the mine or are slowly dieing from incessant environmental degradation. Community residents working for the Section 21 companies are paid a casualised pittance. One such resident we interviewed, who works as a full time, qualified winch operator at the mine, takes home R1200 a month.

The reality is that the local community, for Modikwa's capitalists, is completely peripheral to the logic of their investment schema – i.e. making as much money as possible and spiriting it away as fast as possible. The elusive promise of co-ownership, meaningful job creation and trickle-down development for the community, held out by Modikwa's BBBEE initiatives, is all the more illusory precisely because the community has no real status in the investment cycle, other than as a politically convenient bit-part actor. It is a role that neatly fits with the state's developmental discourse – i.e., the community as a conduit for social citizenship. The catch is of course, that the 'social' is missing from the 'citizenship'.

Remember the name Maandagshoek. There can be few places in our country in which the 'development jump' of capital, ably facilitated by the state and fuelled by so-called BBBEE programmes, represents the degree to which what is left of the social, economic and cultural well-being of poor, rural communities is being systematically destroyed. And remember the name Modikwa – it could soon come to represent the 'world class' symbol of South Africa's developmental path.

By Dr. Dale T. McKinley & Ahmed Veriava - an edited version of this article was published in *Business Day* on 2nd August 2007 under the title – 'Singing the Maandagshoek blues'

Selections from interviews

Isaac Kgwete (Chief of Maandagshoek)

Brief biography: *Isaac is forty seven (47) years old, married with several children. He was born in Maandagshoek and went to work in Witbank for many years as a forklift operator. When his uncle (who was Chief at the time) passed away in 2003, he returned to Maandagshoek and was installed as Chief by a section of the community. He works with Joyce Kgwete and together they oppose her estranged husband's claims to traditional leadership. He has become very active in opposing Modikwa mine's Section 21 companies and in negotiating new agreements for future mining in the community.*

On growing up in area in 1970s: “At the time I was growing up life was great because the old government of apartheid used to give us what we wanted, like eating for free at school. There was no problem because they used to treat us nicely, everything we wanted we got. Even the roads were better because they used to keep them clean.”

“... we had equal assets, we all had lands for farming, equal cows, and goats, and you would not even know that we were a Chiefs family.”

On expectations/feelings after 1994: “After '94 we thought that there were going to be changes which were going to affect us, our children and future children to come, but after voting I have seen no changes. We feel oppressed more than when the white people were in power. The white people used to oppress us but at times leave us alone ... the black government oppresses and never stops to oppress ... from '94 look at how our land is, our people have no RDP houses, no roads, no water to drink. No, today it's worse because people have taken over our land without our permission and have promised to pay us, which they have never.”

On socio-economic conditions in rural but mineral-rich areas like Maandagshoek: “Look at how burnt our lands are, it has mines which make money, these mines make more money than coal mines, by far. Coal is just used to cook, here we build ships, cars, bullets, in other words we build anything with the platinum which comes from our area, and we are poor. Why?”

On relations with government and the mine: “We speak on radio, TV's and newspapers but no one came from the government to ask us what our problems are.”

On Section 21's: “ ... they (the mine) say that the Section 21 companies belong to the community of Maandagshoek, but the community of Maandagshoek has no shares in the companies, they have no control in the companies, and the laws at the companies were not written by the community but by the mine and the lawyers. You can't write you own laws in my firm, every firm has it's own constitution. In other words it's their companies. I mean from 2001 the community have not even got a penny, but they have companies that make money, so where does the money go? Section 21 to the community is like the old government of apartheid. The new government is oppressing us with it now so that we must not be able to notice that it's the old apartheid law which has just been changed a bit. So they bring the old law back with Section 21. Section 21 is doing nothing for us.”

On what hurts him/makes him sad: “I am thinking about the truth. When our leader (Mandela) went to jail for twenty seven years to die for his country it was because of the truth. What hurts me is when I look at a black person and see that even today he is still poor. It's only because of God who said, ‘my child know that in this world I did not make only ... where we are we take them out of trouble, out of Egypt to the Promised Land’. We are trying to take the community out of the area of poverty, and in doing so we ask the government to help us, and to look at how we are suffering. We say to the government, are we not you're children, who are we supposed to cry to? Tell us who to cry to and we will leave you alone.”

On what he wants to see happen: “Our government does not feel for us like the rest of the community. All the communities are the same, no matter where they may be. Let's not pass other villages. We want beautiful schools, Apollo's, and in short everything that's beautiful we want.”

Joyce Kgwete (Wife of another Chief of Maandagshoek but considered as Chief by section of the community)

Brief biography: *Joyce is a thirty-three year-old separated mother of one child. She was born in nearby Sekhukhune in a royal family and entered an arranged marriage. She came to live in Maandagshoek in 2001 and subsequently separated from her husband. She now acts as a parallel Chief since there is a dispute between her and her estranged husband (who is a Section 21 director and close to Modikwa mine). She relies on her chiefly duties for income and has become involved in active opposition to Modikwa mine.*

On her arranged marriage into another royal family: “I didn’t like to be a Chief, but I was told. When I was growing up, I was still in Standard 7 and my father went to Maandagshoek and when he came back he said the Chief of the Maandagshoek wants to marry a wife for the people of Maandagshoek and then Chief Phaswana [related to Joyce] told my father that just because you are next to the Chief it is better for your daughter to marry the Chief. When he arrived to tell me that there are people in Maandagshoek who are looking for a wife, I asked him why are they looking for a wife so far and then he told me that they are from the royal family and you know that you are also from the royal family and I was speaking to your uncle Phaswana and he said you should go there because even the first wife was from here in Manganeng.”

“After they told me I cried ... I was never happy. I said they forced me ... can I be happy with what I didn’t know? I wanted to go to school so that I can learn and be educated to do something about my future.”

On her failed marriage and how community dealt with it: “I stayed with Ralph from 1997 until 2002. At that time I was not already married, I was married in 1998. I stayed with Ralph in his family; there was no good relationship between us. He was always threatening to kill and I didn’t know what I have done to him. Then the family members of the Kgwete then said if your man does not respect you we have the right to take you out because he is not the *Kgoshi* [Chief], he is the one who was supposed to respect you because you are the one who is going to give birth to the *Kgoshi* because his family is not from the royal family.”

“I felt that the community of Maandagshoek cares about me and they didn’t want to lose their money so that’s why they wanted me to come back.”

On respect for the Bapedi pre and post-1994: “ ... now they are not respecting the culture of the Bapedi because of the rights.”

“By that time [before 1994] *Kgoshi* was not going to the community ... the messengers were the ones who go to the community and hear their needs and bring the messages to the *Kgoshi* and *Kgoshi* responded. So now, *Kgoshi* goes to the community and then people ask him straight questions.”

On what it is like to be a woman Chief/leader: “To lead the people is difficult ... To be a leader needs a strong heart, you will get insult from the others. When you are doing this they will tell you that what you are doing is wrong whereas you thought you were going at the right direction, so really it is difficult to lead the community.”

“They are saying I’m not here in Maandagshoek to lead the community, I’m just a lady and I’m nothing ... it is difficult when you are a lady and it’s better if you are with your husband. There are many problems with the people saying they can’t be led by a woman.” [However, she says that generally most people do respect traditional authority]

“As a leader I think it is better not to choose (between people)... so it is better to love all the people. It can’t be possible for me to change and do other things; I will always remain as *Kgoshi*.”

On traditional leaders relations with government: “The problems with politics are that at the time of the commission of Raleshae, people went to submit forms saying they are Chiefs even though they are not Chiefs. We, from the old government, where the Boers oppressed us, the elder Ralegashane never applied for the forms because there was a government of oppression. It is now that we are waiting for the commission of Ramphatlo.”

“In the royal house we have two parties; the CONTRALESA [Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa] and *Sediba sa bogoshi*. Government has the party they respect and then

government does not respect *Sediba sa Bogoshi*. CONTRALESA gets support from the government, they build offices and give cars - but us the *Sediba sa Bogoshi* we don't get the support.”

“I think this new government is full of corruption ... they don't have that responsibility... as I'm speaking now at our local municipality in the Greater Tubatse, they don't even know who the Chiefs of Maandagshoek are. They don't tell us anything, when they have meetings ... we don't know nothing even when its good things. I don't have resources because I don't get any salary even myself, but as a community we try to help one another when someone is experiencing such problems we donate because even if we go to government there is nothing they can help us with. I live by the community. When I don't have anything like maize meal I tell them and they collect money and give me.”

On halting of initiation schools and links to community conflict over the mine: “We decided to stop that because you can't take the children and put them on the mountains when people are fighting and it can happen that those children can get killed then I will take the responsibility of that, so I felt it is better to stop those initiation schools.

“They are fighting because others are supporting the mine and others are not and when you take children to the circumcision they will just come to do bad things with them with the intention to make you talk or do something.”

On getting arrested as a result of opposition to the mine: “When I got arrested I was at home wanting to take a bath, I was with my messenger, and my messenger called me and said JK there are many police cars outside here. When I looked it was true they were there, they came and knocked and my messenger said she is still bathing. Then they waited at the door when I went out the cars were seventeen, and they said they came to arrest me because we expelled the machine people for the mine when they came to prospect. They showed me the paper saying they made me a court interdict that I illegally went to the place that they claim I'm not supposed to go, so it was illegal. There are places that they say I must not go in.”

On whether it is important for a girl to get married and what is important in her life:

“No that is not important ... The important thing is to go to school, work and do everything that she wants. I’m not against the idea of having children ... that, she can decide on herself. What I’m saying is that she must go to school.”

Chief Sonias Vilakazi (Chief of Matimatsatsi community – different section of Maandagshoek)

***Brief biography:** Chief Vilakazi is fifty eight (58) years old and has lived in Maandagshoek his entire life. He is married to more than one wife and has several children. He worked in Germiston for a number of years when he was younger and was made Chief in 2004, after his father died. He was the first community leader to be approached by Anglo Platinum over securing mining operations in the area in the late 1990s and was initially one of the directors of the first Section 21 company set up to give mine ‘shares’ to the community.*

On early history of his community: “Originally we are from Swaziland. We came here from Swaziland because there was a fight there. We came to Ga-Sekhukhune, when (Chief) Sekhukhune was still at Steelpoort. He gave us this land and others came after to join us by climbing across the mountain and some later went back.” [His grandfather was leader]

On becoming Chief: “Because my father was a councillor, the community decided after my father’s death in 2000 that I must be a Chief and I was inaugurated in 2004 and the people of Sekhukhune, the Premier and the people from the local municipality came.”

On how community made a living in the past: “We were using hard-soil, to make pots in order to sell them to other people until the mine started.” [the community also had cows and crops]

On 'politics' in his younger days: "... the real politics started in 1976. The only thing that was happening here was that white farmers were chasing black people in their lands and arresting them."

On the role and importance of land: "Democracy was promising, because our political leaders were telling us that we are fighting for land and better life ... so that was the reason for us to support democracy. Land is life, there is nothing that you can do without it and there is nothing that you can eat without it."

On feelings about changes in respect of traditional leadership after 1994: "The changes are good, because they are giving the culture of traditional leaders back. There is a good co-operation." [with local government]

On history of Modikwa mine: "When you talk about the issue of mines, I start to become angry ... In 1999, there was a white man from Pretoria called Jeffrey White who visited our community and asked to survey our land. I notified my community about it. Later he came back to me and told me that there is a lot of platinum here and it is what he wants. He went back and agreed with Anglo American and they came back with a lot of white people. He told me that they were coming to open a mine. I asked them if they are coming to disturb us, because we knew that when they open mines they chase people like dogs. They said that they won't do that, they said the law of South Africa says that you must sit down and negotiate. We called the community and agreed with them that the mine can start. After that, ARM [African Rainbow Minerals] came and made a joint venture with AMPLATS. I was the one who was involved in the process of joint venture. I used to go to Sandton for meetings. Because we didn't know anything, we asked them what are we going to get. They said we don't have land and the land belongs to them. We said because we are the residents we need to get something from the mine. They said they will develop the company for us like section 21 ... they said we will control section 21 and that they will give us five percent of the annual income. So we agreed because we didn't know what the law says. We reached a point of electing the directors and we said the directors should come from our community, so we agreed. The election took place and I was elected to be one of the directors. We continued and we were getting the information from the mines. The director's term

was for three years. During the first term of the directors things were fine. During the second elections they said that they will consider other people from other villages to be elected, we didn't agree with them, but they forced us to agree. There were people as far as from Lulu Mountain (several kilometres away) who came to be elected. After the elections we made an appeal because our people were not elected. As I am saying now that five percent we used to get, we are no longer getting it ... they are giving it to the people of Lulu village. We are no longer getting any information from the mine, it's now given to Lulu village. We told our problems to the municipality, the office of the Premier and the Paramount Chief. That is why when you say anything about the mine I become angry,. Look around, there are children who are not working, the mine is no longer employing them. This problem is really giving us a headache that is why we have appointed Richard Spoor [a lawyer] to fight for our rights.”

On what community will do if they loose court case against their exclusion: “If we lose, we will try other things and we will fight until we get what is ours.”

On Mamelodi Sundowns and Patrice Motsepe: “I could support it [the soccer team] if their leader was co-operating well with us ... That is why I said I can't like him or support him, because he never fulfils our agreement. I was supporting him before, more especially during that time he became the leader of NAFCO [National African Federated Chamber of Commerce] , and I thought he was taking us to a better level. I am really disappointed by the way he chased us from the mine.”

On state of the community and what is needed: “We don't have tarred roads, our children are travelling 13 kilometres to school and we don't have a community hall. We've made a lot of applications to the mines asking them to build a hall for us, but they have never responded. There are so many things that we need in this community, if you can look around there is no better houses, most people are suffering here.”

On cultural changes since 1994: “On the issue of culture, it is depending to the person to maintain his/her culture; you can't blame someone when you don't follow your own culture.”

On his vision: “What I have asked and wished is peace in this heaven, no matter what colour you are we must be a one thing.”

Simon Vilakazi (Son of Chief Vilakazi; Secretary for Matimatsatsi Tribal Authority; worker at neighbouring Marula Mine)

***Brief biography:** Simon is thirty (30) years old, married with one child and has lived in Maandagshoek his entire life. He is the son of Chief Vilakazi and deals with all the secretarial/administrative work for the Matimatsatsi tribal authority. He was employed by Modikwa mine for two years as a general labourer, was promoted to receive further training and now works at the neighbouring Marula mine as a plant sub-manager.*

On community attending school in the 1980s: “ ... the problem emanated when we have to travel for long distances to our high school, it is far ... plus/minus 13 kilometres from here, so we struggled a bit because of crime on the road. We were walking on foot, the rains and stuff like that ... we were struggling there.” [situation has not changed since]

On post-1994 expectations as a teenager: “I remember the time when I was still at school in Standard 6. I went through a certain document talking about the political stories, so there was one sentence telling me about after 1994 ... after 1994 that time we would have opportunities to work in a nearby situation, we were not going to travel that much. So after that I heard of most of the mines coming in South Africa, so I told myself that was a real thing that I heard about freedom, so I can see that it’s coming now we have companies nearby ... the mines are here.”

On what he thinks should be done to ensure development in poor communities: “You see I told myself ... that if I were a President, I was going to ... actually visit all the wards, all the wards to be visited and checked if, say there was a budget from the government, so to make a follow up on that budget and if that was done. Because you may find our government is giving us a budget so that our wards councillors can do one, two, three things, so make sure that

everything is done. If they had a stage whereby they come down to the ground and check our budget. I think that will sort out the problem ... that's why now there is no development in our community.”

On actions taken to influence local authorities to do things for community (and response):

“I used to advise our councillors including the Chief, that we must sometimes write some letters to our municipality/our local government in general, just to update them on what is happening in our community ... that we are still lacking things. Some of the things were responded to ...for example upgrading the road from Skirnot. They were sometimes sending us some upgrading machines once in six months, two to three years back. But up to now, there is nothing happening again. ... so I can't say they did a lot, because in our community we are still poor.”

On delivery of promises from the mine after production started: “... what surprised us as a community even if it is still surprising us now, is all the promises they did told us about, nothing is happening up to now.”

On specific employment of community members in the mine: “... they promised that they would employ surrounding people here and we also told them that in our community we have a problem, because most people are not educated. Let's say 70% of them are not educated, so how are you going to handle that situation? What are you going to do about those people, because they also deserve to eat, they have the democratic right to get something at the end of the month? What they told us is that they will send our people to specific training, they will employ those people who are capable to work. In our community we were only three who were employed by the mine, two from the plant side and only one for the mining side. So the question mark we have as a community is: Are they doing what we agreed on or what's happening?”

On schooling during the 1990s: “You see the problem that we came across as I was one of those people attending that side, the concentration in the classroom was not up to standard, because the time when the teacher is busy in front it comes to a point where you think about the journey back to home and that disturbs the mind set, the concentration in the school. You had to think about what am I going to eat during break time, the journey from school to home and you

get home tired and sometimes you have to stay behind for the studies, then you arrive home around 5-6pm in the afternoon.”

On what he expects government to do to sort out problems with the mine: “I think our government must intervene in this issue, they must get in and then try to sort out some of the problems. I mean we voted ... that the outcome of our voting is to get a better life and development you can name them. But if there is a situation that as the community whereby we are not satisfied under the government, whereby we voted, obviously they must go in and sort out this problem.”

On whether he thinks there is a bright future for his three-year old daughter: “I think so because I am unlike my parents. My parents used to struggle before. At least I am in a situation not compared to the situation of the previous years when my parents were still growing up. I think yes, she will get a better life as long as I can pull up my socks and also my wife can do that. We will come up with a very good future for our kid.”

On what he thinks younger people should do: “We must stick to a point whereby we look forward to our future, we mustn’t concentrate on the previous things, we must look forward to our future and to have a better life. Obviously I think the first point is to be educated, because there is no way you can go without education and the problem with our youngsters here is that they prefer going to work than schooling, because they think that if they can work they will have anything they want. But the key is that they must be educated. I don’t mind if they go to work because of their hunger at home, but at the same time as they are employed, they must think of saving money and to further their education, so that they can have the better future.”

Flora Mpusi & Flora Makwa (elderly women in Chief Vilakazi’s household who do occasional contract work for mine)

***Brief biographies:** Both Flora's grew up and have lived in Maandagshoek their entire lives. They live in the compound of Chief Vilakazi which is situated several kilometres away from the main part of Maandagshoek, They are part of the owners (which consist of ten women in the community) of a Section 21 company contracted by Modikwa mine to provide washing services for worker uniforms/overalls. Both are of pensionable age, although Flora Makwa does not receive her pension due to a incorrect ID document.*

On payment for services (washing overalls) from mine: “Problems are that we have a contract here, it does not pay us, they pay these workers ... we do not get paid. When we ask them why we get less money, they say the metals are expensive. Some times we get R400, some times R250 or R150 in a year.” (FMakwa)

On setting up of Section 21 companies and how they feel: “Yes we did elect them (community directors of the Section 21 companies), because they are wise and we are stupid ... (FMakwa) ... (but) the directors now, I'm seriously disagreeing, they are not useful, if we were being controlled by the useful ones we could be working right now.” (FMpusi)

On how they make a living outside of mine work: “ ... as to find food, I make pots, I travel to Middleburg to cut brooms and sell, when I hear in my stomach.” (FMakwa)

On whether the post-1994 situation has brought benefits for women: “We don't feel anything, we are just looking at how things work, we don't see anything. Now here is the mine, us who get pension, they could have built a hall where we could get our pension, now we are getting nothing, now we don't see it.” (FMpusi)

On main problems as women in the community: “In our community they could have given us work for women so that we can eat because there is no work. They could have poured water there so that we can sell and get food, now there is nothing.” (FMpusi)

On what an average day is like: “Day by day there is no work, when we are sitting at home we just do nothing and until sunset, because the government did not give us work for day-to-day, we don’t do farming, we just get woods from the mountain and sell.” (FMakwa)

“I get up and make fire then make tea and sweep and after, I drink my tea and then I’ll be talking in my heart about how I can get work.” (FMpusi)

On difference between young girls now and their childhoods: “They have possibilities unlike us ... our parents failed us” (FMakwa)

On thoughts about changes in behaviour of children now: “ ... children of now-a-days are bad as compared to the ones at the older generation. They say its rights, these rights take them to danger ...” (FMpusi)

On impact of child grants: “It’s Thabo Mbeki who helps the children who bears children, as to us it does not help ... our culture has been destroyed. Children get grants and we don’t.” (FMpusi)

On how they see present life in their community and what is needed: “In our land for us to get satisfied, they must make roads and provide work for old women ... we will work. If you can open a mine there I can go and work myself, I’m looking for work now with red eyes.” (FMakwa)

On life of their children: “We will like people to know that in our community there is a mine which does not do anything for us, it does not make roads, we don’t have anything and even work ... our children do not have work, they have started to steal and break into shops because the mine is not doing anything.” (FMpusi)

“I’m saying our children will learn to steal because of the issue of the mine, because these children are sitting at home, they are looking for work now, there is no work so now our children will do illegal things.” (FMakwa)

Olesnas Mamohale (Chair of Maandagshoek Development Committee)

Olesnas is thirty-nine (39) years old. He was born and raised in Maandagshoek and went to work in Daveyton in the 1980s as a security guard. During the late 1980s and early 90s he became involved in the liberation struggle and came back to Maandagshoek in 1996. Besides being the Chairperson of the Maandagshoek Development Committee (MDC) he is also a director in one of the Section 21 companies, but is highly critical of the way it is run and managed. He remains active in opposition to many of the mines activities. (NOTE: Olesnas passed away in late 2008)

On his part in the anti-apartheid struggle in the community and connection to present struggles: “You see, we spent a lot of time not staying at home, staying at the mountain. Then we start to inform our people to not go and try to buy in town because the white guy were happy because they are benefiting, they get money from us but they don’t want to mind about us or they don’t want to care about us and they want our money only. So we start to stop the buses and the vehicles which was carrying food inside, so when we are on the way to go to inform people to stop to buy from the town...”

“ ... that’s why we are struggling to fight until we win this battle, because we know very well that the continent of Africa belongs to the blacks ... there is not the white guy from the continent of Africa who is staying here but not to say we want to chase somebody because he is not South African. We said we want a free and fair election and after that we want peace in our land - all of us, every human being in this country must get a better life.”

On Mandela’s release and feelings: “I remember well when I hear that Madiba was out of prison, I started to dance and kiss the soil just because I’m happy. I don’t know what I must do because I can see that there is a right way to go ... when the times goes on I think Madiba is the

second Jesus in my experience. But now it is not the same as that time Mandela was ruling this country ... now it is difficult.”

On the mine and division in community: “When we try to ask why you don’t come to us and sit down to negotiate what is going on they go to an individual person and they give that person money to come and divide us to make a conflict between the communities. As you know the blacks we are hungry, even now you can see my house is a house by name, but it is not the real house. If you can come to me with ten thousand I am going to accept it and I am going to do what you tell us to do, just because I am hungry. I have got no money, no food, I’ve got children and families ... you see that is what the mining industry is trying to do - divide us.”

On government, accountability/delivery and democracy: “The community is crying because now there is a national, a provincial and a local municipality. They give a municipality a lot of bucks. Let’s say they give the municipality three billion but the municipality they don’t want to come to the community and say there is money. Maybe there is money for water, money for electricity, money for schools, money for roads ... That’s why I say I blame the government because they don’t want to come and monitor the situation, where the money is going. Because when we are crying they know very well, they are the employees of us - we are the government, they get the money from us but they don’t mind about us when we are crying about the way the leaders are trying to divide us. Since we elect the new government, the local municipality, there is nothing changed. From 1994 up to now you can look here - there is nothing, there is no sanitation, there is no RDP houses, there is no water, there is no roads, there is no schools there is no something like halls, there is no tertiary schools anything. We are on the way to struggle together ... I mean to say it is just like during the old time in apartheid. We are just happy because we can raise our voice without someone who is hunting us but it is the same because we benefit nothing.”

“How are you going to deliver without consulting the people, because firstly you must go to the people and the people must tell you what they need. But our leaders they just sit down and decide and say this guy if I can give him a trouser it is alright you see. That is how the people are now ... they are starting to hate the government just because the government they don’t want to

intervene in that matter, because they are, to put that question clear, they are ignoring us but they know very well they are here just because of us. You see, now they are flying on my head going up and down, they are staying alright in the suburbs and their children are attending a luxury school. They don't mind, they don't care about us."

On equality before the law: "If the government can come up with new ideas to monitor the situation here, because our leaders didn't follow the right path, they jumped the law. There is no one above the law. All of us we are under the law but some of us, they are above. They draft the law for us not for them. If you can see they can come and throw the rocks in your yard and when you ask why they say go to hell and when you go to the police the police will say you are running mad. We are afraid now because our police are not working for the community ..."

"So we demonstrate to show the government we are not happy until, we need Mbeki to come down. Because if they don't want to come down to see what is happening down here, I think the next election is going to be tough because I can't elect you several times without doing nothing."

On BEE and Motsepe: "He knows very well when he came to mine here ... he knew very well what he must do firstly because he is the black. He knows the constitution of the country which says when we go to the community to mine we must give them a proposal, an agreement ... but now we see very well that it is our brothers who kills us because they are helping the ones who kill us. Now they are busy sitting together with them in Sandton, Joburg, Cape Town where at the time of apartheid only the whites were staying but now they are going to stay with them because they don't want to remember where they come from."

On hopes for future of Maandagshoek: "Even one day when I wake up in the morning I can see some roads and also some taps of water here and some dams, also some Apollo lights for all the residents of Maandagshoek."

Frans Moloko Thabene (contract worker at Modikwa mine)

Brief biography: *Frans is thirty seven (37) years old and has lived in Maandagshoek all his life. He is married with one child. From the late 1980s until 2003, Frans made his living as a cutter and seller of wood. In 2003 he managed to get hired as a general labourer at the Modikwa mine through one of the Section 21 companies set up by the mine. He subsequently received training as a winch operator and qualified in 2004. He continues to work at the mine through the Section 21 company and supplements his meagre income by renting out 2-3 rooms on his property.*

On previous job before the mine: “ ... I would go and cut wood in the mountains and come back to sell it to the community. Then the changes came when the mine came in 2000. That’s when I started to look for a job in the mine leaving my other job ...I was selling it here at home and to neighbours, it was a bit better than now when I’m working. In profit I could make about R1,200 a month if I had cut enough wood.”

On being a contract mine worker through the Section 21 (community) company: “The full time workers are the ones firstly hired by the mines from Rustenburg and taken for the training but most of us who live here work as contract workers ... their money is great, it’s high and ours is low. They also have a medical. They get R3, 800 and the other day when they came back from the strike I heard that they got an increase to R4, 500.”

“At the time I was still a labourer I was earning R1,125; the R25 was for the UIF which means I was left with R1,100. I worked for a year and then I asked them to take me for training so I could get the certificate for a winch operator. Then they took it up a little bit to R1,600, and it’s remained like that till now.”

“I thought the Section 21 was here to empower the people, but it has done nothing. We even hope God helps us so that Section 21 can end so that things can be better for the work place and for the community.”

On whether life has improved since he took the job: “Life has not improved, it’s gone low ... I earn little money, and the money that I earn does not manage to do what I had hoped to do.

Actually the money that I earn ... is used for groceries, not to improve my life. It's what makes me not to improve."

"I wish there could be a Medical Aid so when someone is sick we can go to a doctor, and for the salary to increase so I can have a better life."

On what happened during the 2007 mine strike: "While we were on strike ... the CCMA [Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration] came to us and told us that they have suspended our strike and that we must go back to work. The thing that they wanted was a letter that states how much does the mine pay the contract workers, and then after they had received the letter they told us that they would not be able to increase the money for the contract worker because a lot of people are working as contracts. We were greatly disappointed to the point that we wanted to leave the union [National Union of Mineworkers] but because of the way they ended up telling us that ... we just ended up taking it like it is."

On character of visits by government officials to the mine: "When members of the government come to the mine they report to the management of the mine, then the management of the mine comes to us to let us know that the members of the government are going to come on a certain day. They tell us workers to fix everything so that when they come they find everything in place. But to us they never get ... they only talk to the management of the mine. After the visitors go, they go back to the sub-standards."

On difficulties in making ends meet: "The R1,600 that I earn is not enough to fit my budget. Before I earn I have debts ... somewhere you find that I have taken a chicken on credit; I have borrowed R10 from someone. Then I buy food for home, I have to pay for societies and then I'm left with R700. To go to town I pay R14, to load mealie-meal we pay R30. It's tough ... I can't budget because before the end of the month the money is finished."

On interest charged for debts: " ... there are interests on the money that I have borrowed. Where I work there is a bank arranged by our company that borrows us money because we are earning very little. Every month after taking the payslip we go to the management to get it

signed, and then we go to Deba Bank to borrow money. If it's R500, the repayment on that would be R625 at the end of the month.”

Laurence Xhetsa & Simon Bongo (mine workers at Modikwa through subcontracted mining company; team leader and operator; NUM members and SB is a shopsteward)

***Brief biographies:** Laurence is in his early fifties and Simon in his early forties. They both are long-time mine workers from the former Transkei and were recruited by a company called Ubuntu to work at Modikwa in 2003. They both belong to the National Union of Mineworkers and are permanent employees. They live in a compound in Maandagshoek for workers from outside the community. Both are married with children but stay in Maandagshoek without their families.*

On history of working in the mines and how things have changed over the years: “I joined the mine since I left school in 1979, and I found that it was difficult to organise the union in the mine and it was difficult to find a place to stay because things were divided ... there was a place for blacks and a place for whites. If you can do something wrong in the mine, they will just dismiss you without a hearing. In 1992 that was when we organised a union called National Union of Mineworkers. The union changed things and if you did wrong there will be a hearing and steps will be taken from there. Things started changing and even the benefits, we started having them. The way things are now it's better than before. By that time if they can find you organising workers you were to be arrested and if you are not arrested then you would be dismissed or be blacklisted and you can't work with the industry because you have a bad influence to workers. And if you or your family member passes away, there was nothing to cover even for the burial and NUM then addressed these issues ... now it is better but not 100%.” (LX)

On outsourcing/casualisation of labour and their own experiences in Maandagshoek and at Modikwa mine: “It is negative because this issue of outsourcing, where the big companies such as mines are outsourcing the workers to contracting companies, where then they are hiring cheap labour people and doing exactly the same job done by the miners. The same applies on us here

... we are working as contracting company here with the mine and we are doing the same job.”
(LX)

“The problem started in 2003 when the companies in this mine were supposed to hire workers from this area. What happened was that at the time the mine started, the system was to take the people from other mines to come and work here When it started they started with people from school but without experience and most people from here never worked at the mine and the mine wanted people with experience. The other problem with Modikwa is with salaries because whether you are working underground, are an operator, driving a machine, the salaries are the same. It happened that on the side of the workers and the management, things were not good. This is what caused the strike that was here. In other words, the workers are not happy with how they are being treated.” (LX)

On relations between them as ‘outside’ mine workers and the community: “It was difficult especially when we first arrived here, because there was a perception that we came to take their jobs because when you start, the management wants to look at the skills that you have. But along the line we started understanding each other and said that as South Africans we must differ because of the employer but still it was not 100% because there were people who would say we are taking their jobs. We will try though to solve these difficulties and there will be mines which are going to open for people to get jobs. There are still tensions even now but it’s not like before when we first arrived here. Another thing is that when the mine started to operate there were some promises to the community in terms of water, roads and things like that but those things never happened and these promises made the conflicts that are between all the mine workers in the mine here and the community. And now the community are saying someone comes and asks to operate a business here, it should be them to agree. If you can remember well the past few weeks there were people who were arrested for protesting against the opening of the new mine.”
(SB)

On BEE: “The BEE does not benefit us as workers but it benefits only individuals. There are no changes and benefits ... and even the conditions are not good. Now we experience more exploitation than before.” (SB)

“To my observation, even if we have the people from NUM, ANC but things are still bad, I think it’s the system they are using. I may call it their strategy but its their way of running business. Yes they are there but they hired people who were in the capitalist system as managers and themselves are there as directors and these managers are the ones who were there in the apartheid, using that experience of exploiting people, so that is why there is no change. That is why there is a gap between us and the top guys. You can’t just go up there without going via the managers and they are implementing the old procedures, unless these people can change and train the disadvantaged people to run their business (LX)

“When we talk about BEE, when we took the government from the old regime we said black people must occupy positions. But now the problem we have is that instead of these people reporting back to the people, they don’t report, they are just serving themselves and when you look you will find that during the time instead of being the unionists they become capitalists. We don’t see any changes because the system they are using, it was used even before.” (LX)

On their living conditions as mine workers: “We tried to address our situation about staying with our families in the case of Modikwa where there are hostels. We found places to rent ... but it’s not enough because the room I’m staying in is small. It is only for my wife, not with children. It is not yet being addressed ...(that) there is a place where workers can stay with their families.” (SB)

On general state of delivery and of working class people presently: “If you look at the rural areas in South Africa there are no changes. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done. If you check where I come from [rural Eastern Cape] there is no water and also RDP houses and so many things are not right in rural areas. It is the same thing even in Limpopo. And even here if you don’t have money you won’t get water in your house ... it’s a problem because most of the water they have to get for themselves.” (SB)

“Also the basic needs of people have not yet been met and there is still a problem of implementation and the strategy that they use to implement and the skills are not there to deliver.

So at the end of the day there is no delivery. You can see that there are some things that have changed but we are still suffering ... and in terms of a living wage we still have a problem.”
(LX)

Simon Siloane (physically disabled and unemployed community resident)

***Brief biography:** Simon is forty three (43) years old and is a life-long resident of Maandagshoek. He is married with two children. Simon has been physically disabled (he gets around in a non-mechanised wheelchair) since he was born and has a Standard 10 education. He was promised a special job at the Modikwa mine when it opened several years ago, but continues to be unemployed and survives off his disability grant as well as a few crops he and his family grow.*

On receiving services/support from government: “I received a disability grant in 1998 ... The change that I can see now is that they [disabled] receive disability grant but they don’t get jobs which means they are still discriminated [against].”

On what he wanted to do once he finished Sandard 10: “I wanted to become a social worker ... I can do anything. I managed to go to school but I did not get the chance to go to tertiary because my parents stopped me due to financial difficulties.”

On expectations after the 1994 elections: “What I understood was that there was going to be democracy even to us disabled people ... services will reach us and things like jobs and all sorts of things. I thought we were going to be recognised.”

On service delivery: “There is service delivery but it is coming slowly and according to me I think it discriminates ... they should be faster and we should be covered because houses are coming but we don’t get them because of our disability. I have been filling forms and they told me that my house has been issued but I never got it.”

On work opportunities with arrival of mine: “The mines have not brought any important things to me and we were the first to choose the directors. Those directors hired people and they didn’t count us because of our disability. We even filled in the forms and I asked them where they can put us because we are disabled. They answered me by saying our time will come. It’s been five years now and nothing has been done so we are still waiting for that time.”

On government performance: “The national and the provisional government are doing things just fine; the problem lies with the local municipality.”

“Political leadership always talks about service delivery but I don’t see these happening to our community, so there should be changes.”

On whether education facilities are better now than when he was a child: “For now I think it’s the same. Its just that I have attended the local schools travelling long ways and even now they are still travelling those long journeys to school.”

On what he sees for his children’s future: “I think my children will end up like me because I don’t have money to further their education. And the money that I receive for disability grant is very little for us to live better.”

On what message he has for others who might hear his story: “I would be happy if they can tell the world that all I need is a simple job so that I can feed my family.”

Petrus Manogo (Spaza shop owner)

***Brief biography:** Petrus is in his 40s, married with two children. He was born in Manndagshoek and his only time away from the community was between 1986-1992 when he was a contract construction worker in Nelspruit. He opened his shop in 1992 and has been running it ever since.*

The shop – which sells basic foodstuffs and drinks sourced from the nearby town of Burgersfort– supports Petrus and his family.

On changes in his life since 1994: “I see changes because my business has more customers than before because they [people in community] got jobs and earn money. If people can get jobs then I think my business will grow bigger and better.”

On any small business assistance from government: “We don’t get support as small businesses ... I do everything on my own. I wish if they can lend us money so that we can expand our business buildings.”

On local government and local councillor: “The best way is to elect new people who can be trusted and take care of the efficient running of our money. Our counsellor is not doing anything for us... I think they get paid for nothing.”

Johannes Madikgake (Bishop of the Apostolic Church of Christ)

***Brief biography:** Johannes is in his late fifties. He was born in nearby Driekop and grew up in Maandagshoek. He worked as a general labourer in Gauteng during the 1980s and early-mid 90s and came back to live in Maandagshoek in 1997. He established his small church and continues to be its pastor. For a brief period he did some contract construction work for Modikwa mine but now his main income comes from hiring out his bakkie for transport.*

On why he became a Christian/pastor: “For why I became a Christian, I will tell the secrets ... I was playing boxing, the one that you will find us tying our muscles with belts, and then every Sunday we play we will hit each other and break each other’s tooth and other parts. I then looked at it and realised that it was not something that will take someone to life.”

On role in years of struggle: “ ... the role I played only at that time, I was just going and burying the dead people they killed, that’s all.”

On hopes in 1994: “My dream was looking and saying maybe ...things might go well and we may be able to gain or maybe the new government will be useful to us and looking at all the killings and wishing that God help to stop them so that we can live nicely.”

On what the community needs: “Firstly we need a road. It’s better now but if it can rain, its not easy to walk ... all the community we don’t walk. We are suffering from drought, we don’t have water in this world of ours. To tell the full truth and again we have children and they are not working. There are the mines but our children are not working and then I’m saying if God can help people get water, road, that I think the community will be happy with this idea.”

On what has changed in society since 1994: “Now things have changed, the way they changed it’s not impressing because this our new government have allowed us, our children to carry guns, we can’t even walk freely. As a priest when you walk carrying your bag with a bible they just take it from you and they run with it pointing you with a gun. That’s when we see that our new government came but when coming to this it is not good to us. Because we have many guns in all our pockets they can’t move from us and people are dying because of them ... It’s because of hunger.”

On government leadership: “It’s our leaders I can just say from Mandela or from Mbeki, I can just say it’s his cabinet they want to fill their pockets first and that is then that we can be helped.”

On the mine: “What I see with the mine ... this mine has brought problems and then many families are breaking because of the mine and then all the diseases are more because of the mine. This mine that got into our homes, our houses broke, there is no use that the mine is bringing to us, since the houses broke, there is nothing that they did and when we talk to them no one listens, that’s the way it is.”

On helping orphans/poor families: “I have many orphans here at church ... that’s when I can ask that the government can help me, so that I can still help these orphans so that they can live. Sometimes on Sundays we collect some cents and sometimes we make R30 or R20 and we look at the most poor family and we give them that R10 or R20, then they can live for two or three days and every Sunday we try to do like this.”

On the local councillor: “I once have spoken to the councillor but unfortunately he does not have powers ... he said he will go to the office and talk but it showed that he does not have powers because he never came back to me.”

On what can be done: There is nothing we can do except to go and ask ... we don’t have a place where we can do farming we don’t know how we can help the community.”

What to tell others: “ ... the community of Maandagshoek we are suffering like in the world called Ethiopia, now we are just making noise, maybe the people might help us.”

Volunteer group of community carers from Mabaso community care centre

The group consisted of around fifteen (15) female home-based care workers, with a fairly wide age range but predominately younger, and most of whom have been doing this work for several years. They work out of the former hospital in Maandagshoek, which closed sometime ago and is now run as a small community clinic. This group tends to the entire Maandagshoek community and earn very little.

What they do: “What made us volunteer is that people in their homes are very sick and they have high bloods and sugar diabetes. They come everyday here at hospital, so we thought to reduce their visits to hospital by going to their homes and give them pills. HIV/AIDS is what made us to go and volunteer because people who come to hospital with HIV they take them to their homes and we go and take care of them in their homes, because hospitals get full with

people with HIV and people with TB. People with TB take treatment everyday, so they can't come to the hospital and take treatment, meaning we carers we have to go and give them treatment at home and write reports, because every Monday when they come to check them they must see that we worked well, we are taking care of our patients."

On their work conditions and government assistance: " We come Monday to Friday, from 8 till 4 ... we get nothing. We are intending to help our people."

"When we help like this we think that they (government) may feel pity for us and give us work. When they trained us we thought it would help but they didn't even give us certificates, we got nothing. We want them to empower us so that we can work, just as we are working now and not being paid but we want them to empower us to get money ourselves, not just empowering the people who are in high positions ... they must also empower us."

Veronica Matsie & Nkele Manyanga (Volunteer care-givers)

***Brief biographies:** Veronica is thirty (30) years old and Ngele is twenty-nine (29). They were chosen by the care givers group (as above) to conduct a separate interview. Both women were born and raised in Maandagshoek and after receiving matric wanted to become social workers. They volunteered for the home-based care programme in the hope that they would be able to become qualified, full-time social workers but this has not happened. They continue to see to the various social and health needs of individuals and families in the community as part of the larger group and identified HIV-AIDs and lack of proper nutrition as two of the main problems.*

On their greatest fear: "The fear of being jobless" (VM).

On what they were talking about in 1994 as change approached: "Having electricity instead of using candles, land-line phones and access to water." (VM)

On social impact of lack of development and facilities for younger people in community:

“Sex is the only thing that they can entertain themselves with ... In other words, sexual intercourse in our community is like a hobby. Boys promise to give money so our young girls have no choice.” (VM) “If there were more entertainment facilities, our youngsters will be busy focusing more on sports facilities.” (NM)

On leadership in post-apartheid society: “We wish the system can be taken by the white people because they are better, at least they can think for us.” (NM)

On how arrival of mine has affected the community in social/economic terms: “Sex and crime rates have increased because some people in the mines are not working therefore they steal. Some mine workers did not come with their spouses so they have multiple affairs with some of our community members even though some of them are married.” (VM)

On food security: “People don’t have enough ... (they) eat meal and vegetables. We hardly eat meat.” (VM) “A lot of people do not have enough to eat. We mostly see this during our sick visits” (NM)

On most important things that can be done in community to improve health situation:

“More accessible communal taps. Provide us more gardens to cultivate vegetables.” (VM)

“We wish government can help us in terms of providing food daily so that we can cook food for our orphans.” (NM)



Moime Madimabe Joseph (ANC councillor)

Brief biography: Moime is forty three (43) years old and was born and grew up in the Maandagshoek community. He was not particularly active in the ANC prior to 1994 but joined the party after 1994 and become an elected councillor in 2000. He has a teachers diploma.

On changes in Maandagshoek since 1994: “When I arrived in Maandagshoek, there was no water and now the community has water. There was no electricity in some villages here and now most people have those facilities and the RDP houses have been built and schools and other things are busy being built. Sooner or later the issue of roads will be constructed.”

On Modikwa Mine and contribution to community – “Up to so far if you can check only little things were done like erection of the (water) pipe which is no longer working here ... and they built one school with four classes, one block. The road from here to Matimatsatsi was not good ... the mine spent R 600 000 but if you can go there now you cannot tell that there was a project. The mine has done so little for this community, there is no improvement ...”

On Section 21’s: “Since the Section 21 (mining company) was established here in the community, there was no full report to the community saying here is the money donated to the Section 21 in terms of shares in the mine, here is the amount in which the community must see to it what they do with that amount. Up to so far there are no full reports to the community. Since the Section 21 was formed there have been people in the community called directors to bring reports but up to so far ... when we ask where is the money from Section 21 then they will say the community is owing certain trusts from the mine. It’s a huge amount, that is why Section 21 cannot bring money to the community. Up to so far there are no benefits.”

On local municipality and developmental challenges: That is a challenge because sometimes when you ask (for) money you find that somewhere, somehow there is no budget to make sure that some of our plans are implemented. The problem is resources as our municipality is still new – they were started in 2000 - then we don’t have a lot of resources in terms of the implementation of other projects in the community.”

Kedimetse Mapori & Lerato Tebele (Grade 11 high school students)

Brief biographies: *Kedimetse and Lerato are Grade 11 high school students. They were both born in Maandagshoek and have lived in the community their entire lives. They want to further their studies and continue to live in, and help, the Maandagshoek community.*

On the state of schools in the community: “I think our schools are poor, even the environment is not good and if you visit them now you will think maybe it has been used long ago.” (KM)

On what the mine and government are/should be doing: “We don’t need Motsepe or Anglo in our land. We can do the mining for ourselves if we can get the license and people invest in us. All we want is that the government should educate us to know how to do the mining or sell our crops at the corporation. Companies that want to mine here should negotiate with us not to betray us and they should stop working individually. What I know is that it is wrong to go to Pretoria at Motsepe’s place or Sello Moloto [former provincial Premier] and start mining, they won’t like that and you can even get arrested ...from long ago our minerals have been controlled by people from far. They just can’t mix with illiterate people.” (KM)

“Those who are not living in the rural areas are the ones that ran away with our money to go and stay in Polokwane and Johannesburg. They don’t want to use the money where it belongs. They don’t do anything for the community. (LT)

On what they would like to do once they have left school: “I want to be a wise person who loves her community and knows where I come from so that I can help where there are sufferings. I can see my community is suffering so I want to improve myself through school and be able to help my community.” (LT)

“I would love to be a Private Investigator so that we can arrest all these corrupt Presidents. They are rich in a corrupt way and people should be returned their wealth.” (KM)

On lack of opportunity for further education: “The problem here is many people do not further their education after passing matric because of lack of bursaries” (KM)

On new black enrichment and leadership: “It’s not good because we are not the ones who are driving those cars (the Mercedes Benzes etc.) ... (KM) “Our leaders are the ones who mislead us ... Things needs to be shared accordingly. We have to share things 50/50.” (LT)

On who can help them in the future: “ ... as the youth we will try by all means to save this community and the problem is we need the national government to help us.” (KM)

“I don’t think the police can help us. I think we should not include the police in our struggle because I think they are the ones who are helping those people to exploit us.” (LT)

Lucas Serage & Pinky Komane (high-school matric students/community activists)

***Brief biographies:** Lucas (male) and Pinky (female) are both matric-level students at one of the local high schools. They were born and have lived in Maandagshoek their whole lives. Besides both being stand-out pupils who are active in various school programmes, Lucas and Pinky have been actively involved in community protests to highlight the problems associated with the Modikwa mine and other mine prospectors in their community. They were both arrested after one such protest and spent a brief time in prison.*

On fighting against the mine: “If we can continue fighting these miners I think they would be forced to come to the table to negotiate better deals. If we leave them they will just take our minerals and left us suffering” (PK)

“We are prepared to protect our land. Those men should sit down with us and agree on what we want then we can agree with them to mine here. And we will continue to go there and if they arrest us we are prepared to stay in prison.” (PK)

“We are prepared to fight even if they can call the police, they can arrest us but we would be fighting for our place. We want to be satisfied all of us ... not individuals.” (LS)

On why they are angry with the mine as young people: “We thought the mine will provide us with bursaries because they are many people who passed matric with exemptions and merit but are doing nothing.” (LS)

“Our school is not up to the standard, we don’t have tar roads and our houses have cracked as a result of the mine and the mine is doing nothing about that ... this is our platinum. If they took it they should develop our community and they must provide us with the service delivery ... People from nowhere come to our village and sell our place. We are afraid that this could lead to us being killed or arrested again because we can’t stop fighting for our place.” (PK)

On poverty and lack of basic services in the community and how that affects them: “We travel long distances to school and when we are going to the river we use wheelbarrows. People wash their clothes with that water and the animals also drink that water ... that water is not healthy. There was the guy who ... got to the hospital they told him to stop drinking that water (because) it is not safe ... but we didn’t stop because we don’t have a choice. We have to drink that water as it is the only one we’ve got.” (LS)

“It takes us thirty minutes to school and even to the river it takes us thirty minutes but those from Ga-Mpuru take about one hour to school. The water which we are drinking is not safe but they keep on saying we are rich because we have platinum. The miners took our platinum and leave us like that.” (PK)

On expectations from the municipality: “We should have paved roads, provide us with water and electricity and disabled people should get proper care.” (PK)

On what they want to be: “I was inspired by the mine and that is why I’m saying the mine should take me to school so that I can become a miner one day.” (LS) “I want to see myself furthering my studies and I also want to have my sewing project and selling my brand to retailers.” (PK)

On whether they will stay in the community: “I want to see myself living in Gauteng at the suburbs (laughs). The children in the suburbs get a better life and proper education. Here in the village children get addicted to alcohol at the young age. There is no proper education in rural areas.” (LS) “I want to live in Gauteng because we are suffering here. The mine does not do anything for us, it does not want to take us to school, and maybe if we can be in Gauteng we can get better education.” (PK)

On their elected representatives: “I can say we are happy and at the same time not because we tried to write letters to them but they just throw them in the bin and say we are stupid and uneducated.” (PK)

Emmanuel Mokgoga (Community leader/activist and spokesperson of the Maandagshoek Development Committee)

Brief biography: Emmanuel is twenty nine (29) years old, married with two children. He was born in Vereeniging and moved back to the family home in Maandagshoek when he was ten. After finishing matric he went to work in Sasolburg in 1996 and become a shopsteward in SAPPWU [South African Paper, Printing and Allied Workers Union]. He returned again to Maandagshoek after being retrenched and has become one of the key community leaders/activists in the area and has travelled fairly widely and done work with various NGOs and social movements.

On what is was like as a ten-year old when he came to Maandagshoek: “The people they were still respecting the culture of Bapedi. The people they were still respecting the traditional leaders and also the traditional leaders they were respecting the people because they understand that they are at that position because of the people. So they are respecting the people when they were ploughing and doing things according to tradition of the people of Bapedi.”

On drinking as a teenager: “I started drinking when I was thirteen/fourteen years ... I think people started drinking when they were twelve years. I started drinking when my father was drinking the brandy and then when he was coming for the holiday he was coming with - in Afrikaans we are saying *Pap Koos* - and then sometimes he is sleeping and then I’m going to steal his brandy. He was coming with the silver ... you know when he was in Veereniging he was just putting the money in the tin or in the cup and then when he’s coming home he will come with the money and then he will give that money to us. And then it’s where I’m getting money to buy some beers, then we meet with friends and put the money together and then we buy beer.”

On the death of his disabled eldest brother in 1976: “ ... he passed away in 1976. He was working at the Sowetan in Joburg and he was staying in Soweto. And even today we don’t know where they have buried him and it was that time of strikes - everybody going up and down during the apartheid taking place and he was killed by the people. I still remember there was a photo where he was lying down and then there was a lot of blood where he was lying. Sometimes I used to think that my father thought about that and he died and he didn’t know where his son is at this moment, who buried him? He doesn’t know the cause of the incident, why he was killed. So I also feel that one day I must investigate and find the bones of my brother and we can take the bones of my brother and then we give him the respect by everybody and bury him. I think if we can do that with my brothers and sisters before my mother she can die, I think that before she could die I would be happy if we have found the bones or we can find where my brother he was buried.”

On meeting his future wife and marrying her: “One day it happened that one of the members of the church died and I was called by the pastor to call others and the name of Grace was called and I asked the numbers of Grace to call her. So the Pastor gave me the phones and then I called Grace but I did not talk to her because she didn’t have the phone. So I left the message and then she phoned back ... then it’s where I started to communicate with Grace. After talking about the death of the member of the church I started my own personal issues. So it’s when we started visiting and talk about the issues until she finished at the school and then she came to Sasolburg and started to live with me. To me Grace is a good lady. What I did now is I married her as my wife but I didn’t make the white wedding I just make lobola to her family so that is why she is

allowed to stay with my family but I still want to marry her, to be my wife. She is my wife but I need to finish everything to be my wife because when you love the girl you must also show that girl that you love her and you can do anything for her. The bible says we must ... so I just want to show my wife that I love her and she proved to me that she is good and her family is good and then I believe that we will be together until we die.”

On ‘white weddings’ and the relational culture of the Bapedi: “When I’m talking about the white wedding you know this thing of the rings and other stuff its just an entertainment for the culture of Bapedi ... it is the rings of the white people. That is why we are calling it the white wedding and then these things of signing in the court saying we will be together for the rest of our lives and when we are saying ... this thing of property and this thing of we will be together. So that is the issue that is coming with the white people. According to the culture of Bapedi we are saying a man is a man in the family/house and then he is taking responsibility for everything. Meaning if I buy the sofa the sofa belongs to me ... so the woman can pack her stuff and go back to her home and she is not getting anything. But at this moment, we are sharing. So we are going 50/50 we have to go to court and the court says you have signed here and you said you will divorce your wife when you die and you are still alive ... now meaning you are not behind your words so you are taking 50/50 ... so that thing is just coming in.”

“When you are doing the white wedding you will spend. You still going to buy a ring and it’s too expensive and then the wines and then you got the cakes to make for the people and you still need to have different stuff. You are still going to get the tables and ... I mean you will spend. And then when you do the wedding as your culture the Bapedi you just send the people and you can just give them R8 000 if I don’t have the cattles for my wife because usually we are not using the money. You can just take two goats, two sheep, two cows and two donkeys if I have and then I have to get my wife. But at this time you have to get cash, let’s say R8 000/R6 000 and I just sent the people and say I have just asked my wife to come and stay with me ... You see now people they are not farming anymore, people they are no longer having cattles anymore so they will prefer cash from you.”

“ ... from my side I like my culture and I’m also liking things to be changed. You see, so I can take the white wedding and also I can take the culture of Bapedi so maybe if I can join these two things I can make something better.”

On Bapedi culture before and after 1994: “ ... we lost our culture because of the new government. And we did enjoy our culture by the apartheid government. After the new government, we lost our culture ... So at least by that time even if our black people they were oppressed by that time but they were enjoying their culture with other people who are living in this country. Now we are not enjoying our culture”

On feelings after Mandela’s release and imminent democratic elections: “Everybody was happy and I was happy to the first black president in our country and to see the first democracy for elections in our country, so everybody was happy.”

On the day of Chris Hani’s death: “I was not aware myself that Chris Hani he lost his life on that day. My parents sent me to the shops to buy breads. When I arrived at the shops I told one who was helping me that I need bread. (He told me) ... there is no bread because Chris Hani he lost his life. I asked myself who was Chris Hani? I was saying maybe he was talking about the Christians but realised no Chris Hani, the guy who fight for the country and I said why there is no bread because Chris Hani died? He said the bakery didn’t deliver the bread so there is no one who was working at this moment to make breads so there is none in any shops here. That is when I sat down with other comrades in the shop and talked about his death, how his death comes.”

On hopes and expectations in years following 1994: “We were hoping a better life ... and we were hoping that it would be a great thing if we South Africans can be united. When I’m talking about united I’m talking about the police, the government, the communities and the President and everybody be united and to say one thing. But it is not like the way we were hoping. We were saying that we will get jobs, we will get free things like they were saying when they want us to vote for them. We were saying we would get free bursaries, we would go to school free, we will get water free because we have fought for this democracy.”

On preference for growing up/living in urban versus rural areas: “Here you see, most people like to say people who are from urban areas they are different from the people who have grown up at the rural areas. When they are talking, because there is a mix - there are Zulus, Xhosas and white people - they learn things quickly and other things from different people. So here now we are just Bapedi, we are just doing the same thing that other Bapedi people are doing, so there is no difference. So other people they think that those people who are growing at urban areas they are learning different things than the people who are staying at the rural areas as one family, as one mission.”

On freedom and democracy in the new South Africa: “We are not free yet in our country. If you can see now people they are still tortured, people they are still getting arrested unnecessarily, people they are still getting killed, there are no jobs for our people. People who are on top like to say there is democracy in our country.”

On his views of labour rights and work conditions as a former worker in the Vaal: “We must fight for our rights, we are not free yet, we are getting peanuts. At the time I started to work, people were still getting R4,50 per hour, even now they are still struggling to get R7/8 but we want a better life for all. I blame our government because if you can check all the people who are working in the big companies at Sasolburg, Rustenburg, in the mine ... most of them they are working temporarily, they are working for the private companies. When we are talking about private company if I’m the owner of the private company I employ you now and dismiss you now because I’ve got my own power in that company.”

On political leadership in the area/province in the face of community struggles: “We started this strike five years back, fighting against the mine, but he [the Premier of Limpopo] have never said something about our lives. The people were relocated, the graves were removed by the mine, the ploughing fields were taken, they were bulldozing our people, but the big man in this province, he never did anything about our lives.”

On the community’s conflict with the mine: “I remember on the 8th of June last year 2007, were we organising a meeting ... the mine they were drilling outside the farms and we went

there as a community to stop them. So I was leading the community and then we stopped the mine and said there is no any other resolution between us and the mine. We told them that they don't have the rights to jump on our land without consulting the community, so we need to benefit from the mine as a community, we have experienced cracked houses, so is better for them to stop and then we were aware of the issue of the convention order. So before they can change to the convention of the new order they must come to our Chief, they must consult the leaders, those that the community has elected to be their representative. And we agreed with the mine that they will call the police and by that time the police were called and we had the meeting with the police and the mine. It's where the police said we will have the meeting next to Modikwa. Tomorrow when we come there, is where the Station Commander of Police Station of Moroke who takes a list from his pocket and started to read the names and he started with my name and Lazarus and other people. We went there because we agreed that we should have the meeting and then it's where they announce that they arrest us to the community and the community said if you arrest these, our leaders, is better you take all of us. The police refused to arrest all of the community. It's where they started to shoot and beat our people and to shoot by the rubber bullets and also they were using live bullets to shoot the community. I'm still remembering they shoot Mme Mmayane on the arm by the last bullet, she was lucky because that bullet goes out but she was injured and she was bleeding at that time. We were arrested and that's where I had to explain this issue of torturing, then abusing people is what we feel that they were torturing us because they were threatening that they will kill us and do whatever they want with us so we feel that our government is not listening to the people so we need the government to cooperate with the people of this country."

On issue of land and the mine: "I was charged by intimidation and public violence and trespassing. How can I trespass in my mother or father's land ... in our land? How can we make public violence in our land because we believe that the land that Modikwa is using belongs to us? So there is no need for them to say they own the land, when the police are beating us, harassing us, saying we were trespassing. We can't trespass in my yard, we can't trespass in our parent's land, the land that they are using belongs to the people of Maandagshoek. It's just because they think they are rich, they are clever; they are having money in their pocket so they

think they can treat everybody the way they like. So we are saying that is totally wrong and that is not acceptable ... the government does not do anything.”

On impact of mine operations in community and also in relation to government: “Let me tell you what is happening ... those that were ploughing, those that were feeding their cattle are the poorest in this village now because of the mines. So there is nothing that they can do because of their ages. Their children are not employed in the mines and government ... is always saying that we must fight against crime and poverty in our country, but the mines are creating poverty for our people in our country ... the government is quiet, they don’t say anything. We suspect that’s why the government is so quiet about us, why our President is quiet about us ... we suspect maybe because the issue of the mine is business and the business makes money and everybody likes money looking for better lives. Maybe they are having the business in the mines. That is why they don’t want to help us. If they have the business in mines why they don’t want to help us? Why they don’t want to help these poor people who are crying everyday, who are always keeping their voices and saying we need help? I think and I do believe that there is something that is helping them.”

On presence of ‘foreign security’ brought in by the mines: “ ...there is a foreign, I can call them a foreign security because they are not talking our language, they are not from this country, they are from outside of the country. It is true the mines they have hired the security to come to force ... to drain our land. I mean that because those people they are well armed, they are with dogs, firearms, teargas everything they got in their camps. And then those people they are dangerous, they are not free, they are not friendly for our people, they are abusing our people. We don’t need foreign security in our country to come to resolve our problems, we can resolve our problems ourselves together as South Africans. But because of the business, because of this game of business going up and down, because of the weak politician in our country, because of the people who are not following the rules of this country, those people we are saying to them that they have to follow the rule of this country, they mustn’t do things more than the way the rule of this country says.”

“ ... they are forcing the young girls, they are proposing to the young girls meaning they are forcing them to be in love with them. And then they are also threatening our parents when they catch them going around getting green grass; they are forcing the cattle towards the wrong directions where a man knows where there is a green grass or proper grass. They are with dogs and are threatening the community with dogs and going into the yards without asking the permission of anybody. When you ask them they will tell you that they are getting the permission from the Chief. In this country, the President of this country is not allowed to take decisions on behalf of this country until he gets the advice of the persons living in this country/community. So just imagine until the person from the Chief who is staying in the village telling the people they must come to the community to drill without giving the people a cent. Now there is the issue of relocating the people – it’s where now the fight is going to start. The issue – where the security they are staying – is going to be the big issue. We know how our parents have fought the old government, we are having the MK veterans, they are still in the villages. We can ask them to fight what those foreign security are doing. Those MK comrades, they are not happy because really, we don’t need those foreign security to solve our problems – we can do it ourselves. We can do without anybody from outside the country.”

On crime in the community and the rise in crime levels after the arrival of the mine: “Let me state it clear. The people of Maandagshoek they are very, very quiet. I mean that...yes there is young guys who can steal your cell phone, who can steal your money, but maybe just because you left you cell phone while you were sitting there, they are stealing it because they have not found you. But now after the mine comes in Maandagshoek really the crime is going up. The reason for that crime in Maandagshoek, where we are sitting, is the mine. We now have *izinyoka*, people that are stealing cables. And then people will steal others cell phones in the pockets and also threaten them with weapons - it is because of the mine. We feel that this crime is going up because of the mine. When the mine came here we thought that all these nonsense small crimes, all this poverty will be finished, so thinking there was going to be no crime anymore, people they were just going to be employed in the mine. But what we have been promised is a lie, there is no employment for the local people, so that is why people they go to the mine and steal the cables, so that is why people they just go to the mine to try to steal other things ... something, a fence just to sell and buy something to eat. So it is not the intention of the community to do crime. We

did get the promise from the mine that they will employ the people, so now there are people who are from outside the village working in the mines of Maandagshoek whereas the people are still looking for a job ...”

On what he thinks of police and application of the law: “Most of the people they are facing the charges because of the corruption, because of bribery, because of looking something in his pocket, but I’m not pointing fingers to somebody I’m just talking generally - people they are getting something from other people. If you look now the community of Maandagshoek is fighting the mines in this village and we know that when you are talking about the mines we are talking about the money, a lot of money ... platinum is doing a lot of money, gold is doing a lot of money, chrome is doing a lot of money ... any others are doing a lot of money. So when Patrice Motsepe talks everybody is listening in this country, in this province everybody is listening ... when Anglo American talks everybody is listening including the police they are listening what Patrice Motsepe is saying, what Anglo American is saying and then they will follow what those people are saying even if they say they jump the wall they will fall secretly, like they arrest people, they beat people secretly.”

“Here people they are still taking bribes, people they are still biased, people when they are judging somebody they are not judging somebody through what has happened, they are judging somebody because they know him where he is come from and we know they are judging somebody because he is poor, he doesn’t have money to pay or to cancel that issue that he was facing now, so there is no fair judgment in this country in general.”

On delivery of water and electricity: “... we did say we were happy for electricity (in 1994) and that we are no longer going to use candles anymore ... we will just switch the light. As the people from this rural area we don’t know a lot of things, but they have made a mistake ... they gave us electricity and we are paying for it. But we can use it to watch the television and at the television we can see the people of Soweto, the people of Khutsong. I can say if we are in the meetings that this village would be like Khutsong because government doesn’t want to listen to us and they don’t want to help us. We are left with nothing but to protect our land. Even with the

issue of electricity we are aware that people don't want to pay it and they don't want to pay for water.”

On Modikwa mine's water notice boards across the community that announce, 'Modikwa Cares': “No, there is no water here from Modikwa side. I think Modikwa is very excited about putting up the boards and saying we are caring about the people of Maandagshoek, about the water and the other things. So what they are doing is totally wrong because there is no water, there is nothing, meaning they are lying. Maybe the people who are driving through here they are feeling that Modikwa is doing the right thing for the people of Maandagshoek but there is no water there. So they have just put their own boards, they just doing anything that they want to do but they are not helping the community by anything ... there is no water.”

On the issue of whether race makes a difference when black capitalists (like Patrice Motsepe) come to such communities to invest: “Ja, it did make a difference for them, that is why now they got the chance to mine that side, because if you can listen to the politics, to the business people, they like to say we are all black people, we must agree. When Patrice Motsepe was talking smoothly to our people, you know we are still saying white people are bad people. They have killed our parents, so we don't want to get together with them. Even if our country says that we must stay together forgive each other on what happened in the past. That issue of Patrice Motsepe did make a change, but now people have realized that they are using this colour of black people to rob the people.”

On blacks exploiting other blacks: “That is still a problem. If I still remember the words of Joe Slovo, comrade Joe Slovo before he died I don't remember the date but he was saying that he agrees that the black people will win against the old government but there is still going to be a problem when coming to the issue of the leadership because those people they will start by wanting to put the money in their pockets first and it's where problems are going to be started. So that is what is happening. Like now, we are fighting as the communities, we are fighting as unionists, we are fighting as people from different movements but immediately you are started to be recognised or immediately you are decided to sit down with the capitalist ... I mean let's take the issue of the unionist and then you are the organisers and you are black and then you are

fighting for the right of the workers and immediately when you get the promotion maybe the secretary or maybe you be the minister somewhere, you start to change your life, you start to live at the good place. Maybe you are staying in town, you are renting, you are no longer staying with the black people anymore. So you are staying in town, you are using luxury things so you need somebody to come and take responsibility in your house, then you employ black people. So you start to capitalise instead of the issue of socialism you start to capitalise and you pay those people less and you forget that we were fighting so that people should get better wages but now that you are a capitalist, you are an employer you start to work as if you are a capitalist, to pay the people peanuts. I am totally against that. Most of the black people they are the leaders now, they are paying our brothers and sisters peanuts instead of showing them how they must sign the agreement, the proper agreements with them for the better life, for the children of those people who are working with those rich people - they are not doing that ... they are still doing the same thing as the whites they are doing.”

On Jacob Zuma’s leadership and criticisms from others: “Most of the people like to say comrade JZ is not educated and then he can’t do anything, he is just going to give those small boys like Vavi, they are just going to do things without telling him because he can’t even read ... so those people who are supporting Zuma are coming to use him, they will do things without informing Zuma because he can’t do anything. We know that people were just trying to influence and speaking comrade Jacob Zuma bad and I believe myself that comrade Zuma he can talk English as he is always talking on the radio and he can write as I think he is always writing things because he is the president of the ANC now so we know education is needed to be a leader. So I think Zuma without the fear he knows how people must be lead. So I think he is a good leader and he is going to be a good president next year.”

“I don’t believe that comrade JZ he will have the problem of the leadership. I think he will do what the community is saying. But unless the people who are going to be next to comrade Zuma, unless they are not going to comply with the rules of the country or the instructions of comrade JZ and that is where I can tell you we are going to have problems. If, by the time of comrade JZ, if nothing is going to happen, (then) we are going back to the bloods.”

On the next five years: “In the next five years I believe, we will be proud of this village it will be good village, our children they will get better life and everybody who will be living in this village will get better life.”

CHAPTER THREE

Rammolutsi

Community profile

The community of Rammolutsi is located adjacent to the small farming town of Viljoenskroon in the Northern Free State. Rammolutsi was established many decades ago as a small ‘black township’ to service the needs of white Viljoenskroon. Prior to 1994, the majority of residents, most all of whom were either farm workers or workers in a local manufacturing plant (producing peanut butter and sunflower oil), lived in ‘normal’ township houses built by the apartheid state and/or certain farmers. Since 1994 however, there has been a huge influx of people into Rammolutsi, mostly as a result of the mass evictions/retrenchments of workers from surrounding farms in the region as well as the local manufacturing plant. From a pre-1994 population of no more than 3000-4000, Rammolutsi now has an estimated population of close to 30 000, a sizeable portion of which are pensioners, women and children. There is very little productive/job-creating activity happening in Rammolutsi/Viljoenskroon resulting in the vast majority of residents being without formal employment. A few residents are full-time farm workers, some pick up occasional (and extremely low-paid) ‘piece jobs’ on surrounding farms but most survive predominately on state welfare/pension/social grants and remunerations from relatives working outside the community. The majority of employed residents work for the municipality, provincial government departments and in the few small businesses in Viljoenskroon. While the ‘old’ township of well built brick houses remains at the heart of the community, the vast majority of housing in the community is in the form of shacks that have been built since 1994, with a few RDP houses spread around here and there. Most houses and

shacks have pre-paid electricity meters and yard water taps. A roll-out of proper sanitation is proceeding slowly although the bucket system remains in use for sizeable numbers of shack dwellers. The community falls under a district municipality situated in Kroonstad (70 kilometres away) and the politics of Rammolutsi has long been dominated by the African National Congress (ANC).

Article on Rammolutsi

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

When was the last time that key newspapers, the TV stations, civil society organisations or leading politicians in our country provided serious coverage of, or commentary on, anything happening in the Free State community of Intabazwe? Answer – August 2004, when a march by Intabazwe (Harrismith) residents over poor service delivery was literally attacked by police, resulting in the death of student, Tebogo Mkhonza, and charges of treason being levelled against several protesters.

What this so poignantly points to, is the fact that Intabazwe, just like the small Northern Free State community of Rammolutsi where we recently spent time talking to a wide cross-section of residents about their lives since 1994, represents the forgotten ‘face’ of the transition. It is in these kind of places where people are constantly accused of having a ‘culture of entitlement’ for desiring the fulfilment of the transition’s long-delayed promises of service delivery and are told to be ‘patient’ while the government gets its local level finances and institutional delivery and investment mechanisms sorted out. As long as they play to this script there is nothing to report or comment on, nothing to see, precisely because there is no societal-institutional recognition of anything that is ‘out of the ordinary’.

What has become ‘ordinary’ is the generalised acceptance of a state strategy that is based upon an abdication of its responsibility vis-à-vis a macro-economic programme of social inclusion made contingent on capital investment. In a community like Rammolutsi, this means accepting a situation in which the only existing form of meaningful capital investment in the area -

commercial farming - is increasingly shedding jobs (as it speeds-up mechanisation in order to enhance its global competitiveness) in a domestic economy where wage labour is the conduit for social citizenship. It means accepting an 80%+ unemployment rate and the probability that most adult residents will never live to see their shacks transformed into proper housing.

The contemporary result is a community which fits neatly into Mbeki's proverbial 'second economy', where unemployment and poverty become structural and, in the President's own words, "act as a fetter on the further development of the first economy". The developmental logic flowing from this - i.e., that such a community is secondary to the needs and dictates of the state's macro-economic programme of growth - practically translates into an almost complete lack of infrastructural investment (e.g., transport, housing and health) by the state in a place such as Rammolutsi. The little infrastructural development that does take place is mostly cosmetic in character, the classic examples being shiny new school and/or government buildings and one or two thoroughfare roads.

People in Rammolutsi told us that the only official - post-1994 - visit to their community by a senior government politician (former Vice-President, Jacob Zuma) was limited to the one main (paved) road running through Rammolutsi where most all the formal housing is located. The thousands of makukus (shacks) that dominate the majority of Rammolutsi, and which represent the most direct manifestation of poverty and lack of development – were ignored. If something is not seen then, for all intents and purposes, it becomes 'invisible', and that includes people themselves.

In circumstances where the continued and often deepening immiserisation of people, whether in Rammolutsi, Intabazwe or hundreds of others places like them across South Africa, becomes an 'ordinary' and acceptable feature of a society, politics can gravitate towards a mode of entrepreneurial engagement. Being effectively cut-off from the politico-institutional and socio-economic mainstream of society, the vast majority of those who inhabit makukus in poor communities such as Rammolutsi have, for example, adopted an understandable (but ultimately disempowering) position that links the possibilities of getting an RDP house to their own political connectedness. It is such a connectedness that would allow access to the networks of

patronage and corruption that so clearly characterise much of the local levels of the state and party. Several of our interviewees went so far as to say that having an ANC membership card is the necessary first step to accessing these networks.

In theory, political society in any democracy is supposed to represent the very basis upon which citizens are able to secure meaningful social assistance from the state. In practice though, when residents of peripheralised poor communities attempt to 'enter' political society (outside of the occasional and increasingly, perfunctory, act of voting), they are forced to do so by means of personalised-networked connectivity and/or through direct confrontation with the juridical and disciplinary power of the state.

This is the case, because the political rationality underpinning the South African state's macro-developmental approach is fundamentally, one of non-negotiability. In this context, the contestation of the conditions of life confront the sovereign power of the state directly. If the conditions of bare life itself have become non-negotiable, then what becomes of demands for anything more? Witness the character of the Intabazwe confrontation alongside the thousands of other service delivery protests that have taken place over recent years. Depending on the 'outcome' of such attempts, which have so regularly resulted in increasing frustration and anger, this trajectory can lead to a longer-term disinvestment in the entire democratic polity.

People, and no more so than the poor, have to be seen - whether by government, the media, civil society organisations, political parties etc. – in order to get political recognition. Thirteen years on in South Africa's transition, the dominant way in which the poor can be seen is by creating an out-of-the-ordinary localised 'crisis' that has the potential to draw the gaze of the national state – and other players within the system - onto the developmental failures of the local state and its individual actors. Anyone paying attention?

An edited version of this article was published in *Business Day* on 1st September 2007 under the title – “Voices cry from under new myths about 'ordinary' South Africa”.

Selections from interviews

Malome Serame Isaac Masike (semi-retired small business man – owns a small general store as well as being a sub-contractor for projects in Rammolutsi)

***Brief biography:** Malome is fifty-nine (59) years old. Although he was born in Sophiatown he moved to Rammolutsi as a very young child and has lived in the community since. He comes from a family of shop-owners and has continued this 'tradition' with his own small general good store. He also is an occasional building/construction sub-contractor to the municipality. Malome is very involved in the local business association – both in Rammolutsi and in Viljoenskroon.*

On early childhood and move to Rammolutsi (its history): “I was born in Johannesburg in Crown Mines at the compounds where my father and my mother and the family were staying. My father was working there, my uncle was working there while my mother was working just around in Johannesburg. From there they came here through my elder brother – my family was just in Johannesburg. My brother came here as he was working for a Mr. Cambanis, the first businessman that came here to have shops. So when my brother came here he bought this house, this stand. At that time that was the beginning of Viljoenskroon, let's say around 1921 that was the beginning of this township in the early days. Now he bought this stand and ... let's say there were no white people around here. It was the government who gave the farms around here to the whites and people were angry and they had to go out either to Johannesburg or here in Rammolutsi where there was a family – Setshogo – who were staying here in the village ... others were the Serame's who were staying in town ... by the time they (the whites) took over they dispersed them and make this place here, Rammolutsi.”

On most vivid memory of childhood in Rammolutsi: “In 1952, it was Masanye, Masika and Mabale ... we were working in town gardens after school. So I work for the teacher. Mr. Erasmus .. this Mabale was working for the Standard Bank manager. So always when we walked

there, we went through the school and looked through the window .. it was Standard 2. And what we noticed is that these people they have big charts, skeleton pictures and others like locusts .. big charts for education. But we haven't got them ... so we stole them one of the days and brought them here. We come with them here and put them in our classroom. Monday morning our Mistress, Mrs. Molobela, she says where are these pictures from? We just kept quiet. Then Mabale said we picked them up from Standard 2, because Standard 2 in town they are doing these things and we like to learn also so that we can have education as those ones. Just after a few minutes, the police came in – I don't know who told the police the pictures are in our classroom. They took the three of us to the police station. The Sergeant said let them go, the school must buy others ... let them go, they like to learn also. So he went to the Principal and said they must buy others but that we must never do that again, we must ask. He was good man.”

On local social relations and politics: “We have got people who can do anything, even without school ... building, carpentry, roofing, windows/frames. But the people who lead us, they don't like them (the white people) ... even at the meetings if you are white they don't care what you will say and they will vote against you. That's the thing that kills us here in Rammolutsi ... all the white people, most of them (80-90%) would like to merge with us, to work together. But now, it's why this big factory of about 1400 workers goes down because water was too weak for the factory, the roads are bad ... Those people from the outside they do not want to go on, so they say this place is bad. It's the municipality that causes all this trouble.”

On race relations in area since 1994: “ ... let's say that 99 percent has changed. It's only to say that people – they don't want to change. We blacks, we don't want to change ... because when you go to them and speak to them they say 'I am busy now'. But the white people in town and those on farms, they have changed and they would like to help us. The councillors they are part of this ... they don't speak to the business people and when they have a meeting with them they don't talk nice. The changes are there in Viljoenskroon but there are no people that are supporting that change ... we blacks, we don't support it.”

On why he thinks local municipality is to blame for most of the problems in the community: “Firstly, if you can introduce something that is new they don't like that – they

must introduce it. If at all you can speak something that helps the people, they are going to say that no, you are misleading the nation. Once I said – ‘why are the toilets not all built together, you put only the pot, only the flush system but why no walls while other towns they are building the complete toilet’? They say no, I must not say that, I am misleading the nation.. The municipality, they say that they are not a business. We have these rents – when we pay these rents, the municipality they must do something for the people, to give people jobs. They could plant gardens so that you can take those vegetables to the market and so people are getting paid – so they said no, they are not a business.”

On the local councillors and politics with the local ANC (of which he is a member): “The elected councillors, they don’t listen to us. At the meetings that have some two or three who are going to crush you ... they talk before they come to the meeting They see Malome and say he has got a big mouth ... and when I speak at the meeting there are three or four who are going to be against me. So the people they are not educated, they just go to them on their side.”

“We don’t elect them [the councillors] We don’t know who elects them. We just see pictures, that this one is for that vacant (?) ... we don’t know who elects them. As an ANC member myself, sometimes I know nothing – just that somebody is there, and there. There is no one who calls a meeting to say let’s have somebody who can stand for us. They don’t do that ... Even the Mayor, we just heard her name is what, what ... You know our councillors and those in Bloemfontein they are the same ... they are friends. I am just from the meeting now and they are telling about the improvement they are going to do. Every meeting they are saying that but it doesn’t come out.”

On problems with democracy and accountability of politicians : “They vote for ANC because they are just used. There are some who will say they want Botha again – not because to say Botha is only white. It’s what I say, our councillors, they don’t want to come near the white people ... even in the meetings they are talking you know, not nice cause you are only white. Now, how can those people come close to us or support us because we are fighting them? I am no more so much interested in the meetings because in the meetings they are fighting me. I mustn’t come with the truth to say gentlemen, you are not doing well here please, let’s do this or

let's try to do this. What I'm doing now is I'm just organising people – people they must know their rights, they must go forward ... let's do jobs so that our people can work.”

“There is nothing happening that is going to help the poor people. There are some people who do not have candles, right here at Rammolutsi. Really, I am working with the community and I know, they haven't got money. I was collecting this offal at the abattoir with my van every day (to give to the people) but I was being stopped by the councillor who was saying that I want to organise people so they can vote for me. For what? As an old man I was just helping them, those people. The councillors stopped that and they said I mustn't do that. For what reason I said, and they said well they are going to choose you sometimes as a councillor. I'm too old, I can't do those things. I have not got money to do things.”

On trying to get tenders for housing in Rammolutsi: “I have travelled to Bloemfontein many times to go and have these tenders of housing, but they don't give us those tenders. I have got everything here ... I can have material, everything. I have tried but they don't even give us one. Those people have been given from Kroonstad, from Bothaville, but mostly from Kroonstad, it is those people who are building here in Rammolutsi.”

On present political leaders: “These leaders must listen to us. There are many things we can do if we can be together like here in Rammolutsi and Viljoenskroon ... there are many jobs but only, we don't have leaders. Leaders are just flying ... and from there it is just parties What they like is parties, always it's parties ... they are taming these people so they can have their votes, really that is what they are thinking. They are not thinking about leading for tomorrow, they are not thinking about these children and what they are going to do tomorrow. I see those big people who have got monies and I see what they are doing. So they must change that, 100% ... they must listen to the people. They have said the people will govern, but they don't govern.”

“We must stand up and then the young people they are going to get a future. Now we can't stand up because the administration blocks us to do things and to suggest things. The administration as it is, is just looking for Kroonstad. They are just talking about helping young people but it does not happen .. it's just like I am sleeping today but tomorrow it will be alright. So this democracy

has given us something but there are some people who have misled it cause they are looking for their own pockets. They are now building big houses and new cars ... through my vote ... and you can't say anything to them.”

Samuel Mahoko (farm labourer living in Rammolutsi)

***Brief biography:** Samuel was born and raised on a farm near Rammolutsi. He has worked and/or lived on nearby farms his entire life except for a brief stint working at a engineering firm in the small town of Vredefort (about 50 kilometres away). He moved to Rammolutsi in 1998. After living in a shack for a few years, Samuel managed to get an RDP house which he and his family now live in. He continues to work on a nearby farm as a tractor driver/shop-keeper. He has a wife and four children, only one of whom is working – on the same farm as himself.*

On farm work and relations with farmer prior to 1994: “We got along just fine; those old whites’ people were good people unlike these ones of today. I was earning R100 [per month] and we used to be given mealie meal and any kind of help.”

... and presently: “When you request something from the farm owner – for example when you have problems with a funeral – he will demand money from you. Another thing ... he will tell you about the ANC government – go and demand from your government because you voted for your government.”

On why he thinks white people in old days were better than ones today: “I was saying that the white people in the past were better because they were understanding when you had problems ... the kids of the white people I used to work for, they understood me. The whites then used to show you the jobs you can do – that’s why now I can do many things.” But now, when you seek help from them they will tell you – ‘Go to Mandela and demand that money that you want’ - and there is nothing you can do or tell them.”

On difference in making a living and basic costs in pre and post-1994 periods: “That smaller salary that I was getting before was better than the bigger salary I am getting now. Previously with my little salary I was managing to make many things for my family but now even with the salary increases the price of things increases daily. So today it is not easy to make a living ... Previously on the farm we were provided with the mealie meal bag. Now, I’m putting the 80kg in the house I must buy it and it is expensive - over R200.”

On his RDP house and government delivery: “ ... the house can fall down at any time ...it's terrible. In my opinion, the government of South Africa still has many things to do. There are lots of things the government should be doing. For example, like the RDP houses they are building now, these are not houses for people, they are just building traps for people, they are very bad for people to live in.”

“Going somewhere won't help in anything - like moving from here to Joburg - because the government is still the same all over South Africa. So the government must fulfil their promises to the people.”

On the character of farm work over last several years: “The white farmers are hiring people for doing piece jobs even though you are working permanently ... they just don't give a damn. Like when you complain about salaries, they can tell you, you can just go away ... so many people are seeking jobs so we can give them piece jobs – maybe R50, R30 a day ... The reason is that the farmers are trying to chase out those who have worked a long time on the farm, to replace them with the new ones who can do piece jobs, because they don't want to pay.”

“They are making a lot of money these people [farmers]. There are changes that they brought. At first we were hired on years, but now we sign contracts. We are signing contracts now even if we've been working here for a long time. The contracts do not include that, it is a new thing.”

On lack of land redistribution/ownership and importance of land: “We don't see any changes, especially on the farms. Before 1994, they were promising each and every person will get land. But around here in Viljoenskroon/Rammolutsi there is no such thing. In fact, the

situation is getting worse – there are no jobs for the people. Land is very important for us. Land was created for people and living things. Why can't we have it? Land was not made for the individuals.”

On overtime work: “This is really painful. We are told that we are going to be paid for overtime but at the end of month there is no such money in the salary pay slip. Instead of an increase, you see your salary go down.”

On union membership and service: “We joined a number of unions so far, but they don't come back after we joined. Recently we joined another one from Cape Town, the fourth, but it is promising. There is one that is deducting our money, but it is not working for us ... the union does not show up, it does not do anything.”

On difference between life on the farm and in the township: “It was simple at the farm ... you can eat whatever. But in the township money talks, everything involves money.”

On thoughts about battles in ANC and Zuma/Mbeki etc.: “What I think is that the South African government is creating a war like in the other areas of Africa, especially Zimbabwe. Because Zuma and Mbeki are clashing, at the end of the day people are going to fight. Many people support Zuma for President but Mbeki is also doing his own things and they are creating a war around South Africa ... Judging by the way our leadership are doing the things, I see it like that. We are facing a war amongst each other [amongst blacks].”

On what he would tell government to do to make life better: “Eish! That question becomes so hard for me because, if you are here, you don't have an influence on what can be done. Those people on top won't consider your plans, they won't listen to you. Even if you can tell them that they can do this and this and everything will be fine, they won't consider it. The community of Rammolutsi, they are telling themselves that we can just sit down and watch what they will do, what is going to happen.”

On what he sees for his and his family's future: "It's really difficult... what do we see that the government is doing in development especially in Rammolutsi?. To me it's still dark, I don't see anything the government is doing ... it's still empty promises."

"For my family I would like us to see that we have enough to eat and we have clothes to wear. For my community I would like us to stand together and fight poverty. We must look at what needs to be done because there is no one who will stand up for us, unless we stand up for our own."

Joyce Bafedile Mokgadi (Creche/pre school teacher – grew up on nearby farm)

***Brief biography:** Joyce is in her thirties and was born and raised on a nearby farm where her parents worked. She came to Rammolutsi to go to school in 1984 (where she lived with relatives) and received her matric in 1997. She started working at the pre-school in 2000. The pre-school has two rooms and a yard and presently has about fifty children between the ages of 2-6 who attend. Joyce lived in a shack for many years but now lives with her siblings in an RDP house (which she applied for in 1997 and received in 2003).*

On being a student in the mid-1980s: "By 1986, the uprisings started in Rammolutsi and I was part of that. We were excited by the demonstrations, but after that we didn't go to school any more because one of the boys from our school – Letsabo - was shot dead by the cops. After the shooting I decided that I have to go back to the farm because the police were beating up people. When I came back from home things were quiet – there was no longer toyi-toying. We knew that we should rather sit down and solve the problems in order to get a solution rather than fight."

On what she did after finishing matric in 1987: "I wanted to go to college at Qwa Qwa to complete a diploma in teaching. Unfortunately my parents were separated and my mother could not afford the fees, so I stayed at home. After, I went to the farmer in Potchefstroom to work on a chicken farm, 'Chubby Chick' - checking out the eggs on the farm.. I worked for seven to eight months."

On the crèche and her own sense of her job/work: “We are helped by social development ... but they only help us to find the certificates but they don’t help us to find the food. There are other crèches who find money from the department of social development, but here we did not get that money.”

“We are close with the parents - we sit down and share, we are friends, we can talk with their children, everything we do it together ... although some parents don’t want to pay for fees and they take so long. The problem of the crèche is we are going to get our salary from those parent fees. When they are not paying we don’t have money for a month, two months when the parents are not paying.”

“I think I am doing a good job because when the children are leaving here they know how to control their behaviour. We teach them how to control their behaviour, we develop their muscles, how to handle their pens, scissors all these things. We teach so many things ... colours and maths. When they are playing we stay and check for them that these children are developing, socially they are developing so many things they know how to play with other children they know how to talk with other children, so many things.”

“ ... people should not view crèches as they used to, as a place where kids are just left by their parents, instead they should view the crèche as a place whereby it’s a foundation for all kids, whereby we are able to identify the talents which are possessed by the kids. Please consider the teachers at the crèches. It is through crèches that their kids can become stars.”

Gabriel Mashakhale (Unemployed - pastor of the local branch of the Apostolic Church and ex-ward councillor)

Brief biography: Gabriel was born in Rammolutsi but grew up in Sharpeville and worked for the Vereeniging municipality for eighteen years as a general labourer. He is married with children. Gabriel moved to Rammolutsi in 1998 and built a shack on a allocated stand, which he still lives

in today. This home also doubles up as his church space. He has been unemployed since moving to Rammolutsi and besides donations from his congregation, survives and supports his family on a medical grant he receives.

On growing up: “I was brought up by my step mother - I never knew my real mother. I never went to school. Sisters of the Roman church, they were the ones who bought me clothes.”

On his feelings and thoughts before and after the 1994 elections: “... I was afraid, because sometimes in the morning when we went to work we saw people dead on the street. That was the part of Inkatha and that also made me afraid ... I thought after the elections there was going to be a war like what is happening now in Iraq.”

“After the elections I saw some changes that are coming I had access to go wherever I want and at least the salaries became a little bit better”

On life when he first moved to Rammolutsi: “When I arrived here, life was very difficult in the informal settlement. There was no water and there was nothing like lights/electricity. So we tried to combine as people staying in the informal settlement and collect some R2, at least so that a tap can be installed and we can get some water.”

On allocation of RDP houses by municipality: “People are not treated equally. If people can be treated equally then things could be much better - now things are not good ... We were promised houses would be allocated here [in shack section] but they only allocate to those in the location, they are the ones who get the houses. Here we only get houses here and there. We don't get answers even if we ask questions about why.”

“I would like the government to build houses for everyone. If they only build houses at my side then it might seem like I have paid a bribe, They must work fairly and provide everyone with service delivery.”

On local democracy and service delivery: “The one thing that can make the service delivery effective is if the ward committee consults the community, also the councillor and the Mayor herself. If they can meet with the people and listen ... but now they do nothing and just sit on their laurels – there are no consultations.”

On how government is performing: “From my point of view I think the government is performing okay. Maybe like parliament or the province – they are providing money to the regions. So everything is okay at the top but when it comes to middle or lower management it is not going well.”

On the biggest problem in the community: “The biggest problem is that people have no job and there is no income at the end of the month. People only maybe get jobs when the farmers are harvesting ... maybe for four or five days work.”

On his ‘dream’ house: “I want a house with three bedrooms, a living room, and two bathrooms. I expect a better life than this, God willing.”

Rabase Lehlohonolo (Grade 10 high school student & COSAS member)

***Brief biography:** Rabase is nineteen (19) years old and is presently in his matric year at one of the high schools in Rammolutsi. He was born and raised on a nearby farm where his parents worked. In 1996 his family was evicted from the farm and went to work on another farm nearby. He came to Rammolutsi in 2000 to attend school and stayed with relatives. His parents soon followed and after living in a shack for awhile, managed to get an RDP house, where he presently lives. Rabase is active in the Students Representative Council (SRC) at his school and wants to go to university so he can become Rammolutsi’s first ‘home-grown’ medical doctor.*

On his family being evicted from the farm: “My parents had a fight and someone took it to the farmer ... it involved my uncle. Then we were ordered to move out of the farm within five days. My parents had been living on the farm for fifteen years.”

On gangsterism in school and community: “They disrespect teachers, they carry knives at school, and they smoke in school toilets. They formed groups from home and they are fighting with one another. The fight may start at school, so one must always be prepared to fight at any time. This thing is affecting the community so badly that you may get attacked, while walking to the shops or just going anywhere. I think as friends they mislead each other, and if one says we are going to do this, they all think they don't have a choice but to do it. It is very bad at school. When they have started they even come into classes looking for their opponent, and when they find them they will fight right in the class ... It's only one that was killed while I was at primary school ... they are smoking dagga in the toilets, but with beers they mostly drink on Fridays during breaks.”

On his own schooling/education: “When I get home I'll rest a bit, and then go out to my friends and later I go to school to study ... every night. I want to go and further my studies at the university ... I want to study to be a medical doctor. [does not know anyone in Rammolutsi who is at university]

“I am taking part in cricket and I'm an athlete. If they can build us a place to play cricket, because we wait for soccer players to finish then we go in and play. If they can make every field for every sport. We don't have a person who can organise us matches, who can organise the competition for us because we just play but we don't go anywhere. We like drawing but we don't have anyone recognise our talent.”

On what he has to say to other young people/students: “I would like to say, gangsterism doesn't pay, drinking and walking out in the night is just a waste of time. Most of all they must focus on their school work, education can brighten their future.”

Molefi John Phasha (pensioner who moved to Rammolutsi several years ago from neighbouring towns where he was a salesman)

***Brief biography:** Molefi is in his late sixties. He was born and raised in nearby Bothaville and received a Standard 6 education. He worked in a hotel as well as for a furnisher (as a salesman and trainer) and a pawn shop. He moved to Rammolutsi a few years ago and lives in a shack on an allocated stand. He has five children and has been married twice – he never divorced his first wife with whom he had two kids. He got married again to another woman who died in April 2007 – they had three kids. Molefi survives on his pension grant. He recently joined the Independent Democrats (ID) and is trying to start a branch in Rammolutsi.*

On his feelings about changes before and after 1994: “In the early ‘90s everything was changing. From my side, I was feeling better, because I had to do anything I want, I am free now. If I want to do my own business now, I could do that. I could have my own business now but to do that you have to borrow money and to do that is a bit difficult for me just because of money. But if I can get money I can open a business and carry on.”

On his old age government pension: “Nowadays it’s small ... if it can go up. But I’m happy because with that, I can live. There is no other income. Yes, I support the children – they have to get food. Anything that they have to do, I can it from that money.”

On difficulties as a newcomer to Rammolutsi: “It’s difficult here because the people here they first want to know you well and then they can make a business with you, help you, borrow some small money for you. But if they don’t know you totally, unless they see you every day and know where you are staying. It’s not like when I was famous in Bothaville.”

On his reasons for joining the ID: “I just like it because the ANC is big. I see that if they haven’t got opposition party they’re going to work like kings and go like kings. They are just going to say no, today you have to move there, you have to sit there ... move from that chair to this chair. They’ve got all the power. Now it’s not to say that I don’t like the ANC, I like it very much but I’m afraid that if they can be like a king we won’t have so much. If they make a

mistake who'll say, you've made a mistake or you are going wrong (otherwise) they will always be right, whatever they do will always be right and *wena* ('watch out') you won't say anything. That's the only thing that made me join the ID."

On what he thinks about top layers of government: "On the pension side, those people on top they have done a very good thing ... they are very good for us, the pensioners. Because every time they are giving us more and even our kids, they are giving our kids. And then, for the education the government at the moment, we can see that they can do something for us."

On what he would like to see change in near future: "Well, the first thing that I would like to see is communication ... If the young people can see that they can be with others and not fight every day, be happy with others. And, the white man and the black man, going up ... if they are happy and can communicate like that you see."

On what he sees as the town's biggest problem: "You see, Viljoenskroon, it is a small town. The big business here in Viljoenskroon is the farm. If you want work, the better work, you have to go work for the farmer. And somebody like me, I can't go and work on the farm ... I can't do it. I have started in a big position and to go down again ... heh! The problem in Rammolutsi is just that ... the black people here have all moved from the farms and they are staying here and they all haven't got work. If you start a business here it won't work ... if you sell something higher they can't afford to buy it."

On what he has to say to people about living/life: "I just want to say to people that really, they must try to be good people in life. Because life comes once and we'll never see it again. So if they do good, we will always be good. I'm expecting next year to be seventy years, but I'm really glad for my life. Since I was born I have not been in jail for anything and I was driving since 1963 until today, I haven't got an accident or anything. It's only to keep myself in the right way and trying to do anything good. I'm not saying that I can do everything good, but I'm trying to do everything good. So I ask of the people ... if they don't have something try to go slowly and you will have that thing. Anything you will like you will get it but you must be patient."

Don't say today you'll get R800 and then buy something for R10 000. You have to go slowly. So, I'm asking all the people, to be right and positive.”

Mmamodike Lydia Ntsane (Adult Basic Education – ABET - teacher)

***Brief biography:** Mmamodike is thirty-eight (38) years old and was born and raised on a nearby farm where her parents worked. She left the farm to come attend school in Rammolutsi in 1984 and gained her matric. She then worked piece jobs on neighbouring farms and was able to attend a college where she received a teaching certificate. Her father (who left the farm and became a driver for the municipality in Rammolutsi) died several years ago. She cares for her asthmatic mother and her brother's children and lives in her self-built brick house. Mmamodike has worked as an ABET teacher in Rammolutsi since 1999, teaching mostly pensioners. (NOTE: Since our interview, Mmamodike has managed to get a permanent teaching job in Rammolutsi)*

On why her family moved from the farm to Rammolutsi: “The new farm owner was very harsh to our parents and he cut the things that the previous owner used to give to our parents. When it comes to the food, there was a limit of mealie-meal, for example, an 80kg we must use for two to three months. My parents used to have lots of animals but the new owner told them they must sell them because there was no room for the workers animals.”

On difficulties of coming to the location as a young kid and how she was treated by other kids there: “Because I was a farm girl ... I was not free, I was always scared ... they treated us badly and we were beaten up by those at the school, those that were staying here at the location. It made me feel bad, very bad. Always on Friday's I go home ... we were staying with our relatives here and our parents were there at the farm. So every Friday after school I would make sure I would go home.”

On mother as domestic worker and her experiences; thoughts on changes for workers: “It was very difficult because she did everything at that place, cooking, washing ... but when it came to lunchtime they were not sitting with my mom at the table – her food was on the side,

after they have eaten and then they give my mom food ... it was not right. It was unfair. When somebody works for you I think it would be better if they take them as a family or a friend because she was doing everything for them. Why can't they just sit there at the table and eat and share everything. Not giving her the leftovers? My mother was old ... but me, I think it was the result of apartheid.

... they would pretend as if they weren't [racists] but they were ...

“ (Today) ... what I see now is that there is some change because they have hours when they go to work and their salaries are a bit better and they are also given rights ... that's what I see.”

On education before and now: “The previous education was better than this one. Because this new education is like a spoon feed ... before when you were educated you were something to the people. But now, you can be educated but you can be doing nothing.”

On having white friends as an adult: “No, not even until today ... I do wish it was different”

On how she felt about her future in early 1990s when things were changing: “By then many black people were starting to take the higher positions in the workplaces so I foresaw that I might have the opportunity to enter any door that is open for me.”

On her educational achievements and feelings of change after 1994: “In 1994, I started attending college in Sebokeng College for three years. I wanted to be something in South Africa, especially after we voted for the ANC and we were promised that we will get better jobs and everything else. So I completed my studies, and I had my certificate in teaching. But since I have my certificate and up until today, I am working as an ABET educator. I don't have the real job, so I don't see any real changes.”

On her ABET teaching and students: “We teach those people who never went to school at all. It is like educating a child from grade zero. The people I am teaching are the victims of apartheid ... they have never been to school, so they can't write ... In my class I have old people, mostly

the pensioners. The school allows people from the age of nineteen upwards but my youngest student is in their forties.”

“I do six hours per week ... from 3 – 5 o’clock in the afternoon. We have never had textbooks. Only this year we got exercise books. We organise ourselves for the books for our students.”

On unions and their own ABET forum: “We always represented our problems to SADTU [South African Democratic Teachers Union], but they did not help us. So we try ourselves, as teachers of ABET, to form our own forum to represent ABET ... It is for all the teachers of ABET in Free State, we meet and talk ... In our ABET forum we are fighting for our rights like UIF [unemployment insurance fund], pension funds. Like if a teacher dies, then she must get paid from government to support the funeral and her family. We want government to register us as permanent teachers.” *[NOTE: In 2008, some of the changes being demanded were implemented – including a salary increase - and she feels much more positive now]*

On relationship with full-time teachers: “We don't have a good relationship between the full-time teachers and us. We use the premises of one of the primary schools. The thing that hurts us is that the full-time teachers look down on us because we earn a very little salary. Some of them don't even allow us in their classes while there are some who understand the meaning of ABET and eventually gave us their classes. On the other hand some just don't cooperate and they leave stuff like files and when they get lost ABET people are to be blamed. Sometimes they write on the chalkboard ‘PDNE’ – ‘Please Do Not Erase’ - therefore we are not allowed to write on the board and we will do nothing on that particular day.”

On how her ABET work has benefited previously illiterate people: “My students did not know how to read and write and their aim was to know how to read the bible and write their own names. It's made a big difference and they enjoy coming to school”

“Those that I have taught are happy cause they can even manage to make their own signatures, where they used to just touch their fingers to get the money. They know how to read and count

their monies and the change they are supposed to get ... they are able to do their own groceries and are able to withdraw money from the banks without the assistance of their kids.”

On changes in Rammolutsi since 1994: “For my side, I have never seen changes because they have promised us that they will build houses, and good sewerage. They are not yet delivered and we eventually built our own houses. As you have seen we don’t even have good roads. We also wrote a letter to the provincial government complaining about the sewage, but no changes took place. The only thing that has brought change since 1994 is free education ... the fact that our children attend schools for free ... that is the only change.”

On what she would do first if she became a local councillor (which she wants to become): “The first thing that I would do as a councillor is consult with the community so that that I will do things according to the needs of the community. I won’t fulfil my needs; I will fulfil the community’s needs. For example, our roads in this area are bad and during the night this place is not safe – we are the forgotten area. They built toilets for us but the sewage is not functioning.”

On thoughts about those in power and what needs to change: “There is a lot of mistrust and corruption on top there, that is why I decided to recently join the ANC and I have a membership card. There are a lot of criminals inside and we want to move those criminals out. I decided to join the ANC because I have seen those people who are in power, those who are the leaders, are criminals. I think if we can start from the bottom to correct this leadership. What has happened is that those people who we voted for have quickly forgotten that we voted for them, So they don’t look for our interests but only for themselves and their relatives. We must stand up and remind them of their promises.”

Ndaba David Nzungu (unemployed 21 year old, community youth activist and music enthusiast)

Brief biography: David is twenty-one (21) years old. Like many Rammolutsi residents, he was born on a nearby farm . He lived there with his family until he was sixteen, when he and his

family moved to Rammolutsi where they built a shack on an allocated stand. David gained his matric in 2006 and was actively involved in student affairs. He is involved in community sports initiatives as well as in youth activities. He joined the Democratic Alliance (DA) in the same year and has since been active in its Rammolutsi structures. He and his mother and siblings live off their deceased father's pension. David wants to move to Johannesburg and become a radio music DJ, or alternatively join the Department of Correctional Services.

On life growing up on nearby farm (as opposed to life in the location): “It was very good because I didn't know anything about the life of the location. Life was very simple and easy for me because everything you need you to get it, unlike here in the location where you seem to spend a lot when you need some things.”

“... everything is there and you don't need to buy and go to a shop to look for this and this. Here in the location is a struggle. First of all you buy electricity, you buy food, you buy everything - but at the farm you don't see anything they buy because the owner of the farm is providing that.”

On relationship between his family and farm owner: “The relationship was good because those white people they were just good people like others, they respected each other, they know what a person is.”

On political arguments with his father when he was a young boy in the mid-1990s: “My father liked politics and I used to spend time with him while I was growing up. We used to argue with him about the ruling party and we used to argue that these people are not delivering and they are not doing this and this correct. But according to him he said I must stop and focus on things that they are doing, not the things that I think they can do. I used to see that we will never be in the same organisation or political party.”

On differences between farm school and school in Rammolutsi: “Education at the farm was good. Teachers are paying attention and doing their work full time. I started to see a difference when I arrived here at the location because they are teaching according to their periods like each

teacher is thirty minutes ... that was a little bit different at the farms because at the farms there is one teacher at a time and everything becomes easy because you are used to the teacher.”

“ ... I saw that I was moving up because before I wasn't even able to speak English. Then I saw that there is a difference coming. With my brother he was also staying with me and I started to enjoy that and he was encouraging me that now things are seeming to be a little bit different.”

On how he got interested in the DA: “You know I like Tony Leon from the first time he is talking in Parliament. He is a very arguing man ... you know when he talks he emphasise a thing but some of the people are avoiding questions ... and I started to see that these guys from the ANC and from the radio they are talking that no, like the ANC they are the Xhosa organisational party then I started to see that them, as blacks, they started to isolate each other. I can see that I can go with DA now and the opportunity if it comes to rule.”

On how it's been for him as a DA member in a heavily ANC area: “One thing that I told myself for sure is that I have the right to choose any organisational party I like and no one will tell me. For the first time there was a by-elections where members of the ANC ... I was a member of the ANC because of my father's choice, I joined the [ANC] Youth League and after that the membership expired ... during the elections of the ward committee I met with the ANC members and they saw me shaking hands with the whites and they asked me am I sure that I'm going with whites. I told the guy that no, it's not like they are whites only ... for example, Joe Seramane he is black and I don't have to be afraid that they are whites and some of the councillors they are black and in the DA.”

On his friends and work choices: “One of my friends is working for the defence force but I don't like working for the defence force, it's too tough there. Another one is working in the industrial site and the other one is working at Pick'n Pay. They know that I'm choosy I don't feel like working just for saying I'm working ... because if you say you're working a lot of people will be looking and saying he is working and you must be earning something and you can do this and this. So I don't like to say I'm working and earning peanuts.”

On future opportunities for young people in Rammolutsi: “There is no future here. This place is disadvantaged. A lot of things are not happening here, even if the mayor is staying here everything that happens here it goes to Kroonstad, not Viljoenskroon ... I can't mention opportunities that are here because there is no opportunity here. The only opportunity I can say is that you are lucky working at the municipality.”

On needs for future of Rammolutsi ... and himself: “I think things like community radio stations to bring information. If there is no information ... municipality must now start to focus, or the council itself, must now start to focus on the community and start to look out for those who want to invest in it. They must start to establish the projects, the firms and create such job opportunities and then there will be a future. Some of them will come with the building of the malls and the job creation can come from that. Even if they don't do that ... I have been here for a long time but I don't see any difference. That is why I just decided to move because here there is no future. I think for me I want to see myself earning something better than staying here.”

On what needs to happen politically for things to get better for poor communities: “One thing for sure is that they must now start to focus on small towns like this one. I can say rural areas according to them they are only based on big towns like Joburg and Cape Town when they only talk, they talk about that. But talking about Viljoenskroon, Kroonstad, Kopies, they are very, very small towns that they don't pay attention. Only what they say is that service delivery is there but they are not coming to see if it is really happening service delivery or not. But if you say this they will say that they are still coming ... only what they do is still coming and not implementing ... talking but no implementation and implementation is important. The big mistake that happens to this government is they make their own decision then they want to consult people ... it is not going to work in that way. For example when I say they make their own decisions without consultation, what happens in Carltonville? They decided to make demarcation but they don't know whether that will suit the residents of Carltonville or not. Look what happened then there were no school attending then they went to start and talking to them and those things happen. In Denysville they killed the chief whip councillor of the ANC ... you see those things ... there is no consultation there. If there was consultation everything would have happened smoothly.”

On himself and what he would like to do: “My role model is Tshepo Masego who plays Parsons in Isidingo. My favourite radio station is Motswedding FM but I used to listen to 5FM to Fresh Drive ...I like the show because I like Fresh. .I want to be in a world of media, SABC this is where I want to be or work at the Department of Correctional Services ... I like the department very well ... I like their uniforms, it’s nice, I like it. I like their cars, I used to see their cars coming around here ... I like the Department of Correctional Services.”

Ouma Ngelele (runs a home for 18 orphans and abused children in her 5-room shack and is wholly supported by sympathetic local businesses and a white church in town, along with a few child grants)

Brief biography: Ouma is fifty-one (51) years old. She was born and raised in Rammolutsi and worked for several years as a sales-person in Klerksdorp before returning to the community in 1998. Ouma’s husband passed away some years ago and she has one child of her own. In 2000 she opened up a ‘home’ for orphans and abused children in her three-roomed shack. Presently she cares for eighteen children ranging in ages from seven months to fifteen years (only some of whom receive childcare grants). She relies on support from local businesses and people for the running of the home. (NOTE: Since our interview, Ouma has managed to get enough donated funds to build a five-roomed brick house)

On feelings and expectations after 1994: “From 1994, I’m feeling well until now. Because I see the changes – at the court we come all in, at the churches, at the schools and mostly in town where white and black people, we are together.”

“I was expecting them [the new government] to do something better for our lives. For example, we are taking the orphan kids whose parents have passed away and those that are abused by their parents, to our homes. I was expecting that the government must assist me to stay in a better house that I can stay with these kids ... there are about eighteen kids, and I can’t stay with so many kids in such a small shack. There is only promises but I get nothing up till now.”

“We thought everything was going to be smooth. That people would get a better life, better jobs, better houses ... everything. But we can see that the poverty is increasing daily.”

On why she started her children’s home: “I got that from my parents, who used to help those that don’t have. Me and my younger sister thought it would be useful for us to help those who are abused and those who don’t have clothes, parents ... we must take them and stay with them.”

On how the children get ‘placed’ at her home: “The children are brought here by the social workers, the police and the magistrate.”

On applying for assistance for Department of Social Welfare (DSF): “I did, in Kroonstad. They said to me I must wait, they will come to me but nothing has happened ... they don't come here.”

On resources for the home: “There is Baroto, there is KM in town – they give us bread and mealie-meal. Some children get the grant ... The church that is assisting us is the Pioneer Church ... it is the white people’s church in Viljoenskroon. So in the township there is no one church that is assisting us. So this Pioneer Church, every month on the 15th they send us some food.”

[NOTE: Ouma says it takes R4800 a month to run the home. She says she does not get any free basic services despite being registered]

On counselling: “I just do it, I pray to God to give me power so that I can speak to the child ... I wasn’t trained.”

On her activities each day: “They go to school in the morning and come back in the afternoon and then I check if there’s any homework and if there’s homework then I am assisting them ... then once homework is finished I start playing with them and chatting with them ... so that they can be closer to the people.”

On why there is no support for the home from local community: “I don't know ... but in Rammolutsi they look at your face and who you are/how's your life, So if you have a good life then they can assist you but if you have a bad life, are one of the poorest of the poor, then you can't get any assistance.”

On how many kids in Rammolutsi need help like she provides: “Thousands ... they come and ask for food. Like yesterday, some came and I gave them food and shoes. When I look at the streets there are many kids who need help and a person who will look after them as I am doing.”

On having to turn kids away: “Yesterday I get a letter from one of the children and he's saying that if I'm not adopting him, he's going to kill himself. That makes me sad and I feel a pain about that child.”

On her message to others: “We can say to the people ... that you must look after the child because the child is a gift from God. If you abuse a child you abuse God and the whole world will be damaged. So please people, look after the child because that child is our future, the next President for us. Take care of the children people.”

Thabo Makwele (sole local proportional representation –PR- councillor for the Democratic Alliance)

***Brief biography:** Thabo is forty (40) years old and was born and grew up in Rammolutsi. He become active in ANC-aligned student politics in the 1980s and almost left the country in the early 1990s to join M.K. abroad. Instead, he worked as a boiler-maker in Sasolburg and then returned to Rammolutsi to teach. He remained an ANC member until 2004, when he joined the D.A. and become a PR councillor in the 2005 elections.*

On life growing up in Rammolutsi in the 1970s and 80s: “It was very hard but it was nice ... We were not happy as Africans but as families we were happy. Because at the end of the day the respect, mutual understanding, communication was there. Any man, any black man was your

dad, your parents, your brother, your sister. But with regard to the state of emergency and all those other things ... that was hard for us but we were together, we were working all forcefully together. Economic wise it was hard but we could manage. Now everything is fine - it's in the hands of the people. But the problem is one only - those who are rich and those who are friends with those who are in power only succeed.”

On his own political involvement and experience in Rammolutsi: “The first five years I was with the ruling party, the second five years I was inactive because of the results of the first five years. I accepted that the first five years they were trying ...but it was very bad. Some of those who were in power abused the positions in the sense of employment which is the major thing in our lives ...we were not working. It was embarrassing when you see someone who is not as qualified as you working in the municipality because of the card while you still have a card of the same party and the participation that you gave to that party is different from what this other person is giving ... and that person is working. At the end of the day there are so many things that are happening here at local level and that is why the outcry is so loud ... that the ANC is doing nothing with regard to the jobs ... they are only enriching their friends and their girlfriends.”

On how he has dealt with perceptions that DA represents specific kinds of racial interests: “For me it was very, very simple like I said. Let me start from a certain year ... I remember it was before the 1994 first elections, I was still with the ANC. A certain lady from the white community who was with the DP at the time ... because of the potentiality that I have and the activeness ... she came to me and I was running the cricket ... I introduced the cricket at Rammolutsi, I was the first black man to introduce the cricket. We wanted to bring the two communities together but I was challenged saying that I am selling the nation because I was talking to the white community ... they thought I was going to sabotage the elections. Even today they say I think I'm white but I know for a fact that they discriminate, they are in a racialism race, rather than in the delivery race. But let me tell you it worked and it is recognised ...”

On what is has been like to be the only DA councillor in ANC-dominated Rammolutsi:

“You know, it was very hard when we started but people are seeing the change because people are flocking up and down for me to solve their problems. Like I’m saying it is good for me to put my head on the block for the people.”

“Let me tell you the foot print for the DA is visible, because some of the things which were done, the way they were done before there was no opposition. The first five years there was no opposition the second five years there was a DA, PR councillor but he was ineffective and he was even swallowed by the ruling party. But by now it is visible because people can even talk ... they can say okay, no problem we can join the DA. You don’t want to know about it because they hate me, they hate someone who is intelligent to come and teach them.”

On thoughts about race relations in present day South Africa: “Socially; our people need to be taught that a human being is a human being irrespective of white, black, or whatsoever ... our people need to be taught, this guy is a good guy and then you understand. Our white community also needs to be taught and accept and forget because we still have those who are still pointing fingers, who make it difficult for us ... even their way of talking even from the working field ... some are still using the things that were used in the past, so that makes it difficult for us.”

January Monokame (Municipal worker at the local rubbish dump)

Brief biography: January was born and raised on a nearby farm and worked there until he moved to Rammolutsi in 1992 because of poor pay at the farm – he earned R250 a month by the time he left. He built his family a shack and has lived there with his wife and two children ever since. From 1994-2001 he was a contract worker for the municipality and then became a permanent worker managing the rubbish dump. When he got the contract job at the municipality in 1994 the basic pay was R750. After a strike in 1996, all workers received R2400 per month – at the same time he became a permanent worker

On people coming to the rubbish dump and recycling/scavenging: “Everything is dumped here. There are so many people ... even today these few people that are here now will become lots of people in the afternoon to pick up the chickens. They just dump them [discarded chickens from the local abattoir] here and then the people start picking them up. They are eating them. The people who are allowed to come are only seven women - those who are doing the recycling” (of plastics etc.). They [the people who come to scavenge] get injured through cuts in the hands and legs as they jump in for some of the things and they don’t see what is under the rubbish.”

On policy of only allowing a small number of people to come to the rubbish dump: “I am satisfied with the small numbers, because if they can be in large numbers there will be fighting each other and that is not nice.”

On ‘state of living’ in Rammolutsi: “The municipality must give people stands. People are not doing their job, people are still living in the informal settlement as they are not able to find their own stand. Therefore I am not satisfied because our children are still staying at the informal settlement and growing up in the *mukukus* [shacks]. That is not good for our people.”

Mokete Tsootlo (Unemployed worker and lifelong Rammolutsi resident)

***Brief biography:** Mokete is in his fifties. He was born and grew up in Rammolutsi where his parents ran a general dealer store. He used to work at the main local factory in Viljoenskroon. Mokete suffers from high blood pressure and has applied unsuccessfully for a disability grant. He has five children by two marriages. Four children and his second wife live with him in a RDP house and backyard shack.*

On apartheid-era struggle organisations in Rammolutsi and what happened to them after apartheid ended: “Before it was only the so-called comrades ... we were mixed together with ANC, COSAS and unemployed persons. It was a very active group. But afterwards, when the

fight is over, they used to come to the elections. We voted for them but we don't see any progress.”

On what he understands by living a 'better life': “To get a job and work for my family so that I could afford to take my children to school. Anything that needs money, I must not ask anyone to help me ... but now, I am ashamed to say that I have been without a job for about a year. My younger son passed away earlier this year and I struggled to bury him.”

On the rapid growth of Rammolutsi after 1994 and lack of jobs: “The people started to come in after Mandela was released from prison (after 1992). Till now, they are still coming, but they don't get the stands, they stay in the settlements ... They have the hope that they will get houses and better jobs, but the job is nowhere to be found in our town.”

“Some of them, they have been losing their jobs because they were working for white farmers for some years and when they are claiming for their salaries for long services, the white farmer is telling them just to take that house and go with it because I haven't got money to pay. Some of them, they broke the houses and took the roofs and they come to the locations where there is no help.”

On problems with local councillors and representivity/responsiveness: “ ... when they put in those who are calling themselves comrades when we were fighting against the apartheid regime, things got worse ... They are cruel people. When you go to the councillor they might know you, but you know that your problem will not be accepted by those councillors. They just write them down and then put them in the office ...”

“When we go to the meeting, it is not going well ... they don't want to be questioned because they hate the truths and they are going to try to make people hate you ... These people, when they have meetings and you ask a strong question, before they answer your question, firstly they will start caucusing and they are not going to answer your question because your question is related to the promises that they have made to you. At the same meetings, when your question is

not answered and you raise your hand again, they are not going to give you a chance to ask another question because they say you are confusing the community.”

On specific feeling about ANC government: “Instead of helping us they are just using us like spanners or screwdrivers. After they have used us, they just throw us there in the corner and will see us after twenty years.”

On his family and work situation: “Because my previous wife died in 1980, I married the second wife. The first one had four children – two boys and two daughters. The second one had only two. The younger one is still at school. The older daughter is married to an unemployed gentleman who used to have a small tuck shop around in the township. The others are not working.”

“[In the house] we are only four – the bigger ones live in the shack [at the back of the house] ... My wife is working but she does not earn enough ... My younger brother is working at the mealie-meal company and he used to help us sometimes, going to buy groceries ... I have applied several times for a pension but they say that I’m fit to go and work.”

On the kinds of jobs he thinks can be done/created for the unemployed in Rammolutsi: “There is a storm-water drain there that is blocked with sand and if you can go to the municipality and says there’s a job we can do, or to clean the graveyards, they will say that they do not have the money. Even if you can go to the municipality with a tractor and trailer to say let’s clean up the township – because our township is so dirty, people are dumping rubbish in the open spaces and the environment is not good with all the dead dogs and cats as well as the smelly sewerage where people are living - if we can be hired to clean it that will be a job. There are lot of faults that we can fix around this place.”

On feelings of the community being abandoned and used: “Our government has abandoned our people. Now, they know that their term is about to end, so in 2009 we will vote. So, they will come again and promise many things they will do just to make us to vote for them again. After the votes, my fellow brother here, he will remain staying at home and not working, not earning

anything. For example, my wife is getting the child support grant, about R200. We will have to divide it ... this month we will buy clothes for the kids, next month we will go buy food. Life is difficult.”

Alinah Malekgosi Obie (home-based care giver working through local hospice)

***Brief biography:** Alinah is thirty-nine (39) years old and was born and raised in Rammolutsi. She was raised by her grandmother because her parents worked elsewhere. She left Rammolutsi to complete her matric in Qwa Qwa, worked for a time as a general labourer and then returned to Rammolutsi in 1992. She wanted to become a nurse but instead married for practical reasons in 1994 and became a housewife. She then worked for two years as a volunteer home-based care worker at a local hospice, before being placed on a stipend for the next five years. She is now a full-time worker at the public/private hospice in Viljoenskroon and visits about forty mostly elderly patients who have HIV-AIDS and TB every week. She has stayed in a three-roomed shack since 1995 with her husband and three young children.*

On basic services in Rammolutsi in the 1970s/80s: “There was no electricity in the houses and there was no water in the yards. We used to go to the communal tap and fetch water and we were using the bucket system.”

And when she returned in 1992: “When I came back it was better. I was happy because I can now get water in my yard and electricity. It was good as compared to having to go and buy coal and paraffin, so it was a bit easier and quicker for us – for example when you want to boil water you just take the kettle and plug it in so it’s quicker than making fire and so forth.”

On who has been enjoying a ‘better life’: “It is only the councillors who have better lives even if they say they give people the RDP jobs. Jobs are given to their relatives - the general public is still suffering because people don’t even get enough money to sustain their livelihood. Most people are not even earning R1000 (per month) ... maybe R200-R300 per fortnight and they have families, so they are still struggling.”

On whether racial politics/attitudes have changed since 1994: “Heh ... this thing of politics stresses, because I saw no changes because the whites were still discriminating. Like where I’m currently working there is discrimination because we as the blacks are expected to go eat outside even when its dusty or raining while the whites eat indoors. It happened yesterday when I had gone and bought food for myself at the shop and went to eat in the kitchen I was told by the hospice manager that there had been a meeting and that some rules had been given to the hospice workers not to eat in the kitchen but outside since the workers make noise. Even now there are no changes and it hurts because we are all the same ... the only difference is our skin colour, so why don’t we treat each other equally?”

On her feelings about getting married and why: “ ... I was staying with my mom and I told myself that I don’t want to get married. But I finally got married because when you ask something from the parents they will tell you that people of your age are working. This man was asking me to marry him, so I agreed to marry due to my situation even though my intention was not to get married.”

“My father was cheating on my mom ... My mom was a cool person. My father would tell her about his cheating and it was a small house so we could hear what my father is saying to my mum. That was not good and it hurts me, so that’s why I told myself I didn’t want to get married ... that is why I don’t want to go to the marriage offices.” *[NOTE: Alinah is not legally married, lobola was paid]*

On relations with her husband: “When I started staying with my husband it was bad, especially about communicating with my husband’s family and I even had an idea of killing myself but I thought that I would be a coward. But now it is better because my young kids are even telling him not to do fight with me (when he is drunk) ... if you want to chase our mum you must go to your home, this is our home.” *[NOTE: After she was married her granny supported her and her husband on the R495 old age pension she received]*

On whether she thinks that women are treated equally to men, given legislation/changes and her own experience: “ ... they are not treated equally because you find that when a woman is working and needs to travel with regard to her job, her man will not accept that. Men want to be always the head of the home and they are not willing to be headed by the women. For example, at this present moment I have applied for a bursary at Vaal Med and it has already caused friction in the house because my husband says he is not going to tolerate a situation whereby his wife will sleep out for some days away while he is here at home.”

“My husband doesn’t like me to go work outside. He’s always complaining about how our Mayor used to have her own husband but when she became a councillor she divorced. And those younger women who are working there as councillors, they don’t consider their man. So that’s why many men are complaining, saying my wife can’t go there and work and only come home occasionally.”

On whether she thinks that there is a relationship between the high rate of HIV and her earlier comments about men cheating on their wives: “Yes, I also don’t trust my husband. I take the HIV test every month because these things are happening a lot in the places where people are boozing and drinking. Women who are drinking just have sex with men without any condom.”

On her work at the local private hospice: “ ... they started to register the volunteers as permanent in 2005, but in 2000 they gave us a stipend of R400 per month.” *{NOTE: Her salary when she started working at the hospice as a permanent worker was R947 a month}*

On HIV prevalence in Rammolutsi: “I think 80% of the people are HIV-AIDS positive. Most of those coming for the test are women between 35-50 [years old]. My opinion is that people were thinking that the ARV’s [anti-retrovirals] were the cure. But now we are attending the clinics and telling people that they must know that the ARVs are not a cure.”

On what she would do about HIV-AIDs is she were a senior health official: “I’m thinking that I would say this thing of confidentiality of the status of HIV AIDS should be stopped, they

should just publish it so that many people can come up. People are afraid that their friends will laugh at them if they know they have HIV. So we should just say clearly that a person has this disease. People should be encouraged to do the test so that they can get the ARVs, because they help.”

On what is most needed in Rammolutsi: “I would be glad to see that all of us here in Rammolutsi have the RDP houses. But the most important one is for there to be a clinic around here. Most of our people, especially the pregnant women, they are afraid to attend the far away clinics. So I think all of the sections should have their own clinics. Our people must encourage their kids to attend the clinics.”

Bramage Edmond Sekete (local community activist and traditional healer)

Brief biography: Bramage is in his forties and was born on a nearby farm where both his parents and grand-parents worked. He left the farm school to seek work on the mines and at the age of sixteen started working at a gold mine near Potchefstroom. He worked there until 1984, when he was retrenched. Bramage subsequently worked in Potchesfstroom as a security guard for five years and then another five years at a furniture store. He came to Rammolutsi in 1995 with his family and erected a shack. He subsequently led an invasion of vacant land and has been living in a shack there since – on an allocated stand. Bramage founded the Rammolutsi Crisis Committee (RRMCC) and is active in community politics and social work. He is also a traditional healer.

On different reactions to 1994: “What I remember one day is that I was at a shop. The white man came from the farm to buy two big fridges and two freezers ... So, when I was chatting with him he told me that guys, do you see what is going to happen after [April 27th]1994? When I responded I said it is going to be nice because we will be in freedom. He said guys your people are going to be in shit and I said why? He said no, let’s just watch it. He left and we end up like that. When I’m going to deliver on his farm he repeated the same words again - he said guys be careful, your people are going to suffer. I said no man it will be fine. Then we just put things in

his house and we go back. I was a bit worried after he said those words to me because I did not know what he means and I was worried and worried. But truly speaking, after 1994 we were happy saying that we have got our own President and we made our mark and so forth. But I started to say that hey, what that Mr. Botha was saying to me that we are going to suffer, it's true because now people were getting retrenched worse, even the big Potchefstroom company named Kynoch, it has retrenched a lot of people.”

On how he became a traditional healer (after he moved to Rammolutsi): “My ancestors started to consult me [during a sickness] so I couldn't do anything. By that time I didn't understand that it is my ancestors that are trying to talk to me, I didn't hear what do they want from me. So when I get here at home, my sister took me to one of the prophets who was also a sangoma. The sangoma told me that, no this man does not need to work any longer. What he needs to do is to listen to his ancestors.”

On leading the invasion of vacant land for housing in Rammolutsi: “One day if I remember clearly it was on Sunday. We had a meeting in the other section, there were some informal settlements at that side. When we are at the meeting we decided that there is a land here and nothing is happening and they are not doing anything. We heard that the previous municipality has bought this place and here are pens, here are some sites. So we just decided that let's go and take some spades and let's go and clean that place up and people must start moving in there.

“... the previous local government was trying to prevent us from taking the place but we took it by force. We told them that we don't have money - that R2500 that you demand from us we don't have, so we can't buy those sites. We are just going to stay there because we don't have money. By that time when we took over here by force, they didn't say anything. Some of the ANC members encouraged us to take these places. We are not able to buy this place because Africa's land is a land that belongs to the Africans, it doesn't belong to the capitalists. So, it's how we took over this place. But a few years later, after we voted for the ward councillors before this demarcation thing ... they started saying that we must pay and by that time, most of us were not working. So, we told them straight that we don't have money to pay and they must remember what the ANC has said before - that this is the land for the Africans and the Africans don't have

money to pay.” [NOTE: Bramage has been applying for an RDP house since 1995 and in early 2009 the municipality began construction work on his site]

On what it is like trying to make a living as a traditional healer: “It was very difficult for me. Even now a traditional job is not like working because when you follow instructions of the traditional healing, we are not getting many customers. Like the person comes once ... let me make an example ... I say I’m going to charge you R300 for the service I’m going to give you ...it is for the whole year.”

On how he counsels patients that come with drop: “What I always used to say especially to boys ... I say guys you don’t want to trouble with girls. If you’ve got one girlfriend be fair and honest with the girlfriend because if you have maybe five girlfriends you don’t know where you got the drop. Tomorrow you will say this girl has dropped me and you find that unfortunately it is not her and it is the one that you liked more than the other. So please try to be honest to your girlfriend. Try to have one girlfriend and that’s it.”

On paying for basic services: “For the sake of the job losses, most of the people in Rammolutsi are not working. Those who are paying are the individuals actually, like the pensioners and a few of those who are government servants, a few of them, and those who are working at Central Wes [the local factory].”

On the formation and struggles of RRMCC: “What has made the RRMCC to be formed was around service deliveries, the rate of crime and awareness of prepaid water meters.”

“ ... we used to get a lot of people who are joining us and others were not joining us but were supporting our struggles. When time goes on, the councillors that we had voted for ... they started intimidating people by saying Bramage has opened his own political party and you people are going to be arrested and so forth ... they, as the ruling party, called mass meetings. So we attended the mass meetings because some of the people came to us and said Bramage, these people are talking about your name wherever they go and they say you are opening a political party. I stated clear to the community that this is not a political party it is a community based

organisation, we are here to fight for the rights of the poor communities and we are here to fight the crime which is taking place in our townships, we are here to fight with the councillors, those who are corrupt.”

“To be fair and honest I can say we have got some difficulties, there and there. But what we have done as the RRMCC - there were some youth here in Rammolutsi, those who did not have money to pay school fees, those who didn't have the parents, their parents have passed away - but we don't know what was the problem. So, one day we managed to take them back to the schools because we went to the schools and told the principals that the kids, they've got a right to education even though they don't have money ...those kids don't have parents, so where must they get money for school fees. What we knew is that the government is subsidising that kind of kids, so what are they doing with that money themselves as the SGBs [Student Governing Bodies] and principals and school teachers, what are they doing with that subsidy money if they don't give it to those kids who don't have parents? So the kids were accepted back to the schools.”

“What I can say is that these people [the councillors], when we started this RRMCC, they were building houses for their own friends, own girlfriends, own relatives. I can say clearly that here was this thing called 'favouritisms' around Rammolutsi, and 'carrying cardisms', like the carrying card members. They were the ones who were mostly recognised, rather than people who applied for their own RDP houses.”

On what his entire family earns in a month: “It's R200 for the young one and maybe another R200 for the piece jobs ... it's a child support grant for R200. So, me and my brother it is R200, because sometimes you find that I have got one piece job for R50, twice a month. So, it is only R100 and he also earns R50 twice a month.”

His thoughts on what the future holds for Rammolutsi and South Africa: “ ... I don't see any future as long as the ruling party is still ruling. Because these people are preaching socialism but practically there is no socialism, it is strictly capitalism. What makes me say that it is strictly capitalism, is that they are capitalising on poor people, those who don't have anything, those who

don't own anything. But those who are earning, they demand from the poor people and they are enriching themselves, rather than, as they say the 'black economic empowerment', they are not empowering the poor people they are empowering those who are rich. So that's why I'm saying that I don't see no future as long as they are still ruling."

On false promises and bad political representation: "What I would like to say is that let's stop promising people empty promises. If you promise people you must fulfil our promises. And, we must stop capitalising on the poor people, especially those who are voting for the political parties. They must stop lying to us by saying this is a social economic what, but at the end of the day there is no such thing. They must stop running to the media and lie in our names, because they are doing things on their own but when they go to the media they are lying in our names saying we have agreed on this and that, and there is no such a thing. They must stop with immediate effect."

CHAPTER FOUR

SEBOKENG

Community Profile

The community of Sebokeng is located in the mid-Vaal area (south of Johannesburg) of Gauteng province. Sebokeng is one of the oldest urban 'townships' in the area and was established under the apartheid regime as a home for workers servicing the large industrial plants in the area such as SASOL, ISCOR and later, SAMANCOR. Back in the early-mid 1980's Sebokeng was at the heart of what came to be known as the 'Vaal Uprising', when residents rose up against the unjust and inequitable urbanisation policies of the apartheid regime and began a campaign (the *Asinamali* Campaign) of boycotting payments of rates and services. Today, several hundred thousands of people inhabit this large community. While some still work in the surrounding heavy industries and further away in the manufacturing and service industries in/around

Johannesburg, many others living in the community have been retrenched over the past several years as a result of industrial ‘restructuring’, privatisation and/or corporatisation of former state-run industrial enterprises. Correspondingly, there has been a huge increase in the levels of general unemployment as well as those active in the local, ‘informal’ economy. Basic service provision and housing is arguably better than in most smaller non-urban communities, but remains highly uneven. This far-flung and populous community falls under the Lekoa-Vaal municipality and while the ANC is the dominant political force in the area, there is also a long history of presence/activity by the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) as well as independent community organisations.

NOTE: The vast majority of the interviewees live/work in Zone 6 of Sebokeng. The choice of Zone 6 was informed by both practical and conceptual considerations, Practically, it would have been nigh impossible given our limited resources and time-frames to try and cover the entirety of Sebokeng. Conceptually, it made sense to us that a specific Zone would better constitute a ‘community’ in geographical terms. The historical bases for zoning in places like Sebokeng under the apartheid state was informed by both ethnic and security/control considerations and since there has been minimal change (since 1994) in places such as Sebokeng, the respective Zones provide, in a sprawling/populous urban context, the best ‘representation’ of a community.

Article on Sebokeng

At the end of the wage

“I’m collecting a register for the indigent people and I had 37 000 applications from Emfuleni only. Each and every day I come across children who are left in their homes, the parents are deceased, they are hungry. When I knock at the door, I say how you are surviving and they say we have been hungry for three days, we haven’t got food. You wouldn’t think it’s a reality in an urban area like this but it is a reality. People are unemployed, a lot of people are unemployed.” (Priscilla Ramagale-Ramakau – government social worker in Sebokeng)

It wasn't always this way for Sebokeng, one of the older urban 'townships' in South Africa, a place synonymous with the early settlement and subsequent massive growth of the black industrial working class.

It was workers in places like Sebokeng which had fuelled the vain hopes of the apartheid state that the development of a settled, waged black working class would ensure continued economic growth as well as political stability. But that's not how it turned out. Instead, those workers used their stable waged employment in South Africa's industrial heartland, to transform themselves into a vanguard for the development of union organisation and struggles for political freedom. There are few places in South Africa with as strong a history of resistance in the community and at the workplace, a building of counter-power that played such a key role in bringing the apartheid system to the point of political and socio-economic crisis.

The figure of the waged proletariat formed the backbone of the community's working class strength and lifestyle. They bought bonded houses, put food on the table for their families and sent their children to school. However, the very foundation for this strength, waged labour, would quickly become the community's Achilles heel. Taking a leaf out of the pages of their apartheid predecessors, the new democratic state adopted a policy strategy which saw waged labour as the ticket to (deracialised) socio-economic inclusion, the main conduit for social citizenship. This very same state however, effectively tore up that ticket when it adopted macro-economic policies that first incubated, then catalysed the mass shedding of waged labour as part of the headlong, post-apartheid pursuit of economic growth and profit.

The workers of Sebokeng were amongst the first to feel the cold winds of retrenchment that followed in the decade after 1994. Throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s the vast majority of workers living in Sebokeng had been employed in the surrounding heavy industries, by behemoths like SAMANCOR and ISCOR. The great irony of South Africa's 'miracle' is that at the very moment at which the promise of political freedom seemed to be at hand, daily life would be forced to meet the new insecurities of post-apartheid unemployment and retrenchment, sharpened by the shift from public sector parastatals to privatised corporates. By the turn of the

century the bloodletting was in full surge, spurred on not only by the new democratic state's reborn neoliberalism but also by the crass greed and inhumanity of new comprador elite and the corporate mandarins of globalising capitalism.

At the very point that they were consolidating the social and economic security that all had worked so hard to achieve (even if often precariously), the proverbial carpet was pulled from underneath their feet. The large scale loss of jobs would come at the same time that the promises of inclusion into a new South Africa, was made conditional on the benefits, consistency and extension of rights that came from having a job.

For the community of Sebokeng, at the end of the wage they found nothing but the precipitous deterioration of the social and physical conditions of life.

Following hot on the heels of the privatised balkanisation of ISCOR, hundreds of long-time workers were retrenched from SAMANCOR. Ezekial Motseke was one of those workers:

“They told us that they were closing down a furnace that was no longer going to work and thus they had no choice but to retrench us (but) they knew that all of us were affected by manganese. Since then nothing is right with my body. I am always sick, I am always in bed. My body is painful all day long.” Another retrenched worker, Thomas Molefe laments the experience: “That place ... it endangered our lives but we couldn't do otherwise because we were earning a living for our kids ... that place killed me. We didn't know what was going on, what was eating us there. People were sick there inside but we couldn't see.”

What was thus bequeathed to these and countless other workers was a double 'death'. On the one hand, an almost immediate social death wherein the hard-won social power gained within a context of waged employment was effectively erased. On the other, a more gradual, excruciatingly slow physical death as a direct result of the conditions under which they worked. These two 'deaths' have become inseparable and represent a tragic and doubly ironic twist of the transitional inheritance of the Sebokeng workers that increasingly appears as a metaphor for the life of the entire community.

Not long ago the working class in South Africa was being told by the state that the imperatives of 'macro-economic stability' and 'economic growth' necessitated a period of 'sacrifice' (read: loss of waged employment/retrenchment) for the greater good. Now that the 'greater good' has been exposed for the selfish lie that it is and the full political and social impact of the 'sacrifice' continues to devastatingly hit home, the same working class is being told by the state to hold onto the coattails of social welfare and the promise of 'new and expanded' opportunities for waged employment. It is a cruel, twisted and chimeric logic and it is slowly but surely strangling the individual and collective life out of communities like Sebokeng.

By Dr. Dale T. McKinley & Ahmed Veriava - an edited version of this article was published in the *Sunday Independent* on 6th July 2009 under the title – “Worker ‘sacrifice’ a selfish lie on part of the state”.

Selected quotes from interviews

Priscilla Ramagale-Ramakau – government social worker

***Brief biography:** Priscilla is forty-nine (49) years old. She was born and grew up in Bloemfontein in a family of educators (her father was a university lecturer). She studied at Fort Hare University and Rand Afrikaans University and received a BA in Psychology. She moved to Sebokeng in 1984 to take up a government job as a social worker and has remained in this job ever since (now with Social Welfare Department where she mostly does work with indigents). She is married with four children and lives in a four-bedroom private house.*

On how she got her love for education/studying: “You know my father was a lecturer at the University of Cape Town. So we are all girls at home except for one boy. That was the root, you do it or don’t do it. That’s how everyone of us at home had to study to get a degree, you wouldn’t just go anywhere without getting a degree. So the four of us at home we all went to school and we got our degrees, all of us. So it was the culture in my home.”

On why she chose social work as a profession: “I think it was because I am passionate about children, I’m just passionate about children. So, I work well with children and it’s the best thing I do. So I love the profession because it’s gentle, you know what I mean.”

On her experience of the 1985 Vaal uprisings: “ ... then came 1985, because I started working in 1984, and then came September 3rd . I remember I was on leave then and I had my first child and here comes the uprising, it was for the first time to see that havoc. You know that day, I took my baby - he was very tiny - I’m sure he was eleven days old and you know I fled until I got to Bloemfontein that day. For the first ... I was seeing violence for the first time because I came from the Free State and it’s a very quiet place, Bloemfontein is a quiet place, and I was here with rowdy people ... I never thought I would still be working here but you know we get used to it. And then I came back and I said heh, I have to acclimatise to this situation and I did.”

On gradual changes from 1980s to post-1994 situation in relation to political affiliation and social work performed: “You know sometimes you’d be in conflict because you wouldn’t know what to do. The next thing tomorrow is this thing, the next day is the other thing then you are in conflict with yourself - you know what to do but I cannot do it because I would be portrayed as this, you get what I mean. So it was very, very difficult. It became better, I think I have to say with the democracy that was coming in, at least it made sense to some of the people because now people they know that I assist them but I have a right to affiliate to whatever organisation that I want to. Then, it’s much easier ... even the way we were doing it during the old days. That’s why I’m saying it wasn’t helping people as such. You know, they always say you must teach a person to fish not to give a person a fish. So that’s why, with the changing environment it becomes different and its more enjoyable now than before.”

On shifts in the character of social work approach: “We are saying you are hungry we know that you need food parcels, basic care, you need whatever. What is it that you are going to do? Okay, you are hungry [but] you are not ill, you are not handicapped so how are you going to provide food for yourself? Okay, let’s come and do food gardens, you get what I mean. We have

to participate we have to do food gardens because we can ... some people, we have got space in our yards, we have got land in our yards but we are not making use of that, then you come and tell us you are hungry. What are you doing with that space? Why can't you do a food garden for yourself, we will assist you and show you how it's done. We will supply you with the things that are needed but you have to do it yourself, do you get what I mean? Initially, when people are hungry we used to come with food parcels and give them food parcels without them doing nothing."

On biggest differences within community from pre to post apartheid eras: "There is more unemployment that it is used to be. That's why I'm saying a lot of people are not working and there is more poverty than before. After 1994 people were encouraged to do things for themselves. Now ... the government is making monies available but now they make monies available but they don't monitor - that is a problem and people they misuse funds. They do all sort of things but there is no monitoring. They give out funds to do everything but the monitoring is not there. Everybody will just come with a proposal - people are encouraged to do proposals - they come with the proposal, but now they get the funds and that's it, that's the end of it and the funds are misused. So, there is no commitment from our people - as long as they get the funds and get their own, there is no commitment - people are not committed. So there is a lot of truancy, there is a lot of truancy. Sometimes I would say it was better during the old days and it is not nice to say that but people were honest, people were honest and people were working. You know, I'm doing this indigent survey. I'm collecting a register for the indigent people in the Vaal area and I had 37 000 applications from Emfuleni only, 37 000 applications. I do door to door verifications. Each and every day I come across children who are left in their homes, the parents are deceased, they are hungry. You won't believe that I meet people every day who go hungry for three days and I'm not exaggerating. When I knock at the door, I say how you are surviving and they say we have been hungry for three days, we haven't got food. You wouldn't think it's a reality in an urban area like this but it is a reality. People are unemployed, a lot of people are unemployed. They are unemployed, they stay at home and what is it that they do - they just sleep because they are hungry. So that is why we get more HIV/AIDS cases because people are not working - the only thing that they can do is to sleep ... there is a lot of poverty in our area, a lot of poverty."

On things that her department/work colleagues have done in relation to addressing poverty in the area: “At the moment I work in the finance department because the indigent programme has been placed in the finance department. Initially when it was placed there it was because it was more of collecting the money from the communities than assisting people. So it was a blessing when they said we should go and assist with that programme because we were saying, yes we have identified those people who cannot pay, yes we have collected the money from those who can pay, so what is the municipality doing for the people who are unemployed who are indigent? We categorise them into two categories: we say there are destitute indigents and indigents. The destitute indigents are those who don’t have a cent. So we are saying to the council, we are social workers we cannot be going to those communities and identify ourselves as social workers and doing nothing after that, saying why don’t you pay the rent. What are we doing for those people who are destitute? So we came up with projects like hydroponic project and we said okay, those people who are destitute come and work here because we are sure that they would get food, although they don’t get the money but they will be getting food. And then we say those who are able to work but are not skilled we liaise with SETA (Skills Education Training Authority) and bring them together and say okay, here are the people we have identified them, give them the skills so that they can be employable.”

On levels of indigency in the area: “In the area that I am working I was at 65%. There is a 65% probability of indigency in our community.”

On why indigent register has only managed to capture a small portion of those who are actually indigent: “People they have been told. We made a campaign and then people were told to come and apply. But believe you me, it was just a third of the people who came in - those who heard. The way the message was brought to the people ... we have got ward committees - then people were informed in their respective wards, they were informed about these things but people don’t attend meetings, they don’t go to meetings. You will find that they are twenty people in a ward of five thousand people, people don’t attend meetings. People don’t want to hear I don’t know ... when you say there is a political meeting somewhere people don’t ... When democracy started they were there like this [clicks fingers several times] ... but I think

because of the way our government has been functioning, people have just lost hope, so they don't attend meetings. So you find that three-quarters of the people don't know what is going on.”

On problems with delivery of free basic services to indigents: “They [the municipality] are supposed to provide them with free basic water and electricity but up until now they are confused, they don't know, our municipality is still confused. We still have a lot of problems with our indigent register. We are responsible for identifying the indigents - for three years we have been doing that. Up until now the statistics are lying there and nothing has been done about it. It will be myself who is getting all the privileges and my neighbour next door is not getting anything. We have been complaining about that ... our administration is not up to standard.”

On main social problems in the area: “We've got a high level of HIV/AIDS, shoo ... we don't even talk about it anymore. It's poverty, it's HIV/AIDS, it's unemployment - those are the three key problems in our area - a very higher rate of those.”

On her approach to service delivery problems as a resident and as a municipal employee: “As a resident I have also to be proactive. When I go to the municipality, I say I'm here as a resident, not as an employee. I am demanding ... my street is not clean. I always go there and complain. I say hey, my area is not clean, my street is not clean so I pay the municipality, I don't owe the municipality. But I'm saying as a resident, I have to be proactive, you have to take care of your own environment and then you have to be proud of your own environment. If we are not doing it who will do it for us? There was a heap of rubbish which was dumped there [points outside her house] - which was there for years and years ... I also called the media and say come, there is a story and then they went there. I am not afraid, I did it as a resident. You can dismiss me if you want but firstly I'm a citizen, then I'm an employee.”

On her perspective of child care grants: “You know if I were the Minister I wouldn't give out the child grants because they have created a lot of dependency. R180, it's R210 now. They have created a lot of dependency and there are ... yes, there are children who are benefiting from the grant but the majority of the children are not benefiting from that. I mean the very ones that are

getting the grants, it's not used for what it's supposed to be used for. It has created a lot of dependency and it has created more babies in our area, because if a person is not working she just gets a baby and she gets R170, she gets a RDP house then it's fine. But it's not solving the problem.”

On charge that many poor, HIV-positive people allow their CD4 count to drop – don't take ARVs - in order to continue receiving grants: “That's what they do. They don't take medication because they want the CD - they are not working, they are unemployed so there is no source of income - so they would just let their CD count go down or you get a doctor who would say your CD count is down, then you will go and apply for a grant. I also work in the clinic, I know. They tell me right in the face, say to me, if I take those tablets and my CD count is a little bit up are you going to give me money for food. So how would you answer that? I say okay, it's your life. But that is the reality of the situation, they don't take their treatment because they want the grant.”

Thomas Molefe – elderly retrenched SAMANCOR worker

***Brief biography:** Thomas is sixty-three (63) years old. He was born and raised in nearby Alberton where he matriculated at a private 'Indian' school thanks to support from his father's employers. He has nine other siblings, is married and has four children of his own. Thomas worked at a Johannesburg hotel for a few years and then secured a job at SAMANCOR in 1983. He worked there for eighteen years (ten of which were spent as a NUMSA shop-steward) but was retrenched in 2001 after falling ill. Since his retrenchment he has been living off his retrenchment package and is waiting until he turns sixty-five to receive his pension. He is active in the SRWCC.*

On unions in the workplace when he started at SAMANCOR in 1983: “In 1983 the unions, we were hearing about them but when I arrived in SAMANCOR there were no unions. There were only white unions.”

On how apartheid affected his love of sports: “We couldn’t play with whites, we couldn’t play with the Indians but we were schooled with them, we lived with them. But we couldn’t have one organisation to go and play for. You see, that’s the things that were struggling us. When things changed we were happy ... because we couldn’t enter Rand Stadium when Highlands Park was playing because we were black. It hurt.”

On his dreams of becoming a professional soccer player (he played for a local team): “That’s every boy’s dream. We went to stadiums to see those big teams ... we wished one day we could be there but things were not the way we wished ...”

On being a union shop steward (from the late 1980s) and impact on family life: “At times I wasn’t at home, went out to meetings. At times you find that when there are strikes somewhere, you have got to go and support that. At times people were arrested and if she [his wife] doesn’t see you coming back to the family, seeing that you are not back, they are feeling miserable until they see you ... or you must phone.”

On dropping of colour bar at work after 1994: “It wasn’t easy to drop it because those guys [whites], it’s in their blood. Some of them couldn’t believe we were eating together in the canteen, sharing everything ... when you come to the canteen or in the toilet, he will just look at you ... pissed off ... but we were used to such things, we didn’t take them so seriously but we knew that everything was changing and really, it changed. The attitudes changed, but slowly. You couldn’t say it changed fast, but slowly.”

On the safety situation at SAMANCOR (in the 1990s): “That place, you can’t mention because it is too tough. Even now when I remember from that place, it’s like a pig sty – SAMANCOR is a pig sty. It endangered our lives but we couldn’t do otherwise because we were earning a living for our kids. But that place with safety - safety was only for whites. But blacks ... they used to send we, the black workers, in front where it is dangerous. They didn’t go themselves. Like maybe when the kiln has got to start, the foreman will send you there, he won’t go there, to check up on what’s wrong there. When the things starts moving he’s going there and then the management will say it’s him. So, the whole credit goes to him, not to you.”

“Whites would be given the safety equipment and we would just be given something to go and work there and come out. So, they can get the production, that’s all they wanted, nothing else. Your safety didn’t mean anything to them.”

On being retrenched: “They gave me a letter that said I would work until February 2001 .. no reason was given. We went to the union, and there was nothing they could do for us ...”

On getting sick working at SAMANCOR and since he was retrenched: “I was sick. I was now breathing heavily and at times I couldn’t sleep by then. And the concentration with my wife, it was also going you see ... when I go to x-rays, they will say it’s asthma and they will maybe check for TB. Yet even now, I am still breathing heavy. So that place killed me. We didn’t know what was going on, what was eating us there. People were sick there inside but we couldn’t see. And the doctors were in favour of SAMANCOR, the management.”

“When I left the company it was six months after that that I couldn’t do those things which I was doing before. Like running to the bus, taking a spade and doing my garden. It was now becoming heavy for me. And they took our medicals ... so I went to the clinics and at the clinics you don’t get the same treatment as going to the doctor. Now the thing worsened ... even when the aeroplane comes over, when I’m walking, I can’t look up or I will fall down. At this moment I can’t squat. At times I will just sweat. Even now as I am sitting here I am hot where I am, I could have took off my clothes because I am hot now.”

On what he sees for future of youth in community and for himself: “I don’t want them to suffer as we suffered, we parents, because things are not as they are now. Everything is going to change but it is going to change by fighting, nothing just comes around without fighting. So we are going to fight this pollution and all this stuff, and for clean water and the promises that they gave us for everything. The environment must be cleaned up – so that’s what I’m striving for, so we can be given a chance to guide these youngsters ...”

Tsebo Knowledge Ngema – recently finished matric student

***Brief biography:** Tsebo is seventeen (17) years old and has lived his entire life in Sebokeng. He has been raised by a single parent (his mother is currently unemployed) and although he knows his absentee father, he has no relationship with him. He has a two-year old (step) brother. He has done well in school and with his good matric results has applied to do further education. He desires to get out of the 'township' as soon as possible due to lack of opportunity and hopes to become a lawyer so he can support his mother and brother. He is a church goer, loves music and cares about what is going on in Africa. (NOTE: Since our interview, Tsebo has been able to pursue his studies further at a local university)*

On growing up in his neighbourhood: “The neighbourhood has always been friendly, a close community - that sometimes causes problems because everyone knows something about everyone else. So it's sort of a closed community where not everyone lives his life according to what they want - we live as sort of a broad family. In this neighbourhood you are not only raised by your parents. I personally grew up in my home and many other homes. If a certain parent sees you doing something wrong in the street they don't just ignore and say it's your parents responsibility, they try to correct you because everyone is friendly with everyone.”

On his memories, as a five year-old, of the 1994 elections: “I was a bit confused because I didn't know what was happening there, all I saw was a bunch of people ... compared to the 1999 elections, the 1994 elections were huge ... because it was their first time they had to cast their vote. All I remember is that it was at night, we were there at night and there were many people, many of them.”

On what primary school was like: “Compared to high school, at primary school level it is different because they don't only teach you about the academic stuff, they teach you about morals. At those times they were subjects such as religious studies and health education and that kind of stuff, so you learn almost everything about life at primary level. I think primary level is like the foundation of what you become in the near future because you cannot survive high school if you don't do well in primary. So basically I learnt almost everything I know at primary

level, because at high school we mostly concentrated on the academic stuff. The most important thing I learnt is that everything happens for a reason in life.”

On his relationship with his biological father who has not lived with him and his mother since he was born: “We do have a relationship but it is not a good one, I cannot say it is a good one. Often when we try to build the relationship something is coming in the way, so we don’t have a good relationship. Sometimes I feel like it’s too late, he doesn’t know a single thing about me. Eighteen years is a lot of time.”

On why he took school so seriously: “I had no other choice but to take school seriously. I grew up in a very disadvantaged environment so I knew the only way for me to succeed was to take school seriously. I had to quit soccer and I love music but I don’t take music as a serious career because it can last you for about only two years, musicians come and go. So, I wanted a stable career for myself. That is why I took school very seriously. For me it was more of an obligation than anything else.”

On greatest peer pressures as a teenager: “The most dominant pressure is alcohol, to be honest it is alcohol. Because I think everybody in this life style – I don’t want to say in this community – but in this generation as a whole, when you become a teenager people take alcohol as if it is a pre-requisite or something, as if it is a necessity. I think the most dominant pressure, obstacle for me, was alcohol and of course, girls. But I don’t think girls were that really destructive for me because I didn’t take these sort of relationships very seriously.”

On what he sees as the results of too much drinking: “Drinking brings out the real person inside their body. So if maybe I wanted ... let’s say I hated someone, after a couple of drinks I have the guts to tell him straight to his face that I hate him ... so the most irritating thing for me about drinking is that you drink and drink and then you make a certain mistake that can be life-costing. Like maybe you have unprotected sex and in the morning you realise what a big mistake you have made and then its too late to amend because you find out maybe the girl is pregnant or you have got the disease. That’s what irritates the most about drinking.”

On talking about HIV-AIDS: “To be honest in this community, no one talks about HIV/AIDS. The main concern is pregnancy, they are always concerned about teenage pregnancy not HIV/AIDS. I don’t know if it is ignorance or anything but I don’t often hear people talking about HIV/AIDS.”

“Experience had taught me that people are mostly afraid of the truth. People are afraid to face the truth at most points. So in this community I think that is the problem, people are afraid to hear the truth about HIV/AIDS. In all these surroundings I think less than 30% of people know their status. Because people are afraid of the truth. And sometimes I think it is wise not to know your HIV/AIDS status but sometimes it is not ... it goes to a point whereby how you take it as a person, whether you think knowing your HIV/AIDS status is important or not. For myself personally I know knowing your HIV status is important but then sometimes, in most cases, you find that HIV doesn’t kill people. Like for instance, let’s say I am HIV-positive and I don’t know, I continue living life even though it is not so healthy as it should be. Then I go for a test and I find that I’m positive, I start getting ill from the mind because the mind tells me all sorts of things like you are going to die, there is no future for you. I start giving up on most things like schooling and stuff. So I think the stress contributes to a person dying before their time because we know for a fact that you can live with an HIV/AIDS for about eleven years.”

On his explanation for why Zone 13 is the most dangerous place in his area: “I think it is the people in that area, because mostly there are these boys from the initiation school. They get the wrong idea from the initiation school because initiation is just a step to convert a boy to a man without spoiling anything. But they have the wrong perception about it, they think when you go there ... it is like when I go there and I come back I am more superior than other people ... so that’s where the aggression and the violence starts. So Zone 13 is dominated by those boys who come from the initiation school.”

On subjects he took for matric: “I took Mathematics, Physical Science, Geography, Biology, Economics and two languages which is English and Sesotho. I scored distinctions in both Sotho and Economics, in higher grade.”

On affordability of higher education: “I’m still comparing my options because I have applied to a lot of institutions for bursaries and stuff. Fortunately I have found someone who said if they accept me, he should be able to cover at least half of my expenses, like the tuition and books. Maybe I can look for someone else to cover accommodation and stuff ...”

On how he would describe the dreams of the youth in his community: “What I know is that in my surroundings everyone wants to succeed. Even though they are not certain which direction they want to take but the only thing they are interested in is getting to the top. It doesn’t matter whether you go to medicine, law or what, or even going to tertiary. Some people want to succeed but they are not ready to go to tertiary institutions, they just want to look for jobs and succeed and stuff ... this is a very underprivileged society we are living in so people want to make the most of their lives. Most of us do it for our parents because they sacrificed a lot of things so that we can achieve what they want.”

On opportunities for young people in South Africa: “I think all the right opportunities go to the wrong people. If you can check, most privileged children get the most opportunities yet they do not use them accordingly. Most children who grow up getting everything they want, they are not that eager to go forward with their studies and stuff. But we, as an underprivileged society, we have to work hard to achieve something you want, it does not come on a silver platter. I think South Africa as a whole ... sometimes I think South Africa is really going astray, with all the strikes and everything. Nowadays, if anyone wants something and he doesn’t get it, we resort to boycotts and strikes and that sort of stuff. So I think we are going astray.”

On the influence of TV-media on young people and more generally: “A lot of things we learn from the TV, not all of us have internet and stuff ... Like in the townships we do not concentrate on the age restriction. A movie can have an age restriction of say, sixteen years, but you will find a thirteen year old watching, no one will try to take him to bed or something. So, we get tremendously influenced by the things we see on TV. Like I said with the strikes and everything - since the educational strike, everyone seems to have gotten this perception that a strike can solve almost anything, a strike and a boycott. Because there was a strike in an area somewhere called ‘Dunusa’. I don’t know what the people were fighting for but they went to the tar and

main roads and put stones there to stop vehicles from moving. So you can see when I say people are doing all the wrong things to get the right things. So I think they are mostly influenced by the media as a whole.”

On how he sees the performance of government as a young man: “Personally, I don’t think this country has been run the correct way, or maybe it’s because I quite dislike the President, I don’t know. I don’t think the country is being run ... especially the justice system ... I don’t think it’s being run in a proper manner. I think sometimes the law only applies to those who are a bit poor. Many rich people get away with crimes but as for us poor people, we get fat sentences for small crimes ... and also the education system, it is really, really low. You can find out in township schools, the standard of education and teaching is a bit lower than the private schools and stuff. I think the government should do more in equipping schools for teaching methods ... I think the government is all talk most of time. They promise and promise but they do not deliver.”

On voting: “Voting for me personally, is like a waste of time. You stay in the queue for four hours to cast a vote yet you don’t get what they promised – they promise you jobs, they promise you this and that but at the end of the day you get nothing. So, I don’t think voting for me, as such, is such an important thing - it was when we thought we were fighting to get a better life. It is better, but not exactly how we expected it.”

On how he thinks people should change things if they are not satisfied with their situation: “I think the most important thing is education. When you get educated you can get proper methods of problem solving. Like at high school, they do teach you the problem solving skills and stuff ... I don’t know if it is us black people or what but most people like solving problems in a more violent manner ... I think if we were educated enough we would find more suitable methods of problem solving, except violence of course.”

On ‘traditional African’ versus ‘Western’ ways: “Personally I am not into tradition and stuff because I don’t even believe in those ancestral stuff and everything else. But what I believe is that if you believe in something and you have 100 % faith in it, it will work for you. So I believe that everyone should concentrate on what they think is best for them. If you believe that tradition

is the way to go, then go with your whole mindset to it; if you believe that the western way is the way to go, go with your whole mindset. But, I pretty much prefer the western way even though I do practice some traditional rituals at home because I come from, not really a traditional family, but we do have some rituals like the slaughterings and stuff..”

On his generation and social-political involvement: “I think what I need to say is a little bit of concern, pointed to the government. I think there are not enough programmes whereby we are trying to build the youth and stuff. Many of these programs are concentrated on the adult people and they have the wrong idea of indulging the youth in all these activities. I know because I am part of the youth. Youth don’t go along with politics. If you want to involve the youth in the running of the country don’t go the political way. Have a strategy where you take them ... I have a saying that says if you want to be the best then go and associate with the best. So if you want to indulge the youth in something that you want, then go the route that will take you whereby you start with the things that they like the most, attract them by the things they like the most. Like festivals and concerts, you can start by attracting them by using those things then you can come to the more academic stuff, whereby let’s say you are aiming at building their self esteem. You can advise them but then you can organise artists and stuff to perform. That’s where the youth will come in a great capacity. But if you go the political route ... you will have wasted time and money. So I think they should have strategies of how they deal with these things, especially concerning the youth because we are a very sensitive generation.”

Daniel Serame Masemola – widowed pensioner

Brief biography: *Daniel is eighty-six (86) years old. He was born and raised in nearby Meyerton and moved to Sebokeng in 1965 due to forced removal. He managed to secure a title deed house and has lived in this house ever since, fighting many legal battles to retain his residence there. Daniel held many different jobs, mostly in construction as a general labourer. He had nine children with his only wife, four of whom are alive today. He survives off his pension, which also supports several in-laws.*

On meeting his wife and getting married: “I saw this lady passing by the street, I wondered. Then the eyes gave a certain erection to my heart ... that this one should be somebody of whom I will live together, forever. And it happened really. There wasn’t any fight against me and my wife. She was called by God. She was a lover, a beautiful, short girl. If ever I could meet somebody standing with her ... yoo, yoo ... he would want to become her partner ... she was beautiful for my side. I was about twenty-five years old when I met my wife. And I took only about three years and then I married her.”

On his family and moving to the community in the 1960s: “I got married to Merriam Dikeledi Moabi and we had nine children. God gave me those children and I have struggled to give them education and they have now all been educated. When we came here it was difficult; we were given the stamps that these houses will be ours in five years time. But the superintendent from Residentia took those stamps from us so that we cannot get those houses. It was a very serious problem and we fought too much with the committee that we had on this community. The committee said if you don’t pay your rent after seven days, they will throw out your belongings and the house will be locked up. When it’s been thrown out they will be destroyed by rain and dust. From there, when I thought I was resting I found the letter from the superintendent saying that they are giving people the rights called titles, for the place.”

On being forcibly removed: “We were just told that we have got to move from Meyerton to come here. We were just given R300 to move from that place and leave. You leave the house as it is, you just take the things inside the house ... zincs, windows everything, you are just leaving it like that.”

On constant struggles around his property/house ownership: “Let me tell you a story ... I have got my wife here, I have married that wife first in my place then the government brings a man to come and marry my wife ... is it possible? It’s not. Now the state that I am is this. I have got my stand now here ... I fixed everything alright, then the law of this place is taking the money from somebody to come and build his house here in my place ... is it right? It’s what Residentia municipality is doing ... it’s now still a struggle ... even by tomorrow I can see them saying that we bought this place, I want to build my house here. The council itself is looking

that they should have only their life for money but they are disturbing our lives ... we black people, to fight each other. It is very funny because the other man, as a black man, he is told to come and build in my yard ... why does he agree to take that money? Even as I am here, we had a meeting and there is a certain somebody who is high here ... many houses are sold, many houses while you are in here, in my house, it is sold already to somebody ... more than 200 houses are sold out while people are still living in their place ... it is very painful.”

On what he thinks has shifted/changed since 1994: “I’m still going to vote for the ANC, because really something has moved away. We used not to have one queue to go and bet on the horses, while at the banks, but now today, it’s free. At Vereeniging - those apartheid times - while walking on the street the white man is just there to push you like this ... unfortunately myself, while walking I go over him ... they will get fists and there was always when one white is fighting the black they all just come for nothing. They never saw what happened, but you are there to be dumped as nothing. But today really is free. I mean, I do not say that I hate the whites. I don’t hate the whites, because I used to agree what the white man says. And sometimes now presently, it is wrong with our people ... while they are given work to do while there is no white man, then they sit down and they don’t want to do the job. But when you call a white man, a white man is a racer to them, then they stand up and work. It’s another mood of which I don’t know what can I say ... it’s just like these people who are stealing money at the banks, robbing, I mean robbing the other people ...”

On violence/crime in the community and government responsibility: “The government has to take responsibilities on its people, no corruption and take those guns from these young boys as they have got no license. Why do they agree that they should have guns ... why? Why don’t they collect all these guns from these young boys? Why this government does not do it ...?”

On his feelings about political leadership after 1994: “It was nice because we got to vote for Mandela and then you know, it came better, it came better, far better. But only one thing is this now - the very same man who came after Mandela, Thabo Mbeki ... you know he is there standing there but as to working for South Africa here he is always going out, leaving South Africa here for nothing, doing nothing for South Africa.”

On other things that have improved since 1994: “The money for the pension and that we can walk together, we can be together in the buses, in the train ... let me remember something. During that time when Mandela was struggling ... I used to go by train, to work and the carriages were closed for black people, not to go to number one carriage. The guards, the white guards, used to say - *jylle dink is Mandela se train is nie Mandela se train nie* [‘you think this is Mandela’s train but it’s not Mandela’s train’] - and the train could not wait for a minute. But since Mandela ruled, there is peace on one side. Really life is better, life is far better. Because even you know in those apartheid days when I’m the owner of this place ... if I can die at that time then the wife is driven out of this house, she has no control of this house because I as the head, I’m dead. But after [1994] the wife can own the house now. And then our children as girls, as wives they are given a chance to rule themselves by working, doing their own jobs and so on and so on.”

On government doing its job in poor communities: “Government is trying to do a good job but it can’t afford. If you’ve got ten children, you’ve got to give them food, all of them. But now he cannot ... he’s having thousands and thousands of children, it’s not easy. And as to helping those people, from here onto the farmers there, it’s not easy, it takes time. Even for electricity towards the other places, it’s very difficult and it takes time.”

On new social/child grants: “Look, they have just started now making grants for the children isn’t it? It’s something that has happened presently, it used not to be there. Well, it’s a part of which we say okay, thanks, although there’s a certain poison of which now this grant ... the children they make the other children because they want to have payments of two children, three children and so on, so on. Of which now, it’s breaking the family.”

On younger generation having little respect for people: “They don’t respect you, they don’t respect me. Even down there towards that side of the tar road last week, they stabbed two men to death. That young man went to the police station saying he’s going to report that I killed somebody here at a certain place because he was trying to take his parcels. And yet, there were two girls knowing of this trouble and they said to the police that he is the very same man who

rushed that old man, and killed that old man. The old man did nothing to him ... they are sick, they don't respect, they are lazy and they don't want to work for themselves. Even their yard, you can go around and you will see, you will find that the grass is as big as this [gestures above his head]. Instead of taking a shovel and clean and what, what, they run around at night here looking for people from work or from which places – killing them and taking their money. Really, our children are very bad, it's one thing I don't know. Maybe by so saying those other people who are having those children will hate me, they may kill me tonight I don't know."

On what he would say to today's young people: "I would like to say to these children, to these people, that there are old people also because there are certain old people who are not good, who are always doing bad also. Hey people, we were brought down here by God, in the way we were taught, that we are from God. And God is a man who is having love. The first point is that he saw that Adam was lonely in the field. So God wanted Adam to live in peace. He made a wife for that gentleman, to have love. I would like to say to these people ... wishing for these old people you should have love, love each other. In this way do good for somebody and that somebody will also do good for you. Don't kill each other. Because death in the house of one man causes a lot of worries towards the end of years. Love should be between us ... love is good to be between us. While my car is getting broken in the road I should have somebody to come and help me. But now, you will find that people coming there are coming to take the wheels off, killing us, robbing us. So people, have love and don't do the mistake to the other people. Because, even you, your own self, you don't want somebody to do you bad. You must pray if there is a church , revolve your opinions from badness to kindness."

On what he really wants in his community: "I want humps this side. While I am crossing the roads to see the other people that side I don't see cars. Three months back, I was crossing the road and there was a pothole that tripped me and then I fell. Then the car came past in front of my head at the same time while I was still lying on the road. It is just why really I'm not feeling good ... why are they not putting the humps on this road, why, why don't they? They say they are dear, are they dearer than somebody's soul, to loose your child, to loose your wife? Those humps - they are just concrete and cement - to put there to make humps. Are they dearer than a human being? They are not, isn't it?"

On his many grandchildren and large family: “My first daughter has three girls and her first born son has a daughter. The other one who is at Soweto has two boys and one girl. The one who is in Rustenburg has six children. The one in Pretoria has four. They sometimes do come here when it’s my birthday. They come here, make cakes, killing fowl, making food – and we enjoy. Then we dance together ... When I’m looking at them I am proud of myself although I am so tiny.”

On what worries him the most as an elderly person: “You know what, growing up to be old, it’s alright, it’s good and it’s bad for the very same reason. You, who is growing up, sickness is very now with you, you cannot do anything. You see now my yard, I’m struggling to clean the yard, I cannot afford. While I am cleaning the yard, it happens that I cannot even see ... now to grow up is very bad, it’s not good but I don’t want to die, one thing is that. Who ever wants to die? But the trouble is the body, pains in your body, eyesight .. and even when a *tsotsi* can come in, no power to fight, to hit him. I will still try and knock him but he may knock me off because I’ve got no power. But the power is in my heart ... I don’t want any bad movements to be in my heart.”

On the difficulties of trying to live off his R900 a month pension: “You know, the hand of a wife in the house, in your own house – it’s far better than any other family that supports you or is with you. Now you see I’ve got those two little girls here [grand-children]. When they say grocery, they say R600. And after R600 you will never do for a month with the money. The groceries are finished of which I cannot even find them. Maybe they take, they buy their own things ... but I don’t want to quarrel with them and say *aikona* man, you bought small groceries or whatever. Because they will leave me alone and what will I ever do. Who will wash for me, who will do whatever if they go away? I can tell you that right now I have got not even 10 cents in my pocket. Even in the house now I am waiting for the month to go, to get to an end. I’ve got no sugar I’ve got nothing in the house here. Life is difficult ... (but) I will keep going, as long as I’m still breathing in and out.”

Nomvula Paulina September – widowed pensioner

***Brief biography:** Nomvula is sixty-four (64) years old. She was born in nearby Evaton. She left school at an early age and became a domestic worker. She married and moved to Sebokeng in 1970. Her husband worked at the SAMANCOR plant and she became a mother (three children), housewife and informal seller. Her husband fell ill in 1999 as a result of his work at SAMANCOR and was then retrenched in 2000. He subsequently died in 2003. Nomvula lives in a RDP house and survives on a government pension and help from her adult children.*

On differences in growing up in the past and now: “When I was growing up in Evaton at Nhlapo area, we didn’t grow up like today’s children. We played a lot of activities, even when parents called us it was very hard. But we were doing our domestic chores on time. We were respecting our parents a lot as compared to the children of today.”

On health services for older people like her: “At hospitals nothing has changed. When we are sick they do not check us, they ask us what is bothering us. They just give us medicines and say that it’s because we are growing old and there is nothing they can do.”

On gradual sickness of her husband from working at SAMANCOR and how hospital/clinic/local doctor responded: “At the clinic, they did not tell me the problem. But I took him to the doctor and the doctor told me that my husband is badly sick and he is close to losing his mind\memory and then I should always guard him. He had sores. He would complain about his burning chest. One night he got up and went to the toilet and when he returned he was developing stroke symptoms on his mouth. He was not aware that his mouth was swollen. Then I took him to the clinic and they gave us a letter to take him to the hospital. Then they took him to the X-ray and they gave him tablets and said that he will be fine, his mouth will be fine. (A few months later) his situation was very bad, he couldn’t walk long distances and he was always sitting down, failing to bend his feet. He started failing to take care of himself and he was always sleeping as he was always tired. He was getting worse day by day. During the night I slept with a five-litre bucket to help him as a toilet. He was starting to lose his sound\voice, his voice was too low. It was very hard to really hear what he was saying. I took him to the doctor and the doctor

gave him the tablets. After coming back from the doctor, he started vomiting dark blood. I remember he told me that he had something in his mouth and I took my hand and pulled something from his mouth. We went back to the clinic and they gave him pills and when we came back he vomited black clots of blood from the mouth and nose. They would just check him and send him home. I did take some samples of blood with me to the hospital but they did not even look at it.”

On the positive changes she sees since 1994: “Before 1994, there was no freedom, we were denied access to a lot of things. Things have changed - the state gives money to the poor. Pregnant women get money even though they are not working. They now have maternity leave which you get paid for even if you don’t work.”

Siqelo Mkhize (retired policeman)

***Brief biography:** Siqelo is fifty-seven (57) years old and was born and raised in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal. He received tertiary and technikon education and joined the South African Police (SAP) in 1973. Both his parents died soon afterwards. He was transferred to the Vaal Triangle in 1974 and worked as a police constable throughout the Vaal for the next twenty-six years, with Sebokeng as his home base. He was forced to retire in 2000 due to health problems. He lives off his pension and lives in a medium-sized private house.*

On what his family thought about him joining the SAP back in the 1970s: “You know my family they didn’t like it; they didn’t like it. My Uncle, Mr Dlamini, used to tell me okay, my department is better than your department of SAP because it’s dangerous and I was weak and the worst part of it is they transferred me to the Transvaal. And Transvaal at that time was known as the place of violence you see. It was not nice you know. I used to hear from people that the most dangerous people are in the Transvaal, the *tsotsis* [criminals]. Now I feared and they told me that the job you are taking, you are going to Transvaal, they can even shoot you there. I didn’t like it but I was forced because my father told me that you know if you are many, if you are not alone and then you are given an instruction you must not first complain before others complain. If

those people they are tolerating the situation you must not be the first one to complain because you are a man ...”

On experiences during 1984 uprisings in the Vaal: “You know 1984 it was bad, but it was not so bad. You know, we were the enemies of the community at that time, they dislike us. And then what happened here most of it was a pain to us because our colleagues they hated us you know, our white colleagues. Now we felt the pain because now it’s discrimination this side and then our community that side. Also we had to think for ourselves how do we come through this, you should decide for yourself. But you know what - I prayed to God that I should not kill anybody, I must not kill or negligently kill somebody - this is what I was praying. God helped me because I joined and then I didn’t kill anybody, my hands are clean ... but I saw a lot of things which were bad, which were not nice.”

How some things began to change after February 1990: “The salary was still down in 1990 it was still bad you know. We just realised it ourselves ... now something is coming a little bit better you know we could write in all the books at work, we could use - if you have got a license, a driver’s license - you could drive a state car, we could attend the complaints of a white man, we could write the statement if he is complaining we could write his complaints ... it was a little bit better.”

On what he expected to change after 1994 (and opinions about what got better/worse in terms of the police force): “What I was expecting was that we are going to work freely, we are going to learn the job, and then the money, they are going to increase our salaries and then the working conditions, the working conditions. But I must say something which was good [in the past], comparing to this today - discipline and the people they liked their job because we could not misuse the state property.”

“We benefited ... all the benefits like housing, medical, subsidies and then you could choose if you want a house or you want a car, you could choose and then the state was giving you. And then the state was paying three quarters of that amount, we used to pay a quarter. The medical was free of charge my friend I am telling you. There were no deductions on your salary about

your medicals. But what made me so cross ... because now my own black colleagues, they became lazy you know. They became lazy to do the job.”

“And then when it comes to increments and promotions ... now the younger ones there were promoted more than the seniors. Now we thought - is it revenge or what is happening? They promote you, they neglect you, they say the old people they are stubborn they can't listen and this and that. And then the job was not done correctly. That's why the public were complaining, the standard, the performance was deteriorating.”

“And then there comes a gentleman, a big man ... he commits an offence and then you say, no it's a big man leave him, you must not touch him ... there are those who are untouchable. But the poor ones, they don't want to listen. Now how are you going to do your job?”

“Let me tell you something that I realised ... if you want to get a new coach or somebody tells you okay, we are going to give you everything new, it is not to say you are going to throw everything away that you had ... you can now check which ones are good, which are bad. Don't throw everything away. You threw even the good things away you know and this is a very big mistake which is happening now because now even the councillors here, what they did is that they threw everything away.”

On his thoughts about the 'state of things' in the community since 1994 and changes amongst the youth: “Today's community they think that they know everything but practically, deep down they are not so good you know. I do not know...I think it is the *duiwel* [drink], you know this thing is destroying our own community. Our youth don't have curiosity you see, they don't have that curiosity, they are not willing to learn. Now if you tell them do this and they say that it was at your times, not now. Now what can you say? And then there is the Bill of Rights here, that thing is destroying, I think it is destroying. Let me come to education. We used to learn on religion, those were basics that if you are younger it was a subject at school - you learn to pray, you must not steal, don't tell lies, you know the Ten Commandments those basics. If you learn that thing from the basics it was very good, but now it's cancelled, it's no more a subject at schools. Myself as a parent, I'm preaching this at home and then if a child is going to school he

or she must get the same preaching. Now the child won't get a chance if he or she comes out of the house going to school feeling that now I am free, I can do this and that ... that was very important because now it goes to discipline. Behaviour is very important. I would not be here today if I didn't have the discipline the behaviour, to humble yourself."

On his experience with new, post-1994 young police officers: "Now if they were supposed to ask you [as a senior officer], they have got that vanity you know, a valueless pride. If you leave them they are going to flop and then the public is going to complain. But when it comes to money increments they are the first people ... give them the (car) keys ... and then when we were supposed to *toyi-toyi*, then it is very nice. And when you call the meeting, the general meeting, [saying] come gentlemen there is a new policy here that we must tell you about - they won't attend. But if you say there is a *toyi-toyi* or this and that tomorrow, they are there you see. How are you going to serve your community if you don't have the skills, if you are not educated, if you don't teach yourself the job?"

On criticism of police management and government vis-à-vis the police service: "What I don't like about the government is they don't make inspections you see. They don't go down and look at what are they doing. Okay, they pass laws, they give the new policies do this and that but they must go down and see if it is followed, they must get feedback on how is it working now, does it materialise or not? If it doesn't materialise let them change, they must not go to another country to look at what they are doing ..."

"The top management now, they don't respect the public. They are arrogant. The government is also very arrogant - they don't want to listen to us you see and whatever is happening nobody is coming down here. You can't pay a person a salary if you do not know how does he work, you must evaluate that you know. A person must do the job and then you pay him and you must be satisfied about the job. If it is wrong you tell him you are wrong here and there, otherwise I'm not going to pay you. How do you pay the person before you have inspected the job or evaluated the job? What kind of management is that? Now at the police force everything is falling apart because of the management. We are going to see the worst if we go on like this."

On local government capacity, management, democracy and service delivery: “Now we were happy that these people are going to do a very good job you know. We were happy but now it goes back because they threw everything away, even that which was good. How many years tell me, if you are a manger, can you plan? If you are a manager you must have plan one and plan B you see. You are planning for one thing for five years you flop, you are planning again for the same thing and you flop, how many years are we here? We have got eighteen years my friend.”

“They must not hire the people of politics, no! The person must be interviewed, short listed ... they must bring their CVs and if you qualify you take the job ...”

“One day one of my neighbours, Mr. Malindi, was asking the councillor, can you give us the feedback sir of what we were talking about in the previous meeting? He said look, this is a mass meeting and we don't have secretaries. Tell me, for a qualified manager this thing is simple ... here are the needs, you prioritise, you tell the people here is our plan and we begin with this one, or talk with them about which one is to be first. And then if you flop you come back to them and tell them look here gentlemen - they could not do number one or number two, let us try this and that – and tell the reason. They can't even tell you how much money is allocated to them, how many projects they have, they won't tell you. Now how are you going to serve the community? Even the complaints of the community, they tell them that nobody is writing them down. You know another bad strategy which I hate in the meetings ...if you ask a question they take five questions and then from there he is going to answer. If you are not satisfied about the answer you won't say objection, gentleman, I was not correctly answered. Or, he is going to answer only two out of five (questions), you see. He is then gone and we must keep quiet and then if you talk there are people who are going to intimidate you ...”

“The top management must evaluate the job because these people they are paid every month you see. Now you pay them, you pop out the money, you don't check the job. If the counsellor is coming to the meeting there are so many departments which are involved which should be allocated, because this job of the community is not done by one person or by one department. But if they call the mass meeting they don't call the heads of those departments you see. They

don't call them, especially the social workers who are working here, they are making decisions about the community, the problems of the community. When there is a mass meeting all the departments that make the decisions are not there and that counsellor is going to say no, it's not part of my job, I am not involved, go and ask the Mayor. Now the mayor must come here. We do not know who is the Mayor ...”

“They (politicians) will come to us and ask us ... but if we tell them they don't implement that thing. Now what is that thing? Who is fooling who?”

On today's youth: “Our youth they are spoiled brats, just spoiled brats, all of them. Their generation, what they must do according to me ... the first thing is they must teach them the correct things. Those lessons that they cancelled at school they were so very important you know, especially at the junior level at the primary schools. Theology is very important, even the history it was so very important. You must have discipline because all of these things is caused by (lack of) discipline ...if you are a minister of this and that, bad habits will follow you. You will commit the very same thing even if you are at the higher position because it is habitual now you see.”

On privatisation and outsourcing jobs: “This thing of privatising it's a disease, it's killing us because now people will be working on contracts and if you work on the contract it is very bad. According to what I see ... we are working and they say okay, you are going to work for three months ... you won't benefit from the union, it is going to die first thing because now the union they subscribe money. Money must be subscribed from you to the union every month. And then when you are working on contract you are loosing the benefits, you won't go to any company and say you want to buy this car. They are going to ask you, are you working? Yes. Permanent employment? No. Sorry pay cash, you see. Medicals they don't benefit because there are contributions that you must make. You must make those contributions each and every month. Now those people they are going to be counted as people who are employed ... in what sense because they benefit nothing?”

“Now at the factories ... I have realised that something very wrong is happening there. I could see that they can choose any department at the factory and tell the owner of the factory, okay we want this department privatised. And, that person who is coming from up there, the factory is going to allocate R2million to that gentleman to pay his people and then he is going to employ his own people. That man the supervisor ... and then nepotism is going to start there because they gave him R2 million he is going to press this capital so that he can have a remainder of about R1 million extra or R1.5 million. He is going to squeeze the job so that other people they must not get the job or he is going to pay them less and less. Now it’s part of corruption. It was right not to privatise you know ...”

Maria Mabeko Nkomo – divorced traditional healer/herbalist

***Brief biography:** Maria is thirty-nine (39) years old. She was born and raised in Sebokeng. Her mother died when she was twelve years old and she was married by the age of fifteen, living with in-laws. She had her first child when she was sixteen. Besides taking care of her own children (she has four), she also took care of her siblings through doing odd-jobs and informal selling. She eventually managed to finish matric at the age of twenty-four and then she subsequently went on to do some nurses training for a short period. She then got a part-time job at Hillbrow Hospital and moved on to become trained as a traditional healer/herbalist. She runs her own ‘surgery’ in Sebokeng, helps out in the community, and supports all her children and extended family.*

On hardships of early adolescence: “When my mother died I was twelve, and then my father did marry again and then that’s where life started to confuse me because then there were so many complications. Then I got married at the age of fifteen years. And then I finished school while I was married. At those times I was still staying home because I was still schooling and then I fell pregnant - I must stay at home, taking care of the child. After that I must carry on again and the years are moving on. But I didn’t give-up.”

“I didn’t know anything, I was still a child. They didn’t show me the way, instead they had to ... I don’t know what to say ... instead of encouraging me, so there wasn’t a good example to me. I didn’t know anything, everything to me was blank. I started to notice things when I was still growing up and seeing what other people are doing. I learned by myself.”

“When I had my first born, when I started to fall pregnant, we were staying at our own home. It was a two-room house and when it’s raining the water was falling like this inside the room. So we had to take the bucket and throw the water out of the room. And then when my child was ten days I started to get sick. I didn’t raise him very nice, I had to stop breast feeding him.”

On what she had to do to make money/support herself and two kids when she was still going to school: “Then I wasn’t sleeping at all, I was sleeping for just one and a half hours, because when I get home early in the morning I had to go and stock cows feet, go and buy some flour to make some dumpling, fat cakes. So, during the night I’m not sleeping, I’m making fat cakes and during the day I’m still scrubbing these cows legs so that I must cut them into four pieces. I don’t rest at anytime and I don’t have time for the children. At night I’m not sleeping, I’m busy making fat cakes. At one o’clock, two o’clock [in the morning] I am going out to catch the first train here and it is dark by that time. Sometimes when I was going early so that when those people are getting to work, really five o’clock, I must be there so that they must buy my stuff. Nine o’clock I’m in the train and I’m going back home. Sometimes I fell asleep in the train, I will find myself lost in the Soweto location, I have to walk back from the train to go to the location. Then it was difficult because I have to maintain them even though their father was still supporting them but he was giving us little money. So, I was supposed to help myself.”

On how she got the funds to pay for her nursing education and then herbalist school: “Hey it was hard. Let me say, before I went there at the nursing school I was suffering because I was divorced and I had to stay with the children, I had no money to go there to school so I was still selling like my mother used to sell, food. And then those people which I was selling to them, maybe I was having four years selling to them ... those people they said, no Poppy [her nickname] you mustn’t suffer like this. They donate for me and then I went to that school. After finishing that school then I worked there as a volunteer - sometimes they pay us, sometimes they

don't. When my friend told me about this (herbalist) school I thought even to that school I was still suffering to pay the fees ... I was suffering before I went to school, even our principal, she knows that Poppy will come late. Every day it was a meeting for me - why you came late - but I didn't give up."

On why she feels the need to 'give back' to the community and children: "First, I didn't play in my childhood and now I have to be example to my children so that they mustn't take my foot steps. And secondly because of the things which has happened to me while my mother was passed away. So, I must show the community and guide them ... maybe the orphans or the children who have left with their father or mothers, I must help them because I have seen what has happened to me."

On why she got divorced from her husband: "... sometimes I can hide it but sometimes it can teach you something. You see sometimes if you have got a wife, you must give her a full love. We got married at a younger stage and then if the husband doesn't give the woman most of the love inside the house then he is taking it outside, then the woman will look for another love. So that's what has happened between us. Then we split up."

On what got her interested in nursing: "At first I didn't like that work but because in my marriage I was getting sick now and then ... when I was admitted at the hospital I used to fight with the nurses. I see that they don't do their job properly. Then I started to think that maybe I can go ... firstly I started for money when I go there but then I was in the class and I saw the difference - then I enjoyed this work, this nursing work."

On the effectiveness of her herbalism versus medical doctors: "You see the herbs I like them very much because you can compete with the medical doctors. What I hate is to give a patient tablets more and more, as long as he is still alive. But the herbs they can take the illness away. But when you go to the medical doctors they can inject you, they can give you tablets and then that illness cannot go away easily because when the tablets are finished you must go back to the doctor again. So the herbs, they can take the illness out of the system, permanent. Like for example I can talk about arthritis. Arthritis they say it's a permanent damage, but when I treat

most of my patients they get well, they get well and in a short time. Once I apply the massage oil into their system, into their body and then it gets into the system it takes away all the coldness in the skin and in the bones. So the herbs are more good than a doctor.”

On the positive attributes of her medicine for ‘men’s problems’: “The men’s problem, sometimes most of the people they have early ejaculation, some of them you know those problems. Then I have got my bottles, it’s 500 ml, then if I put my medicines inside there and when a patient drinks that medicine he is going to want more and there is going to be a stable relationship with his wife. You see, now I am saving the marriages now. As I told you that I have to serve the community, I don’t want the same mistake which has happened to me to apply to others. When I sell my medicine I tell them that this one, there will be no divorce, it is going to make the happy couple inside the house and it’s for sure. The husband won’t go away, he is going to need his wife near.”

On her treatment for HIV-AIDs and how patients respond: “I have got couple of flowers. I mix them and I make a infusion with them. With that infusion he must drink it then he is going to get well, he is going to boost his immune systems. I cannot guarantee that but what I know is that my patients, when I gave them that treatment, their immune system is becoming better.”

“But these people ... they come here weaker then after few months, maybe two months, when they get their strength, they don’t come. You will find them there where they sell beer, so they don’t come. When you ask them they say no, you want me not to get the grant money anymore, so I won’t come anymore, my friends told me not to come and I want to earn before I die. Most of the people they are looking for money. So from me, they know maybe they don’t get the letter to get the grant ... so from the clinic, that’s where they are going to get the letter to get the grant.”

On her services versus those at clinics and hospitals: “It’s not like us. Because there, some of the patients they are running from the clinics because they said they don’t get good services. There at the hospitals there are so many and the nurses they get angry so quickly. When they get

to us they get counselling - there they cannot get counselling and they cannot take out what is in their mind. But here, when they get here that can find counselling, better treatment everything.”

On general health issues in the community/people’s attitudes: “I can say that to avoid more illness like the one who is killing us now is because people we don’t listen, we don’t listen and we don’t believe. Our beliefs are not the same. So at first we were told that we must be faithful, we must do what and what and now we don’t do that. What I can say is that a person, his heart is the controller of his body so if a person cannot have a choice what he wants in his life, with his health, no one can because you cannot force him to do what he doesn’t want to do.”

On what would make her a happier person: “Firstly I have to find a nanny, then I have to renew my house and then I have to get more herbs. Some of them I cannot find them here, they are at overseas and I cannot go there and find them. Then sometimes it’s a big stress for me because some of the patients they come and I don’t have that treatment then I have to find a simpler treatment to help. My dream is to buy a car wherever I’m going I must go with my children. I’m struggling to get the herbs ... someone must drive me with his car to go to get the herbs. The car is my dream.”

Bafana Makhanya – retrenched SAMANCOR worker and activist with retrenched workers and in community

Bafana is forty-four (44) years old. He was born and raised in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal and moved to Thokoza at the age of fifteen to start school and live with his father. He is the youngest of fourteen children, five of whom have passed away. He moved to Sebokeng in 1980 and achieved a Form 2 education. He became a political activist in the early 1980s and then got a job at SAMANCOR in 1984, where he worked until being retrenched in 2001. He has been unemployed since then. Bafana helped found the SRWCC (SAMANCOR Retrenched Workers Crisis Committee) and remains one of its key leaders as well as a community activist. He lives in a small private house with his family.

On the differences between rural and urban life (and Zulus): “There was a very big difference between Thokoza and Nkhandla [small, rural village where he grew up]. What I know about Nkhandla is there were fights and life was not that fast in Nkhandla compared to Thokoza. If one cattle is missing fights will take place. It was not a very peaceful place because of these fights. In Thokoza life is very fast. We in Nkhandla, we were forced to the obedience of the authority. On the other hand when I arrived in Gauteng I find that Zulus don’t want other cultures like the Sothos to mix with them - they were fighting. The Zulus would just group themselves together and felt that this is our territory and without mixing with the other people who are not Zulus.”

On division of people in Sebokeng according to ethnic group: “By that time, when my father got a house in Sebokeng zone 7A, there was a mix, people were living together and there were Zulus, Shangaans, Tswanas and Sotho. When time goes on the Zulus moved to another place and they called it a Zulu section which was in Zone 7B - that’s when the differences came and people started to be divided according to their culture. It was in 1978 ... it was an order and they would just tell you at the office that you must move to zone 7a or 7b, your house has been approved there.”

On his involvement in the *Asinamali* Campaign in the Vaal (1984): “It was one day after work when others have left, I talked to this other guy. I told him that we must take part in the Campaign since it affected us. Then we agreed to do the pamphlet. After doing the pamphlet, the machine jammed. The other thing that nearly put us in serious trouble was that we did not get permission from the lady who was using the machine. But the pamphlets were already gone. We were arrested and taken to Klip River and they threatened to throw us in the water and they took us to Vereeniging police station and they tortured us and asked us where did we get this idea. They threatened to throw us in the river. The hospital expelled us because we would bring influence to their staff. They took us into custody and tortured us, asking us whether we belong to any of the ANC, PAC or IFP. It was terrible because I lost my job.”

On working conditions at SAMANCOR in the late 1980s (he got a job there from 1985): “There was no safety. First thing that I can say is that people were dying - the funnel that we

were using sometimes could explode and kill people ... What SAMANCOR did was that they only gave us masks that you will put on for many days even if the mask was dirty to put it on our face when we are near the funnel so that we could not get burnt on our faces. Workers also complained about when they coughed, they were coughing blood.”

On big strike in 1987 and conduct of NUMSA (National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa): “In 1987 there was a big strike in SAMANCOR. Our representative (shop steward) went to negotiate for higher wages but there was no agreement and when they came back we started the strike. Even there I was the first to fight against NUMSA because when they came from the meeting they would tell us different stories. I started to destroy NUMSA’s cars because I think if they are the organisers they can’t just go to speak to the management without talking to us first.”

On political changes in the years following 1994 and how that affected him: “After 1994 ... there were more conflicts. There was the formation of other political parties, for example, the UDM [United Democratic Movement]. We were confused as the community and I was also confused and I told myself that I had to pull out from politics because people were more concerned about themselves than the human rights. By that time the ANC wanted to be the only organisation and that thing brought confusion to the people. At the same time, people thought that when Mandela came out of prison it will bring freedom, people are confused and think Mandela brought freedom, Mandela never brought freedom. Freedom was brought by the people who were striking, burning tyres and others were even killed. I believe that people from the grassroots brought freedom. They were struggling, got tortured and killed. After 1994 my wife discouraged me, saying there is no need for me to talk about politics because we don’t benefit from it.”

On the IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party), Zulu culture and the political fighting in the early 1990s: “The IFP was called Inkhata the organisation that was more of cultural organisation to help people - for instance, if people have cultural activities taking place at their places. Buthelezi changed it to politics. Zulus are violent, violence is in their culture. In politics you should not be allowed to kill each other. Even the ANC was involved in some of the killings and destroyed

houses of the people but they were not blamed for that, it was always Inkhata. What was hurting was that the black people were killing each other. People think that the IFP was killing only other cultures but I think this is not true because, they were killing people in the trains, streets and in the hostels, they were even killing the Zulus because how did they know that this is not a Zulu.”

On what has changed overall since 1994: “Only little has changed, what has been promised the people has never changed - that people will get free houses, their credit will be cleared and we will get free services. Things that have changed are that we no longer have to carry passes when we go around and you can do your own business. But what people need did not change, like work, the police roaming around with the criminals and the councillors stealing our money. We thought that after 1994 the law would be strict but it has gone from better to worse because there is a lot of corruption that is going on now.”

On his relationship with his family/children and what he thinks about the new ‘rights’ of children: “I don’t spend more time talking to my kids and actually I don’t have that time. And culturally we don’t talk with kids about HIV/AIDS. In our culture we are not allowed to talk about those things with kids but sometimes we do spend time with kids telling them ABC or instructing them, that they must not be on the street in the night, they must not go to the parties especially because they are young. But now because they have rights, they disrespect their parents because they know that their parents will not punish them. Really, things have changed for the kids, but in my family I try to enforce my rule and tell them that this is my house. I think these rights destroys kids and they disrespect elders.”

On what he thinks was the real reason for being retrenched in 2001: “In 1999, they called a doctor from the University of Cape Town to do the blood tests - they were testing for manganese. Actually by that time people were dying because of manganese and as a result, we were retrenched in 2001.”

On activities of retrenched workers committee over last several years: “We are fighting with the company and we want the company to have responsibility for those people affected. God has given everyone days of life and this company has reduced these days. We have an ongoing case,

we are trying to use our lawyers to fight the company because we feel that what SAMANCOR did to us was not good. But at the same time we realised that we cannot fight effectively if some of us are hungry, without jobs - that's why it is very important to get supplies because that money can assist in buying food to continue to live and fight for our rights. The main problem is that the government is supporting SAMANCOR and to make sure that the company could not pay us.”

On role of NUMSA in their fight: “We went to the union and fight them as workers and they did not help and we went to Midrand where there was a meeting with the SACP [South African Communist Party] and COSATU [Congress of South African Trade Unions] - they were embarrassed and told us like they don't know what was happening. We are very disappointed with NUMSA. People are living a difficult life in the location and the other thing is that children go to school on an empty stomach and some are struggling to go to school because of school fees. That's why we decided to fight the company. NUMSA took decisions for ourselves and they are siding with the company and it is difficult to fight the company from outside than if we were inside.”

Sara Maduna (worker at a private clinic in nearby town of Vereeniging)

***Brief biography:** Sara is forty-two (42) years old. She was born and raised in nearby Sharpeville in a family of eleven. Her father died in 1980 and she then left school and went to work as a domestic worker to support her mother and siblings. She married in 1990 and has one child. She moved to Sebokeng in 1993 with her husband who worked at the ISCOR plant. He was retrenched in 1997 and remains unemployed. Sara managed to get a job at a private clinic in Vereeniging in 2004 and has worked there since, supporting her husband and child. They live in a RDP house.*

On her family growing up: “At home we were nine, two girls and seven boys - but two boys have passed away. It's only seven that are left.”

On unsuccessful attempts to become a policewoman: “I think it was God’s will. I hated to work at the hospital, I liked the policewoman but now I’m working at the hospital.”

On what she did between the time she received matric in 1985 and got a job at the clinic in 2004: “I was staying at home because my father passed away in 1980 and so my mother had no money to give me to go to school. I was staying with those children [her siblings] because my mother goes to work.”(NOTE: Her mother was a domestic worker and supported all seven children)

On what she thought would happen after 1994 and who benefited: “I thought the government would support the children who are going to school and people will get jobs but that didn’t happen. More people were retrenched from their jobs.”

“Those who benefited were those who were involved in the struggle. Like my brother who follows me ... he was involved in the struggle and government took him to Wits and he does not even have matric. He worked at the license department but he is now working as a traffic cop.”

On her husband and life until she got a permanent job: “He was retrenched, he was working at the metal company ISCOR in 1997. We have been living with the money that they gave him and I was also doing piece jobs ... washing the clothes for people, cleaning the houses for people.”

On what most patients at the clinic are there for: “Its diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol and the rest is for the operations in most cases.”

On the difference between the private and public hospitals/clinics: “The difference is that the private hospital has good treatment and those people who are there are people who have got money. The government sometimes they have no medicines and those clinics there are so corrupt because they treat people freely. That is why a lot have died because they have no money to go to the private. At the government the service is so poor.”

On health of people in the community: “It’s not alright, on the side of the people who are not working. Like when my neighbour is sick I refer her to the diet but due to lack of finance they won’t afford. If a person is HIV positive she must get good nutrition but if those people are so poor they are going to die because they have got no money to buy food that they must eat.”

On the present state of things in South Africa, the split in ANC and who is to blame: “If you look at the parliament they are fighting each other - that is why our situation is not right and others when they are given money to use for the community they don’t use it for the community, they just use it for themselves. Like now the ANC is split into two parties. Me, I like Zuma - if there came another Xhosa I won’t tolerate that because I see we have been suffering under those Xhosas - they cause our lives to be difficult you see.”

On her support for Zuma (*she is not an ANC member*): “I support only one person (Zuma) because he is a Zulu man and I am a Zulu woman - that is why I support him.”

On how she spends her monthly salary: “Let me take it like this. It’s food, electricity, children for when she is going to school, its me for transport. Let me just say it’s R1500 because I spend R600 on food, R320 a month for transport and there’s also for my child caring money. I would be left with R700 and I spend most of that for my mother.”

On what she plans to do to improve her life in the future: “Like next year I want to do engineering. I want to register with the Vaal Technikon. I just want to do this for my child because next year she will be doing matric. I like to fix things like TVs, cars ...”

On problems of poverty: “I wish many people could get the job because children become *tsotsis* because of poverty. Like now, if you can go to Eatonside [nearby informal settlement] there is a lot of robberies and little boys with guns. You see, most people used to kill themselves because of poverty – it’s not alright. Because they leave their children behind, who is going to look after those children after they are committing suicide? – no one. We have a lot of thugs in the shacks there because their mothers and fathers are not working. Like me, I am working and my child gets everything she wants but what about the other children?”

Lineman Dyonase (retrenched SAMANCOR worker and tuck-shop owner)

***Brief biography:** Lineman is in his fifties. He was born and raised in the Eastern Cape and moved to Sebokeng when he was twenty-four years old where he got work at the SAMANCOR plant. He worked as a general labourer there for 26 years while living in worker hostels (his previous wife stayed in the Eastern Cape with their two children). He was retrenched in 2001, the same year his wife left him. He subsequently remarried and has one child with his second wife. He moved to nearby Meyerton where he opened, and continues to run, a small tuck shop which supports him and his family.*

On what he expected from ‘freedom’ in 1994: “What I was expecting was that maybe our salaries would be different from before but that never happened, it remained like that.”

On his retrenchment package after twenty-six years of work: “It wasn’t that much. It was around R48 000.” [*His salary when he was retrenched was R2000 per month*]

On starting up and running a little tuck-shop since his retrenchment in 2001: “It is better than before, it has expanded because at first I was selling fruit and vegetables ... cabbage, spinach from the market and I decided to leave it because they were bringing little income. With this one it’s better. I sell tin fish, mealie meal, tea, basic groceries and little things for the children to help feed my family. I can say it’s better than sitting doing nothing because I can’t go to bed on an empty stomach.”

On what he does with the R20 000 a year he makes from the tuck-shop: “My child every month is R100 and the two grandchildren depend on me [because] they don’t have their father. Their mother is still young and she is not working and my child doesn’t work. I pay school fees every month and when they go to school they have to have lunch money.”[*NOTE: Lineman received help from other former SAMANCOR workers to start up his tuck-shop and this network continues to assist him*]

On giving people credit at his shop: “They do come ...I give them credit if they can’t afford because they are working on the contract. I give them food to eat so that they could not go to bed on an empty stomach. I give credit to those that I know. When you come for credit I hold one of your items then you’ll get them when you pay.”

“What I have realised as a businessman is that this community loves me and I also love them.”

Amelia Mavuso – unemployed, single young woman heading her household

***Brief biography:** Amelia is twenty-six (26) years old. She was born and grew up in the Northern Free State and moved to Sebokeng when she was eight years old to join her father who got a job at the SAMANCOR plant. After gaining her matric, she could not work due to having to take care of her sick mother and two younger siblings. Her mother passed away in 2000 and her father, after getting sick due to his work at SAMANCOR, was retrenched in 2001. Amelia was then ‘chased away’ by her father and other relatives and went back to the family home in Free State for two years where she did contact work for a clothing company. She returned to Sebokeng in 2003 after her father died and has since lived in the four-roomed house while raising/supporting her two younger siblings with no formal income. She receives one child grant and occasional food support from an uncle.*

On her early schooling in the Free State: “I remember that the Sub-As and Sub- Bs were packed into one room. When Sub-As were being taught, the Sub-Bs used to sleep and when Sub-B’s were taught, the Sub-As would sleep. There were not enough classrooms. Sometimes up to four learners would be sharing one textbook.”

On difference between small Free State community where she grew up and Sebokeng: “In Free State there is lack of resources, there were no libraries and we were travelling long distances, kilometres, to school walking and there was no transport to school. So here we are closer to school even if when school is far it’s better because you walk inside the community,

you pass people, while back there you could walk on a mountain for more than thirty minutes alone without transport.”

On what she remembers about the elections in 1994 as a thirteen year old: “I don’t remember because I was not interested in politics ... we just wanted the ANC to be voted in. I knew that the ANC was for Mandela and that he was going to be our ‘king’.”

On what subjects she liked in school and why she wasn’t able to follow them: “I liked mathematics and physics but it was difficult for me to understand. Maybe it was the teacher who was teaching that subject ... I liked the subject but could not understand them. I wanted to do mechanical engineering ... but after mathematics and science started to be a real problem for me I gave up on them when I was in Standard 6/7. I changed to History, Biology and Home Economics. We were just forced to do subjects that did not link with each other. For instance History and Home Economics, they don’t link.”

On what she does not like about living in Gauteng (province): “In Gauteng life is a competition, everyone is competing. If someone has done something and even though you know that you can’t compete, people still compete and end up in debt. For instance, if you go to school and see others wearing something that you/your parents can’t afford some of the children drop out of school saying others are laughing at them. Some even commit suicide.”

On her thoughts about life and work pre and post 1994: “I think during the apartheid era it was better. Most everyone was working, even if they were getting lower salaries ... if you can work hard you knew what you were going to get. These days there is no job even if you have gone to school. If you need a job you are supposed to buy it. Where can we find the money to buy the job because we don’t work?”

On what happened in her life after she received her matric: “My father was willing to take me to the Vaal Tech but at that same time my mother started to be sick so I had to sit down to take care of her. My father was also sick. There was no one to take care of them so I had to sit down and take care of them. It was difficult because I was also looking after the last born and he

was still young. I had to prepare them for the school. Even when school is out, I had to take and fetch them in Zone 7 and it was a long distance. At the same time I was looking after my parents. I was always busy without time to relax.”

On life/work upon returning to Free State: “It was difficult because at my granny’s place there, everyone had to look after his/her family, their own children. Then I realised that even me, I have to look after my siblings. I started to look for a job. I managed to find some work sewing tracksuits and t-shirts for the company called Callies clothing. I also sewed for shops like Jet and Mr Price. The salary was not that much. It was just to support my siblings so that they could go to bed without an empty stomach. If you would go to work Monday to Friday it would be about R60 something [a day]. If you go on a Saturday or Sunday they would add R10 a day.”

On why she stays in Sebokeng despite not having a job and very little money to support her siblings: “It’s better to stay here so that my siblings can have a place to call their home. If we go to our grandmother’s then ... her children are still staying there and they could chase us away. Life there is tougher than here ... I won’t go back because it will feel like life is going backwards.”

On her future and those of her two siblings: “I want to see myself working, getting a job, for my siblings so that they can forget about being orphans. If I can have enough money to support them I think they can feel like they have a parent. The thing that I enjoy is when I am with my siblings and even if we sleep on an empty stomach if they are happy, I am also happy. They are the ones that are important to me and that I trust most. When I look at them I think to just sit without getting a job is not good. Especially the boy, because he is no longer going to school and it is damaging his mind. He meets with different people and he ends up doing what they are doing for example, he is drinking alcohol because he is not working. It is hard for me to help since I do not have a job. I wish I could get the job so that I can be able to support my siblings. I went to Houtkop [municipal offices] and they told me that the social worker would come but I have been waiting for the social worker for four years. I want my brother to get help to further himself, he has good results for matric and he has the passion to study mechanical engineering. I

wish the last born can get the foster care grant so that she can be able to attend Saturday schools and for myself if can I get a proper job so that we can live better.”

On government and jobs: “Particularly with government workers, there is this favouritism and this thing on who must employ who. If Joseph [interpreter] works for government then you will find that they are all Joseph’s there, which means they just put themselves there. The government must tell us of the available positions and the CVs must be looked at fairly, the way they have been submitted, not by the names. They must be honest with job offerings.”

On present day politics: “I am not interested because even those that I thought were going to help us, Zuma ... they are making things worse each and every day. Maybe as time goes on, changes can happen.”

Happy Jabulani Malindi – unemployed youth

***Brief biography:** Happy is eighteen (18) years old. He was born and has lived in Sebokeng his entire life. Happy has been in and out of school and is presently out of school and unemployed. Both of his parents are presently unemployed, his father having been retrenched from SAMANCOR in 2001 after working there for over twenty years. Happy has been a member of a ‘township’ gang and spends most of his time hanging out with other youth in the streets and at their homes. He lives with his parents and sister in their small, private house.*

On best memory from childhood (when he was five years old in 1994): “The memory that I have and the memory that I love mostly was the memory whereby Mr Mandela was walking towards the stage and so Winnie Mandela took his hand and raised it up and the crowd cheered ... that was the moment that I really enjoyed and loved.”

On hardships growing up and how he dealt with things: “Like my mother was unemployed by that time, my father was working and he was the bread winner. So he even lost his job. So you see ... like when I go out with my friends sometimes I don’t have money. When you come

home sometimes they would tell you that today ... we are eating bread, there is no money for maize meal. If you watch sometimes there is no TV, you have no stoves; you cook with prima stove, the little thing which has too much smoke. You see, just bad memories, bad memories.”

“You know, having parents who love you sometimes gives you an understanding. My parents told me that, look at this, we are black people from the black community we do suffer and we don’t know how ... so, for you to have a nice life is up to you to make it up and go to school and get educated because we can’t give you wealth but we can give you education. So, what I can say is that my parents they said education is the key to success. Don’t stress about things which you never inherit, which you never even made. So that’s how I came to live with the situation.”

On why he has not progressed further: “I never listened to my parents. I never paid attention to my parents. I never took the message to my heart, because what I thought and what I saw was that I go to school and then let’s say I have to go to tertiary education ... who is going to pay at tertiary because my mum...right now I can say my mum she is a bread winner, my father doesn’t work. So I asked myself when I go to tertiary who is going to pay for me? Who is going to do this and this for me? I asked myself too many questions of which whereby I started skipping school. I never went to school until I came to the sense again that no man, my father said this and that, I went again to school, but here I am now, no school and I am not working. I am just an ordinary guy.”

On other kids at school: “You see it hurts a lot to say that you have a lunch box to eat and the other child doesn’t have a lunch box to eat. It even hurts to see that you have shoes to go to school but the other child doesn’t have the shoes. Those were the main problems that we came across, seeing people living with poverty, starvation, they suffered a lot. Okay, sometimes I could cry and say this and that, but what I can say - my parents tried harder to give me that thing that they had. But other kids they never had the chance ... they could go to school in the morning with an empty stomach and leave school in the afternoon still with an empty stomach, with no shoes, with no uniform, with no covered books, with no bags, just a plastic. So those were the things that we came across.”

On social ‘gangs’ and names/attitudes for/of different kinds of youth: “There is this thing maybe, I have a phone, my phone is 1100 and the other one has a phone maybe has an IG phone or has Samsung D600 phone, he wears Cavellas, what can I say, Soviets, the top things that the other kids could never even reach. Then he could walk on the street and brag about it and says *ja* I am the main man, trying to impress ... I am going to say this but I think the cheese boys impress chicks [girls]. By so being cheese boys they are trying to impress chicks. So then we - I am going to use the term but I know the term is not good - we call ourselves niggas. We niggas come across these cheese boys and say in Zulu, we say *kuyasekezwa*, we hustle for each and everything that we want and we are going to get it. But these cheese boys they don’t, they don’t work hard, they don’t hustle for each and everything they have. But we niggas and pantsulas we hustle each and every time to get what we want.”

“You see, when you’re a nigga you are entitled to a gun, you are entitled to women, you are entitled to cars you see. So then in this area mostly we are like that, that’s whereby chicks notice you, that’s whereby chicks notice that this man is a real born hustler, he is very cool. But when you come as a cheese boy we don’t say its cool, we don’t say fancy staff, we just say *haa ke pari* (this is a coward) - so then you are considered un-cool.”

“Usually when someone says hustling, the idea that you are going to get is the idea that okay, it means this person is a thug, it means this person hustles, robs people and immediately you are going to do what? You are going to try to get away from him as much as possible - so that’s how it is.”

On what kinds of work he will never do and why: “Truly speaking I won’t tolerate being a garden boy, I won’t tolerate going out painting houses in suburb places, those kinds of work I won’t do. You know as a person you have your own pride, you have your own sense to think of ... sometimes I think okay, what if I go and work as a domestic worker and usually I am a person who loves chicks. What if I am in the garden and at this house then appeared a fine, good looking chick and I am busy making the garden over. No, I am going to lose my dignity. So that’s what I think. Dignity comes first to me, my dignity comes first.”

On attitudes to work and life in black communities and opportunities: “You see as a black young man and speaking on behalf of the black community, I think right now we as people, we live for today cause whenever we are trying to think for the future we always get disappointed, so that’s how it is. Right now there are no opportunities. There are no opportunities, the opportunities are for the wealthy people.”

On elections/promises and what happens: “You know once a black person goes up, we can vote for a black person and say we want this certain person to be our future President ... he will give us promises, promise this, promise that ... immediately he goes on top he forgets where he comes from. You see he forgets where he comes from and then starts to be Mr Big Shot.”

On role models for the black youth in his community: “What I would say is that the person they look up to is not a politician but just a business person ... just this person who owns too many garages, TK. They look up to him, they want to be like him. Too many people want to be like him ... they would say *ja*, in the near future I will see myself there, I see myself driving my own cars, not a car, you see. I see myself having ... living a nice life, enjoying life, building my mum a house in a suburb place, things like that. Even me I consider that one day I wish to be like him, own my own garages.”

On drugs in the community: “Everyone smokes pills ... I don’t know their names but they are pills. They could usually take a bottle, put weed inside of it and smoke.”

On his thoughts/hopes for the future: “If I still don’t work, if I still don’t go to school and finish my matric, I’ll still be here trying to hustle for each and everything, as I’ve said. You know I have lost hope for the future, that’s why I can’t think about it. I’m almost going to one year sitting down doing nothing, you see. So I’ve lost hope for the future ... totally, totally.”

On how he see service delivery demonstrations in surrounding communities: “I said, it happens. What I saw was not new. I know you could even come next year and you could still find the same thing taking place. The year after next, you can still find it taking place. I don’t think it makes much of a difference, it doesn’t.”

On thoughts about being a black person: ‘When you are black it’s all about you having to live to hustle, you have to stand in a line whenever you want something. Like when white people talk about technology we on the other side we talk about the *detokoloshi* [spirits]. You see, witches, black people are involved in witchcraft, they are involved in crime, they are involved in those things. So to me, there is nothing interesting in being black but I am just taking advantage because I am black and they are going to blame being black for not getting opportunities, they are going to say just because I am black, you see. There is nothing interesting about being black.’

“What I want to say is more of an advice ... like we black people we take ourselves down, we oppress ourselves, we do not put our mind into what we want to do. We always blame the colour of our skin and say just because we are black ... not doing anything. We expect jobs to come to us but we don’t go and look for jobs. We expect opportunities to come to us yet we don’t go and seek for opportunities. So, even the black government on the other side is still not doing nothing for us. I understand why people don’t go and look for jobs, I understand why they just sit and never think about opportunities and never consider their dreams - it is because they know that whenever we go somewhere without money, without wealth, I am nothing, just an ordinary poor person. So what I wanted to say is just that, if you put your mind into something, definitely you are going to make it.”

Kate Masabatha Makhanya (elderly crèche owner/operator)

Brief biography: *Kate is in her early sixties. She was born in Rustenburg, lived in Evaton for twenty-one years (since 1974) with her husband and four children when, in 1995, she moved to Sebokeng. She had previously been a worker at a crèche in Evaton and started her own – consisting of two backyard shacks on a fairly large plot with a private home - upon arrival in Sebokeng. There are presently fifty-six children who attend her crèche (although many of their parents do not/cannot afford to, pay fees). Kate owns/manages the crèche and employs two workers/teachers. She has been married for thirty-seven years and has four grown children. She*

has been running a crèche for 20 years. (NOTE: In late 2008, Kate passed away from natural causes)

On how she felt after the release of Mandela: “I felt relieved and I felt life was changing because we were not obliged to carry our identity documents with us. In my life I thought my life has changed, I am now independent. I just wished for a good life without poverty.”

[NOTE: Kate only achieved a Standard 3 education but all four of her children gained a matric although she could not afford to send them any further for schooling].

On making a living from the crèche: “I just love kids; the income is not that much, the money that we make, we buy food. Then I pay people I work with and then I am just left with little money. Sometimes they [child’s parents] do not pay me well. Many of them don’t pay or do not pay on time. I also work with children who don’t have parents.”

On positive changes in her life since she opened the new crèche in mid-1990s: “I was very independent and working for something that I really love, working with children. My life has dramatically changed. What has changed for me was that I managed to take my children to school up to matric. I can support my kids. Though the money was little, they all went to school, and they never slept with nothing to eat.”

On governance/service delivery and standard of living: “Some promises have not been fulfilled, people go to sleep with empty stomachs, and unemployed people go around begging for food. We now have water though privatised, roads are not fixed ... in the hospital they don’t work, you can go there early in the morning at about 06h00 but without help, no medications, they hardly attend to our concerns.”

On daily routine of crèche: “In the morning, I open the crèche from 07h00, clean and I wait for them to enter, and we have already cooked soft porridge meal for them. At 09h00 they pray and at 10h00 they eat soft porridge. From there the elders write in the other class, the younger ones do not write, they just draw. At 13h00 they eat lunch and from 14h00 I bath them until the parents come.”

On what she wants for herself and her community: “For what can make me happy is because I have been trying but I am failing, if I can be able to build more rooms for the crèche I would be satisfied.”

“More schools, hospitals and clinics since we are running out of them, people here are struggling to get proper care.”

On what she fears/is scared of: “We are not safe, we just only appreciate when the sun comes out and when its dawn.”

Motseki Johannes Ngape – Unemployed educator

Brief biography: Motseki is thirty-eight (38) years old. He was born and grew up in Sebokeng. His father died when he was very young and so he was raised by his general labourer, single mother, alongside his two siblings. He was a COSAS (Congress of South African Students) activist in the 1980s and after gaining his matric went to work at a Johannesburg hotel. He received support from his employers to attend the University in Qwa Qwa where he received a BA Honours in Education and Politics. He taught there for a few years and returned to Sebokeng a few years ago when he fell ill with TB. He says that he has recovered but is unable to get a teaching job.

On how he did at school as a teenager: “Excellent, I never failed at school from, as they called it at that time, from sub-A to Grade 12. I never failed, I did well at school because the principal was a friend to the family so I could not survive to do anything or the other. I had to be strict because we were going to the church, the family was there and the principal was there as the member of the congregation - so I did well at school.”

On how he dealt with the student struggles in the 1980s: “It was very difficult. I mean liberation before education was a slogan by COSAS. However at *Khutlo Tharo*, where I

attended, we changed it. We said people, we can't be liberated if we are not educated in the first place. So what we did was that we changed it to say then, be educated so that you can be liberated because you can't be liberated unless you know something about yourself or about the society that we live in. So we changed it and the students fell for it, they all did well."

On what he expected to happen once political freedom was imminent: "Basically I expected a lot from the system, in fact from the old political scenario, I expected a lot. However, I expected that everything would be like a plate on the table ... however it did not go that well. After I resigned from the hotel it was on the basis that Mandela said everybody should go to school. I resigned from the hotel and I went to the university and unfortunately I did not see what I expected, it was a different story."

On reconciliation and racism: "I have always recalled the question of reconciliation. Reconciliation must be well defined, because reconciliation is not about me meeting you, you meeting me, reconciliation is an emotional exercise. At the very same time it is a psychological exercise, that when I meet you, I meet you as a friend of mine, as a human being at the same time. So the perspective of racism is the question that it is not well defined. The law does not give the real perspective about what is exactly about racism. To be racist does not mean to hate you as white or to hate me as black, no that's not racism. Racism is an emotional content of a human being - you and me have got red blood, we die, we are fallible as human beings. At the very same time you and me have to reconcile emotionally and psychologically. I can marry your daughter and you can marry my daughter - that is how basically we close-up the question of racism. There is no way that racism can be defined in a categoric perspective, there is no way that it can be defined in that. It has to be a psychic matter, that's how you define racism."

On his thoughts about the character of democracy in the post-1994 period: "The scenario that I see now basically is that we don't have democracy in this country, in fact democracy is impossible. The scenario that I see is that I perceive that the system that we have now ... does not correlate with the human needs. The human needs are not met. So basically I cannot conclude personally, as a human being, that we are living in a free country. Even in America,

you go to America, they are practising neo-democracy, you come to South Africa it is neo-democracy, you go anywhere in the world where there is democracy and it is neo democracy.”

On what he thinks of government: “In the first place it is capitalist. It’s capitalist in the sense that you know, the government works in the sense that people earn on behalf of others. Let me make an example. I read a paper, the Daily Sun, where they were talking about social development. The government accrues tax, we pay tax of course, even if you buy chappies [small pieces of chewing gum] you pay a value added tax. At the very same time that money does not go to the government directly, it goes through certain individuals who take decisions. In other words, the government that we have now is capitalist ... it works for people who are already in government ... it is what we call the rewards. If I have been involved in the political system or in the struggle for democracy or in the struggle for a change of the system, that would mean that I have to be rewarded. That’s why in government you find people saying to relatives – nepotism - because they have to be rewarded for what they did in the past system. Therefore it’s a capitalist government.”

On how his experiences confirm his view of government: “Basically I am not working at the moment. I used to work at the college ... and my experience is that the government does not plough back to the people who put it there. In other words, if I can’t work as a graduate with a B.Com tech and so forth, it means that the government has not put enough to the people. So therefore, as I said, it’s a form of government that concludes on the basis of itself, not on the basis of the people - of itself.”

On his experience being overseas – in Belgium – for three months: “When I was there I spoke to Ben Schoeman, he is a friend of mine whom I worked with. I spoke to him to bring atchar [Indian spice popular in South Africa] to Belgium and some pap [cooked mealie-meal]. However I realised one thing that in Europe they don’t sleep, there are a lot of things. When I came back I realised that here in South Africa people sleep - that’s why they call Africa black, it’s the dark continent because people sleep deeply. But in Europe I would go to IT lab at one o’clock in the morning. So people there don’t sleep. The experience there was better, a little bit of racist but yet it was a very excellent experience.”

On what he did when he came back to the community after many years away: “When I came here I was very angry when I saw the environment because in terms of the system, this is a suburb and we are not supposed to be divided ... I started a movement, I spoke to people and said let’s do something about it. I did that but unfortunately there are sometimes back-stabbers and so forth and I had to withdraw. So when I came here I did not see anything fine, even now nothing is fine. So I tried to change it but due to people becoming naïve and envious in the system I decided to withdraw.”

On problems finding employment and problems of nepotism/political connections: “Seeking work is very difficult in South Africa, in fact around here. Because to get employed you must be the member of the ANC. If I am a member of the DA or ID it is very difficult to get a job because of the very same thing that I spoke about earlier, about the rewards, that if I was struggling in 1960s and so forth I must be employed. So getting employment is very difficult. I have applied at the Department of Foreign Affairs and so forth. I have applied a lot but I just can’t get a response. However I got information from a friend of mine who is a counsellor around here. He told me no, be a member of the ANC then you will get a job, I see your CV every time there but you can’t just get employed because you are not a member of the ANC. So that is some form of paying back the people who did what they did at that time.”

“You know it makes me feel very bad because I believe that I can contribute to the society. I mean at that time I won’t be working for the government but I will be working for the people which basically puts the government there, so I will be working for the people. I feel terribly bad if I see someone who is not well and you know he can’t get anything to eat, it terribly hurts me. But that’s how the system puts it. As much as they would do now, the president would be Jacob Zuma or whoever, it’s just a power struggle at the very same time at the expense of the people, that’s a problem, the people. It makes me very sad.”

On his thoughts about the present social fabric of South African society: “It has broken, the fibre has broken. When you go right now you can sleep with a child of fifteen, sixteen years old, because now the system gives more money and less norms and values. Therefore our social fibre

has broken down. We don't have norms and values and principles are not applied any more. That's why at some point in time, you ask yourself why is this lady, this little one dressed like this? In a traditional mode you will never see a woman dressed in a mini skirt, that would be a disgrace in the society. It happens now and that's why it leads to the devaluation of the very same norms and values. They have been devalued because of the system itself. I mean if you look at ETV [television station] in the early hours of Sunday morning you will see things which are not valuable in terms of the human beings. But our kids do watch that and they want to practice it, which brings our norms and values devalued at the very same time.”

On what he thinks of the legal system in the country: “The legal system in the country is very flawed. I cannot kill you and be sentenced for two years and someone who robs a bank be sentenced to ten years. That, according to me, does not auger well with my understanding of the law.”

On what he would like to do in his life: “I want to change the system. In fact, I want to change the world, how people perceive the world. Because what I have seen now is that people have lost the relationship with the creator ... they have lost the relationship . My aim is to put back what God placed at the beginning, that's what I want to do. As a jurist, if I get there, I wish to put the law of the lord which basically is the basis of everything.”

Nicodemus Khayakhole Makhanya (unemployed ‘Bishop’ of indigenous church)

***Brief biography:** Nicodemus is fifty years old. He was born and has lived all his life in the Vaal (first in Evaton and then Sebokeng). He achieved a Standard 5 education and then worked in various manufacturing and service-related jobs until 1995 when he was retrenched. The same year, he started his own church in his backyard – ‘The God-Stone Ethiopian Baptist Church’ – of which he is ‘Bishop’. He remains the ‘Bishop’ of this church. He lives in an RDP house and survives off his wife’s salary as a general worker as well as donations from church members.*

On working conditions in 1980s and early '90s and why he left his first job: “It was bad, sometimes you were even thrown by the brick, meaning you are not rushing. We were easily dismissed and we were forced to work in a speed rate. They wanted us to do exactly what they wanted us to do - if you can't do it then you are dismissed. I left because one of the white man has fallen from the top and we did not get our money as a result.”

On what he thought new government would do: “I thought the government was going to be a national government, everybody to have a decent life whereby each and everyone of us can be free, do what I want to do. That's why I decided to build a church in order to keep children away from the street. I wanted life to be easier for old ages because after drinking, they fight. I wanted to reduce crime rate, stop child abuse and make youth involved in activities (such as choirs) that will help them have a better life. And for the children not to be abused. But, it is very hard because the government is not willing to help me build the church. I thought government will help me build the church and protect sinners from going to hell. However the government is denying that.”

On getting fired from his job in 1995 and feelings: “They knew and noticed that I was active in the strikes, and then they put a trap so that they can fire me. They told me why do I leave the job and go to the toilet and the machine that I was working with rolled over the wire and that was a mistake, and they told me I cannot leave without giving notice to the boss. We had an argument and they called me to a hearing, where we misunderstood and then that's when I resigned. I was hurt, because when we were negotiating about wage increase, we had to strike and by that time they took a video and that's when they saw that I was a leader of those people. NUMSA did not stand for me, I just stand for myself. It did hurt me because I knew that as I stood I did not have power. Even my co-workers were not willing to stand by my side.”

On his starting his own church: “The church has helped me a lot, because after the ill-treatment that I have faced, I could have committed suicide. I named this church the God Stone – it is the stone of God in order to send the message that God is the only person that can give them strength to live. I want to teach people about the hardships that I have been through.”

On the kinds of things he does as a pastor: “Even though people fight, when I come and discipline them, they understand me ... even though I don’t touch them ... that what they do is not right. Some don’t understand because they are drinkers, but after that day they understand what I was saying. Last week there was domestic violence between a man and a woman and the children came to tell me to calm them and on Sunday they were here to humble themselves to God. The fight is over. I just thank the power of God and the strength that he gave me to lead these people.”

On health services in community: “Government has built clinics and schools, even though the staff does not really help the people in terms of approaching the patients. I do visit the hospitals and clinics and I can see that these people are sick but without help. For example, when you get to the hospitals, people die on the chairs because of lack of special attention. They even discharge very sick people. And you can see the patient is very sick but gets no special attention.”

On unemployed paying for rent and services: “Government still is pressuring us on Masakhane. Government is forcing us to pay rents for Masakhane, how can we pay Masakhane if we are not working? I feel like government is creating thugs in our community because it forces people who are not employed to pay rent. People engage in criminal activities not by choice. In my church, I let the criminals come to my church and I teach them about humanity and selflessness.”

On his missing child: “I have two daughters, but the elder one is missing when she was seven years and I have reported her but no one has found her, since 2000 on the 7th March. And I have reported her to the police station but up to now they did nothing.”

On why he thinks it is so difficult to get jobs nowadays: “It is because of privatisation, government sold its firms. Before we had options even though we were not paid well. Government sells off its firms to subcontractors. For instance, SAMANCOR, ISCOR and Cape Gate. As a result, people are retrenched because the company has been owned by someone else

and all over are contractors inside firms. I was thinking my daughters and sons will get the job because they have studied further than us as their parents.”

On what he thinks would change if most people had jobs: “There will be unity. Murder, house breaks and attacks will be eliminated. It is very hard to walk at night because they [thugs] need money, they are hungry, and they hijack cars because they are hungry and when you ask they tell you it is because they are hungry. If people had jobs, crime will be minimised. This is because of poverty.”

Thulo Ezekial Motseki – gravely ill retrenched worker

***Brief biography:** Thulo is forty-four (44) years old. He was born in nearby Evaton and moved to Sebokeng at a young age. His father died when he was ten years old and he and his four siblings survived from his mother’s occasional work. Thulo achieved a Standard 7 education but then went to work in an abattoir to help out the family. In 1986 he got a job at SAMANCOR and supported his entire extended family for the next fifteen years. In the late 1990s he began to get regularly sick as a result of work conditions. His wife left him because he could not father any children due to becoming infertile from his sickness. In 2001 he was retrenched and since then his health has steadily deteriorated to the point where he now is very weak and mostly bed-ridden. Thulo continues to fight for compensation from his former employers. He lives in a private house with relatives.*

On his father’s death and his responsibilities: “My father passed away when we were young and I had to drop out of school to go and look for a job for us to survive ... I was around seventeen or eighteen.” *[he got a job at a local abattoir earning R82 every fortnight]*

On the ANC/Oliver Tambo release rally at FNB stadium in early 1990s: “I recall the atmosphere at FNB, where people were happy and there was hope of change. We thought the release of Oliver Tambo would change our lives for the better. I was happy and hoping ... but I didn’t see any changes [after the 1994 elections].

On early work at SAMANCOR: “There was no training, they showed us where to work, gave us instructions and we relied on our colleagues. I earned R300 a week.”

On the role of the union (NUMSA) in relation to conditions of work: “I never saw NUMSA staff coming to look for the safety of workers, there was no attention from the union, but the subscriptions were being deducted every week. I was not happy but there was no choice. Even if the working conditions were not good, we were telling ourselves that at least we have a job, earn a living wage every week or month to support our families/kids.”

On impact of sickness on his personal life: “I was married but after I became sick from the chemicals at SAMANCOR, my wife decided to leave me. We never had children because chemicals caused damage to my fertile system.”

On any (expected) changes in work conditions/wages after 1994: “I don’t remember any changes. Nothing changed. I was thinking that there will be better job opportunities - any job that would give me a better wage, that would enable me to live like other people and meet my needs and those of the family, such as extending my house. And a better living for all as they promised. But it didn’t happen.”

On work conditions in the factory laboratory where he worked for several years until he was retrenched: “We were preparing, mixing and measuring chemicals and putting them in the containers and waiting for analysers to come. There was no training but we were put next to someone who was already working there for some time so we can learn from him. We were not given any safety measures, they didn’t care about our safety. Nobody was responsible. The management would just let you work whether you are protected or not.”

On initial signs of his sickness: “It was headaches, chest pains and joints. There were so many things, including sexual dysfunction that were on top of these things.”

On what happened after several bouts of epilepsy at work in late 1990s: “They let me go to my own doctor and then instructed the doctor to write a letter that would tell them what my problem was. I was given six months sick leave by my doctor, but under the instructions of SAMANCOR. During the sick leave the illness was better because it was not like the time I was at the company. I was feeling a little better. The management and the union shop stewards, they knew I was sick. But I preferred not to go to management to talk about my illness.” *[He discovered he had epilepsy in 1998]*

On SAMANCOR’s medical procedures for workers: “In SAMANCOR we were checked every month, a check up and X-rays. The doctors were examining our urine. But after the check-up they would not tell us whether we are sick or not, they didn’t tell us what was happening. They would just tell us to go to work, you are okay. We couldn’t talk to a doctor, we couldn’t ask any questions. The doctor would just come and check us, fill the papers and not tell us about our health problems. Then we would go back to work.”

On outside medical visit – at facility of SAMANCOR doctors - once he became quite ill: “They made a brain scan and after that the x-ray was taken. They just told me that I have water on my brain and even though I wanted to see the x-rays, they refused to give them to me. We were not allowed to see any papers. They knew but that was their secret.”

On how illness affected his life at home: “Life was not good at home. Things were very hard to bear. The epilepsy could strike at any time and my mother could not sleep because she was watching me. During the day, my younger siblings were around me. I always had somebody to watch over me.”

On being retrenched in 2001: “They told us that they were closing down a furnace that was no longer going to work and thus they had no choice but to retrench us. They knew that all of us were affected by manganese. No one from NUMSA attended to our grievances. We tried to call them several times and some of them got fed up with us for calling for help.”

On his wife leaving him not long after he first got sick: “It was bad for everyone, the whole family was affected. They tried to convince her to come back, explaining to her the situation I’m in, that I didn’t choose to be like this and it was because of the job. The uncles also tried to convince her to stay, they even went over to her place and talked with her family. But she refused. They were all very supportive and told me it’s not the end of the world. They felt shame for me, that my illness had resulted in my wife and I going apart.”

On how life has been since the retrenchment: “I went to lots of different doctors but no doctor has been able to tell me what is really happening or causing damage to my body.

On surviving after his retrenchment in 2001: *[NOTE: Since he was retrenched, he has not been on any regular medication because, he says, he cannot afford it].* “Since then nothing is right with my body. I am always sick, I am always in bed. My body is painful all day long. We live on my mother’s pension money and my younger brother who is working. I would like it if the government would at least give us some grants every month so we can live like other people. Government should give access to medication, free doctors ... I live in pain and I rely on tablets like Disprin and Grandpa, which can only take away the pain for a short time and the following day it’s back ... I live a painful life.”

On fight of retrenched workers committee for compensation/recognition: “Since 2001 we have fought a lot with SAMANCOR. We went to SAMANCOR where we marched and had pickets with placards where we wrote our queries. They called police to fight with us and to stop us from entering their premises. We even went to the Department of Labour. We tried to seek help at the compensation section, asked them to involve themselves in our struggle, then we confronted Mr Mdladlana as the Minister of Labour. We asked him to intervene in our struggle and he told us to stop fighting with SAMANCOR and to go to the workmen’s compensation section. He said that was the only help that he can offer us ... There has been some justice, but only from the comrades” [in independent social movements].

On what he would say to workers still at SAMANCOR: “I would say to them that they should have themselves checked by doctors on a regular basis. After that they must be given a report

which must be taken to SAMANCOR so that they can diagnose them and then they should demand from SAMANCOR what is belonging to them while they still have the power, so they can start to see the other life outside of SAMANCOR.”

On what he would consider to be some kind of justice for what has happened to him:

“SAMANCOR should compensate us with the money that we have demanded so that we can support our families and children.”.

=====

ANNEXURE ‘A’

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ANNEXURE ‘B’

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS

- Provide a basic introduction to the project – i.e. the main purpose is to ‘hear’ the voices of those in poor communities (as against the elites etc.) on life in South Africa since 1994. We do not want to ‘filter’ these stories but to have them recorded as they are told. We encourage you to tell your own story/history as you want.
- Stress importance of telling your ‘life story’ with main focus being on period since 1994. This can include (but not limited to): personal and family history/experiences; good and bad things/experiences; the politics and government of the new South Africa; issues of

service delivery; standard/quality of living; We want to make this more like a conversation and to hear about what you think is important to know about yourself/family/community.

- State your full name and what you do/where you are located (i.e., a job, unemployed, self-employed, student, home-based etc.).
- Tell us about your life prior to 1994 (if applicable) and also about your community (issues to possibly flag – land, political freedom, socio-economic status/position, basic services, relationship to levels of government/state as well as to private sector)
- What did you feel about what happened in 1994? What were your expectations of change – both individually as well as applied to your community?
- How would you describe what happened/did not happen, during the first five years of the new South Africa – in relation both you're your own/your family's life and existence as well as that of the community you live in?
- What did you/do you think about the changes in government policies and leadership (at different levels) since 1994. Tell us, if applicable, how these have impacted on you and you, your family and community?
- How have things changed/not changed in your life and that of your community? – issues of employment, family/community life, land, services, democracy, standard of living.
- Some personal examples in your life that give content to the above?
- What kind of things would you like to see happening for yourself and your community and how do you think these things will happen? (concrete examples)?
- Who do you think is ultimately responsible for things in our society?
- Overall 'scorecard' of government (at relevant levels) since 1994? Are there particular areas of concern and/or satisfaction?
- Do you think people still have same expectations as they did in 1994? (explain) If they have changed, how so and why?
- Where do you see things headed for yourself, your community and for the country as a whole?
- What do you think is possible – at all levels – i.e. personal, community, government, society.

ANNEXURE ‘C’

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Maandagshoek

Joseph, Moime Madimabe (16-06-2007)
Kgwete, Isaac (15-06-2007)
Kgwete, Joyce (13-06-2007 & 25-02-2008)
Mabaso Community Care Group (12-06-2007)
Madikgakge, Johannes (12-06-2007)
Mamohale, Olesnas (13-06-2007)
Manogo, Petrus (09-06-2007)
Mapori, Kedimetse & Lerato Tebele (09-06-2007)
Matsie, Veronica & Nkele Manyanga (12-06-2007)
Makgoga, Emmanuel (10-06-2009 & 24/25-02-2008)
Mpusi, Flor & Flora Makwa (11-06-2007)
Serage, Lucus & Pinky Komane (10-06-2007)
Siloane, Simon (09-06-2007)
Thebene, Frans (15-06-2009)
Vilakazi, Sonias (11-06-2007)
Vilakazi, Simon (11-06-2007)
Xhetsa, Laurence & Simon Bongo (16-06-2007)

Rammolutsi

Lehlohonolo, Rabase (26-07-2007)
Mahoko, Samuel (25-07-2007 & 02-04-2008)
Makwele, Thabo (29-07-2007)
Mashakale, Gabriel (24-07-2007)
Masike, Malome (23-07-2007 & 03-04-2008)
Mokgadi, Joyce (27-07-2007)
Monokame, January (27-07-2007)
Ngelele, Ouma (25-07-2007)
Ntsala, Mmamodike (26-07-2007 & 02-04-2008)
Nzungu, David (27-07-2007)
Obie, Alinah (28-07-2007)
Phasha, Molefi (24-07-2007)
Sekete, Bramage (29-07-2007)
Tsotlotlo, Mokete (23-07-2007)

Sebokeng

Dyonase, Lineman (13-09-2007)
Maduma, Sara (12-09-2007)
Makhanya, Bafana (14-09-2007)
Makhanya, Kate (08-09-2007)
Makhanya, Nicodemus (08-09-2007)
Malindi, Happy (08-09-2007)
Masemola, Daniel (13-09-2007 & 14-05-2008)
Mavuso, Amelia (13-09-2007 & 14-05-2008)
Mkhize, Sicelo (09-09-2007)
Molefe, Thomas (10-09-2007)
Motseki, Thulo (09-09-2007 & 14-05-2008)
Ngake, Motseki (12-09-2007)
Ngema, Tsebo (10-09-2007)
Nkomo, Maria (10-09-2007)
Ramogale, Priscilla (12-09-2007)
September, Nomvula (09-09-2007)

Published 2008 by S.P. Design
Ground Floor Noswal Hall
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Braamfontein
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