

**KWAZULU-NATAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Interview with Makhosi Khoza**

**conducted by Ruth Lundie on 15 July 1998**

**at the Alan Paton Centre**

**(‘I’ shall indicate the Interviewer and ‘K’ the Interviewee)**

I: This is a conversation with Makhosi Khoza, Deputy Mayor of Pietermaritzburg, at the Alan Paton Centre on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1998. Makhosi has an extremely interesting personal history. She is a ‘Maritzburg person, born in 1969, so she’s still very young, but very soon she got dramatically involved in the events around her. Makhosi you were about fifteen years old when you got involved with trouble through belonging to the Edendale Youth Organisation.

K: Yes, that is true. I got involved in fact when I was thirteen years old, I got involved with student activities and as well as youth activities against apartheid, in the struggle against apartheid. And the reason was simple, I was coming from a family that lived below the poverty line. I mean there were days when we would go without food and that’s what motivated me. And when I was fifteen years old, I then had to - I was forced to become an exile in the home country - I had to come and live in town because there was a lot of violence where I lived and secondly the police were harassing me - it was not clear whether they would kill some of us because some of the youth were killed without - nobody knew who killed them. So to stay in that I was a leader of my youth organisation - which was Edendale Organisation - advised me to go to PACSA to see what they can do in that kind of crisis and it was then that I met Peter Kerchhoff who then organised the Mazel family for me to accommodate me during that period.

I: They lived very centrally didn’t they - in Oxford Street at that time?

K: Yes, yes and it was quite close to where PACSA is located.

I: Yes.

- 1 K: Ja.
- 2 I: And were you able to continue with your schooling then?
- 3 K: I tried - it was very difficult I must say. At times Aaron Mazel had to take me to school and  
4 wait for me whilst I'm in the class because the vigilantes would come to the school to look  
5 for me and on a number of occasions, I remember was forced to take me to school and  
6 sometimes wait for me and make sure that I'm safe before he could leave and sometimes he  
7 was forced to come back and collect me at school.
- 8 I: Was this at Herwood?
- 9 K: No, this was in Sweetwaters when I was doing my Standard Nine in 1986, it was worse at  
10 that time and after I came out of detention - because I was detained at the ? for wearing a  
11 UDF T-shirt at the funeral. I was the Speaker at that funeral - I was speaking on behalf of  
12 the youth and the Transkei forces at that time when they targeted me because I was the  
13 speaker of the youth and two, the UDF was banned in Transkei at that time and I had my  
14 UDF T-shirt on. So they detained me so when I came out of detention...
- 15 I: And you were detained in Umtata were you?
- 16 K: I was detained - what's the name of this place again - in Zongwani - there was a village  
17 called Umzongwani, near Mount Fletcher - that's where I was actually detained and when  
18 I came back from detention I went back to school and the school that I went to was a  
19 predominantly Inkatha school, of course.
- 20 I: Yes, it would be - being near Sweetwaters...
- 21 K: Ja, and I couldn't go back to my former school in Sicgonkwene? Because the school was  
22 closed down at the time because of the youth activities and student activities - demanding  
23 free text books and all that. So that's the kind of thing that happened to me at the time - so  
24 Aaron Mazel played a very important role in motivating me - even under those difficult  
25 circumstances..
- 26 I: ...to pursue your education?
- 27 K: I mean to pursue my education and the whole family - they will help me with my homeworks  
28 - they would - and also I had - when I praise Aaron, I say 'you are - were actually behind me  
29 when I tell them - don't?' Aaron always tell me 'that Makhosi, you want all the ? because

1 you wanted to. The way that you were with that decided to drop off - but you went to school  
2 even under those difficult circumstances - so it was quite a challenge. I went to school, it  
3 was difficult and it was even more difficult - because I remember when I went to write my  
4 exams - my Matric exams. Aaron sat down with me before I went to do my exam to write my  
5 exams, said 'Makhosi, please, just reproduce what the textbook tells you.' I went to my  
6 exams - when I was asked - I remember there was a question where we were supposed to  
7 write an essay on the United Nations and the Second World War and I was very critical in  
8 my writing that and the involvement of Jan Smuts in the First World War and so on - I was  
9 very critical of that, I said 'I do not understand why would somebody get involved in getting  
10 World Peace, when we actually don't have peace at home. I mean I still have - I was still  
11 very much politically excited and I failed history - I got an 'h' which is equal to a zero. I was  
12 more like the person that did not write history.

13 I: Well, it really told a story didn't it? A very important story.

14 K: Yes, and Aaron said to me 'I told you that you reproduce the textbook - don't go there and  
15 write on things because you're gonna fail.' So I failed my history.

16 I: Oh Makhosi.

17 K: Ja.

18 I: Yes, yes, what a reflection on the education system then.

19 K: Mmm, mmm.

20 I: ...yes...

21 K: But even through that I was able to go to Khanya College although I had failed my history  
22 I didn't want to stop my history - in 1988 I went to Khanya College which is a pre-university  
23 college where I did my African history and my African literature. One would expect that I  
24 would then fail at Khanya College because I have got almost a zero in Matric .. But I passed  
25 it.

26 I: Oh exactly...

27 K: Ja, so I passed it but that was only by a college that was ...

28 I: Oh it was a much more enlightened thing - it wasn't government education.

29 K: Yes, absolutely, ja. It wasn't government education so there I could express myself, I could

- 1 express my opinion, I could - you know - I could argue my case as long as ...
- 2 I: In other words - it was an education...
- 3 K: ...I suffered...
- 4 I: ...not an indoctrination...
- 5 K: Absolutely, it was education, not indoctrination - absolutely correct, Ruth.
- 6 I: But you skipped that important part - I mean you were pitch forked into terribly forceful  
7 circumstances at a very early age and it's wonderful the way you've come through - but tell  
8 me about the NGOs and the working with Patti Henderson and the Sarmcol people and so  
9 on and the Unions. Because you were doing this before you went to Khanya College.
- 10 K: Yes, ja...that's all...
- 11 I: ...and you must have been what...
- 12 K: ...in fact that's...,
- 13 I: ... - seventeen then?
- 14 K: Ja, when I was ...
- 15 I: ..something like that...
- 16 K: Ja, when I was at Khanya College, yes I was seventeen.
- 17 I: So at the age of sixteen...
- 18 K: ...yes...
- 19 I: ...you were singing freedom songs in a small village ...
- 20 K: I was - long before that actually - let me tell you what interested me about Patti Henderson  
21 when I met her for the first time - I think I was fourteen years old when I met Patti..
- 22 I: Yes, where did you meet her?
- 23 K: I met her in one of - I think I met her during - it was August 9 celebration...
- 24 I: Oh yes...
- 25 K: ...at the hall and she was singing and I was very much impressed by this woman who was  
26 singing - I knew I was a singer myself, because I used to act plays at the age of seven - I was  
27 a star in my own community - I was this little girl who used to do a lot of singing for my  
28 mother's burial clubs - I used to sing there - I used to do stage plays - and so on...
- 29 I: Yes, of course...

- 1 K: ...at that time - so when I met Pat Henderson and she was singing on stage I thought 'Oh my  
2 God, I think I would love to sing with that woman.' And I was also performing on that day -  
3 I was performing a Zulu dance and some liberation songs - um songs that were pro-Freedom  
4 Charter because we loved Freedom Charter and I still love the Freedom Charter even now -  
5 I still feel that's one of the guiding documents of this freedom that we've got now..
- 6 I: Of course.
- 7 K: So, um when I met Patti then - I loved this woman - and she also loved me - and said 'oh  
8 man, that young girl I can sing with her..' so she approached me and she asked me if I could  
9 visit her and we can sing together and so - Patti and myself sang together - we sang in most  
10 of the funerals - in most of the rallies - we sang in some of the COSATU functions...
- 11 I: Solidarity Forever.
- 12 K: Solidarity Forever, yes, you remember very well - we sang Solidarity Forever we also sang  
13 one of Patti's songs that she wrote - Inkanyamba - the workers' freedom train... um we used  
14 to sing those kinds of songs - we sang at womens' - womens' rallies and - and  
15 commemorations? Of some of our heroes of some of our heroes - some of our functions like  
16 that - we sang there - so...
- 17 I: So you had all this in addition to carrying on with your school work...
- 18 K: Absolutely and I was writing poetry...
- 19 I: ...and you were so young...
- 20 K: ...and I was so young - I started - that's the period when I started writing poetry because I was  
21 feeling very lonely - I was living without my parents - I left home when I was thirteen years  
22 old and I was living with friends because I could not go back home...
- 23 I: For safety's sake?
- 24 K: For safety's sake, yes. I could not live with my parents - I was scared that if I continue living  
25 them soon their house was going to be burnt down and I knew that my father worked hard  
26 to get that house - I mean he was the only person that was working - my mother was not  
27 working and he was an ordinary factory worker. So I was feeling guilty on the other hand  
28 that a) here I am getting involved with these activities that were disapproved by my parents  
29 -..

- 1 I: Is that so - I'm sure..?
- 2 K: ...in that way - yes, they disapproved them because they were saying 'well you can't change  
3 the situation - we've been through it - we try to make ends meet out of it and you can't  
4 change it - who the hell are you to change it?'
- 5 I: Did they try to stop you in your activities?
- 6 K: Of course, they tried to stop me in fact my father's brother at some point tried to surrender  
7 me to the Inkatha at that time..
- 8 I: ...?..
- 9 K: Because he felt that I was - he was saying I must apologise to them - I ran away - I said 'No  
10 ways, a friend of mine who tried to go and apologise, her parents forced her - her name was  
11 Makhosi, by the way, Makhosi Zuma, her parents forced her to go and apologise to them -  
12 she was killed.'
- 13 I: Oh. No, Makhosi....
- 14 K: And she was pregnant at the time...
- 15 I: Oh, my....
- 16 K: They rape her - Xishe Zulu apparently raped her and she fell pregnant and she ran away from  
17 her - we lived together in a place called 'Lusaka' in Mathabisa? And her mother came to  
18 collect her - she took her back to Herwood, and the following day she was dead.
- 19 I: Oh no, Makhosi.
- 20 K: She was meant to go and apologise to them - she was dead. So I didn't want to subject  
21 myself to that kind of thing so I - I run away from my parents and ja - but the poetry kept me  
22 going...
- 23 I: I'm sure...
- 24 K: I wrote some of my poems and Aaron sometimes jokes about them because there was one  
25 poem that I wrote about myself - which was about me being a strong young woman and  
26 giving herself a lot of..
- 27 I: mmm, I didn't know? (They speak at once)..
- 28 K: ...self praises and I think that played a major role in keeping me going...
- 29 I: Of course, of course....because it was creative... it was inspirational ...

- 1 K: Absolutely...
- 2 I: ..because you needed it..
- 3 K: yes...
- 4 I: ..with the forces that were against you...
- 5 K: Mmm, mmm, mmm...
- 6 I: So you went through this turmoil of 'Maritzburg and threat and harassment and all the rest  
7 and then how did you manage to get to Khanya College in Cape Town?
- 8 K: I was involved with SACHED Trust...
- 9 I: Oh yes, yes...
- 10 K: I was involved with SACHED Trust and I was doing - I did a lot of things, Ruth. When I  
11 was involved with SACHED Trust I used to run workshops for the - for children - on non-  
12 racism and non-sexist games - we used to do a lot of that. I used to run workshops on that -  
13 I used to teach them to make toys out of things that they considered as junk...
- 14 I: Yes. rubbish...
- 15 K: I was mainly concerned - with - with creating some instruments out of that - I remember  
16 some - we used to use empty bottles and sometimes we'll use the different water levels in the  
17 bottles to create different sounds. So - we used to - and we used to paint those bottles so that  
18 they look nice and we used to make instruments out of them - we also got Pat from Cape  
19 Town - Pedro - from Cape Town to run workshops for us on - he used to - you know just  
20 pipes - that join pipes - he used those pipes - he used to make nice instruments out of pipes.
- 21 I: And after all that's what marimbo are made of..
- 22 K: Yes, even marimbo - we used to make those instruments - marimba and all that so I used to  
23 run workshops on those kind of things for children, because I was also a kid by the way - so  
24 I used to run workshops for the kids on that - I also used to run literacy classes in  
25 Sweetwaters - for women. I was teaching them how to read and write and at that time I was  
26 doing my Standard Eight - my Standard Nine - I was running workshops for Sweetwaters  
27 women.
- 28 I: It was full of activity - your life...
- 29 K: Yes, my life was full of activity - so I was very much involved with SACHED at that level

- 1 and I was also - once I was involved with SACHED, I used also to correspond with TCC -  
2 the Tyrant Correspondence College for my Matric - before I went to Johannesburg - so I was  
3 quite close with SACHED and as we well know - Khanya College was the project of  
4 SACHED...
- 5 I: Yes, I do know.
- 6 K: So I got to know about Khanya College through SACHED and I applied to Khanya College  
7 and I had interviews and I must tell you they admitted me on the spot - I went for interviews -  
8 they asked me all sort of questions - they couldn't resist telling me that 'you are accepted.'  
9 At the interview.
- 10 I: Wasn't that lovely - it must have given you tremendous...
- 11 K: Absolutely - just to get away from the situation as well...
- 12 I: Of course...
- 13 K: I went - absolutely ...
- 14 I: It's a big change?
- 15 K: Absolutely and to meet different people in Cape Town and also to share - because I had the  
16 talent - but I also needed academic exposure -
- 17 I: Of course...
- 18 K: ...so that my talent could be complete. Complete. Total - so I went there ...
- 19 I: Where did you live?
- 20 K: I lived in Salt River .. In Cape Town - I lived in Salt River with other students...
- 21 I: Yes...well that's interesting ...
- 22 K: ...and at that time ...
- 23 I: Of course..
- 24 K: Oh, yes, for the first time I was living an independent life - because it was just myself and  
25 the students...
- 26 I: ..yes and they all (they speak at once...)
- 27 K: ...and we had to budget ourselves, we had to learn time management - we went with our  
28 studies and all that...so it was quite interesting.
- 29 I: Oh, I think it was ... you were really an undergraduate in English terms...



- 1 K: Yes, I was, I was ...oh yes, I was, yes.
- 2 I: Good. So you were there how long?
- 3 K: I was in Khanya College for one year - after that I went to Community Arts Project in 1989  
4 where I did my community theatre facilitation because I was so much into drama - I loved  
5 drama.
- 6 I: Where was this community arts ?
- 7 K: In Cape Town..
- 8 I: Yes, well it's a good place to be...
- 9 K: So from there I went to Community Arts Project in Cape Town - I took my community  
10 theatre facilitation and I must say that Khanya - CAMP - the Community Arts Project where  
11 I did this theatre facilitation did a lot in terms of counselling me - you know we did all sort  
12 of exercises that were just relaxing my body. That were just making me come to terms with  
13 myself, who I am...
- 14 I: Your psyche...
- 15 K: Only discovering myself -
- 16 I: You were learning yourself..
- 17 K: Absolutely.
- 18 I: Yes.
- 19 K: So I was learning myself and I don't regret not going straight to the university after going to  
20 Khanya College - because my going to Khanya College - did a lot in terms of addressing in  
21 some of my fears - some of my past experiences - because I turned them into plays - I turned  
22 them into projects - with that plays around our own experiences...
- 23 I: It freed you as a person...
- 24 K: Absolutely and there I met Patti Henderson again...
- 25 I: Oh it was ....
- 26 K: It was my teacher now....
- 27 I: Sbe went down there ..
- 28 K: ...at Khanya College - so she was my teacher and we still continued with singing and dancing  
29 and all the things that we did together.

- 1 I: And now tell about the scholarship that got you to America - or the expenses that were paid  
2 for you...
- 3 K: Oh yes, in 1989 then - I - or 1989 I left Cape Town, I came back to - to 'Maritzburg - when  
4 I came back to 'Maritzburg Harry Gwala said 'Wow, I think it would be very nice to have  
5 you in 'Maritzburg now - you are not going back to Cape Town.' And he persuaded me not  
6 to go back to Cape Town - because I was supposed to go to UWC - to the University.
- 7 I: Oh really, yes?
- 8 K: And he said to me he thinks that I would be able to start an office - an ANC office - open an  
9 ANC office - so we had to organise furniture - at first we operated in Harry Gwala's place -  
10 we were legalising the ANC - in South Africa. Because at that time - you remember I was...
- 11 I: ...You mean there was ...
- 12 K: ...I remember it was - talked - it was not ...
- 13 I: It was not (They speak at once)
- 14 K: ...it was not unbanned at yet...
- 15 I: ... not unbanned as yet..2nd of February had still to come...
- 16 K: Yes. So it was at that time that I went to Lusaka first - I went to Lusaka to a conference - to  
17 Zambia - to a conference which was talking about legalising the ANC Womens' League  
18 inside the country - we were beginning to strategise about how are we going to work with the  
19 structures that existed at the time when that organisation of women, the UDF structures -  
20 because the ANC was banned - so it was in exile. So we wanted the smooth transition...
- 21 I: But information must have been coming through - that liberation was not far ahead...
- 22 K: Absolutely. Yes which is why we had to have that conference - so after that conference I  
23 think a lot of exposure. I met some women - Lange Shortbay? And a lot of woman like that -  
24 they were very impressed with me because I was only twenty at that time...
- 25 I: You were very young...
- 26 K: ..they were saying - hey they 'phoned me one day when I was in the ANC office - they said  
27 'Listen there is this ? in America on women versus violence - they need somebody from  
28 South Africa - we think it would be a wonderful idea if you can be - if you can stand for  
29 South Africa - represent South Africa there in America.

- 1 I: Wonderful Makhosi.
- 2 K: And I said 'But who am I?' I mean I'm just this ....'
- 3 I: Well, you're a woman who's been subjected to violence...
- 4 K: Yes and they said 'You know - in your talk in Zambia - and when you addressed the OAU,  
5 the Organisation of African Unity...
- 6 I: Oh did you?
- 7 K: Yes, when I was in Zambia - they said 'When you addressed them we felt that Jesus - we  
8 want the world to know that even though there is so much violence in 'Maritzburg even  
9 though our youth is subjected to such a lot of violence, we still have ...
- 10 I: ...the spirit?
- 11 K: ...the youth that has the spirit to go on - that are able to articulate the issues that affect  
12 women.'
- 13 I: Of course.
- 14 K: So I said 'Well let me grab this opportunity.'
- 15 I: Of course.
- 16 K: I went there - I was representing South Africa.
- 17 I: Was it very exciting?
- 18 K: ..I was free from ...
- 19 I: You flew from what, Johannesburg?
- 20 K: Very, very exciting - but let me tell you the embarrassing story - I flew from here to - to  
21 Durban, from Durban I took British Airways to Johannesburg, from Johannesburg I went to  
22 London - then from London I had to take a flight that was taking me to New York, when I  
23 got to New York I never flown for such a long distance in my life. When the flight landed  
24 I felt something bitter in my throat - and I was feeling weak - and I started throwing up - just  
25 when I landed in new York.
- 26 I: Dear...
- 27 K: I was so embarrassed - now I was dirty and the hostess tried to help me - but I was choking -  
28 I got out and there were these people with this nice blanket welcoming me to America...
- 29 I: Oh no, Makhosi

- 1 K: ... and I was feeling so embarrassed.
- 2 I: It was sheer nervous excitement...
- 3 K: It was absolutely - I mean I was excited - I was excited - oh my God - I had a lot of friends -  
4 I lost a lot of friends from violence - but I was saying 'God I am lucky - I am even learning  
5 to another place now and people are appreciating what I did - you know.' Although we did  
6 not have our liberation - in the true sense of the word - but I was beginning to feel liberated.
- 7 I: Of course, of course.
- 8 K: Anyway, I went to America - it was sponsored by the - the organisation which is a women's  
9 organisation for peace and freedom - that's the organisation that sponsored my trip and...
- 10 I: And did you speak in New York or at ...?
- 11 K: I went to about twelve states in America... I went to New York, I went to Washington DC,  
12 I went to Richmond Virginia, I went to Philadelphia - I went to New Jersey - I went to  
13 Portland, Virginia - I went to a lot of states.
- 14 I: Did you go by yourself - or did you have a companion?
- 15 K: No, what is interesting is that they would simply give me a ticket - they would put me in the  
16 train - I would be on my - on my own in the train - and I would be - somebody will collect  
17 me at the station...
- 18 I: Yes..postcards saying.. (they speak at once...)
- 19 K: They had postcards, yes - so in a way I was on my own - most of the time...and I remember  
20 I met one Italian girl in the train and we became friends although we did not understand each  
21 other - she had another accent - I had another accent - hut we tried to communicate - but, ja...
- 22 I: Oh, that was lovely...
- 23 K: ... and sometimes we would have to use gestures a lot to communicate, ja, so I was on my  
24 own - I enjoyed that experience - I also won some awards in America at that time - in 1990...
- 25 I: Did you?
- 26 K: Yes, I was on television... where people were saying Jesus - we never seen this - a twenty  
27 year old telling us this stories and a twenty year old being able to articulate - I mean I knew  
28 very big concerts at the time - you know like I was telling them about the system of  
29 patriarchy and how this violence which is happening within a system of patriarchy is

- 1           subjecting women to sexual abuse. Because a lot of women during that time - a woman  
2           would not just be killed - they would be raped - all sort of things would be done to you before  
3           you are killed and that had something with our - patriarchal system... so they were very much  
4           impressed by that - I was appearing on national television there...
- 5    I:       How wonderful...
- 6    K:       ...talking about ? and I was given an award
- 7    I:       ...Makhosi - I had no idea...
- 8    K:       ...and I was given an award as an Hon - in Baltimore I was given an Honorary Citizenship  
9           of Baltimore...
- 10   I:       Oh, how lovely...
- 11   K:       ...and I was given another award in recognition of my contribution to the struggle against  
12       apartheid...
- 13   I:       ...bless you...
- 14   K:       ...so it was quite exciting...
- 15   I:       ...it was very exciting indeed..
- 16   K:       ...very exciting, yes...
- 17   I:       And very formative too...
- 18   K:       Yes...
- 19   I:       Because you were telling these people about Herwood and Dambuza way ...
- 20   K:       Absolutely...
- 21   I:       ...which they couldn't imagine - I don't think they ...
- 22   K:       Absolutely....
- 23   I:       Absolutely! So - after your speaking tour - back home - that was when you decided to do  
24       your A-levels was it?
- 25   K:       Yes, I came back in 1990 - from America - but things did not go right...
- 26   I:       Oh...
- 27   K:       Because I became - I think all these experiences...
- 28   I:       Yes of course...
- 29   K:       ...taught me a lot about democratic freedoms and nobody - no matter how ? you are in

- 1 politics - it intimidates me - so it was at the time when I had the fight with Baba Gwala...
- 2 I: Ja, I`m sure, I`m sure...
- 3 K: I had a big fight with him...
- 4 I: Yes, no, he also thought he knew it all...
- 5 K: Yes, he thought he knew it all and I used to tell him what I thought and he didn`t want to be  
6 challenged by this young girl. so I ended up becoming - the relations between myself and  
7 himself became very bad and at the same time I was a threat even to the security forces  
8 because I was like the right hand person of Gwala and we were so close. So in fact it was  
9 a threat even between - to them - because our - they knew that I was giving him the right  
10 advices - they knew that some of the things that he said - if I disagree I will tell him - so they  
11 also played a very important role to strain our relationship. Maybe you will remember that  
12 they distributed a pamphlet in 1990 which was saying a community leader - ? with my  
13 photograph and Harry Gwala saying `I am saying Harry Gwala is sexually harassing women.`
- 14 I: That`s right - I remember that very clearly.
- 15 K: And that was a big fight - they distributed that - ? trying to assassinate my character - because  
16 Harry Gwala was very popular at the time. They distributed that in Dambuza, in the streets  
17 of Dambuza, and the centre of town - in Freedom Square...
- 18 I: Oh goodness, Makhosi...
- 19 K: ... and they were trying to destroy me - I had tough times and at that time - I didn`t know who  
20 was going to kill me - it was either the security forces - because already when I was living  
21 with Ann and Aaron I was receiving letters - sometimes I would receive a letter with the  
22 blood stains on it telling me that `You will never get married - you are such a terrible woman  
23 - no man would want to marry this monster - you are too cunning - what have you..?` I used  
24 to get those threatening letters a lot. I survived another assassination when I was living with  
25 Ann and Aaron..
- 26 I: Really?
- 27 K: ...yes...
- 28 I: When you were in that little room at the bottom of the house...
- 29 K: ...yes at the back - they broke in - fortunately my instinct told me at that time - Ann and

- 1 Aaron were away in Cape Town and they were going to come back...
- 2 I: ..and you were keeping an eye on the house?
- 3 K: ...yes, I was keeping an eye on the house - so they probably they knew that I was alone - I -
- 4 it was about - around six o'clock in the evening - I just felt something - it just told me that
- 5 'no - leave, leave - leave - go - go somewhere.' I had only one rand in my pocket - when I
- 6 got to the bus stop I just took a taxi - I went to Edendale to sleep by my friend in Edendale -
- 7 and that day when I came back the following day - fortunately Aaron was in the house...when
- 8 I went to my room - I noticed that somebody broke in - my home - but that person must have
- 9 had the key - they opened - because they had locked it again - but there was this chain - you
- 10 know this thing that locks the door? They broke it in the other door and just to prove that
- 11 it was the security forces- they stole my diaries - they stole my documents ...
- 12 I: Oh Makhosi...
- 13 K: and they stole my paintings as well - just to destroy me...
- 14 I: ...yes, just out of sheer malice...
- 15 K: ...and some shoes - they stole those kinds of things but they didn't steal my radio - all those
- 16 valuable things...
- 17 I: No, they weren't thieves...
- 18 K: ...stove - but they stole all my documents...
- 19 I: Yes, of course...
- 20 K: And Aaron says he did hear Rosa (was the name of the dog) - barking in the middle of the
- 21 night and Rosa soon kept quite quiet and Aaron says he remembers that - he knew that it
- 22 must have been a White person - because Rosa would not have - I mean thieves don't have
- 23 the technique of drawing...
- 24 I: Of calming a barking dog...
- 25 K: ...yes, calming, yes...
- 26 I: ...but a White Police Officer certainly would...
- 27 K: Yes, ja so at that time - so luckily what happened to me - I had applied for a scholarship - I
- 28 saw something in the Weekly Mail ... which was advertising the scholarship of the United
- 29 Nations to study in Zimbabwe. My goodness, I was just taking a chance, I applied...

- 1 I: You got it?
- 2 K: During the midst of all that - one day I was sitting in Unit Three - there was Biwe Mkhize  
3 coming there - running - saying I've been 'phoned by people from the United Nations - they  
4 are saying - he came to me - I was ...
- 5 I: Biwe Mkhize, really...
- 6 K: Biwe Mkhize - you know him?
- 7 I: Yes I do...
- 8 K: It's not working? He came to me he said I've been phoned by the people from Durban and  
9 they are saying that they are phoning on behalf of the United Nations - you have for the  
10 scholarship and they are saying that the bus is leaving at one o'clock - it was ten o'clock in  
11 the morning...
- 12 I: No, Makhosi...
- 13 K: Your bus is leaving at one o'clock in Durban - I said 'Oh my God, what must I do?' And  
14 because I don't waste any time - I tried to pack there and then - running to Aaron's house -  
15 trying to get whatever I could get and I tried to negotiate with ? on that 'no no, let me catch  
16 the bus in 'Maritzburg - because I'm in 'Maritzburg - and off I went - how, just like that...
- 17 I: How marvellous!
- 18 K: I got the scholarship - I didn't even get the letter - I got it by telephone call and it saved my  
19 life because I was gonna die...
- 20 I: Of course it did - but you see you had the courage to do - and get on with it...
- 21 K: Absolutely - I just - I didn't even knew that they would accept me - fortunately they simply  
22 did...
- 23 I: So you went by bus all the way to Harare...
- 24 K: So I went - no, I went to Johannesburg where we got the briefing - a flight - a chartered flight  
25 was hired for us to take us to Zimbabwe.
- 26 I: How many?
- 27 K: We were about - how many of us - I think we are about fifty..
- 28 I: Oh a lot?
- 29 K: Ja, we were about fifty - from all over...



- 1 I: South Africa?
- 2 K: South Africa and Southern African - from Swaziland too - so fifty of us altogether - so we  
3 were about - I think I was - we were three from Natal - two were from Durban, I was the only  
4 person from Maritzburg...
- 5 I: Oh, good for you.
- 6 K: ...so I was quite lucky...
- 7 I: Of course and ?
- 8 K: ...and ja, off we went to Harare - from Johannesburg we took a flight to Johannes - to Harare  
9 - ja...
- 10 I: And once there?
- 11 K: Once there we went to Bulawayo where I studied for my A-levels - yes I enjoyed it and I fell  
12 pregnant. I came back for holidays - I had a boyfriend here and I fell pregnant during that  
13 time...
- 14 I: Oh my, yes?
- 15 K: But still that did not stop me...
- 16 I: I'm sure not...
- 17 K: I was kicked out of the residence because in Zimbabwe you are not allowed to stay in the  
18 residence if you are..
- 19 I: If you are pregnant?
- 20 K: If you are pregnant - so I went to rent a room somewhere in the township so I had to travel  
21 every day ...
- 22 I: Oh my...
- 23 K: ...these taxis in Zimbabwe...
- 24 I: Yes?
- 25 K: And unfortunately I had the kidney stones...
- 26 I: There was a complication?
- 27 K: Yes, I had kidney stones and in Zimbabwe they did not have the technology or expertise to  
28 look after me - so I had to come back - I had a very - I had serious complications with my  
29 pregnancy so I had to come back here to be reviewed here.

- 1 I: What year was that?
- 2 K: That did not - it was 1991....
- 3 I: I remember bumping into you in the street...
- 4 K: Yes, in 1991...I came back I then finished - I went to - to - I went to have my kidneys  
5 checked and I was admitted - I was in hospital most of the time during my pregnancy - hut  
6 I still studied - I still went on - I left - well immediately - I delivered on my own - on the 21<sup>st</sup>  
7 of December, January - off I went - back to Zimbabwe to finish my A-levels.
- 8 I: Good for you.
- 9 K: And I left Zama when she was only one month old ...
- 10 I: Wow!
- 11 K: ...with my mother - it wasn't an easy feeling...
- 12 I: Of course...
- 13 K: ...but I knew that in the long term she will benefit...
- 14 I: Well, yes, she would benefit and if you didn't have ..
- 15 K: ...my parents also...
- 16 I: If you hadn't got on then - you wouldn't have got on with it.
- 17 K: Absolutely - so in 1991 and in 1992 I went back - I got Zama on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1991,  
18 on January I went back to Zimbabwe and I came back in July - and when I came back in July,  
19 I then went to work for the Natal Museum, as the food research officer.
- 20 I: That's right...
- 21 K: On the project called 'Collecting the anti-apartheid resistance mass in Natal'?
- 22 I: Well I'm sure - was that when that lovely exhibition was put up in the Museum?
- 23 K: Yes, yes I collected all those things that you saw ...
- 24 I: That was a wonderful exhibition...
- 25 K: yes, ja -..
- 26 I: I remember ...
- 27 K: ?? (they speak at once) - Duminy, yes, yes...
- 28 I: And from there you went to the Centre for Adult Education...
- 29 K: From there - I came then - I was gonna proceed...

- 1 I: And there was ...
- 2 K: ...with some ? study law in Zimbabwe but I soon discovered that if I do law in Zimbabwe I  
3 won't be able to practice here...
- 4 I: That's the difficulty you see -
- 5 K: So I came here...
- 6 I: ...Roman Dutch Law is ? here ..
- 7 K: Roman Dutch Law and English Law in Zimbabwe - so I had to come back here and  
8 fortunately I then started - I then went to - I worked for the - for - for - in 1992 - from July  
9 until about January 1993, I worked for the Natal Museum, then in 1993, I enrolled, I studied  
10 here - did my degree here - at this University, the University of Natal.
- 11 I: And it took you three years ...the customary three years?
- 12 K: Yes, they took me three years - but you must remember what I did then - when I was doing  
13 my degree - I was doing my degree full time - I was also working full time as the Coordinator  
14 of the Community Arts Project - because I had to live - I had to support my family - I had to  
15 support my baby. Although the father of the baby - of course he was supporting the baby -  
16 but I know - I mean as a mother you want to do something for your baby and I also needed  
17 some few things for me during my studies so I had to work. So during that three years I was  
18 working - I was working firstly in 1993, I was working for the Community Arts Project as  
19 the Coordinator of the Community Project - Arts Project - then 1994, I started working for  
20 the Centre for Adult Education...
- 21 I: And that was an illuminating experience..
- 22 K: ...teaching Blacks? yes...
- 23 I: ...because of everyone who was coming and to help with illiteracy and so on and so forth...
- 24 K: Absolutely, yes...
- 25 I: Yes, and found your way into computers...
- 26 K: I found my way into computers - yes, yes - I went to computers - I like that story...
- 27 I: I like that story very much - I like the whole story very much...
- 28 K: Yes...
- 29 I: We've got ten more minutes - what shall we spend it on?

- 1 K: Ja, so anyway I then did that - I taught at Centre of Adult Education - a Certificate in Adult  
2 Education - I also ran workshops for an organisational development on all sort of things -  
3 adult learning and all those kinds of things - I ran workshops as an evaluator? with the local  
4 NGOs - I've been working very closely with local NGOs... I ...
- 5 I: Tell me the names of them - because we've got a lot of their material here at the Paton  
6 Centre...
- 7 K: Yes, I worked very closely with the Built Environment Support Group there...
- 8 I: Yes, BSG..
- 9 K: I worked very closely with - with all the - most of the organisations that are based at  
10 Tembaletu - even Tembaletu itself - the Community Arts Project - ? centre...
- 11 I: Yes WEED?
- 12 K: Yes, I worked with a number of them and I worked with - with most of the -I worked with  
13 PACSA, with Peter Kerchhoff. I worked with AFRA - I also worked with AFRA as a  
14 translator - I was doing some translations for them - ja, um, I worked with quite a number  
15 of NGOs - some of them I can't remember right now - but I worked with quite a number of  
16 NGOs in 'Maritzburg and that is why this face is so familiar with all those NGOs.
- 17 I: This is so important - because it's the people who were concerned with all these NGOs who  
18 were going to mastermind the future of South Africa.
- 19 K: Absolutely.
- 20 I: ...because they know the structure from below and from the struggle times...
- 21 K: ja, but I can tell you something - Ruth - right now that my being Deputy Mayor has actually -  
22 and that - with the kind of background that I have of all these NGOs - I can tell you that I  
23 fought for NGOs like Centre for Adult Education, to get some money to pursue the other  
24 basic education - Tembaletu - they got some money as well...
- 25 I: Good...
- 26 K: We had about seven hundred and fifty thousand in the RDP funding just for training, ? see  
27 all those NGOs they benefitted from that because you have somebody that understands the  
28 role of NGOs.
- 29 I: Of course and you ? I agree with you...(they speak at once)..

- 1 K: Yes, I've been ...
- 2 I: I mean you ...
- 3 K: ...and I know the government cannot do everything...
- 4 I: Of course they can't...
- 5 K: The government will only become effective with the help of the NGOs ...
- 6 I: And your experience is invaluable...
- 7 K: Absolutely...
- 8 I: Now in the five minutes left, what I'd like you to tell me - because it's very important - your  
9 position in the TLC, your interest in Local Government - where you are going to do your  
10 Masters degree and so on - obviously your heart is very much into that world - how have you  
11 found that? Is it very demanding? There must be quite fun times sometimes - but there must  
12 be a great deal of hard work. Tell me a bit about your life in the TLC...
- 13 K: Ruth let me tell you - things have been so dramatic for me...
- 14 I: Really?
- 15 K: When I first became the Councillor I was approached - I was seven months pregnant..
- 16 I: Oh, I ? yes...
- 17 K: They said to me you are going to...
- 18 I: Yes, I remember...
- 19 K: ...my husband was actually away - he was in Boston? doing a course - okay I first 'phoned  
20 him I said 'People are approaching me - they want me to become a Councillor - what must  
21 I do?' He said 'Oh, well but you're pregnant - think about it - do you think you gonna cope?'  
22 I said 'Well. I think I'm going to.' Then I become the Councillor - the next thing I was  
23 elected to be like Deputy Mayor.
- 24 I: Yes exactly..
- 25 K: I mean I was the Councillor for the first time - I didn't even know what I am I going to - what  
26 I was getting in to...
- 27 I: But you see you have this invaluable quality - you are articulate ...
- 28 K: So...
- 29 I: ...and you can speak for them you see - and this they know and treasure - quite right..

- 1 K: ...and you know when something that surprised me is that even men were saying 'we want  
2 her as the Deputy Mayor..'
- 3 I: Yes, well...
- 4 K: And other Councillors that were there during the nominating first - they were saying 'but she  
5 has no experience,' They said 'No, we know she's gonna master - she's gonna get there.'  
6 And I tell you - I got in - I became a Councillor in July 1996 and I became a Deputy Mayor -  
7 on - in July as well - 1996..
- 8 I: Goodness me. yes...
- 9 K: And in - on November - on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November - my ? I was - I was seven months pregnant  
10 so two months later I got my baby.. In September I got my baby - by the 18<sup>th</sup> of September -  
11 I had beautiful labour...
- 12 I: ...and ? was a boy?
- 13 K: And I was working until the last day - and look how healthy he is - I was working until the  
14 15<sup>th</sup> of September - I got him on the 18<sup>th</sup> - I went back to work on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September...
- 15 I: Goodness me - yes...
- 16 K: And he's a healthy boy...
- 17 I: Absolutely
- 18 K: - so I had wonderful times - I - my labour was the best - I didn't have any ? anyway in - then  
19 on the 12<sup>th</sup> - on the 20<sup>th</sup> of - of November there came - or before that - there was a formation  
20 of Kwanaloga - the KwaZulu Natal Local Government Association - well I was elected into  
21 the Executive of KwaZulu Natal Local Government Association.
- 22 I: Excellent.
- 23 K: On the 20<sup>th</sup> of November of 1996, I was getting scared - I was saying oh my God what am  
24 I getting myself into? In the province - nine provinces - they are supposed to elect two Reps  
25 to the South African Local Government Association - to sit in the Executive of the South  
26 African Local Government Association - and guess what happened - on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November  
27 1996, I was elected as the Natal Representative into SALGA - South African Local  
28 Government Association.
- 29 I: Isn't that excellent?

- 1 K: So I am the Executive member of the South African Local Government Association - but I  
2 must tell you I was not sure at that time - because I got ambitious - I am going to manage -  
3 I became always with myself - I was saying - ' no, no - what is happening with me - I've only  
4 been in Local Government for six months - for only four months but already I'm holding  
5 hundreds of positions - I haven't even find my feet as the Deputy Mayor - I was scared - then  
6 I was saying - oh, oh, am I getting myself into trouble now? But, I tell you Ruth, I told  
7 myself that I'm going to learn - and Local Government is the closest sphere to government -  
8 closest sphere to people and I told myself that as long as I can work and change - a difference  
9 to that poor man on the street...
- 10 I: Of course...
- 11 K: That poor old man on the street -
- 12 I: ...this is it - this is that ...
- 13 K: that poor child...
- 14 I: on the street...
- 15 K: That is playing in the mud - I will be very happy and indeed this is the only TLC that has  
16 allocated money for pre-school training..
- 17 I: Really?
- 18 K: We allocated seven hundred and fifty thousand - we gave all the pre-schools from  
19 disadvantaged communities from greater Enthabeni - they received - um educational  
20 equipment of - it's worth about ten thousand each and training of all those teachers - so that's  
21 what interests me about Local Government - I've done so much in the Local Government and  
22 I think I am pursuing that career..
- 23 I: Absolutely..
- 24 K: That's where ...
- 25 I: ... your heart is...
- 26 K: That's where my heart is, because I can see delivery - I can see the change that we are  
27 making...
- 28 I: And you see.. You're very. ....
- 29 K: ..the roads that we've built as Local Government...

- 1 I: ...what you want to do...
- 2 K: ...ja, the roads that we've made - but the houses - that we have built as Local Government -  
3 all that makes me feel that - I have fulfilled what I fought for during the eighties.
- 4 I: And let me tell you something - oh, forty years ago when I went to teach in the Eastern Cape  
5 I said to one of my friends - 'I don't ask my friends to be rich - but I do ask for them to be  
6 famous.' And you know - who that friend was?
- 7 K: Ja, uh uh?
- 8 I: Desmond Tutu...
- 9 K: Really?
- 10 I: So you see - then my friends this is happening to you...
- 11 K: Absolutely - I didn't know ... I was glad that I was ( they speak at once)... assisted with the  
12 ?
- 13 I: You were in that kind of ? I've been ? with you. I'm going to stop now because I think it's  
14 time...
- 15 K: Yes, thank you.
- 16
- 17 (The tape is switched off there is nothing more on this side).
- 18
- 19 (There is nothing on the second side).