

CoJ Senior! Citizens Write

Jeff Nyoka (Editor)

An anthology of short stories
written by senior citizens,
through a digital literacy
programme by the City of
Johannesburg Libraries

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE LIBRARIES OF THE CITY OF
JOHANNESBURG AND THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG



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Hoopoe Press

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Foreword

*Ms Nobuntu Mpendulo
Director for City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services*

As part of digital literacy programmes, in 2018 the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services (CoJ LIS) introduced a Senior Citizens Computer Skills and Creative Writing program that resulted in over ‘twenty (20) stories typed by the participants after they learned computer skills. The digital transformation strategy for City of Johannesburg libraries emphasizes the importance of providing interactive services and developing smart citizens who can participate in the digital economy.

CoJ LIS responds to the (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) 2022 Manifesto on Public Libraries’ Mission, which states that public libraries have the responsibility for initiating, supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes to build reading and writing skills, and facilitating the development of media and information literacy and *digital literacy skills* for all people at all ages, in the spirit of equipping an informed, democratic society.

This digital literacy programme was an initiative of a senior librarian Ms Edith Khuzwayo from Murray Park Library, who had been working closely with a local community of Senior citizens, and she wanted to introduce them to basic computer skills. The LIS eLearning Unit offered to bring a Mobile eLearning Classroom to the library, which consisted of laptops delivered and assembled in the library every Wednesday for a computer skills class conducted by CoJ Library eLearning manager. Once the participants had gained basic typing skills, they were encouraged to write stories about their personal lives as a part of the programme. This proved to be a therapeutic exercise where they wrote stories on various

themes such as their love life, arriving in Johannesburg, surviving apartheid, and social issues

We are extremely proud of these senior citizens for participating in the programme and sharing their most personal stories for the world to know. Most of the writers in this anthology, are females over the age of 55, but there are writers whose stories had to be added because they were part of the program, and their stories were unique and very touching.

We are honoured to have entered into this publishing collaboration with the University of Johannesburg. It is a blessing for both the participants whose stories will be read worldwide and for CoJ Libraries, who are intentional about serving the marginalized and neglected members of society.

These bite-sized short stories are easy to read, but will also give hope, and teach someone about survival, and life. Hopefully they will be accessed by all, in both print and eBook format.

Acknowledgments

CoJ LIS would like to thank all librarians involved in editing, translating, and coordinating this project, particularly Ms. Edith Khuzwayo and all the Murray Park Library staff, Ms. Gwyneth Perry, Senzo Nkwanyana, Tebello Sengoara, and Elearning manager Mr. Jeff Nyoka. A special thanks to Mr Wikus Van Zyl and the entire University of Johannesburg team for the collaboration and for coordinating the publishing project.

The Journey of a Purposeful Life

by Sibongile Ellen Malinga

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to thank the Almighty, my creator, who destined my life I before was formed in my mother's womb. To my parents, family and friends who will always be humble, to my mentors and role models, and to the authors of books. These people have inspired me in all the years of my life. To all of them, please keep on doing the good work because without your books and libraries even generations to come are doomed for failure.

To my local library staff, Edith Khuzwayo and to my project manager, who came up with this initiative of allowing us to write our stories I say thank you, may God richly bless you. Yes, it has been my dream to write about my journey in life, my achievements, blessings and failures and to stand even when I was faced with challenges. They normally say that life is not a bed of roses, but God is always there to give you strength.

Thanks to the people who have inspired me over all the years and who never gave up on me, you have really shaped my life. As they say, it takes a village to raise a child and also, no man is an island. To my youth, always remember you are the master of your destiny and captain of your own ship. Always remember to cherish your visions and your dreams because they are the children of your soul and also the blueprints of your achievements.

When faced with challenges, always remember they are your stepping-stones towards your dream. As a person, have hope, because it conquers all. I always remember my parents' words and

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how they related life to us as their children. They will always be my mentors.

End

The Journey of a Purposeful Life

My name is Sibongile. I was born in a very small country, into a big family. My parents were blessed with ten children, six boys, and three girls. I am the eldest and I was named Sibongile, which symbolises that they were thankful to God for having a daughter. I am the sixth child. They had to give me a second name, as in those days white people couldn't pronounce our first names. As a parent, you were forced into giving two names, so I normally say it's a slave name. Today it's a rainbow nation and we are all one. There is no longer an issue with second names.

My parents were uneducated, and our grandparents were working as farm labourers. One thing about them is that they were dedicated Christians which means we were brought up with Christian values. Their faith was like that of Abraham who believed, when God made a promise, that he was going to be a father of nations. He knew that even if he was 90 years, he would keep his promise. He knew that He was a God who doesn't lie. My parents also knew that no matter whether they were uneducated, their dreams of having graduates would be fulfilled.

My father worked in the mines, so we were left with my mom to run the household. Life was difficult, especially attending school, as firstly it was very far, and we had to cross a big river. Imagine in summer, during rainy seasons, crossing that river. We had no shoes to wear but hey, we never complained. It didn't matter to us. Those things didn't mean anything in our minds. Our dream and desire were to fulfil our parent's wishes to go to school and acquire an education. One thing about that school was that it was a Catholic school and was sponsored by the church, so we used to get lunch three times a week. On the days we didn't bother about the food we would eat in the morning and eat when we reached home.

We carried on with our hardships of life. Two of my brothers dropped out of school before completing their primary education. But two of my younger brothers matriculated and it was an achievement for my parents. I completed my primary school education and moved to stay with my aunt. Well, this was another

challenge. Because of lack of funds, I dropped out of school, and, as young as I was, I had to go and look for a job.

I returned home and I had to find employment so that I could assist my parents. Wow! My first job was as a cook. I was working for a company where my salary was R70.00 a month, in those years when money had a big value. I worked for two years and later got married and I had to move to my in-laws. I was married for three years but infidelity was the cause of the marriage not being sustained, by then I had to figure out where to from that failed, so-called marriage. I had support from my family who all agreed that I had the right to make my own choices and they were going to support whatever decision I wanted to take. I was happy as I got their blessings.

My next move was to move to Johannesburg to look for greener pastures. It was going to be my first time in a foreign strange city. I was given an address of a lady who was working as a domestic servant in Bedfordview. When arriving, there was another issue, which was the “Dom-pass” laws. It wasn’t easy to move around and look for a job, but that never stopped me from looking to find my purpose in life. I decided to move to Soweto. Again, it was with strange people, but what kept me going was my faith that one day God would change my situation. My family assisted me to find my first job as a domestic servant and yes, my first salary was R40.00 (\$2.50) a month. I worked there for a year and within that period my landlady got me a job where she was working. It was in a retail company and a head office. I was going to be a cleaner. Yes, I knew that my God liveth! He had brought me to this place for a reason and I had to use the opportunity given so that I might be employed as a cleaner but be ready for the better position God had for me. The reception area was one of the departments which I was supposed to clean. I had developed a very good relationship with the receptionist. She saw that I was interested in learning the switchboard, so she taught me. The company discovered that I was able to work for the switchboard and I was offered the position, but on three-month probation. I had to work hard to prove myself. I

got the job and they offered to send me for training with everything paid for. Wow! That was my turning point from being a cleaner to a receptionist! I knew that my God had a purpose for my life and my duty was to find my dream and drive. Always remember in life, that the greatest tragedy is not death but is living your life without a purpose.

That promotion was my first achievement, and it meant the world to me. I used every opportunity given to me and I thank God for every achievement within that time He gave me. It was an eye-opener.

In January 2002 the company was liquidated this was a challenge for me because I had bought a house the previous year, trusting in my God and believing that He was going to make a way for it. Wow, for a while I was confused and wondered what my next move should be from there.

Within that period a miracle happened. One of my former bosses, who was working for another retail company, HiFi Corporation, called in and I answered that call. I explained to him the situation and that there was a possibility of the company closing. Right away, he offered me a job with more money, the only difference being that I had to decide if I was prepared to work weekends and public holidays. They say beggars can't be choosers, so I took the post as a receptionist. In February 2002 I started with my company, and it was a new journey but hey, it was exciting and also fulfilling at the same time. Within the same year, I lost my middle brother. It was a big setback. As a family, we had some challenges as my mother didn't take it well, so she needed our support during this period. In 2005 my mom passed on. That was the worst moment of my life. There is no pain that is worse than losing a mom. But there was another challenge, as my father had gone blind through losing his partner and a son. We all had to support our father emotionally and I had to especially, as the eldest daughter. This was a painful time for him as he was missing his wife so much. My dad was left with my nephews and a sister-in-law. Life had to move on for all of us, still with the pain of losing her. At work, I had set a goal for

myself, that within a year I needed to move to another position. We had a lot of opportunities within the company and so I moved to work as a cashier. It was just doing the basics because I didn't like working with money, especially in that branch, which was the busiest within the company. What I enjoyed about that branch was that we met a good deal of highly respected people who used to come and buy electronics.

I had the opportunity to move again, to another department, in sales. It was a bit difficult at the beginning, especially dealing with customers. We needed to know the products, so I had to receive training in all the products I was selling. This was also a learning process. We had a new branch in the West Rand that was opening. I moved to that branch and once again, to a new environment with new people. I had to learn many things and I never gave up; despite the challenges I was faced with.

In sales, there was more money, but as a salesperson, you needed to work hard to make a budget and reach your targets. In 2009 my father passed on from a stroke. Once again, we had to come together as siblings, to support each other, for the sake of family values. In 2010 my sister-in-law passed on. Hey, this was a huge challenge, with her children left alone and still young. Once again, as the eldest daughter, I had to discern and figure out what was to happen to my parent's household. We only trusted God to lead us and give us direction.

The children were left alone so our baby brother had to travel home most of the time to check on them. It was a bit of a challenge, but we had to stand as a family. In my journey as a salesperson, God was always there to guide me and bless and I will always be thankful. I had wonderful achievements and blessings at the same time. Yes, there were challenges sometimes, but I had people who were there for me spiritually and emotionally and who were also mentors. In that same year, in November 2010, God wonderfully blessed me. I won a ticket to fly to Dubai and watch Formula One. We stayed in Abu Dhabi. It was the dream of a lifetime. In my life, I had never dreamt of being on an airline traveling a long distance.

The Journey of a Purposeful Life

It was unbelievable. I had to send photos to the travel agent and within two weeks I got my itinerary and my ticket. I now know that doesn't happen to man but with God, it does happen. We left around eleven at night and reached our destination around nine in the morning. While applying for the visas I was warned that in a country of Arabs I needed to buy myself a scarf and was told how I was supposed to dress and carry myself, as it was a country with very strict cultural differences. Everything was catered for, and they were waiting for us because we were twenty-two in total. LG was a sponsor of Formula One.

There was a bus which was to transport us to our first place, which was in Abu Dhabi. This was the first and last country that was clean in the manner that we observed from the Arabian people. While we were at the border post one of the men who was traveling with us forgot his bag in the bathroom, when we were about to leave for the hotel. He remembered the bag and rushed to fetch it. Wow! It was still there, unlike in our country, South Africa, where you can't leave anything behind. We had our first meal at a stunning venue, then had to go for photos and visited a lot of places before going to our seven-star hotel, which to people like me, was like heaven on earth. We visited a lot of places but of all the places I have ever been to, their mall was the best place ever, with its twenty-four-story building. But since I have been to that extremely tall building, I am scared to be in a high building because it feels like it will catch fire. I met young South Africans who were there for greener pastures, and I was very inspired by those young people. Their behaviour was amazing. Some were from Cape Town; one was from Soweto, and I admired them. The day going to watch and meet people from Formula One came, and we had to travel back to Dubai where the stadium was. What I learned during this time was the way females dress in that country, that women are respected and that you can only find pubs in designated areas, unlike here in South Africa where things are done anyhow.

It was a holiday of a lifetime, and I will always cherish it for the rest of my life. If I could turn things back and be young again, I

would study and be the best person ever, so that I could travel and accomplish everything. The people who make millions like Bill Gates started when they were young. When Bill Gates was thirteen, he started a small business about computer software, but that dream had to grow within him. Today he is a multi-billionaire! He was an ordinary child, born in a poor family like me, but he never gave up on his dream. Today children have access to everything, like phones with all the apps, and most of them spend more on those apps than on their studies. They are forgetting that those things can't create any work for them. Education must come first. Remember, even university graduates can't get employment with those pieces of paper. A lot is required for one to get employment. The story of the women who fought against pass-laws is that they had a strong drive. Always remember that in those days life was far different than it is today. They didn't have the forms of communication that there are today but through their faith, they achieved their dream. The majority of them were not educated but through hopes and desires, they changed the country. Today all generations to come have benefited from their struggle. So, from those blessings, I have learnt a lot and I have cherished everything in my life.

Yes, I have failed at certain times, but I learnt to strive for better things and also to rise above those situations, because nobody would know my dreams and desires, except me. The pain I have endured was really a stepping-stone for today. When I look back at my life, without God I wouldn't have made it this far, as a person's prayer always gives strength and hope. It's like the lady in the bible who was bleeding for a part of her life. She never gave up and her faith and hope kept her going. She trusted that one day if she could only touch Jesus's garment, she would be healed.

In May 2016 I was retrenched, and I had so many questions. "Lord, another challenge again?" But I had to pray for His guidance and also figure out where to go from home. I knew that he would not take me this far and leave me stranded. Yes, He always has better plans for his children. At that moment I didn't know where to

start and how to go about it. My merciful God had already planned for my wishes and dreams to be brought into reality. I joined an organization that was an NGO. There I had to be a volunteer and I didn't get paid, but I never knew that a year later my dream would be a reality. Wow, I am thankful that today I am sitting here writing my story with everything catered for. So, in the journey of life as we pass through pleasure and pain, sometimes there will be sunshine and rain, there will be loss and gain but we learn to smile again. What I can say, is in the race of life it's always by faith and grace. As a person, whatever challenges you face, always remember you are unique among the billions of people on earth. There is no one like you, regardless of where you come from.

You were created in God's image. I will always admire women like Wendy Luhabe, Winnie Mandela, Hillary Clinton, and all the ladies who have made strides. They stood even during their trying times. They say good things come to those who wait. Hillary was seven years old when she dreamed of studying politics and she never gave up in all the years of her life.

During all the years while attending school she was passionate about her dream of being a politician. Her parents supported her in all the decisions she took, and she knew she was holding the keys to making her dream come true. Today, as I am only now writing about this journey of my life, I want to paint a picture of everything I have gone through, the challenges, my failures, and my successes. Those points have driven me to not let any distraction stop me.

Always remember, in day-to-day life people are not the same. If you succeed you will win friends and during that time you will see who your true friends are. But you, as an individual, have the power of spoken words. They can mould and shape your life; they are the expression of your thoughts. Always stay positive. Yes, people will criticize but because you have got that drive you will always conquer anything that comes your way. Have self-esteem in all that you are doing. The greatest tool for me, as a woman who is computer illiterate, is the library. The library has helped me a great deal and reading books has given me a lot of drive. What I have

learnt is that there is no age limit to doing what you always dreamt to do. There is no age required to achieve whatever you desire.

The late president Nelson Mandela didn't have a chance to write the books while he was in jail for twenty-seven years, but during his few years out of jail, he made sure that he fulfilled his dream of writing. It wouldn't have been any use for him to take his talent to the grave. The generations wouldn't have learnt all about the hardship he endured in all the years.

To such people I am thankful and to children like Nkosi Johnson. As young as he was and as sick as he was, he made a point of informing the generations to come about the dreadful disease of our time, to me, he will remain a hero and children can learn a lot from him.

Ukukhula kwami Emakhaya

by Zadidi Augusta Mbangeni (Zulu)

Sanibonani nonke zihlobo. Igama lami ngingu Zadidi, ngizalelwe e Eastern Cape.

Ngithanda ukunioxela ngendlela engakhula ngayo engiyithandayo. Mina ngikhule ngihlala nogogo, Umsebenzi wami bengelusa izinkomo, izimvu nezimbuzi. Bengivuka ekuseni ngiyokha amanzi emthonjeni, ngibuye ngiwabilise ngenzele ugogo itiye aphuze. Ngemuva kwaloko ngithelele amanzi inkonyana nami gigeze.

Uma ngiqedile ukugqoka, ngangiithatha ithunga, intambo yokubopha imilenze yenkomo uma ngiyisenga noswazi lokushaya amankonyana.

Uma ngiqeda ukusenga eyokugcina inkomo, ngiyaziklezisa, phela ukukleza ukusengela ubisi emlonyeni bahlobo. Ugogo ubelusefa ubisi alwethe emaguleni ukwenza amasi. Ngemuva kwaloko ngangikhaphela Izinkomo ukuya emadlelwenii, amankonyana wona asala ngasekhaya. Uma ngiqeda ukudla, ngangifaka iunyumfomu ngiye esikolweni.

Isikhathi engikhule kuso besimnandi kakhulu, ngokuhlonipha. Besihlonipha wonke umuntu omdala Uma uthunywa ngumuntu omdala ubhamba uye lapho ekuthuma khona ungafuni nkokhelo. Uma ningamantombazana, nime nabafana kwenzeke kuqhamuke umuntu omdala, besibaleka singafuni nje nokuthi abonisise ukuthi singabobani. Esikolweni thina besishaywa ngoswazi ayikho ingane yesikolo ebilwa nothisha.

Bekukhona inhlonipho kumfundi nothisha. Uma siphumile isikolo, bengiya ngqo ekhaya. Lapho ke bengenza wonke umsebenzi wasendlini ukusiza ugogo. Ngiye emthonjeni ukuyokha amanzi ngiwabeke ekhishini. Ugogo yenake apheke ukudla. Mina bengithanda ukudla amasi.

Ngemuva kwaloko, ngiya emadlelweni ukuyoqoqa imfuyo yakithi. Laphaya emadlelweni sihlangani sibaningi, singamantombazana kanye nabafana. Besenza imidlalo esiyithathela ebhayibhelini ,onje ngowokuzalwa kweNKOSI UJESU KRESTU nowokubethelwa kwayo INKOSI UJESU KRESTU esiphambanweni.

Ngamanye amalanga, abafana bebesifundisa umdlalo wezinduku ukuthi ushaya kanjani na nokuthi uyivika kanjani na induku.

Bekuba mnandi ukudlala abafana, besihloniphana, bekungekho umfana ohwaphiliza intombazana engenasivumelwano nayo. Uma sibuyela emakhaya, besihlanganisa imihlambi yonke siyiqhube kanye sonke.

Uma sifika ngasemakhaya,yilowo nalowo uthatha umhlambi wakubo ayowuvalela. Ngomgqibelo sivuka ekuseni singamantombazana siyotheza izinkuni. Umfana wakwamakhelwane ubengisiza ukukhipha nezakithi izinkomo intlazane. Uma ngibuya ekuthezeni, ngiqhubeka nokwenza umsebenzi wasendlini umfana angisize ngokusenga.

Besiphilisana kamnandi nabomakhelwane bethu nomphakathi nje wonke.

Growing up in the Eastern Cape

by Zadidi Augusta Mbangeni (English Translation)

Hello everyone. My name is Zadidi, I was born in the Eastern Cape.

I would like to share stories about my upbringing, which I loved. I grew up living with my grandmother. My chores were to herd the cows, sheep, and goats. I would wake up early in the morning to go fetch water from the fountain, then boil it using fire to make my grandmother tea, pour some for the calf to drink, and use some to bath. After getting dressed I would take a sling, a rope to tie the cow's legs and a rod to chase away the calves to milk without disturbances.

Once I am done with milking the cows with my grandmother, we preserved the milk by storing it in containers to make sour milk (Amasi), I would milk some straight to my mouth as a way of rewarding myself for the hard work. After all that, I would herd the cows to pastures where I would leave them to graze while the calves remained at home. On my return home I would eat Amasi and after finishing I would put on my uniform and go to school.

During our times it was delightful because of the respect that prevailed, as we respected adults. When an elder would send you somewhere you would go without expecting any reward or compensation. If it happens that you're seen by an elder with a boy, we used to run quickly to hide so that our faces could not be seen because if it was, it only meant trouble. At school, we were beaten with sticks. No schoolchild would fight with the teacher. There was respect amongst students and teachers. When school was out, I would go straight home. Then, I did all the housework to help my grandmother. I would again go to the fountain to fetch

water and store it in the kitchen and my grandmother would cook for us. I loved eating sour milk (Amasi).

After eating, I would go to the veld to collect our livestock. In the veld, we would meet many other children both girls and boys. We used to play games that we took from the Bible stories, such as the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. On other days the boys would teach us interesting games played by boys such as fighting with sticks, how we hit the other opponent and also how we can protect ourselves from being beaten.

It used to be nice playing with the boys because girls were treated with care and love, no boy would touch any girl without an agreement. When it was time to go back home, we would gather all the livestock and herd them all together, when we get closer to home, each of us takes theirs to its kraal.

On Saturdays, we - as all the girls would wake up to go collect firewood. The boy from next door used to help with the cows when I came back from fetching the firewood, and I would continue with the household chores while the boy next door would milk the cows.

We used to have a respectful and loving community because we used to assist each other with what we could; it was indeed a great place to grow up and live in.

My Short Story

by Caroline Nkhato

My story starts when we were living around Soweto in 1982, at my aunt's place. The house was too small for all of us to stay in. It only had three rooms and there were eleven of us inside the house.

We didn't have enough space for all of us to live comfortably, so my aunt's husband decided to build a shack outside the house for my parents to live in. The only thing was that we were not comfortable because we used to fight each other in the same house. The problem was that we used to share the room, especial when it was night-time. There were some of us sleeping in the kitchen and others in the dining room. It was too hard for us because we didn't have privacy until, thanks be to God, when my father bought a house at Drieziek, around Orange farm.

Then life became easier for my family. My father was working at the PDC factory and my mother at Eljen mission at the flats. We were a happy family; everything was just fine and we started to enjoy life for years and years here at Orange farm.

The only thing here, is that some places are corrupt. We have groups who call themselves wrongten. They are a group of young boys who kill people here where we stay at Drieziek. Once we found a young boy dead, with some of his private parts removed. The heart and eyes were not there, and they only covered his body with stones.

Those wrongten boys would cover their faces with a red cloth and sometimes a black cloth and both of these colours have a meaning. Red is for blood and black for death. It means they are there to kill people, drink their blood and remove their private parts. So, we involve the police in these situations. They arrested them but they were soon out again. We are all scared, especially our children,

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because they call themselves cheese boys. They say that they think that they are better than anyone else.

They even say that they won't rest until they finish us off, so it is a nightmare for all of us. We need help to solve this problem.

The Little Girl

by Elisa (Surname)

There is a suburb called Killarney, a very beautiful and expensive suburb in Johannesburg, South Africa. At a time, in the 1950s, you were respected if you worked in this suburb. This was because everything was posh and when you were traveling to town you would travel on a double decker bus. In those days the busses would use electric wires and don't forget it was during the apartheid. There were buses for black and white people, at that time people knew who they were.

They used to respect their authorities and the Madam and the Masters knew who they were but they used to give their girls good service, treating them like queens. People were coming from the rural areas. At this time the young beautiful Jospin was working for an MRS LEVENCES. Even her uniform had to be very smart before she could enter their premises.

During those days black people were treated like tools to work. They were not allowed to have anybody in the room. But because they were human, they talked about it and found the seclusion and were doing it. So, girls from rural areas enjoyed hiding their lovers.

IN 1957 Jospin became pregnant and worked during the pregnancy until it was the 11th of November 1957. On that day, when she woke up in the morning, she took her bath and put on her beautiful uniform. Out she went to the passage until she reached the lift and pressed the button for the lift and the lift arrived. She entered and pressed for the first floor. There the lift went until the first floor. She then stepped out and walked through the passage, and as she was about to get to the flat, she took out the keys to open the door.

The door opened into the kitchen. Jospin quickly boiled the kettle and set the tray to take the tea to her Master and Madam. As

she went, she was very tired as it was her month to deliver. She knocked at the door and the madam said, "Come in Josephine "and she opened up and said, "Good morning, Madam" and the Madam said" Hallo Josephine." She put the tea on the small, clean and beautiful table and left the bedroom.

She went back to the kitchen to start her day duty, and as she was busy with her work, she felt that she was not feeling very well.

But she was scared that if she told the Madam she would be fired and so she kept working even while she was feeling sick. But things where not going well, because it was actually labour pains that she was feeling. Jospin was crying, and she was not doing her job properly, so the Madam asked her, "What is wrong Josephina, you don't seem to be okay today?" The Madam used to like Jospin very much because she was a hard worker.

So, Jospin told her everything, and the Madam quickly took her to Hillbrow General Hospital, and they took her in to examine her.

The doctor told the Madam that Jospin was about to deliver the baby and the Madam thanked them and left the Hospital. Josephina was admitted, and while the Madam was driving home, she was thinking what she should do about her house and who she should hire. She thought of taking someone else on and she did that.

At about 20 clock Josephina had a beautiful little girl! She was so happy, and she stayed in the hospital for 1 week. On the 7th day she was discharged in the morning while the doctor was doing the rounds. That was the start of a hard, painfully hard life. The mother was distressed thinking what was going to happen to her little girl. Then she went to the big city of Johannesburg.

The baby was now left with family, and everybody was wondering who was going to look after her. They held a meeting so that they could come up with a solution, but nobody took the responsibility because everybody had something to do. Josephina's family told her they were not going to look after that child, and they were very angry with Josephina for having a baby with a stranger. So, they went on with their duties. In the mornings they used to prepare

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themselves to go to the field and the forest for animals. It was a routine to take the older people outside for fresh air, and they also took the baby with. It was not good for the baby because the sun was either too hot or it was raining. It was difficult for the elderly to move the baby around with them. Life was very hard for the baby and the elderly people. But with the grace of God, she grew up and was now 3 years old.

The females came together and asked what they should do with the child. So, they decided to write a letter to Josephina to say she should come and take the child and they did that. Josephina received the letter and life was not easy for her either. As you know, in those days people used to work for 2 pounds which is now 4 Rand. She was desperate, having sleepless nights. So, she thought of her sister, also somewhere in Polokwane, and she wrote a letter to her and the husband asking them to please take the child. The sister refused because the husband did not agree so it was a very hard life for the child. Now they started treating her very badly. They used to wake her in the morning and send her into the forest to look after the sheep. Before that she would go to the river to fetch some water, and after that she would take the sheep to the forest for the whole day, without food in her stomach and when she came back, she was not allowed to mix with anybody, and she would be left sitting in the corner and they didn't even give her food. She was eating the forest fruit and sometimes the other people would give food and she lived like that until she became very sick.

The sickness was called Tlhakgama (I don't know it in English) and she went on like that without anybody to take her to the doctor. One day, somebody saw her in the forest and saw that she was very sick. She couldn't even move, and a man took her far away to some other people, so that they could help her. They took the child to the Roman clinic, and they helped her and after that they took the child to another family and they accepted her, and life became sweet for the child, and she was healed.

Her new family also wrote a letter to the mother to send money for food, because Josephina didn't send any money. So, these people started to be unhappy with this because her mother don't want to take her responsibilities, and now they also started to treat the child badly by not giving food and some other things. It was now up to the child. In this family, there were a lot of men and women staying there because a traditional healer was the owner of the house.

So, they took advantage by sleeping with this little girl and not giving her food, because nobody cared to give her food, and she lived like that until somebody wrote a letter to Josephina about the life her daughter was living. Josephina received the letter, but she did not know what to do, and she decide to write another letter to her sister again and the woman said, "Yes you can bring her", because she had explained everything to her, and felt very sorry for the child. Some Samaritan took the child (her name was Elizabeth) to Mokopane Prust in Limpopo. On her arrival the husband of the sister was very angry because he said he was not going to look after some other man's child, while the father was enjoying life in the big city. The sister begged him, but he still didn't agree. But the child was already there, her aunt did not know what to do and the little girl sat in the corner until the evening, and they all went to sleep. In the morning they woke up and the auntie took the girl to school.

The little girl was very happy, and she told the other children that she was going to be a school child. It was late in the afternoon and time to fetch in the flock.

The auntie went off and bought the school uniform and when she came back, she called the girl to come and fit on the uniform. She fitted it on and jumped up and down with happiness. She could not wait to see herself going to school.

The next day she woke up and took the flocks to the forest quickly and went down to the river to take a quick bath. She ran to put on her uniform and quickly ran to school, very excited.

Day one went by, and it was a moment she would never forget. After the school day was finished everybody went home, and during the day everyone was playing with her, and she was enjoying it and forgetting her past life. A life of serving big men with her body, just so that she could eat food. Now this was a time she felt like a child. On the street she was singing and dancing until she got home. When she entered the gate there was a tree and her aunt and the uncle were sitting under it.

Very excited, she began to greet them and her aunt greeted her back and she waited for the uncle to greet her but he looked at the girl and looked at the aunt and asked “Where is this child going and where is she going to stay?”, and the aunt replied by saying, “ She is just a child. Leave her, we will be staying with her.” The uncle was very angry and said “I am not going to support another man’s child. Please, I don’t want to see her in my house.” Shame, the girl did not understand, and she slowly approached the house.

The uncle stood up and said “Voetsek, get out of my house you bastard child!”, and he went into the house and took her belongings and put them out on the street. “Go to your mother and father!” The little girl was in trouble, not knowing where to go. She was hungry. The uncle even went to the king to tell him about the matter, and even the king agreed that this child was a bastard and should not be allowed to stay in the village or play with other children.

“She will make them dirty because she doesn’t have a father”, said the king. So, it was very hard for her. Her aunt wrote a letter to the girl’s mother, to tell her about what her husband had said and even what the villagers were saying. In those days if you wrote it would take a month before it reached the person. Josephina received the letter and read it, but there was nothing she could do, and she didn’t even reply to that letter. We don’t know what was going on in her mind.

Back in the village where Elizabeth was, it was hard going. So, she went to the forest to stay there. She stayed there but she didn’t stop going to school. You might ask yourself who was feeding her.

Nobody was, she was living under the trees and eating the fruit of the veld.

When it was night, she got ready to visit the village while people were sleeping and scratched out the pots so that she could eat. Luckily in those days they had plenty. And she would eat and take some for tomorrow.

In the morning she would run to the river and take a bath, and come back, put on her uniform and go to school. At school there was no problem. She would play with the other children and the teacher would teach her. But after school she would go back to the forest and start looking for the fruit in the forest. Sometimes other children from the village would steal food and come to give it to her and play with her. If the adults found out they would beat them and warn them of the danger they are putting themselves into. Elizabeth used to go to another old lady who used to stay alone in a small hut, and this lady used to have insects, *dinta* in Sepedi.

She would help to kill them because they were biting her, and it was itching and it was not easy for her to scratch herself. Elizabeth would scratch her and help to kill them, and the old lady was very happy and thanked her and gave her food, so she could eat without washing her hands because this old lady used to stay alone, she also enjoyed having company and telling stories, and that time was a happy moment between them.

Elizabeth was not even allowed to visit the old lady. If the villagers ever found her there, she would be given a big hiding so she would sneak back to the forest. That was her life for 4 years. After 4 years her mother wrote a letter and said she was going to come and fetch the girl, and everybody felt relief, because they were thinking this child was going to be a bad influence on their children. So, the mother sent someone to fetch Elizabeth, and the aunt sent the other children to tell her, and when they told her it was like a big day, like Christmas! She jumped up and down because they told her she was going to ride a train and she was going to see her mother. And they told her she could come to the village to prepare for the journey.

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She took her suitcase, packed her things and headed off to the village. It was in the afternoon and the sun was going down. Everybody was busy, even the auntie and the uncle were busy. Very nervously she entered and start greeting them and she sat in the corner. The auntie greeted her back and told her that somebody was coming to fetch her. The girl did not say a thing because she was scared of the uncle, and he was quiet. The time came to sleep, and they told her to sleep with the other children and gave her food to eat, after that she went to sleep.

Early in the morning she was the first to wake up and was ready because she didn't have a lot to pack in her suitcase. She heard the footsteps and the man saying *kokokoko* and she knew that was the man, but she waited until they called her. The uncle said, "Come in" and they gave him a chair and greeted him.

In those days there was no tea, but they made food and were very happy to see him, because it was a long time since they had seen him. The man was very handsome and well-built, and they respected him because he was coming from the big city, Johannesburg.

He took a deep breath and started saying,

"I am here to fetch Josephina's child. She has sent me to come and fetch her." "That is a good thing, because I don't know why she brought her to us" said the uncle, "I am very angry, I don't want a bastard in my house.

Tell her what she did is not acceptable, and even the king and the villagers were complaining about what was happening. Tell her I am not happy at all."

He also warned his wife not to mix herself with these kinds of people. Woo, he was furious! As he was talking, he stood up and shouted the girls name very loudly.

They used to call her Elisa and the little girl answered, " Papa "and came quickly. She thought she was in trouble and ran quickly to them and stopped a little further away. The uncle looked at her and

rose and said, "You girl, you must not think of coming back, you bastard." And said "Gentleman, please take her away from this village. Goodbye." and he left the place and went to his flocks, and called everybody to take the flocks to the field.

The aunt took a deep breath and start talking, and she said," You will have a good journey." And the man also thanked her and stood up and called the little girl to start the journey, and he took a step and off they went.

The man was easy to the girl. He kept saying, "we are late, hurry up", and the child ran behind him as they were heading to the bus stop. The bus came, and they were going to Pietersburg. Off they went walking the streets of the town to the station.

It was already 6, o clock, the train was already there, and everybody was entering. Shame, the child was very happy to go to Johannesburg to see her mother.

For the whole night they were in the train. In the morning they arrived in Johannesburg and the mother was waiting for her.

At this time the child did not know her, but the mother knew her, and was very surprised to see her so big. She thought of the letters she used to receive, and she was ashamed of herself.

But she tried to make herself strong and the moment she saw her daughter she called her "Elisa".

Impilo Yokuhlukumezwa Emshadweni

by Elizabeth Khamanga Zulu (Zulu)

Ukuhlukumezwa emshadweni Ubaba ubuya ebusuku, wena uhlezi ekhaya uyapheka awuyi komakhelwane. Ubheke ikhaya nabantwana, ubasa esikolweni ubalande futhi ubaphe ukudla ubagqokise, upholishe izicathulo zabo, ubageze ubalalise.

Afike ubaba ebusuku akuvuse ulele afune ukudla, akubangele umsindo alwe nawe akushaye. Ebusuku akuxoshe ngaphandle ushiye abantwana bakho. Athi nihambe niye kubangane bakhe nifike khona nibingelele bakujabulele.

Aqale athi masihambe uma usakhuluma, aphumele ngaphandle ashaye ihutha yemoto ngaphandle... Uphume akuthathe niye ekhaya; afike akushiye bese abuyele lapho nivela khona. Uzobuya ekuseni ageze esebenzini. Uma nikhuluma nabantu, athi thula wena angakuhloniphi. Ungahlala iminyaka engu45 engashintshi sahlukaniswa umudali. Bengizilungisela yena yena ngokuthula; waze walunga kwaba nokuthula ekhaya.

A Life of Marital Abuse

by Elizabeth Khamanga Zulu (English Translation)

In an abusive marriage, husband comes home at night, you stay home and cook, and you don't go to the neighbours. You look after the home and the children. You take them to school, pick them up from school, feed them, dress them, polish their shoes, bath them and put them to bed.

Husband comes in the middle of the night and wakes you up looking for food, makes you angry and fights with you and hits you. At night he chases you out and you leave your children.

He takes you to go to his friends and when you get there, and greet them, they welcome you and you enjoy company.

He then starts telling you that you are leaving. While you are still having conversation, he leaves and when he is outside, he gets into the car and starts blowing the car horn. He gets home, drops you and returns to the same place you had visited.

He will come back in the morning and bath for work. When you talk to people, he will tell you to shut up and he doesn't respect you.

You can live 45 years without being separated, only by God. I was dealing with him in peace; until he was fine and there was peace at home

Ukulimala kwami isingesanzi

by Funani Mpeyi (Xhosa)

04 January 2009 ndandise hokini nosbali silungisa icango ndathi ndisarha iplaki kwanento esukumayo apha kum esiswini ndabaleka ndaya edlini kusbali kuba ndadingaphandle ndagenaphakathi ndafika ndamxelela uba kunento esukumayo wathi ndihlale phantsi esofeni ndathi mandihlala phatsi ndeva ihamba lento isehla ngomlenze lo wase right ihamba kabuhlu ingathi lilahle etshisayo kodwa yangabonakali ukuthi yintoni yayiviwa nje ndim omnye umntu engayiboni coz usbali wayeloko ebuza eva ndikhala ndikhomba apho ihamba khona uba natsi Iphi yintoni sbali mayisuka yehla ngalomlenze use left yehla ngasemuva yabuya ya rounda apha esiswini kabuhlu after 2minutes kwathi cwaka sendehlile kusofa londandihleli kuwo kuba ndandikhala ndijampa ndahlala phatsi ndanaba wabuza usbali uba ngoku sithini ndathi uba singaya emntwini osebenza ngamayeza wesintu wathi kungcono siqale ku DOCTOR kuba Ndi weak ndiqale ndiyofumana IDRIP kugqirha eloxesha makethi uyandiphakamisa ndiqaphele uba lomzimba ungezantsi awusebenzi andina feeling umzimba uyatshisa kubuhlu phakathi.

Kwamagxa mabendigalela ngamanzi abandayo ingathi ndigalelwa ngamanzi atshisayo bakendibamba ingathi ndihlatywa zinaliti kubuhlu bandiphatha ndaqabela emotweni sahamba.

Saya esibhedlele safika kwaku late ngabo 8pm ndafakwa Ewodin wandihlola ugqirha bendise Swartlan hospital eMalmusbery wabiza iambulance ugqirha ukuba ndidluliselwe eTirgaberg hospital yandithatha phangabo 10pm ndayofika ekuseni maybe ngo 2am ithe pha ngabo 8am ndathathwa ndasiwa.

Kwi X-ray le ofakwa kuyo wonke ikuhlale umzimba wonke ukuthi ikuphi ingxaki eyenza ukuthi yintoni eyenza ukuba ndigakwazi ukuhamba zange babone nto wase wabuza kwalapha kum uba zange ndalimala or ndephuka noba ngumlenze ngoba wayengaboni ukuba kwenzeka njani uba ingasebenzi imilenze kungekho ndawo ephukile wasuke wathi ugqirha myb ndine Infection yeSpinal cord kodwa wayengaqinisekaga wayefunisela ayonto akayifumana kwi x-ray coz kwakuyinto neFamily yam... ndiyolinda khona ukuya eMichasplayn kufeezeo therapy ndiyofunda iwheelchair nomsebenzi wezandla but kwakugcwele kungekho bhedi kwamele ndilinde ixesha kude kube nendawo yam ndahlala inyanga yonke ndilindile baze bathi mandihambe ndiyolinda khona bazandifounela makuse kunendawo kufeezio ndabuyela ekhaya ndahlala ukuseka ngoFebruary ukuyotsho ngoMay bengakaze bandifounele.

Ndasuka ndeza apha eJoberg (ndahlal anobani ndincedwa ngubani daily) ngokuzo zama khona uba akhomntu osebenzisa amayeza wesintu ongandineda ndamane ndisiwa ke kosiyazi bandihlale batsho uba kwenzekeni bangandineda bandinike amayeza aselwayo ndiwasele kondwa zange ndabona mehluko kubo bonke bt babethi bangandineda bethatha nje imali yam kuthe ekuhambeni kwexesha ndigaboni mahluko ndathathwa ngutata eTembisa ndayohlala khona wandihambisa komnye utata wase Zimbambe osebenzisa amayeza esintu wandihlala wathi angandineda wandinika ke imbiza zakhe uba ndisele ndazisebenzisa but zange kubekho mahluko.

Wathi kumele andenzele isifutho atshise istena sibebomvu abilise umuthi wakhe andibanise ndifuthe ngazo ndakhenza ke konke oko azange kundincende naloko ndasuke ndatsha imilenze nditshiswa ngumphuga lo ophuma kwezizitena ezitshisayo emvakoko akasazi uba kutheni nditsha mna coz uqhelukuyenza lento ebantwini bt abatshi kutheni kum ndahlala ndinjalo sisoyika ukuya esibhedlele sizawuthi kugqirha besenzani kwahamba abola amanxeba ngoba ayengahlanjwa ayefakwa nje umuthi wesintu emdaka enuka kwaba nempethu ndafounela usiswam wandithatha wandisa

esibhedlela for ukutrita amanxeba ndimane ndisiya ngomvulo nangolwesithathu nangolwesihlanu ndade ndaphola ukusuka lomine zange ndaphinda ndahamba ebantwini abasebenzisa amayeza esintu ndahlala ndingenzi nto.

Kwafika umzala wam wandichazela ngecawe eseJubert park ku Corner Wolmarans & Claim ndayakhona ndisahamba khona nangoku kumnandi ndiyakhonza futhi ndiyakholwa ukuba ndizawuphila ndiphinde ndikwazi ukuhamba ngenyawo zam njengoba ndandizimbela kade andingeke ndibuyele ebantwini abasebenzisa amayeza esintu zange bandincende tu before ndandisebenzisa iCatert for ukuchama kwakunzima ngoba yayibloka oko indenza iInfection.

Xandisithi bayitshintshe bandinikeze enye into engadincenda wathiugqirha izaziphumela xasendipholile ndaqhubeka ndiyisebenzisa akwalunga ndatshintsha ndaya eSouth rand hospital before bendihamba eShalot Maxeke hospital wathi ugqirha mele ndiyeke usebenzisa icatet wandinikeza enye into endincenda 4 ukuchama kakuhle andisabi na infection ngoku ndiright ndiyakhonza andisakholelwa kumayeza esintu ngoku.

How I lost my ability to walk

by Funani Mpeyi (English Translation)

It was the 04th of January 2009, and I was in the “hakini”: with my...fixing the fence, and I was sawing the planks when I felt something moving up inside my stomach. I ran inside the house to my brother-in-law as I had been outside when it happened. I got inside and told him that something is moving up inside me, he told me to sit down on the sofa. When I sat down, I felt this thing moving down my right led and moving so painfully. It felt like hot coal, but no one could see what it was, I was the only one who could feel it, anyone else couldn't see it. My brother-in-law kept asking me as he heard me crying and I was pointing to where it was moving and telling him there it is.

He would ask me what it is my brother, as it moved down my left on the left this time, moving to the back of the lack and around, up to my stomach in a painful way. After two minutes it was quiet as I had moved from the sofa I was sitting at.

I was crying and jumping and sat down with my legs stretched. My brother-in-law asked me what we should do. I said we can go to a traditional healer that uses traditional medicine. He said we should start at the doctor because I was weak, so I can first get a drip from the doctor.

The time he tried to lift m, I noticed that my lower body was not moving or working, I had no feeling, and my entire body was hot, with pain inside. That was when they poured cold water on me, but it felt like they are pouring hot water instead. When they tried to hold me, it felt like I am being pricked by needles, it was painful. They carried me into the car, and we left. We went to

the hospital, and we got there late around 8 pm. In the ward the doctor examined me, I was in Swartland Hospital – Malmesbury Western Cape. He called an ambulance to transfer me to Tygerberg Hospital. The ambulance took me around 10 pm, and I got to the hospital around 2 am. When it was around 8 am, I was taken to an X-ray, which examines your entire body to find out where the problem is and to check what is causing me to be unable to walk, but they didn't see or find anything. The Doctor asked me if I was ever injured or broken my leg because he could not see why my legs were not working when no part is broken. He then said maybe I have an infection of the Spinal cord, but he was not sure because he could not find anything on the X-ray. He said I should wait to go to Mitchel's Plain for Physiotherapy and to learn to use a wheelchair and handcrafts. But it was full and there was no bed, I was forced to wait for some time until there was space for me. I stayed a whole month waiting until they said I must go and wait at home, and they will call me once there is space in the physiotherapy. I went home and waited from February, until May, without them calling me. I then left and went to Johannesburg place, where I was staying with anyone who can help me daily. I came to Joburg to see if there is anyone who can help me with traditional medicine. I was now and then assisted by those who are knowledgeable who would test me, and they would claim that they will help me with medicine, they would give me their medicine to drink. I would drink them and still see no difference, from all these medicine people promised would help me.

They were just taking my money. Overtime when I didn't see any difference, I was taken by my father to Tembisa to stay there. He took me to another man from Zimbabwe who used traditional medicine and he tested me and promised he can assist me. He gave me his traditional medicine to drink.

I used them, but there was no difference. He then said he will prepare something for me to steam with, where he prepared a brick and burnt it until it was red-hot and added it to his boiling medicine so I could steam with it. I did all of that, but none of it

helped me, I was just burned by the steam instead, that came out of the burning bricks.

After that, he didn't know what to say, while I was burning, because he was used to doing this procedure with people who did not get burnt so he couldn't figure out why it didn't work with me. I stayed (burnt) that way, and we feared going to the hospital because doctors were going to ask what exactly we were doing. Those burn wounds eventually got septic with pus because they were not bathed. Instead, I was having some traditional medicine applied to them while the wounds are smelly and dirty. When I started noticing maggots on the wounds, I called my sister who took me to the hospital to treat the burn wounds. I used to go to the hospital every month end- on Wednesdays and Fridays until I was healed. From that day, I never went back to traditional healers who sue traditional medicines, I just stayed not doing anything.

My cousin came to visit and told me about a church in Joubert Part in Corner of Wolmarans and Claim. I went there and I still go there until today. It is nice and I worship there, and I do believe that one day I will walk with my own feet like I used to. I will not go back to traditional medicine because they never helped me at all. I was using a catheter to pee, and it was difficult because it was getting blocked and thereby causing me infections. When I asked doctors to change it and give me something else that can help me, the doctor said it will come out on its own once I am healed. I continued using it and that didn't get better, so I went to another hospital in South Rand. Before that, I was at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital. The doctor then said I should stop using the catheter and he gave me something else that assisted me in passing urine. I no longer get an infection. I am much better now, I am religious, and I don't believe in traditional medicine anymore.

Ukuboshwa Kwami Amaphoyisa Obandlululo

by Gladys Mkhobo (Zulu)

Ngikhumbula ngonyaka ka1982 lapho ngiboshelwa khona idompasi ngesikhathi ngangithunywe esitolo abelungu ngezwa nje izandla zingibamba zingiphonsa phezulu nje ngathuka ngakhala ngamemeza kakhulu Kodwa ngezwa sengiwela phezu kwabantu phezulu egumbagumbeni eyayicwele abafana namantombazane. Sagcwala kwaminyana egumbagumbeni lelo sayovalelwa epholisteshi

Kwakungolwesihlanu bafika abelungu engangibasebenzea, ukuzongikhipha kodwa bala abaphathi kwathiwa kufanele ngiyobingelela imantshi ngomsombuluk. Sasibaningi silala nje phansi. Kwakungenangubo, indlu encane yokuzikhulula ikhona lapha phambi kwethu, ukudla kulethwa ngothayela kuyaphushwa nje yipapa namanzi. Asizange sidle kwazekwafika umsombuluko sasesincole kakhulu. Wafika umsombuluko sakhishwa saqhutshwa ukuya egumbagumbeni lapho amaphoyisa ayephethe izibhamu.

Uma siwabheka athi nisibhekani ayasithuka nje lamenezwa igama lami kwathiwa ngena ebhokisini uqhakamisa isandla sokudla uthi inkosi ikusiz. Kwathiwa kimi, “ipasi lakho liyabhedha” Ngaphendula mina, kwathiwa “thula manje uzogwetshwa iminyaka emihlanu noma uphume uphele lapha egoli ungalali la noma ubhadale imali engamakhulu amahlanu opondo”.

Abelungu engangibasebenza bayikhiphake layo mali ngaphuma kanjaloke ejele laseBedfortview emva kwalapho ngalisaba iGoli, ngase ngihlala nje endlini ngingaphumi.

Kwodwa kwaba mnandi mhla kuphuma uTaata uMadiba ejele wathi mayiphele indaba ye dompass kubekhona ID. Zaqala ukushintsha izinto kwabakuhle sahamba lapho sithanda khona kwaba yiGoli lenkululeko.

Kodwa manje sekumnandi ngoba sesathenga ngisho umuzi sengiyisakhamuzi salapha eGoli. Nginezindlu manje, futhi ngibonga uJehova ngomusawakhe akekho onjengaye ithemba lami likuye ehliziyweni yami kugcwele injabulo enkulu, uyakhazimula uJesu kimi.

Ungithathe la wangibeka la ngijabula khona kumnandi ukuba langikhona ngiyamthanda futhi ngimbona lapha kimi ehlanza inhliziyo yami.

Ngangingazi ukuthi ngiyoke ngiyithinte nje ikhomputha kodwa manje sengiyabhala ngayo Ngiyabonga iyasho inhliziyo yami ithi ncincibo ngiyanithanda ninothando, Uthisha Jeffrey uMiss Edith Khuzwayo banothando olukhulu.

I was arrested by the Apartheid Police

by Gladys Mkhobo (English Translation)

I remember in 1982 when I was arrested and sent to a whites-owned shop.

I felt hands grab me and throw me up. I was just in shock, and I cried out loud.

But then I felt myself falling over on top of people in a room full of males and females. I was crammed into a cell and locked up at the police station. It was a Friday and the whites I worked for, came to get me out but the authorities refused.

I had to go and meet the magistrate on Monday. There were many of us sleeping on the floor. There were no blankets. The toilet was right in front of us. Food was brought in a metal tray, just pushed towards us with pap, and water only. We did not eat until Monday. We were extremely dirty by then. And we were led to another room where the police were carrying guns.

If we dared to look at them, they would shout, asking why we are looking at them and they would swear at us. My name was called, and I was told to go into the box-stand and raise my hand for swearing so “Help me God”.

They told me my Permit was not right. I replied and they said ‘Shut up! Now you will be sentenced to five years or leave Joburg completely and don’t sleep here at all OR pay five hundred pounds.’ The white people that I worked for, paid that money and that is how I escaped from imprisonment in Bedfordview. After that incident, I fear Johannesburg, I stayed indoors and never left the house. But it was wonderful when Tata Mandela was released

from jail, and he said the “dompass” rule must end and everyone must have an ID document. Things started to change for the better and we went where we wanted. It was a Johannesburg of freedom.

Nowadays, it’s fun because we even bought a house, and I am now a citizen of Johannesburg. I have houses and I thank the Lord for His grace. There is no one like Him. My trust is in Him. In my heart I am filled with great joy. Jesus shines in me. He takes me and puts me in his arms. I am happy.

I didn’t know that I would ever touch a computer but now I’m writing with it.

Thank you, my heart is pounding. I love you; you are filled with love. Teacher Jeffrey and Ms Edith Khuzwayo both have a lot of love.

My Story

by Victoria Ludonga

I believe in the word of God, that whatever you ask for in His name you will receive. We have to believe because His promises make us strong. Although I wanted to cut my story short, I now decided to take it further.

About my grands, this was a touching story, because they were abandoned by their mother. I had to intervene and play a mother figure to them. It was not easy. I had to request night duty at my place of work to cover their time. Before I would leave for work, I used to help them with their homework, give them their bath, give them love, hugs and kisses, then head off to work. I was leaving them in God's hands at their different ages. Thank God for keeping me strong, as all three of them are grownups now. It is only that their mother is no longer in this world. That is how I ended up being everything to them, by the grace of God.

The most embarrassing part was that of being a tenant with grands, at my age, which is humiliating to these children now. If we had not been promised empty promises, this couldn't have happened.

Yes, we worked for years, right up to our sixties, earning sparingly to buy a house. We are still looking to these promises today.

If you remember, from 1996 an application for a house was entitled to every South African. The worst part of this story was to find that my name was not available on the system. I nearly collapsed in front of the man who was helping to check my name! Now that was in 2004, when I doubted if I was even a South African, after these ups and downs. All I could do was to re-apply back in that year 2004.

I'm so grateful that I came to this library, through the organisation called Golden Years. It was led by the brilliant lady Elizabeth Libisi, who arranged the whole thing. Here we fell in with a heart-warming young man, Mr Nyoka. He was very professional, not only in his standard of education but also through the way he taught the old people, along with the ever-joking lady Fezeka. That was the reason we kept going to this computer training library. At least I had a way of coughing out the pain I had felt for years.

When things are tough you need people like these 'teachers, gentle and caring.' I'm so proud of them. I wish they could go around South Africa and hold their sessions in schools.

We were all happy to have this opportunity to learn, because we only wrote in books during our time. God bless our South Africa that we all belong as one. What is not yet done we are still entrusting in God's hands. We didn't know that some of our problems would be attended to in this so-called New South Africa. It must not end here. Let's move forward as living people.

Ngikhule Ngesikhathi Sobandlululo

by Sizani Ngobese (Zulu)

Ngazalwela emakhaya ngakhuliswa ngugogo nomalumekazazi ngoba ngangihlala ekhaya kubo mama.

Ugogo wethu wayethanda ukusixoxela izinganekwane ebusuku. Athi nathi sibojwayela ukubaxoxela abantwana bethu, ngoba lokho kwenza ukuthi noma ungenakho ukudla endlini abantwana bangakhali belalele izinganekwane.

Ekuseni bengivuka ngigeze masengiqedile bese ngigeza amathunga esisengela kuwo ubisi silungenise edlini umntwana kamalume umzala uye owayesenga besesiyaphuma siya esikolweni. Besihamba ibanga elide amakhilo ayisithupha ngezinyawo singaphethe kudla. Kodwa sasijabula ngoba yisona isikhathi esasithola ngaso isikhathi sokudlala, ngoba uma sifika ekhaya besingenaso isikhathi kufuneka siyokha amanzi kude. Nomzala kwakumele ahambe ayolanda izinkomo akhethe amathole. Sakhula kodwa ukufunda kwethu kwabanzima ngoba asizange safika emabangeni aphezulu ngoba izikolo zamabanga aphezulu emakhaya zazingekho.

Kwafika isikhathi lapho sengizofuna khona umsebenzi ngabuthola ubunzima amalanga amathathu Ngangilala phansi kombhede kodwa ngenkosi ngawuthola umsebenzi. Ngithe ngisajabula ngisasebenze nje izinyanga ezine sabanjwa izipekitali saba baningi kodwa futhi inkosi ingaqhelanga kimi ngoba nabelungu bami (abaqashi) babengithanda ngoba base bengibonile ukuthi ngisebenza kajani .Nabantwana bakhala uma bezwa ukuthi sengizobashiya ngoba izipekitali zasinika amahora angamashumi amabili nane ukuthi kumele kube sesiphume saphela eGoli. Kodwa

futhi ngamandla enkosi balala bengalele abelungu bami savuka ekuseni sahamba saya ekhaya beyongicelela ivume yokuzosebenza eGoli.

Nakhona ekhaya abelungu basihlukumeza ngoba nabo bebe nalenqondo yobandlululo. Kodwa ngenkosi bangenzela .Ngithe masengiyoRerjista ipasi e-ofisi, ngathola umlungu owayekhuluma isiZulu esinzima nami engingasazi kanti ngingumzulu. Wangitshela ukuthi uma nje eke wezwa ukuthi labelungu abangilungisele ipasi ngibayekile uzongixosha ngibuyel ekhaya Futhi kufuneka njalo umakuphela unyaka ngizo vuselela ngiyofaka esinye isitembu.

Kwafika nesikhathi lapho ngaqala khona ukuthola abantwana. Hayi laphoke ngathola ubunzima obukhulu ngoba abelungu bami babengithanda kodwa uHulumeni Wobandlululo wawungafuni ukuthi sihlale nabantwana emajalidini abelungu. Bengafuni nokuthi sihlale nobaba babantwana bethu kufuneka bahlale eHositela.

Kulesikhathi samanje sesiyajabula sesinohulumeni wethu, sihlala lapho sithanda khona. Siyabonga.

kubaba uMandela owasikhipha ekuhluphekeni nasebunzimeni esasibuthwele, ngoba indlela uHulumeni wobandlulo wayesiphethe ngayo kwakunzima kakhulu.

Sifisa abantwabethu bafunde ukuze bangatholi ubunzima njengathi ngoba thina sasingafundile kungako sagqilazeka kangaka.

Growing up in an Apartheid era

by Sizani Ngobese (English Translation)

I was born in the rural areas and raised by my Grandmother and my aunt since I was living at my mother's home.

Our Grandmother used to tell us stories (fairy tales) at night, and she said we should also make it a norm to tell stories to our children as well because it means that even if you do not have food in the house, but the children will not cry while listening to your stories.

I used to wake up early in the morning bath and have something to eat. After that, I will wash the buckets that we use to milk cows. My cousin's son was the one who milked cows. After milking cows, we put the milk in the bucket inside the house and then we take our long journey to school, about 6 kilometres walking with our bare feet and carrying nothing to eat. But we were happy because that was the only chance we had, to play. When we got home, we did not have time, we had to fetch water far away and my cousin had to go and fetch the cattle and choose the calves.

We grew up, but our learning was difficult because we did not get to high school because there wasn't any high school in our rural areas after completing primary school you had to start working.

The time came when I was looking for a job and I had a hard time for three days I slept under the bed but with the grace of God I got a job. While I was still happy and enjoying my new job at the factories. While I had only been working there for four months we were caught red-handed at work with other co-workers by the (apartheid) Permit inspectors. But with the grace of God, I did not lose my job because my bosses liked me and has seen how I worked. Even my children cried when they heard that I was going to leave

them since the Permit Inspectors, gave us only 44 hours to take all our possessions and leave Johannesburg for good, but my bosses fought for me, and we woke up early in the morning together with them they accompanied me to my home to ask for the permission to continue working at Johannesburg.

Even (when I got) back home, the whites abused us because they still had the mentality of apartheid, but I was fortunate enough because they granted me the permit. On my arrival at the Post Office to finalize my registration for a permit I was assisted by the white person who was very fluent in a deeper IsiZulu way better than mem even though I am also Zulu. She told me that if she ever heard that I have left the job of my white employees who managed to prepare my permit she will never assist and will send me back home. She also told me that every once in a year I have to renew the official permit stamp at the post office.

There came a time when I started having children. That is when I had a hard time even though my white bosses loved me, but the apartheid government never allowed us to stay with our children at the white's back yards. They did not even want us to stay with the fathers of our children, saying that men should stay at the hostels.

Nowadays we are so grateful to have our democratic government and we live wherever we want to. We give thanks to "Tata Mandela" who brought the end to misery and hardships. We urge the younger generation (our children) to take their education seriously so that they can prosper in life and not go through the hardships that we faced because we were less educated that is why we were enslaved

End

Authors

Sibongile Ellen Malinga

COJ Digital Literacy Programme

Zadidi Augusta Mbangeni

COJ Digital Literacy Programme

Caroline Nkhato

COJ Digital Literacy Programme

Elisa (Surname)

COJ Digital Literacy Programme

Elizabeth Khamanga Zulu

COJ Digital Literacy Programme

Funani Mpeyi

COJ Digital Literacy Programme

Gladys Mkhobo

COJ Digital Literacy Programme

Victoria Ludonga

COJ Digital Literacy Programme

Sizani Ngebese

COJ Digital Literacy Programme

