

Project name: Alternative History Project
Date of interview: 2007-07-27
Location of interview: Rammolutsi, Free State
Language of interview: South Tswana/English
Name of Interviewer/s: Dale McKinley & Ahmed Veriava
Name of Interviewee/s: Joyce Bafedile Mokgadi
Name of translator: Bramage Sekete
Name of transcriber: Moses Moremi
Audio file name: AHP_RAM_MokgadiJoyceBafedile_20070727

INTERVIEW WITH JOYCE MOKGADI

Dale McKinley (DM): Just for the record could you state your full name please?

Joyce Mokgadi (JM): Oh, Joyce Bafedile Mokgadi.

DM: Joyce, what is it that you do here at Rammolutsi?

JM: I am a crèche teacher.... pre school teacher.

DM: You are a pre school teacher. You can speak Sotho if you want to. How long have you been here in this community?

JM: For 7 years.

DM: Since from 1999 or 2000?

JM: 2000.

DM: Where were you before you moved here ...where did you live?

JM: Here in Rammolutsi.

DM: You lived in Rammolutsi? Were you born here?

JM: No on the farm.

DM: When did you actually moved from the farm to Rammolutsi?

JM: 1996.

DM: Were your parents working on the farm prior to that?

JM: Yes, my mother and father worked at the farm.

DM: Just to get a little background. Can you tell us a little bit as to how it was like growing in the farm?

JM: It was very nice. We used to get a lot of stuff nearby and get the milk nearby ... generally it was great.

DM: Ok, did you go school at the farm school ... how was that?

JM: Yes, it was nice. I was not a bright child at that time but it was cool. I studied from sub until standard five. We used to share a class while overcrowded and we had one teacher for the whole sub A until standard five. But our teacher was also used to that system/job.

DM: Were there good relations between you, the family and the farmer?

JM: Yes, it was cool. My parents had good relations with the farmer. My father was looking after the farmer's cattle and my mother was a domestic worker and they both got along together with the farmer and his wife although the wife was a bit unfriendly towards my mom.

DM: Did anything change when 1994 happened, when the elections happened and when Mandela became the president? Were there any changes on the farm in terms of the relations? You say you moved in 1996, that is two years later. Did anything change at that point?

JM: Yes, it changed. Even that white woman started to be more unfriendly towards my mother and it was worse than before, or maybe it was because the farmer passed away. I just forgot to say that I came to Rammolutsi in 1984 not in 1996 when I came to do standard six.

DM: So, you came to start schooling in 1984? Did you live here in Rammolutsi? Or did you come from the farm every day?

JM: No, I lived here in Rammolutsi.

DM: With relatives, family? Where did you stay?

JM: Yes I started staying with my relatives. Then I found a room to stay because when you come from the farm and stay with the relatives in the same yard they will ill treat you.

DM: Tell us ... you were here in school during the 1980s ... there were a lot of things going on in the 1980s. Were you involved? Tell us a little bit about ... as a student in the 1980s, what was it like?

JM: By 1986, the uprisings started in Rammolutsi and I was part of that. We were excited by the demonstrations, but after that we didn't go to school any more because one of the boys from our school – Letsabo - was shot dead by the cops. After the shooting I decided that I have to go back to the farm because the police were beating up people.

DM: How old were you or what grade were you doing when you decided to go back to the farm?

JM: It was very bad at that time. Many friends of mine were taken by the police and taken to the police station. We did not live very nicely because it was so bad. They shoot that man and were moving around celebrating ... after that I see that I'm going to be taken by the police so I would rather go home ... this place is no more good for me. .

DM: What grade were you in when you left to go to the farm?

JM: Standard 9.

DM: How long did you stay in the farm?

JM: Two to three months and then I came back.

DM: And things had quietened down?

JM: Yes.

DM: And you went back to school?

JM: Yes, and I passed my standard nine at the end of the year and going to do standard 10 next year.

DM: So, once you came back in those late 80s and early 90s had things changed quite a bit in Rammolutsi in terms of what happened in the early-mid 80s?

JM: When I came back from home things were quiet – there was no longer toyi-toying/ fighting. We knew that we should rather sit down and solve the problems in order to get a solution rather than fights.

DM: When did you get your matric?

JM: 1987.

DM: After your matric what did you do?

JM: I wanted to go to college at Qwa Qwa to complete a diploma in teaching. Unfortunately my parents were separated and my mother did not have much money, so I stayed at home. After how long I went to the farm in Potchefstroom to work on a chicken farm – ‘Chubby Chick’ - checking out the eggs on the farm. I worked for seven to eight months.

DM: How was that job on the chicken farm?

JM: It was not very nice.

DM: Why?

JM: The farmer was harsh/rude.

Ahmed Veriava (AV): When you say he was harsh what did he do?

JM: He was rude and he screamed and chased people away. Maybe when we didn't count the eggs well, cleaned them well or set them in the right sizes/places.

AV: When you say after that you came back home, was home then Rammolutsi or you moved to Rammolutsi?

JM: No, we were at the farm again and I am going to live there at the farm and left after some few months to Soweto where my grandmother stays. I went to look for a job but unfortunately I did not find a job and I came back to the farm.

AV: When did your family leave the farm?

JM: 1991.

AV: Then your whole family then moved to Rammolutsi?

JM: But my mother and my father were separated. My father was in Qwa Qwa and my mother stayed here and was working for that lady on the farm.

AV: When you moved here at Rammolutsi where did you stay?

JM: To hire to another people's yard.

AV: When did you get your own stand?

JM: In 1996.

AV: Did you have a house or a stand?

JM: No, to the stand ... only the stand. We come with our shacks to build the house.

AV: How many rooms did you build?

JM: Only three room.

AV: How many of you were staying in there?

JM: Me, my mother, my father came back from Qwa Qwa again in 1995 ... my sister and my brother. We were five.

AV: In the shack when you moved there, did you have electricity and water?

JM: We only have water ... when we were moving there is no electricity and the tap was on the street so all the people of that side were getting water in one tap.

AV: About how many families were using the same tap?

JM: Phew!! Many of us, maybe 20-50 using one tap at that time.

DM: When did they put the tap at the house?

JM: I don't remember.

AV: And electricity, do you remember when they brought electricity?

JM: 1997.

DM: When you came and set up in the backyard shack, from 91-96 ... did your family apply for a stand or an RDP house?

JM: No, we didn't apply for the stand after leaving that yard of the people. We came to the informal settlement (Baipegi). We were living there for a year and after a year we heard that all people living in the informal settlement must go to the office to write for the stand and after that we found the stand.

DM: After 1994 did you apply for an RDP house?

JM: Yes.

DM: 1994 or 1995, what year did you apply?

JM: It is not 1995 it is 1997.

DM: Are you still living in the informal settlement today?

JM: No.

DM: You applied for RDP house in 1997?

JM: Yes in 1997, but we didn't find it in '97. We were applying and applying and we didn't get it. It was only in 2003.

DM: You got an RDP house in 2003?

JM: Yes.

DM: Of all the family members living there was your mother the only person that was working there with the woman that was on the farm?

JM: Yes, my father is only finding sick pensioner ... its about R320 or R350.

DM: Were you also looking for a job? I assume you were also looking for a job? What kinds of jobs were you looking for here?

JM: Only a job. Firstly I was looking for a teaching in the matric but I didn't find it. Then after that I went to work on the farm... to help my parents to buy foods.

AV: So you were unable to find some job at that point?

JM: I was able ... but I didn't find it. It was very hard.

DM: When did you decide that you wanted to come and take care of the small children?

JM: In 1997, when I leave to work at the farm the other lady who worked at another crèche she was used to call me to work with pre school children. I came and worked with them for about a month. After that month they took me to the training to do a PAP - this is a first course - and I do that course. After that course I lived with that lady for three months and she didn't pay me so I decided that I am leaving. In the year 1999 this lady called me and said that she saw me at that crèche and that I am working very nice with the children and she took me to this crèche.

DM: So you joined her here at this crèche. What's the name of this crèche?

JM: Sepoe(?) pre school

DM: So you've been working here now for several years?

JM: Yes.

DM: Tell us about the work here and the children you are taking care of. How is it for you?

JM: Firstly it was very hard because when you are working with children and their parents sometimes didn't understand you and you don't understand them you are going to find it very hard to understand each other. But when the times goes by I find that it is nice to work with the children and the parents, the community. Firstly I used to work with the parents who are not understanding about this pre school they only said its only place where the children can stay ... Secondly Ntataise took me to the course I do another course ... module one, module two up to level four certificate. And there is another

course from, Ntataise the course I love very much. It is Bopanang where parents and teacher are going to understand each other. We had not been taking the parents seriously at that time. When you are parents and I am a teacher you are not coming to me to share or to do something. You are going to go back there you think that I am a teacher I didn't going to talk to you ... these parents, saying you are a crook ... leaving the child and not paying. But that helps us a lot. Now we are close with the parents - we sit down and share, we are friends, we can talk with their children, everything we do it together and there is no longer that separation ... although some parents didn't want to pay for fees and they take so long. The problem of the crèche is we are going to get our salary from that parent fees. When they are not paying we don't have money for a month, two months when the parents are not paying.

DM: How many children do you have here now in this crèche?

JM: We have 45.

DM: Their ages?

JM: Two to six years.

DM: Is this a private business or you are hooked in with the department of education?

JM: No it's a private ... its not a private, it's a community and we are helped by social development ... but they only help us to find the certificates but they didn't help us to find the food. There are other crèches who find money from the department of social development, but here we did not get that money.

DM: So they are providing you with money for ... what is it again that they are providing you with ... money for?

JM: Money from the parents?

DM: No, from the department of social development?

JM: They didn't give us money. There are some crèches who found that money to buy food for the children who are at those crèches. And so, they get so much money ... here we didn't get any.

DM: Have you applied?

JM: Every year.

DM: How much do you charge for the kids to attend?

JM: R50.00 per month.

DM: R50.per month? And the kids... how often do they come?

JM: 8 to 1 o'clock - five days.

DM: This is a very important educational institution for the little children. What is your experience in terms of the children themselves ... how they've moved on, I'm sure you have watched kids leaving here to the schools ... in other words do you think you are doing a good job?

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

DM: It's a very rewarding experience I imagine, for you?

JM: Yes. I can go further.

DM: I am sure. What do you hope to do with the school? I mean, your own dreams of being a teacher, an early childhood educator. For yourself, how do you hope to move forward?

JM: I want to see the kids coming from here moving forward to help other kids of the coming generations move forward ... to benefit the entire community of Rammolutsi.

DM: We have to give you an opportunity ... if we have not asked something and you want to say something that we have not covered. Some people will be watching this and ... so please feel free to say anything ... about your own work or the community.

JM: Yes, people should not view crèches as they used to, as a place where kids are just left by their parents, instead they should view crèche as place whereby it's a foundation for all kids, whereby we are able to identify the talents which are possessed by the kids. Please consider the teachers at the crèches. It is through crèche that their kids can become stars. Also for people to consider ... I have certain grades but I can take them further through these kids, to the university ... without them, I can't do anything. So people must take pre-schools into consideration.

MINUTES: 32:49