

Collection no: AL3290

Project Name: Anti Privatisation Forum

Date of Interview: 2010-04-08

Location of Interview: Johannesburg

Language/s of interview: English

Length of interview: 1:06:59

Name of interviewer: Dale McKinley

Name of interviewee/s: Selaphi Sibanda

Name of translator (if any):

Name of transcriber: Olga R Pickover

Notes on access and use (if any):

Audio file name/s of interview: AL3290_Sibanda Selaphi_2010-04-08



Dale: It is the 8th of April 2010, Dawu thanks very much for this, for making the time. Just for the record, can you state your full name please?

Sehlaphi: My full name is Sehlaphi Sibanda.

Dale: And where does the Dawu come from?

Sehlaphi: Dawu is sort of the clan name, but anyway everyone calls me Dawu. Sehlaphi is only for official records I suppose, not even so many people at the APF refer to it, if you come here looking for Sehlaphi, they will tell you they don't know who you are talking about.

Dale: Okay, thanks very much. Now listen before I start asking you some questions about the APF and work ... I want to know a little bit, something about yourself personally. Can you just tell us where and when you were born?

Sehlaphi: Okay, I was born in Bulawayo in 1981, on the 27th of February 1981, which makes me twenty nine years old now.

Dale: Okay and places obviously other than Bulawayo, other places you've lived?

Sehlaphi: I have lived in Gweru, it is a city in Zimbabwe, I am also living in Johannesburg now.

Dale: Just tell us a little bit about your family. Parents, siblings, do you have any children?

Sehlaphi: I come from a very big family. I've got seven siblings, one brother and six sisters. I have got a twin sis, we don't exactly look alike we are very, very fraternal. My parents are both still alive, they are still back in Zim and I come from a pretty loving family, really. I am glad that I was born into that family. They weren't exactly your huggy, kissy family but we are close in our own special way.

Dale: And you have no children as you have never been married?

Sehlaphi: No

Dale: Alright tell us about your schooling, what kind of schooling have you had?

Sehlaphi: Actually I am studying towards a Masters in Development Studies. I did my honours in History and Development studies at the Media State University in Zimbabwe, and well I was basically educated in Zimbabwe apart from my M.A that I am studying through the University of the Witwatersrand. My education was basically done in Zimbabwe.

Dale: And I am assuming that also means in South African terms you matric'ed as well, or did you ... did you do up to A levels in Zim?

Sehlaphi: Ja I did up to A levels in Zim then went to University, ja and then in South African levels, ja

Dale: And major areas of study, interests?

Sehlaphi: That was development studies particularly focusing on women and forced migrants.

Dale: And just tell us also finally a little bit about your work, jobs that you've had since school or during school even.

Sehlaphi: Okay. I've got what I will say is a bit of background in the media field. I've worked for Radio Dialogue FM, a community radio initiative based in Zimbabwe, Bulawayo. It is basically ... a recording studio because they have not been granted a licence to operate as a community radio station. After that I moved to Johannesburg and I was employed by the then Media Monitoring Project, they are called Media Monitoring Africa, now. I used to do a bit of, well it was daily media monitoring of print and electronic media. I have done media monitoring and I am still doing media monitoring with media based companies like Gender Links and the Community Media for Development as well as with Media Monitoring Africa, though on an informal basis because I have a full time job. My full time job is with the Anti Privatisation Forum where I work as an administrator. I started with the Anti Privatisation Forum in July 2008 and basically my duties are office admin, answering of calls, sending emails, liaising with our partners, with our donors ...

Dale: My next question was going to be how did you become involved in the APF? So just step back to before you got the job, first of all how did you hear about the APF and what made you interested in getting this job?

Sehlaphi: Okay, how I actually got to hear about the APF - I made friends with people who were active in the APF - am I allowed to mention names?

Dale: Ja of course, of course

Sehlaphi: Okay, after I made friends with Virginia and Mondli, we sort of you know, we sort of got talking. Actually I used to meet them at public lectures, Wits used to hold quite a lot of them and they were almost always there and there were also public lectures organised by the Mail & Guardian and I used to see them there, until, a friendship actually developed. And when it came to that there was a job opening at the APF and then there was an advert that was actually posted about this job opening, then I applied and that is what I did. So when they were telling me about the APF and I felt that is something that I identify with, I thought it was an area that I needed to explore, so when that opening actually came up, I felt why not? And ja, here I am.

Dale: And what did you - at that particular point and time you said it was something you need to explore other than the actual job itself - what did you know about the APF?

Sehlaphi: Okay, I didn't exactly know much apart from what they actually told me what the APF was all about. At that time there were talking about this, the Coalition against Xenophobia wasn't formed yet, but we were also taking about migrant communities that they deal with and being also a forced migrant especially in South Africa I felt I really needed to sort of explore this network, get myself into that network.

Dale: Okay.

Sehlahphi: Definitely get myself involved ...

Dale: Alright and when you got the job - clearly you know you went through the interview process and you got the job - just describe for me how it was for you in the first while when you came and started the work and ja, there may be some follow on questions I have but just tell me about what it was like for you?

Sehlahphi: Okay, I guess every job is a challenge really. I would say it was challenging both, and what I would say is that both a good way and maybe in a not so good way. Firstly this was a completely new environment from what I have been exposed to previously, you know dealing with lots of people on a daily basis that I really found that quite new and at times I didn't exactly know how to handle it and it's still a process, I am still learning. You know there are so many people it means different characters, different personalities but you are an administrator and you have to serve, help those people regardless of their characters or personalities and also the nature of the job itself because, this is also new. I love the fact that I find this challenging because having to deal with finances and you know, balancing books and what have you, because that was new to me because I only dealt with petty cash which in my previous instances really didn't go beyond three hundred rand per week. So now having to deal with large sums of money, it was something really difficult and new but somehow the fact the organisation is a non profit organisation that is really dependent on donor funds and we really have to be careful with our resources. It's also taught me how to be careful with how I spend my personal resources, you know really sitting down and budgeting, I didn't really stick to a budget then but now I know there is going to be a budget and line items which I apply in my everyday life really. So I have not only grown in terms of my professional life because of the experience here, but I suppose in my personal life as well.

Dale: Okay and tell me how you were received in the organisation? You are Zimbabwean; you were coming in at a time when there were quite a lot of things going on the country with a lot of things with regards to xenophobia and a range of different things, so just talk a little bit about that experience.

Sehlahphi: Okay I don't know, I want to say fortunate that I found the reception here was quite warm, but there were a few elements that I sort of found were a bit not so welcoming towards me. But those really were a few, less than one percent of the organisation and the management at the APF, I would say leadership because at the APF you know we don't use such terms, such words, they don't belong here, they belong somewhere else. I think leadership really addressed that issue quite effectively, they got the message across that there was no space for xenophobic attitudes and personally really I would say the reception is still quite okay. No one is forever reminding me that I am Zimbabwean and you know I don't belong here, this at a time where South Africa...you know I came here at a time when there were just being the xenophobic violence of 2008 and I was also a bit, was kind of scared really now that I was moving from what had been a comfort zone especially, then I was dealing where I was previously at the Media Monitoring Project then it was quite a diverse community in terms of nationalities. But APF is diverse, everyone almost everyone here is South African but you know diverse in terms of the languages

that they speak and what have you. So I found that coming here as a Zimbabwean and maybe not even being able to speak the language, I am comfortable in Zulu, I would say my Zulu is okay, but South Africa is actually a diverse nation with so many languages and our people here they speak different languages so I really felt, I was a bit worried as to how I was going to fit in; the impact that it was going to have on my job and carrying out my duties and even dealing with people because that is what the job entails on a daily basis you know dealing with different kind of people. And I am also dealing with the elderly that I cannot always communicate with in English, but you know what I have actually realised that language hasn't been a barrier at all. I speak in my corrupt version of Sotho and people are actually, they understand they accommodate me, they realise that I cannot speak as a great Sotho or whatever languages as they are, but there is that effort from my part and there is that effort from their part, so we get on really quite well in terms of communication, well in fact language hasn't been a barrier at all.

Dale: Okay, the other part is being a woman and being in this job and as you say the APF is a very diverse organisation and large amounts of people coming through. One of the challenges for the APF has always been what could generically be called gender relations within its ranks. How have you as an administrator taking on responsibilities, been responsible for as you say not just administrative issues but often times financial issues and money - as a woman, what is your experience in terms of the APF?

Sehlaphi: How they incorporated gender into...?

Dale: Not just ... but also on a personal level and also in your daily work and how you have been treated? Feel free to talk about any incidences ... good and bad.

Sehlaphi: I would say I've been respected. I think people will respect me as a woman and as an administrator though of course you would get that occasional incident here and there where you feel maybe things could have been different if I've been something else, if I have been male or if I have been an administrator. You know I would feel sort of people would kinda want to talk down on me like because maybe they feel you are a woman and you don't exactly understand issues but if you are assertive; I would like to believe I am an assertive woman who will find especially if it comes to finances there are men or even women in some cases who will want to bulldoze their way in and having to put your foot down and saying, you know at that instance not exactly looking at yourself as a woman, you're looking at yourself as the administrator with a job to be done. And it only comes out later that okay, could they have done this because I happen to be a woman or it's just how they are, you know? I will find, I would say not quite overt, but some comments that I would feel are kind of, would make me uncomfortable, comments that are directed to me as a woman, not exactly referring to sexuality but you know you sort of pick up on those connotations and because they are not overt, you can't exactly approach the person and then confront them and ask them what they mean by this ... especially when it is in there in slang. I have actually realised that it comes through sort of what I would say slang and I wouldn't want to exactly harp on that. I don't really want to concentrate on that because at times I feel that maybe I missed out on the slang, not really conversant in that lingo myself but still at the end of the day such comments do make me uncomfortable and I've picked out really some text messages that were sent in Afrikaans, and I am not an Afrikaans speaking person and when I checked with some of my

friends who actually speak, well not speak Afrikaans but who could actually interpret the messages for me, I found they were a bit offish really, sort of with sexual connotations. At that point I think now where were they coming from but because they kept on getting them I went through the registers at the APF and I found it was someone from the APF who had sent them but I felt I really didn't even want to pursue this. I didn't even confront the individual involved; I sort of left it there because even if they were in Afrikaans it was still not very subtle so I just left it at that. So ja this is how it's been but though I am sure if I had reported it to the leadership, I am sure something could have been done.

Dale: Now one of the areas maybe you would say there has been a challenge probably for yourself is as you were saying coming into an organisation which is overtly political and has a particular ideological bent - it's not just a service organisation - and speak a little bit to the fact, I don't want to pre-empt what you are going to say to me, but at any point were there some tensions with regards to the political stance of the administrator and the politics of the organisation and that was political versus the practical or admin aspect of that and you yourself have, as an administrator, spoken about this on more than one occasion? So just speak a little bit about that and experiences around that.

Sehlaphi: Okay yes I really have spoken about that on several occasions because you know there have been times where I feel maybe I didn't exactly understand what the APF was about when I took up this position because there are times really where I feel the gap between my duties as an administrator and what the APF as a whole stands for, it's getting wider by the day. Because you'll feel that the people that I am dealing with because they come from this perspective that we are a political organisation we do this one, two, three; this in our way and they sort of neglect that in as much as things have to be done in their way, there are also systems and procedures that have to be followed. And because I don't exactly identify with some of the things that they say or they stand for I wouldn't want to use 'purport to stand for' I thought really, it really creates conflict where I feel they do not understand where I am coming from and maybe I also do not understand where they are coming from. So they also want to assert themselves as an institution of I'll say authority and power over me that I am the employee and that they are the employer and this is how things are done as the employers, sort of forcing down on me. But if you really do not belong to that school of thought it sort of does create conflict at the end of the day also maybe as 'Dawu the person, Dawu the administrator' you would get that conflict.

Dale: And you said on a daily basis you deal with people, all the different ... [Okay, we just took a little bit of a pause there] ... you would mention that on a daily basis you deal with a lot of people and you particularly now have to deal with finance, dispersing monies ... organising meetings and these kinds of things. Speak a little bit to your experience about how you have found the APF as an organisation with regards to its ... democracy and accountability?

Sehlaphi: Okay I think the APF, I really don't want to lose my job for saying this, but I think it can really become so much of a toothless bulldog. There's so much on paper, you know always talk about how they are going to discipline people who do not conform to procedures and stuff like that but it never really happens. I think people have been allowed to get away with murder as it were, that's why we have recurring problems. So I feel, I don't know whether it's because of people here are - or it's because

of the nature of the organisation - that most people are here only on a voluntary basis and therefore that's why there's not even a code that's binding in terms of how people should conduct themselves at the APF and because there is a lot of talking behind peoples' backs. No one really wants to confront people head on, they would rather talk about others behind their back so you really cannot have democratic structure when people are not willing to come out and stand up for what they believe in, when people don't really want to talk - about things that are not done the manner that they are supposed to be done - in corridors rather than a round table meeting, sit down at a meeting and discuss this. You would find people are vocal outside meetings, but when it comes to that platform that are processes ... it does not happen, everyone sorts of wants to take the back seat. No one really wants to be on the forefront, no one wants to confront this comrade ... I don't know whether they think of what would happen when they get to the communities, because we have heard of cases where people have been threatened for standing up to what they believe in so that sort of affects the way the APF operates in a very negative manner I must say. Personally I think it's so sad that people would have more to say about the APF, about their colleagues outside the APF as opposed to inside the APF, there is so much talk that is happening outside and there's people really tend to entertain gossip more than the practical things. So it is also really destroying an organisation, its destroying individuals as well.

Dale: Okay, just to be a little more specific. You said 'everyone' and 'all' people - I am just trying to be clear because are you saying in your experience since you've worked in the APF you have not seen any attempt in the APF or even structures to deal with problems, to deal with peoples unaccountability and these things from any quarter?

Sehlaphi: No, I have seen that happening, I have seen that happening but it's dealt with, I don't know whether I just happen to be a strict disciplinarian, but I think it has dealt with, with kid gloves. I think maybe it's also to do with comradeship that there is that word comradeship though to me, I mean I really don't see that happening on the ground. People would rather respect that word just the word and not the person, they would rather harp on using the word comrade instead of applying it in their day to day relations. So when these democratic processes are settled and there are disciplinary processes there's always you know; 'no, no we cannot be too harsh with our comrade', 'we cannot do this to our comrade'. I'll cite an example, there has been money that has been stolen in the office and that has really upset me and I wanted that to be reported to the police but because we do not, because the APF maybe has lost faith in the system like the police as a system, as an institution they won't report that, they would rather want to discuss those issues as internal matters, but what exactly comes out of those discussions? Not much really. You would have people who defraud the organisation and people who get caught at the end of the day, but really what happens to those people? They are let off you know, they are allowed to go scot free. So I feel if someone intentionally wrongs the organisation, you know there are instances where someone would go against the principles of the organisation but maybe not intentionally, but you know if someone intentionally does that I think they should be punished in a manner that fits the offence, not in a manner that says "well this is our comrade, maybe we don't want to be losing our affiliates we need to be building up on our affiliate base so we cannot be suspending people, we cannot be doing that". So at the end of the day there is more of "okay you did this, okay you

weren't supposed to do this" but well there is always an excuse for an offence, they always come up with an excuse for an offence.

Dale: Do you think that, that what you are talking about is something practiced in the views of the minority or the majority within the APF and have you seen any differences between what you would call the 'rank and file' in that regard and the 'leadership' ...?

Sehlaphi: I you know there are how do I answer this? I don't want to say whether it is the minority or the majority because there are times really when I come here and I feel I do not know who to trust at all. I really do not know who to trust at all because you know some people might be actually, I don't know at times people are all nice, we are doing these nice things and seem to be doing everything by the book ... I don't know whether I can recite exactly on this?

Dale: Please feel free to talk about it.

Sehlaphi: Okay there was this person at least was suspended from the APF, you know this person was very, his name is Themba; he has been suspended from the APF. I used to trust him, he was one person that I was comfortable around so when it actually came out that he was an agent of, well he was a security agent and he had given me every reason to trust him, I could have never suspected him whatsoever. So now, if someone that I trusted to such an extent actually turns out to be something that's completely different I really do know who to trust anymore. There are times when I feel and look at people I wonder if whether it's a case of white teeth, smiling at you while they are actually killing you and it sort of really affects the relationship that I have with individuals, with people. But anyway, to go back to the question, I will say there are people that I still want to believe I trust, there are people that I still want to believe cannot take any nonsense as it were, there are people that I feel that are for building this organisation, they are here to call people into order, they are here to build an organisation, they are here to say a wrong is a wrong, you get punished if you are doing wrong. And even with the leadership, there are some individuals in the leadership of the APF that I feel I would say 'they blow hot and cold' in terms of how they are, in terms of disciplining people, in terms of even their commitment to this organisation as a whole ... but there those are of course who I will say "oh wow its great working with these people". There are some people that are even in the leadership that I've even approached when I think things should have been done, like even approach them in an informal manner, not by going through the proper channels, like our office bearers meetings, because I feel this person listens and will not only listen, but they will act. Then I approach those people and I will try to talk to them. So Ja.

Dale: Okay now on this specific issue - one of the English words would be conundrum, a situation which is a bit of a contradiction - the APF as an NPO, it relies on donor funds and without those funds most of activities couldn't happen for the APF, your salary couldn't be paid, a whole range of things, we couldn't have this office. On the other hand funds cause tensions and problems because the APF's constituency is predominantly unemployed people; just speak a little to how that kind of conundrum or that tension

there with someone - you're here on a daily basis, you're dealing with these things at the coal face - how does that play itself out in the APF?

Sehlaphi: Okay, I will go back to what I have said earlier. Sorry because I am sort of making this to be about me.

Dale: No sure...sure

Sehlaphi: But I also did not understand the need to stick to a budget, have line items against a budget. Because you know people are not dealing with money, we sort of lack education when it comes to that. We would want to see a thousand rand and say "oh I've got money, so I can use it for whatever I want" but can you really afford to use that one thousand rand for whatever you want? No at times you do not, you might have that one thousand rand and you want to do something else, B, but you cannot because that one thousand rand is for A, you need to take care of A. So this is what I have seen at the APF because most of our people that we deal with don't exactly understand how this money thing works. Now they will hear of funders having provided us with something, they will not even bother to check how much it is, the fact that there's been communication that funders have made funds available people will think "okay, now we're the richest organisation around, we can do whatever we want". And I understand, I really, really understand that there is a lot of work that our people are doing on the ground and we need money to carry out those activities but we cannot be living beyond our means even in terms of our activities. We want to grow, we want to be effective, very effective in terms of what we do, but we also have these limitations and these are practical limitations that we have to deal with but unfortunately many people do not understand this, there is this sense of entitlement, 'the money is ours, because it is in our account now, it is ours we can use it however we see fit'. But really it does not work like that, in the real world it does not work like that, there are budgets that have to be followed, there are processes that have to be followed. Because I really found people take offence when I ask them to account, they really take offence, they don't see it as necessary that they should ... they really feel so insulted when that happens, they really can't see any reason in that. That's not just how money works especially at a non profit organisation that has very, very limited funds and especially in this context, you know the global economic crises, we can't be in a free-for-all situation, we have to account, we have to cut back on other things. But before that happens really I think there has to be this education, we always talk about political education and we tend to emphasise more on the politics of things rather than, because this is a process, this is a system we also need A for B to happen and B for A to happen, you see. So we would need to shift the focus a bit and exactly school people in how things work and how we deal with the money.

Dale: Now the APF is predominantly made up of community organisations, but it also has in its ranks what we know as individual activists, people that are not necessarily representing community organisations as well as a couple of political groupings. In your work and in your time in the APF how would you describe the relationship between those three components of the APF?

Sehlaphi: Sorry can you just repeat the question, I got lost there?

Dale: Sure, I was saying the APF is made up of three different components, the biggest and most predominant one is the community organisations that form the core, but there are also individual activists, people who are not necessarily representing communities and then there are also political groupings as well. I am just trying to find out if there is anything that you can say in your work and as you work for the APF, in terms of the relationships between those three or if there are any tensions? Often times in social movements one of the key debates in social movements is the relationship between community organisations and what is considered to be skilled individuals, individuals that come on to assist that and become part of the movement, but who don't represent any specific constituency. Have you found that in your work, tensions in that regard or can you speak to any of that relationship between the three different components of the APF?

Sehlaphi: I'll say there's been people especially when we say the skilled when we introduce these people that were here coming from a skilled background they aren't exactly well accepted because communities will feel they don't exactly identify with these people, they feel these people are at another platform when communities aren't exactly there. So it could be a matter of how these people actually introduce themselves to the communities, how they go to communities how someone actually interacts with communities, also shapes the manner in which a particular community is going to accept that person, is going to deal with that person. So it could be that and then there are individuals also as well, there is what I will say is tension within communities like individuals within communities who some communities feel aren't exactly on the same page with them. You might find that this individual probably sort of stands out, with this individual there is one person who is attending most workshops and what have you and then the community will feel this individual is actually doing things, like leaving them out, they are sort of personalising, not exactly personalising actually but turning the struggle if I may use that word into their personal project. So there tends to be tensions there. It could be maybe that this individual just happens to be hardworking and that's why people especially when it comes to skilled people, especially when it comes to organisations such as CALS that we deal with, that's why those organisations will always want to liaise and correspond with that individual, you see because this individual is hardworking and has earned it and then that organisation has got faith in that individual because they know if there is anyone who can get any job done, it is that individual. So they would rather work through an individual as opposed to the community at large because if you work through a community, then nothing happens, so then at the end of the day, those individuals, they are sort of not well received or ostracised by their communities.

Dale: Ok, the other thing that you do as an administrator is that you are the main communicator to the outside and liaising with different allies that the APF works with ... speak a little bit to the kinds of relationships that the APF has in that regard with other organisations both domestically as well as internationally?

Sehlaphi: Okay domestic, well it also applies to both cases anyway. I feel we've got very good relations with our organisations that we deal with be it funders or people who are also within maybe social movements, I feel we really have a cordial relationship. The fact that we are able to meet - though not in

meetings like in organisations - but we are able to carry out activities together. Whenever there are areas that we need help, we are able to approach them. I think that speaks to the kind of relationship that we have. I will look at for instance CALS; we do not have that capacity, we do not have the legal capacity to address the water issues, but we are in a position to call CALS and say we have such a situation, how best can we deal with it and they are always open to assist us. We have even organisations when we've had a problem, maybe something happened along the way, maybe it was poor planning, maybe it was we failed to do our duties and then we find ourselves in sort of a fix when we organised the march, but now we cannot transport people, we are able to call those organisations and even individuals within those organisations and they are always willing to come to our rescue. So I think it speaks to the relationship that we have with them, even our international - the outside organisation - that are with our funders. I will use an example of War on Want. We had Wendy Williams who was grant officer then who left the office of War on Want. We've built a very, very cordial relationship with her. now that she has left War on Want completely but she still drops us an occasional email to ask us how things are going at the APF, she's expressed interest in our events, that she needs to be kept up to date as to what is happening, if she's got time and she can also attend those events, so ja. I feel also as the person who also does the communication most of the times, I'm in a space, where there are some people that I communicate with that I have never met, but the fact that our communication really is good, it's effective, I feel I don't have really, I have never experienced a problem where they have never responded on time over issues I've raised, or if there is clarification that they want or I want it's easy to do that. Because we have created that space, that says we are partners, they might be our donors, they might be our funders but they don't exactly look at us as such.

Dale: Okay and just a few last questions, more general questions. Things at least at the macro level in South Africa, things are constantly in flux. Politically you can see the changes that have taken place over the last two years of the ruling party and other things. The APF is a kind of an organisation that in some ways has a very direct relationship to what is going on outside and the politics of that. What kind of, from your own perspective and having worked inside this organisation ... you are, this has to be said, you are the only person that has been interviewed here that's from the ... you know volunteer-activist side, you are an employee - but irrespective of that kind of positionality, I am very interested to see what you think is the potential future role of an organisation like the APF from where you stand and how you experienced it?

Sehlaphi: The fact that the political landscape sort of isn't constant, it is always fluctuating and at the moment where we are at right now I think organisations such as the APF are really in demand, they are more needed now than ever, because as we stand right now the marginalised, they've sort of been forgotten from the whole spectrum of things, they are so-so forgotten. The only time anyone ever remembers them is during the election time, of course we know that, and the marginalised actually they also know that now and they are saying 'you know we are not going to be used, you know we need to be constantly, we are part of this community, you cannot shelve us, put us in a closet and then open that closet only when you feel it suits you'. That's why we are seeing these service ... hardly a week goes by without us hearing because of those delivery protests. So I think organisations such as the APF are

more relevant now than ever and I feel even the government is feeling the pinch, it is actually feeling the pressure. And even you see in the manner in which they are responding now, the tendency back then was to sort of ignore these things and say 'oh okay, eventually they are going to die down' but now we see our government trying to defuse situations, trying to calm situations, maybe they are only calming situations from what I feel from what I see, they are only calming situations but they are not doing anything about it, they are saying 'no we do not want our people on the streets'. But the fact that you know, government leaders have been forced to move from their comfort zone to go to their informal settlements where people are or to go to people and talk to them, the fact that now government is starting to. Not much is happening, I feel nothing much is happening but it is a start that now government is in a position, is prepared to listen to people. So I feel in that sense organisations such as the APF are relevant because I feel if organisations such as the APF keep putting pressure on government to address their concerns, then one day we might not really have a government that will give us service delivery that will meet all our needs, but this government can do more than just actually doing. The people on the ground with organisations such as the APF are in a position to actually get that message across and then one day government will listen.

Dale: Ok and then you've mentioned what one could call a lot of different challenges with problems whatever, but putting it in a different language. What would you identify as the key strengths and the key weaknesses of the APF overall when you look at the two years now that you have pretty much been here and what you see?

Sehlaphi: Ok, not necessarily limiting myself to administrative duties?

Dale: Don't limit yourself, correct, yes.

Sehlaphi: Okay firstly the strengths of the APF. I am a positive person so I will start with the positive .

Dale: Okay

Sehlaphi: I think it is the ability really to organise, that's our strength. I have looked at marches that the APF has organised and people, the number of people that would turn up for those marches, they are so, they are going there and they are so passionate about what they do. The APF is sort of schooled in that, in the fact that we can do this, we can do this, we cannot allow, we can't wait on other people to do it, if we want change, and then change begins with us. I think that is the one positive message that the APF carries and mind you we are talking about people with limited resources but they don't really let that stand in their way. They do not let that stand in the way, so it is the ability to organise 'we want this period, nobody is going to do this for us', sort of go-getters, we want it done and then we can't. I also feel a strength is; most people within the APF are willing to put an extra mile, you might say it's an inconvenience; I have had people phoning me at very odd hours. If you are an employee and maybe even with other people within the APF if this happens over a period of time and I am not saying this is a bad thing, it is a bad thing in terms of people also have private lives, but it's a sign that people want to have work done, they really want things to be done, so the fact that they are willing to do that and the

training, the APF also is willing to give relevant training to people. But unfortunately people are aren't exactly open to that kind of thing, I don't exactly know why, but the response to such initiatives has been rather disappointing because the APF as an organisation is saying 'okay we are willing to train you in this' *{short pause}*. Okay, I was talking about this strength but unfortunately the APF also needs the other parties to do their bit ja but we have some individuals who are eager, who have shown eagerness to go to these trainings. I feel the APF also, I will say this is a strength in terms of wanting to consolidate, to mend relations with some of their sister organisations, I'll use the example of Khanya College, I think the relations were sort of going downhill, there was a time where they were sort of going downhill but the APF initiated a meeting with Khanya College to sort of mend the relations as it were, so to me that's the strength that you feel your partner or your friend is slipping away and then you do something about it to get them back on track to mend the relation so that is really the strength . Then of course there are weaknesses that I have pointed out, the fact that I am really not happy with the disciplinary processes I feel a lot can still be done there, we can still do a lot. I also feel this is a strength, the fact that we as an organisation. I am talking about the broader picture here, we know what we can do and what we can't do so we don't exactly tend to go blindly into things; we are sort of a practical organisation. For an organisation like ours it's so easy to really want to be everywhere and we cannot and we have told ourselves that we cannot [even if] people on the ground would want us. It is so easy for some organisations to have been carried away and wanting to impress but we have said no 'we are the APF we can only do this and this is what we are going to do' ja and okay what other weaknesses is there? Okay let me see strengths, weaknesses, strengths oh well I really can't think of any...

Dale: Okay, no that's fine ... as I have said you've mentioned several other things ... the one last question I always ask of everybody I am interviewing is, is there something that I have not asked you, something that we have not covered that you would like to make a comment...that you would like to say? And knowing that this project is about the APF, its history, its character, talking to different members so if there's anything you would like, please feel free. ●

Sehlaphi: Okay, I am sure I have mentioned this during the course of the interview but I feel the APF really needs to do more in terms of our disciplinary issues. I will suggest maybe a workshop in terms of how we relate to people in this organisation, it's important that's work-shopped and as an administrator coming here on a daily basis, we would need maybe an external facilitator in public relations management who would really sort of train us in how to deal with other people. This environment isn't exactly conducive or safe for someone who really comes here on a daily basis. I think there is a lot that needs to be done in order for trust to be restored, I think one's losing that and we really cannot operate as an organisation, this is not only about me as an administrator but I am picking that up. Actually people have actually mentioned it, this also happened especially in communities, people are so suspicious of each other and maybe they have reasons but it really makes life difficult especially for me. I am not asking for any special treatment but it is so difficult when you are dealing with people and you really don't know who to trust, you do not know what to say, you really can't give your duties and your work your all, really you cannot, it really becomes difficult. And well as an administrator now this will apply to Dawu as an administrator with my Treasurer, actually he will be stepping down, he won't be

contesting elections so it's going to be very, very difficult for me I know. He is one person that I developed this very, very close relationship with in terms of our work. He is the first person that I report to and of course someone else will be coming in his place and I would like to believe that person is also a capable person, though whoever they are they've got very, very big shoes to fill they really do. But and in the meantime he is trying to teach in terms of how to be hands on, these finance things, because I did not come from a financial background because like I have mentioned this it was also one thing that I found sort of challenging when I got here. Because administrative duties here mean a lot to do with finances than any other thing else of which I don't exactly come from that background. But the Treasurer is really trying to sort of prepare me for that, skill me in those areas of which I am quite grateful but I feel I would also need help more than what the Treasurer is doing, he is playing his part but if I could really get formal training that would I think make life easier and of course I am up for this challenge, I am doing something different and I mean it's challenging really, it's challenging. I like the fact that I am challenged, I like that quite a lot ja and generally I think seeing improvements, there was a time where I had really lost hope for the APF where everything was really going wrong like now we sort of saying we lost it there was a time, sometime last year where I really couldn't picture where we were at, but now we are sort of picking up and I think it is because we've tried and we must be trying to do something with regards to filling those gaps. There were gaps in terms of who is doing what and the roles are becoming clearer now so people are sort of clear as to what they are supposed to do and that needs to be encouraged. We should never just say we are an organisation if people have roles to be done and they are sort of neglecting those roles, they need to be reminded that this is what we do, this is what we are supposed to do. So I suppose that's it.

Dale: Okay. Thank you very much.

Sehlaphi: It's a pleasure.

