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**Interviewer:** Okay it's the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2010 Ellen thank you very much for making yourself available. Okay just before we can start can you just state your full name please.

**Chauke:** Ellen Chauke

**Interviewer:** Okay. And Ellen before I start asking you questions about Wynberg and the community organisation and APF I just want to find out a little bit about yourself. Find out who you are. Where and when were you born?

**Chauke:** I was born in Soweto, in Masakeng before Soweto was very big so there was an old location called Masakeng

**Interviewer:** Masakeng, and what year was that?

**Chauke:** 1956

**Interviewer:** 1956? Ok since that time where have you lived in South Africa ... different places?

**Chauke:** I went to Louis Trichard with my parents, my father remained here because it was in apartheid era so people were not allowed to stay here without permit so I was staying there with my mother in our homeland then my father was here in Joburg for work.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And how long did you stay there?

**Chauke:** I think I was still very, I was a baby then and then when we came back I was a little bit maybe 3 years old then we came back here and we stayed here now forever. From Masakeng we went to White City, Jabavu then from there we went to Chiawelo Ext 1 before it was just Chiawelo, it didn't have any extensions after that there were extensions because houses were built for people and we were allowed to move from one place to another. My parents moved from extension two Chiawelo. Then from there I went to Alexandra. I stayed with my brother, it was in 1984. Then I stayed here for two years in his house, then I moved to, he got a place a small 3 roomed house for me at a place where Indians used to live. So when they moved to Marlborough people were allowed to go in those houses for rentals so those premises were in Wynberg industrial site and business site. So there were back yard houses and back yard rooms behind the shops so that's where I lived from 1986 until 2006 then we were evicted. The eviction started in 2004 but I resisted it, went to court and until 2006.

**Interviewer:** And then from where have you been since 2006?

**Chauke:** Then from 2006, August we were allocated to camps.

**Interviewer:** (Problems with the recorder) OK. We are back on ...so you were just saying from two006 you moved into a new area?

**Chauke:** Yes after the court case.

**Interviewer:** Where was that?

**Chauke:** The court case?

**Interviewer:** No the area that you moved to

**Chauke:** The area it's in Alexandra but very far from the original location, we are just next to Marlborough its outside Alexandra a bit.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Just tell us a little bit about your family, you've already mentioned your mother and father, what did your mother and father do when you were growing up?

**Chauke:** My mother was not working, was a house wife my father was a garden boy so nothing else he was doing. He was just a garden boy but he struggled with the ANC he was involved in the struggle, he was part of the struggle

**Interviewer:** Ok - and brothers and sisters?

**Chauke:** I'm the only girl, they had two girls but they all passed away. I have 3 brothers left, others have passed away then --- my mother now has passed away, my father is the one who passed away first in 1979 then my mother left remaining with us and then in 1999 my mother passed away.

**Interviewer:** Okay, alright and children of your own?

**Chauke:** I have got only two kids, a boy a girl. My first born is a girl my last born is a boy who was born in 1984 and the girl was born in 1976.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Do they live with you or now they are on their own?

**Chauke:** They still live with me you know these things. We are just living in the same place and my daughter has two daughters, so which means I have two grandkids.

**Interviewer:** And what about your schooling? Tell me about your education?

**Chauke:** I went to school in 1963, it was my first year, then I went to primary, then from there I went to high school in the rural areas. So I passed my junior certificate, by that time when I passed everybody wanted to be a teacher or a nurse there was nothing like maybe a doctor so I just wanted to be a nurse. I applied there was no response then I just sit at home until I find something to do so I went in the hospital, I was just a backroom attendant so I went in the dark room doing the film thing and then I left the job because there was no money.

**Interviewer:** What year was that when you left that work?

**Chauke:** I worked in the dry cleaner in 1979, during that year I went to Johannesburg. I left Johannesburg hospital I think two years after that I think I was 1981/82. Since then I just sit at home on my knitting machine, I'm just doing that for myself, I knitted jerseys to survive.

**Interviewer:** So you've been self employed since that time?

**Chauke:** Yeah since that time.

**Interviewer:** Just give me some little bit of history of how you became active, politically active, how did that happen?

**Chauke:** During that time, I told you that my father was an activist and always people would come at home, he solved their problems always, I kind of liking that what my father was doing. While we were there in Wynberg, a lawyer came, a women's lawyer at 11 o'clock to just bring an eviction order, that's when I started. 'No man this is too much we can't live like this, we don't have proper water, we don't have electricity' - they came at about 10, we report it to the landlord he doesn't want to do anything about it so we started, I started recruiting other residents to talk about this and then we went to the Civic Association. It didn't help much but we went to the meetings, every Tuesdays we went to the meetings, how to do things right and then we fought this eviction order before we joined the APF. We fought it; I think it was 1992 when we received the eviction order. We fought it with the civic, local civic they never came back again. We kept on paying rent and then we started saying 'no the rent is too much' because it's not equal. If you have two rooms others are paying this, you have 1 room you pay more than the one who is having two rooms so it was unfair. So we started resolving that. We told them that 'no we are not going to pay more than we have to pay we want to pay R40 per room and that is all'. So we started marching to his house cause he was an Indian, we went to Marlborough, we marched then we solved the problem. From then we started saying we are no more going to pay the rent and we are no more going to call you if we have a problem, we will do it ourselves. Then we started to win the

struggle there and then when times come again we started this eviction, it was-because of this thing we started seeking some help somewhere and somebody told us about the APF. How are we going to go there, so we started engaging with the APF.

**Interviewer:** I'll ask you about that just now. Just give me a sense of who made up the community in Wynberg and how in regard to ... you indicated that you moved to a room but were most of the people initially from Alex? Where did most of that community come from?

**Chauke:** Most of the community were outsiders in fact, the foreigners because we had people from Malawi, most were Malawians when we started living there why because they were Moslems and the landlord, must I say the caretaker but at that time he called himself the landlord he was a Muslim and so mostly were Malawians. So I got that place because of my brother, he is also a Muslim so that's how we started living there. As time goes on there came people from Maputo, from Zimbabwe we started living with them, so each and everybody there was just coming in and out after we started the struggle because we said we didn't want to see him anymore so he didn't even come there. There was places where the garages which was empty so we took the people to come in.

**Interviewer:** Excuse me; Most of the places where people who were living in abandoned buildings that used to be industrial or a business is that correct?

**Chauke:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Now you mentioned that it started, as far as I understand in the early 1990s when they first tried to evict you. What were the reasons? Just describe that initial struggle before you joined the APF.

**Chauke:** The reasons were rent, service delivery because if you are paying rent the landlord must see to it that services are done - nothing of the sort was done. I think the landlord went to his lawyers to lay a complaint about that and they come with a bundle of papers for each and every person who is living in the yard. So that's when we started marching cause before we used to just go sleep in the night so that people must not notice because we didn't trust them because most of them were Muslims and we didn't want the landlord to find out what we were doing because if you have got something to tell him you must just tell him behind other's backs. So you can see that it was unfair to others so we tried to engage with other structures outside how to do this, how to do that.

**Interviewer:** Ok you mentioned that you went to the local civic, what civic was that?

**Chauke;** It was Alexandra Civic Association

**Interviewer:** So that was a SANCO affiliate, wasn't it?

**Chauke:** Before it was named SANCO it was ANCO- Alexander Civic Organisation.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And you say you didn't have much luck with them?

**Chauke:** Ya, because they didn't care so much about that but we kind of pushing, keep pushing until I think the landlord which was not exactly the landlord was a caretaker, do something to the traders. I don't know what but I think there was misunderstanding with the monies and all that so only to find out that those people wanted a disciplinary committee to handle this matter so there was one guy who was in Malborough, he was with the civic, Alexander Civic Organisation, so he was an Indian and he went to warn those traders to leave. So we heard about it that they were searching for the owner of the place so somebody told me that the owner, the owner the original is coming to the civic today so you must go there. I took two women whom we used to sneak at night to seek help and then I was the third one. We went there to that civic when there somebody said 'we didn't call you' and we said 'we are also residents of the place so if there is something to be solved we have to solve it together'. So somebody said 'no let them stay and hear what they want maybe we can try and solve it'. That's when I meet the landlord and his lawyers and then we didn't talk to him in fact we just sitted there listening to those people who were complaining, the traders who were complaining. Then, when the meeting was dismissed, everybody dispersed. He was waiting for me outside, he called me, he wanted to know who I am, I told him I'm the resident of Wynberg, 'so are you living there? Nobody told me that there were people who are living there'. Then I said 'no we are living there, we are paying rent and there are no services done' that's when we started engaging. He was from London then he keeps on phoning me even if he is in London. Then we talked then I didn't have money because he phoned me one day, he said 'look I think I can see that you like your people, I can sell this place for you for two million' and I said 'no this place doesn't worth two million'. He said 'no we can negotiate about that but if you've got money you can take the place, the place is yours so that you can keep your people there, so that's how we meet with the owner of the place.

**Interviewer:** So the owner was living overseas?

**Chauke:** Yes he was living overseas.

**Interviewer:** And how many people at that point would you say were living in that little community there?

**Chauke:** There were people who were living in the industrial site, in the firms abandoned firms and then we were in the houses behind the shops so I don't know which....

**Interviewer:** Were there two separate groups?

**Chauke:** There were 4 in fact 4 stands so where I used to stay there were houses I can say more or less 50.

**Interviewer:** In houses?

**Chauke:** In houses.

**Interviewer:** But you joined up with them as well?

**Chauke:** They were evicting us as those in Marlborough in large numbers we said, 'no, we are together; seeing that there is only one person who is seeking for this place we have to join together and then fight together'.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So when you combined everybody how many people were you talking about?

**Chauke:** 850 plus the children ...so more or less 1000.

**Interviewer:** When did you start the organisation? You said you know you were making contacts but when did the organisation come together?

**Chauke:** 2006, that's when we start naming our organisation that this is Wynberg Concerned; it was in 2004 the second eviction order, yah.

**Interviewer:** So up to that time it was more or less just some individual activists and yourself and other people? So describe ...now you said you heard from other people about the APF, so just talk through that? How did that joining the APF and learning, how did that happen?

**Chauke:** At first when this eviction order number two came there was somebody who was working with the housing department in Alexandra, the ARP [Alexandra Renewal Project], so he didn't want to come so we send somebody. When he came he said 'no I don't want my name to be known and I don't want anybody to know'. So we sat down as a committee and him and we ask we were seeking help about this eviction, how can we go about fixing this, he told us about the APF, you can go to the Anti Privatisation Forum they can help you. And then one lady who knows somebody from Alexandra Vukuzenzele said there are people who are working with the APF, I can call them. That's when we meet Vukuzenzele but we had already known about the APF, but we didn't know how to contact the APF, where can we



find the APF until that lady told us about the people who were in Vukuzenzele. So she tried to phone them and they came - so that's when we come.

**Interviewer:** Okay and that was in 2006?

**Chauke:** Ya ... no, 2004.

**Interviewer:** And then just talk through how joining the APF and what happened from that point when you ...

**Chauke:** From that point when we joined the APF there were meetings which were attended, when we got problems we went to court. I still remember we were there in the court room, everyday he used to come. When it started on Monday then it will end on Friday so every day we were there for a couple of hours and then after that will go to job . We went on and on with the APF until to date.

**Interviewer:** And then what was it that the APF gave to Wynberg, what was it that you were getting?

**Chauke:** In terms of the APF they gave us resources - when we want pamphlets or what or transportation we went so we know that when we don't have money for the transport because you know that court case was, it was something else I don't know it was not postponed to maybe next month for one day. When it start on Monday it will end on Friday and then they will give you another day from Monday to Friday again just like that so really we didn't have, we tried to have our own maybe meeting but APF was there for us.

**Interviewer:** Okay. As your membership of the APF grew just beyond the court case just describe what other kind of things were ... as the organisation ...that you received not in terms of resources but politically and otherwise.

**Chauke:** You know when you are an activist you have to have some knowledge in things. We were activists but we didn't know anything about political issues. So then with the APF there were workshops, political workshops, there were subcommittees where you would go and attend to gain that knowledge how to go about housing committees, media committee, labour you name them . All that people are struggling about is there in the APF so we gain a lot in the APF.

**Interviewer:** Once you formed the Wynberg, it's called the Wynberg Concerned Residents, it that correct?

**Chauke:** Yes.



**Interviewer:** ... did you form, how was the organisation structured? How was the Wynberg structured? Did you have formal leadership or was it just a collection of people there?

**Chauke:** You know at first we were just individuals caucusing but when we formed Wynberg Concerned we had a subcommittee, the subcommittee is in the yard because there were 4 yards so there were subcommittee in each and every yard. From that each and every yard we pick up maybe 3 to 4 comrades to come and form the area committee so we used to call that an area committee at that time.

**Interviewer:** And you meet on a regular basis ...?

**Chauke:** I can say maybe everyday because we had those problems we had to meet every day to know if maybe somebody must be sent out to go to any office. So we had to meet in the evening and then give the report back and then every Sunday we have to meet the residents.

**Interviewer:** Did you have elected leadership?

**Chauke:** Yes...I for one I was the chairperson and then there was two, a chair person and a vice, a secretary and a vice, organiser, treasurer and elected committee member.

**Interviewer:** When Wynberg joined the APF and begun to be active in the APF did members of the Wynberg community start taking positions in the APF? Have you held any positions in the APF?

**Chauke:** After a while because you must learn things before you want to take a position, you can't just take a position not knowing anything about the organisation you have to learn something first then know the organisation then you can take something about the organisation. So I took the position last year, I was the Joburg organiser and I think I still am because I'm still doing the organising for the Johannesburg region.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And you said that in 2006 you went to court. Just describe what happened as a result of that court case and then you said you ... anyway what happened with the court case?

**Chauke:** I can say the court case we went on in 2005. There is the first phase and the second phase of the case. The first phase was in Johannesburg High Court and the second phase was in 2006 in Pretoria High Court. So, in Joburg High court I can say we did have our victory because the judge didn't want to grant the eviction order, instead he wanted to know if there is any place which was allocated for us. So unfortunately nobody for the local

government came they just sent a two sentence note to the judge and then he was so furious then he said 'no I can't accept this'. They tried to bribe us saying maybe we can have R500 000 of which when you calculate it each person must have R85.00, what can we do with R85? We are homeless, we don't have money, we are not working, we don't have money to buy material maybe to build a shack somewhere else and where are you going to build that shack 'cause each and every land has its own. So that was that and then the judge didn't grant any eviction. And then the developer, I don't know what happened or maybe they found new lawyers because there was one lawyer who was an elderly person, I think he told them something and then they decided to withdraw the case here in Joburg, they took it to Pretoria so they started afresh. Instead of taking us to court they took the government to court because they said the government has an obligation to us. The constitution states clearly that you must give people houses so you can't evict people without giving him/her alternative place to stay. So that's when we went to Pretoria High Court. That old man he was both sides because when he speaks he didn't say my client, he was talking about both of us, we were caught in the middle both of us ... so the government must see to it that it's either they give us a place to stay or we are going to remain in the premises and the government must pay the owner of the place 1 million a month because that's the money which must be paid to him every month for the rentals. That made then start to think again because that judge knew that this case was in Joburg started talking about the previous case and then he said the government and the local government just sent a two sentence to the judge who was holding our case. So now they want to call everybody from the local government, starting with Nomvula Mokonyane [MEC for Housing], she was there. It was a circus because when we went to, I think you still remember we took the children to court wearing uniforms so that made the judge somehow didn't know how to rule this case so we went to Pretoria High Court. The judge went straight to the point that I can't just grant the eviction because I can't just say people must be evicted. Where are they going? Do you have a specific place for them? Unfortunately there was none, they called the ARP 3 times, 3 days in a box, nothing was said, no land for us, no place for us so we said okay, let's call the big fish . They called Nomvula and her cabinet, there was nothing, they called the province nothing was said, they called the minister for housing by that time it was Lindiwe Sisulu. In my understanding or maybe what I'm thinking is that Sisulu told them that they must give us the place to stay and they decided that they must give us the camps, temporary camps to live there until because extension 7 was congested so they just can't take us to the houses we have to wait a bit so that's how our case ended.

**Interviewer:** And how did you get legal help and legal representation?

**Chauke:** Through the APF of course, we had Simon Delaney through the APF, he was working for the APF by then and then in the middle of the case he took us to transfer the case to Legal Resources Centre. He said they have resources there and they have got attorney there they can help us. We went there to the Legal Resources Centre then still the APF was there for us.

**Interviewer:** And so the eventual ruling at the Pretoria high court was that you will be relocated to these transit camps?

**Chauke:** Yes, either we go to the transit camps or we must remain in the old premises.

**Interviewer:** So what happened after that?

**Chauke:** And he doesn't care whether we stay until 2025 as long as there is no alternative housing for us then we are going nowhere because he keeps saying that. Where do we must take these people to if you don't give them a place to stay? 'Where do you think she must go with these people so I think the judge played his role very, very carefully there. So until today we are still living in the camps. We were given two months to move out and they were not taking us every week a small group after two weeks, fortnightly. It was on August I still remember the first group moved from, I mean the first group moved on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2006, the second group first week of September the third group, third week of the month so until today

**Interviewer:** And what kind of structures were you moved into?

**Chauke:** We have got 3 camps in Alexandra. We have got Marlborough transit camp, which is those tiny little boards and then, we have got Alexandra Transit camp which is built by bricks but very tiny, it's like this ...

**Interviewer:** Just a few meters wide?

**Chauke:** Ya, it's a two roomed very tiny. You put a bed then nothing else, no wardrobe nothing and then there is shacks. I decided as I leader I must go to the shacks and then the people must go to those tiny little houses and then the others were taken to Marlborough transit camps where there are those tiny little boards ... so there is a shack camp which we called it Silver Town because it's a shack and then those brick two roomed tiny houses and the boards so I think like a tin. So I can say because we are not sleeping under the bridge it was fine because it was meant only for 6 months -1 year it's long overdue now.

**Interviewer:** It's been almost 4years now.

**Chauke:** Its 4 years after the 26<sup>th</sup> - we will be staying we are now going to 5 years.

**Interviewer:** And since the time that the community was moved did you maintain, what happened to the struggle for proper housing?

**Chauke:** We are still doing that. We march to the ARP demanding houses because there was this thing of corruption. We heard that they were taking people from somewhere else – Thembisa, Soweto giving them houses in Alexandra and they know that Alexandra is a very tiny place there is no space, so once you take somebody from outside how about those people who are living within Alexandra. So it was a problem but there was no response still.

**Interviewer:** Excuse me, so nothing has fundamentally shifted since then?

**Chauke:** No since we tried to because we have done the inspection, marched to the offices, marched to Joburg and we are talking to lawyers to see what's happening in Alexander so they tried to move people. It's only in Silver Town that they have never come to move us. Maybe it's a punishment because the leaders are living there but at least the Marlborough transit camp after the inspection they moved the people to the other camp and then most of them are people from outside – Zimbabwe, Maputo they give them rental houses those who qualify because they have got papers to be here in South Africa they gave them *smalanyana* rooms for R350 but it's too much.

**Interviewer:** R350 rentals per month? So people are having to pay for these rooms?

**Chauke:** They have to pay and we have got one of our members who is from Wynberg, she took two rooms, she is a South African, she took two rooms because she has got family because she doesn't qualify for an RDP house so she must get those rentals. So instead of one she took two because she has got a very big family so it's unfair also because I can't pay R700.00 for two small rooms. It's very unfair. I don't know why they don't build social houses for rentals.

**Interviewer:** And how through out all this time I mean you mentioned that you marched on the ARP, you marched on the province ...how has the response been from both the state and the ANC?

**Chauke:** Those they don't respond maybe giving us an answer of what they are going to do. 'No' you have to push them to come to you. Last time I pushed them I think it was in 2009. I pushed them that I do not have any more answers to tell the people so you have to go down there and talk to the people. What they did when they go they start dividing us now saying your leadership doesn't want you to go ... your leadership I mean you can't say your

leadership doesn't want you to go so I'm here to tell you that as time goes on we will stop moving you out. That's bullshit. You are not talking the right thing, you must tell the people straight what's going on, what's wrong why are you not moving them to the houses because what we see you register people at night. Two o'clock people are asleep you just choose your friends to register at night.

**Interviewer:** That's for RDP houses?

**Chauke:** Ya, and some of those people are not qualifying to be at RDP houses.

**Interviewer:** And in 2008 the xenophobic attacks started in Alex and they spread in everything. How did that in any way affect the community particularly given the fact that there is a lot of people who are from outside the country who are part of the community?

**Chauke:** Ya, no we fought that we didn't want anybody to enter the premises except this camp, Alexander transit camp, there were people who were, and I don't think those people were ... it's just those who were thieves and thugs because I can't just go straight to your house, I don't know you, where you come from that means somebody called you and told you to come to that house. But where I stay nobody was hurt and nobody even came in to harass people there. We didn't allow that to happen but people were very afraid about what will happen ...

**Interviewer:** So there was someone to defend the community?

**Chauke:** Ya, there was a defence for those communities.

**Interviewer:** And has that, has the issue of people not being South African been an issue in terms of the struggle, generally in the community?

**Chauke:** No. To us no, because when we were still by the time we were evicted there was that rumour that those are not South Africans you can't give them ... those words were from officials from the government. We can't give them places to live because they are foreigners. We said foreigner or no foreigner those are people. What you have to do is to give them a place to stay. Maybe come to them and ask what's wrong. You know why they are here and you allow that to happen so there is no foreigner in this place. Even the police, they used to send the police, I don't know maybe they tried to threaten us that we must run away. The police used to come at night and harass people, knock so we had this strategy when somebody maybe notices something at night we sent an sms, a please call or just call if you have airtime to say that they are here we have to take the whistle, whistle and everybody will get up and we just start fighting with the police there throwing stones at the van and they will

go out running. So we didn't sleep there we used to when you hear something the whistle calling people then you just get up whether you've got clothing on you just get up and see what's going on because we knew that the police were harassing people more especially those from outside. They will take their radios, they will take their monies in Wynberg several times we went to meet the station commander. I still remember when we complained to Simon [the lawyer] that these people are harassing us please write them a letter to the station commander notifying that if that happens we will do something which they will not like because when they came in somebody will close the gate with nowhere to go then it will be a disaster . I remember they came into my house I was not there. They never come and apologise and the police who were passing, I flagged them down and talk to them

**Interviewer:** And have there been any problems since then?

**Chauke:** Since then everything has stopped completely.

**Interviewer:** You've covered a lot of questions. So the challenges in terms of the initial struggles, housing still remains?

**Chauke:** Yes it still remains cause some, I can say most of the Wynberg people have moved out but some are left in that Alexander Transit camp. In Silver Town they never came totally to register us to say maybe whether we are moving out or what so we still have that problem. We are still waiting to be reallocated.

**Interviewer:** Besides the relationships, I mean your membership, Wynberg's membership with the APF ... as a result of the struggles that you undertook were you able to establish relationships with other organisations, NGOs? If so just describe those.

**Chauke:** We are engaged with this PAC because of this housing struggle.

**Interviewer:** Pan African Congress?

**Chauke:** Yes. I still remember when we go to picket they were there assisting us in Sandton. We went to Soccer City stadium they were there with us, and then we went to Joburg Housing department they were with us. So I can say we've got that good relationship going on. And we have got this slot on Alex Fm, it was organised by Siphso Magudulela. So every Tuesday we used to go there to talk about service delivery, everything in connection with human rights, so we called one of them to be with us. The NGOs, we have got this AIDS programme with this AIDS organisation which we came with open care so I think we need to go more and more to those people and built a very strong relationship.



**Interviewer:** So in other words the character of what you've been doing is broadly defined from housing to other issues as well? How about the basic services generally for example ...

**Chauke:** Basic services like?

**Interviewer:** Basic services like sanitation, water, roads, electricity ... all lighting, recreational facilities, all of those kinds of things?

**Chauke:** Ya I still remember I think it's 3 to 4 months now ... we went to confront with toyi-toyi to the ARP offices, sit in there and we said if you don't give us the toilets today we are sleeping here because there is a toilet when we need to go to the toilet but I can't eat at my place because there is no toilet. They have to amend that so we are doing that also, we are doing that also.

**Interviewer:** And the success of that ... of those struggles?

**Chauke:** Ya

**Interviewer:** So you managed to get sanitation, toilets, and these things that were delivered? Have you got electricity for example?

**Chauke:** We've got electricity, we managed to get electricity because in the shack you know they do not want to give people electricity but we told them we want electricity. There were no windows but we told them we want them to put in the windows, we want the windows they put in the windows. So I can see the struggle is very strong.

**Interviewer:** Why is it that you think - from what you are saying - you've have had a lot of success in persuading the authorities and local government to do these things, why do you think you have had that success?

**Chauke:** Knowledge is power, knowledge is power. Through APF I know the right channels, what to do if I don't get this what must I do you see. So I've got that knowledge, the APF work-shopped me, I know what to do, I know who to approach if I've got a problem maybe I don't understand something I phone them.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And now just switching to the APF a little bit about the APF itself which has certainly over the years since Wynberg has joined, it has had its own problems and challenges and I want to get a sense of your perspective and where you're coming from? First of all describe to me how it is - you've said quite a lot of good things about the APF and everything - what have been maybe some problems and challenges experienced?



**Chauke:** Sometimes you find that maybe you want the funds to do something only to find that we don't have enough money. I don't know why? Maybe the funders cut the funding or what, but I really don't know but sometimes you really need that funding to be given to you so that you must do something and maybe workshoping people on the ground or doing something and leadership is fine except for now. I really don't know what is going on otherwise but the leadership I knew was almost perfect. Not exactly perfect but you can talk to them and they will understand your situation and give you what you want, guide you on the way but now I think our leadership it's failing us.

**Interviewer:** in the more recent period now?

**Chauke:** Ya

**Interviewer:** Okay. Just speak a little bit, you've now been in the struggle for quite a long time living amongst communities that are very, very poor and most people not having jobs. How is it that you see the challenges, what kind of challenges do you see for people who are at the bottom of the socio- economic in poor communities? The APF is an organisation in poor communities, started to try to bring poor communities together but it's proven quite - some successes some failures – it's proven quite difficult. What do you think are the most difficult things in organising and getting things that you are struggling for in a context of poverty and such sometimes quite desperate situations?

**Chauke:** Ya you are right. I've been with the APF for a long time now. And communities, people who are not working, people who are coming here for the meetings most of the times, people who need to be given funding in most of the cases. I really don't know how to explain this - it's quite something emotional.

**Interviewer:** Okay, well take your time; if you want to express that or if you want to find a way, we can always come back to that. I guess I was trying to ask from your experience as an activist what do you see as the main challenges that present themselves in the condition - so this is not an organisation that works with unionised workers, it's not an organisation that works with employed people - in the context of that poverty? What do you think are the main challenges to face organisations like a community in Wynberg or APF?

**Chauke:** Most of the time people don't have money and we've got those challenges. People fight to go to join the struggle but when they come home there is nothing to eat so sometimes I think of something like how about we have project ploughing something may be cabbages, spinach, tomatoes or whatever so that people must be encouraged to work very hard and then when they are in the struggle they know that APF is doing something for us

and maybe they are giving us money to do the gardening, small gardening something else or maybe projects like beading, knitting, sewing and that and then maybe the communities can ... because really people are very poor and the APF can't give them jobs you see they managed to gather us together but they can't give us jobs. We have to struggle, we don't have housing, we don't have water, sanitation whatever, APF is doing something to help us to go and do those struggles but what about this poverty?

**Interviewer:** So that remains a challenge, projects in particular. Can you tell me to what extent you as Wynberg, as the community of Wynberg you were able to link up with other communities, other organisations in other areas as a result of belonging to the APF, you know either learning solidarity, joining others how did that experience ...?

**Chauke:** We meet with other organisations through the APF because those organisations are affiliated to the APF. There are some committees where we meet together, we talk about this, we plan the struggle, we plan the marches. So by so doing we link with each other from Tshwane, from East Rand, from Vaal, from Soweto, Joburg we kind of link our struggles and have become strong

**Interviewer:** And what about outside of Gauteng?

**Chauke:** Ya outside of Gauteng. We've got Tshwane which we are linking with but I don't think Vaal, East Rand, Tshwane and Joburg we must end there. We must go abroad as now we have got people from Mafikeng, I think we have to go somewhere else linking those people and recruiting them to the APF. But we've got people who we are working with like people from ILRIG in Cape Town, there are people from Abahlali Basemjondolo we are linking with them through the APF. But I think APF must not to be in Gauteng only.

**Interviewer:** Last couple of questions. How do you think - if at all if it happens - the recent political changes and the battles that are going on within the ANC and government ... has that affected or changed in anyway the kind of struggles that people on the ground like Wynberg have been undertaking, have been struggling for?

**Chauke:** No, because you can't do right when you're doing wrong.

**Interviewer:** Just explain what you mean by that

**Chauke:** The fighting within the ANC the ruling party, it does affect us because when you are fighting corruption and the ANC is corrupted, amongst themselves they are fighting and then what about people on the ground? What are they going to achieve? Nothing because you are still corrupted, you're still fighting amongst themselves there is no time to see how

we plan things on the ground; you don't even have time to go and check. I don't know whether I've answered you.

**Interviewer:** Ya, so it's taken the attention off the organisation from what they should be doing, is that what you're saying? In the present period now, I mean you have described a lot of the struggles that have gone through some successes and everything - where do you see things going from here in terms of both Wynberg ... in the future, what do you see as the main challenges and what should be done?

**Chauke:** From?

**Interviewer:** From the present point on, I mean right now. What we have talked about here is the struggle has taken place over a long period of time. Now we are sitting in this situation both as the APF as well as let's say Wynberg - if you're looking now as a fairly experienced activist what do you say needs to happen? Where do things need to go from here?

**Chauke:** Ya from here onward to achieve something bigger. The APF and its affiliates, I think we need to work together, see what we've done before and what needs to be done so that we must make something big, the APF and its affiliates. And there must be some changes there because right now there is a very big difference since we got the new elected office bearers so there is a difference of those who were there before. So fixing that, we have to do something because if we don't do something about that APF will collapse. So to keep it from collapsing we have to change some things to make it happen to make it big, to make it accessible because now it seems each and everybody is going backwards now.

**Interviewer:** And what about Wynberg in particular, the same question ...

**Chauke:** No. Wynberg it still stands. Wynberg we are still there. We want to fight, we want to fix, we know that we can't fix everything but we have to do something so that our government must know that APF is there, Wynberg is there.

**Interviewer:** Okay.