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**Interviewer:** Alright. It's the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2010, Lawrence, thanks very much for making time to come. Just for the record, can you please state your full name?

**Lawrence:** My name is Lawrence Ntuli.

**Interviewer:** Okay Lawrence and we just want to know a few things about yourself - when and where were you born?

**Lawrence:** I was born in Tsakane. Tsakane is in the East Rand

**Interviewer:** And what year was that?

**Lawrence:** 1976.

**Interviewer:** 1976, and have you lived there all your life or you've moved...?

**Lawrence:** Yes I've lived there for all of my life. Actually I grew up there.

**Interviewer:** And tell us a little bit about your family. Are you married? Do you have children? Are you single?

**Lawrence:** Yes, I do have one dependant, meaning one child. I'm not married; I'm single at this moment.

**Interviewer:** How old is your child?

**Lawrence:** He's eight months.

**Interviewer:** Eight months so he's a new arrival?

**Lawrence:** Yes he's a new arrival.

**Interviewer:** Congratulations. And just tell us a little about your schooling, what kind of schooling have you had?

**Lawrence:** Actually I've got matric, I matriculated, I think in 1995. I went to University, Wits University. I did a BA honours and Masters and now I'm doing PHD.

**Interviewer:** In what subject matter?

**Lawrence:** In politics.

**Interviewer:** In politics?

**Lawrence:** Yes, my focus is on inter-government relations, a case study of three municipalities in Gauteng.

**Interviewer:** Impressive, and in terms of work, what kind of work have you been ... or you've been a student?

**Lawrence:** Actually I worked for Khaya Centre for Applied Legal Studies as a researcher but that was a long time ago. Also I did a research for South African Centre for Economic Justice - it was also a long time ago. I worked for NEHAWU as a publication officer. I worked for Freedom Urban Foundation as an assistant researcher but that was ten years ago and recently I worked for the Gauteng Government as a Deputy Director, research, planning and inter-government relations. Yes, I think that's my work experience.

**Interviewer:** And just describe to me how you became politically active, when did you start becoming politicised and how did that happen?

**Lawrence:** I became politically active I think at University it's how I first got joined into politics, became a political activist through student movements, SASCA and later socialist student movements like Keep Left ensured that I became politically active at University. But prior to University, I was political but not in the same way as I was at university. I was a little bit without direction - I was still a teenager - and identified myself with the alliance politics but never joined any politics. But in one way or the other but I supported them during my high school days. But as soon as I arrived at University I...actually I emerge as a political activist. Yes...I like ensured that I became active at Wits University.

**Interviewer:** And you mentioned specifically, I'm quite sure you've been a long time member of Keep Left. Is that correct or previously Keep Left was called ISSA wasn't it?

**Lawrence:** Yes, actually me I joined Keep left in 1998, but by then it was called, Socialist Workers Organisation. At some point it changed to Keep Left. I was more of a coordinator at Wits, co-ordinating Keep Left activists, actually Keep Left activities at Wits meeting so I was more of a central person and Keep Left comrades at Wits. But as soon as I left university they also die out because it failed to produce other people to play the same role as me. But now I'm no longer associated with Keep Left because of other reason, I think I left it eighteen months ago, yes. Now I don't think I'm that much politically active as before...

**Interviewer:** ... how did you get interested or what was your specific interest in issues of privatisation in particular? This question is leading up to talking about the formation of the APF in particular. So where did your interest come with regards to privatisation and why did you think that was important?

**Lawrence:** You mean struggle against privatisation?

**Interviewer:** Correct. Yes.

**Lawrence:** Yes, you see I was socialist by that time when that thing of privatisation was happening throughout the country but also at Wits University there were attempts of privatising and outsourcing some services. Actually it's what motivated me to join the struggle against privatisation because in one way or the other, privatisation affected me or it was going to affect me in one way or the other because of student funding. Because this thing of privatisation under neo-liberalism, it was also an attack on student funding. And me at that time I was dependant on student funding, they called it NAFSAS by that time, government funding. Actually what happened there were funding cuts...the funding was cut as a result of neo-liberalism, you'll remember it started in 1996, neo-liberalism

through GEAR policy. Now what motivated me to do a struggle is personal. Privatisation was going to affect me as a person; second, it's because I was already politically active, a socialist, Marxist.

**Interviewer:** And how ... do you understand privatisation? It's just that different people have different understandings about that and for you what does it mean?

**Lawrence:** I think privatisation it takes different forms, it can be outsourcing of services like at Wits or somewhere in Jo'burg municipalities they outsource services. For example, at Wits they outsource cleaning and catering etc. etc. I think...but also in assuming some of the things owned by the government or by whichever government institutions...I think that constitutes privatisation meaning that you create conducive environment for accumulation of capital ensuring that few people benefit out of service. I think that is my limited understanding of privatisation. It is more of an antithesis of nationalisation, you see because with nationalisation everything is owned by the state, you see. Yes, like privatisation which happened in the ...after the fall of socialism in the Eastern Europe ... neo-liberalism, creating conducive environment for profit making. I think that's privatisation.

**Interviewer:** And for you, you've said that it was impacting on you personally at Wits University, but why did you think that from the mid-'90s onwards that the issue of privatisation became so important to so many people in the context of post-1994 South Africa? In other words why did it become such an issue for such a lot of people to struggle against?

**Lawrence:** No, actually it will be a mistake for one to think that privatisation started in the post-apartheid era. Actually they were attempts of privatising state assets as I said even prior to democratic breakthrough. The difference is that after 1994 it becomes stronger ... actually it depends, now the Apartheid government tried to privatise but at that time it was not conducive because there was a struggle all over the country. They tried to privatise many things in the township but the more you privatise, the more people occupy the side of the struggle against privatisation you see. But now my understanding is that it preceded 1994, true but after ANC became government, become strong ...it take different form actually, yes.

**Interviewer:** Now just turning to Tsakane in particular, your community. Tell us a little bit about the history of that community. How did that township come about, what is the sort of general character of the place as opposed to other townships because each one is quite different in some ways and some history?

**Lawrence:** Actually Tsakane was located in Brakpan before because of forceful removal - I don't know whether in the '60s or '70 something, I'm not quite sure. The apartheid government decided to relocate people in Brakpan to what we now call Tsakane. I think it's how it was established. Actually I don't think it's different from other working class areas, like in Tsakane people are experiencing same problems that experienced by some other poor or working class people somewhere in the country like the question of unemployment etc.etc. There is no development, sluggish service delivery, and all those things. For me, it's like other working class areas. You find informal settlement there, you'll find many things that you'll find somewhere, you see.

**Interviewer:** Was Tsakane initially ... when you say forced movement for most people in the early years in Tsakane ... was that workers in the surrounding in the industries in the East Rand around Brakpan?

**Lawrence:** Yes, actually the first people who settled in Tsakane were from Brakpan you see. They were staying next to places of work where they were firms and industries and everything. Because of apartheid laws they decided to remove them and locate them in Tsakane. That is how it was formed basically.

**Interviewer:** And does Tsakane have any particular, what I'll call political history to it, in terms of the liberation struggle? You know, the sections of the Vaal have different kinds of political history, sometimes depending on the inspiration of it. What is the overall political history of Tsakane?

**Lawrence:** As I say, I think Tsakane is like other working class areas in South Africa. People in Tsakane also play a major role in the struggle against apartheid but of course under the leadership of ANC, they play a major role in the struggle against apartheid like other townships. Hence that's why I'm saying that we cannot single out Tsakane and view Tsakane separate from other working class areas. It's got the same history with Langa, Gugulethu, Sebokeng and Soweto.

**Interviewer:** Also a strong history of civic organisations as well?

**Lawrence:** Yes, SANCO was everywhere, SANCO was everywhere. Rent boycott and bus boycott, consumer boycott was there. Actually those things happened in Tsakane in the same way they happened somewhere, you see, yes.

**Interviewer:** And when...just tell us a little bit about how the community organisation that you belong to and have been part of some time ... how did that come into being, how did it start? What were the conditions for Tsakane? What's the full name of the organisation?

**Lawrence:** The Tsakane Community Forum.

**Interviewer:** ...tell us a bit about the history, how it started and why it became an organisation?

**Lawrence:** The Tsakane Community Forum was started after the birth of APF, actually it was started as a response to student exclusion in the township because they were saying that you cannot repeat matric, if you fail matric you must go somewhere, an adult school and finish off your matric. But also it was a response to rent related problems because by that time they were saying that if you don't pay rent they will attach your properties and all those things. But actually I think it was a response to student exclusion from college. Students were no longer allowed to continue with their studies if they fail matric. Of course it grew to deal with other issues, service delivery, housing and so on and so on, yes.

**Interviewer:** And what year did it come into being? What year was it formed? Do you remember?

**Lawrence:** It was formed I think in 2002.

**Interviewer:** 2002?

**Lawrence:** Yes, I think 2002.

**Interviewer:** And I'm assuming because of the issues a lot of the membership was mostly composed of the younger generation of activists, mostly students?

**Lawrence:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Is that mainly the case or as it's grown it has incorporated other residents and people?

**Lawrence:** Yes as it grew and deal with other issues like electricity and water and housing it attracted other members of the community, elders and young people but it is dominated by young people. Young people from the beginning up to now were playing a leading role as compared to the elders, you see.

**Interviewer:** And tell me a little something about the way you structured the organisation...what do the structures of the organisation look like?

**Lawrence:** No, Tsakane Community Forum is more of an issue based organisation, we only become active if we have to deal with a particular issue, it's not forever active, you see. If anyone at either sections are experiencing problems, A or B, Tsakane will emerge and deal with that problem, you see. In between it's not that much active. Because also what we must keep in mind is that the community-based organisation can only be active if there are issues; if there are no issues it cannot be active. If there are no people who want to struggle it cannot be active. But now the organisation was in a close relationship with Keep Left Tsakane. Most leaders of the organisation were affiliated to Keep Left in one way or the other. In the meeting we organised community meetings and in those meetings we elect and we put potential leaders into the fold of the organisation. I don't know whether I've captured your question.

**Interviewer:** Sure. So you had an elected leadership as well?

**Lawrence:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And when I say structure I'm thinking about for example, other than the usual community meetings, was there an elected office bearers there where there is an AGM or that kind of thing or was it more as you say just a response to the struggles?

**Lawrence:** Yes, in terms of an AGM, at the beginning we used to elect leaders formally but at some point that thing it became a problem. You elect people and say, you you're Chairperson or Secretary but the person doesn't do their job. They just become a Chairperson or Secretary by name only without executing the mandate. Therefore it becomes a problem of continuously electing people. Now we decided to come with different way like work-shopping people to be leaders, like grooming people to be leaders, you see. Yes grooming people to be leaders but that thing of AGM honestly it's not happening every year as we want it to happen because there are many challenges. Like if an organisation is not active on the ground I don't think it will have an AGM every year, in fact you're doing nothing only a few people are active, actually it will be a farce

organisation to pretend that it will have an AGM as only five people are active. Yes, I think those are the challenges that we face. It's difficult on the ground to build a strong organisation. I know some will say; "no this is not democratic", but what we must understand is that the organisation is dependant by active connection by what is happening on the ground.

**Interviewer:** And tell me a little bit about how your organisation came to know about and to join the APF when you say in 2002 when it formed.

**Lawrence:** You see I was there when APF was formed, me personally. And I was with one of my friends. Now we transmitted that thing to the township, that there is a progressive organisation, somewhere in Jo'burg, it deals with issue A and B. Therefore it will be productive for our organisation to be affiliated to the APF. Actually it was me because I was...actually it was formed in Wits. APF together with TCCPA and some as a result of Wits privatisation project, see. And me I happened to be active without that project. When I went to the township I communicated that thing to activists and it's how Tsakane became part of APF.

**Interviewer:** And since you joined the APF, have you or members of Tsakane Community Forum, have you held positions in the APF? Have any people been elected as leaders in the APF from Tsakane?

**Lawrence:** You mean APF as a ... yes, like some of us became Chairperson, of course at the regional level, others Secretary but that was log time ago.

**Interviewer:** That was the East Rand region?

**Lawrence:** Yes, East Rand region.

**Interviewer:** Any structures within the APF like media, education, labour that's what I'm asking ... What kind of roles did Tsakane people play in the APF?

**Lawrence:** Yes, like me as a member of Tsakane I contributed in different committees within the APF. For example, labour I was there from the day one. I think I was there for three years as a labour coordinator, as the labour person within the APF. Now in that way as a deployee of Tsakane one would say that Tsakane contributed in the APF or in the broader APF struggle, also in research committees we were there as well, yes and the coalition, Water Coalition.

**Interviewer:** Water Coalition.

**Lawrence:** But long time ago - we're no longer participating because you're also not as active as before. I think that thing must be clear, we're not active as before in the same way that APF is not active as before, most affiliates of APF are not strong as they used to be. We're also facing that problem as a community organisation.

**Interviewer:** Tell us a little about some of the key struggles that you engaged as Tsakane. You said from the beginning that generically you were about education and that sort of thing ... after 2002, in those years as members of the APF, what kind of things, struggles did you undertake around what particular issues?

**Lawrence:** Yes, the first one is education struggle I think I said that thing before. Secondly we dealt with housing, we organised a march I think it was 2007, a big march to the Ekurhuleni Metro municipality. The march was around housing, water and all those service delivery related issues, you see.

**Interviewer:** And what were the specific demands around housing and service delivery?

**Lawrence:** We want the government to build housing for the people in the informal settlement to ...actually to install services like water, sanitation and to build roads, you see and to ...actually there are other facilities in the community because by that time we were active in one big informal settlement and trying to make sure that delivery in that area is happening, you see. We had a march to Ekurhuleni, also we had a march locally, you see. As a result of our march I think we secured some gains because houses will be built, services were installed like sanitation and water. In other words, our struggle secured some gains, it was not for nothing.

**Interviewer:** And on the education front, was it successful when you first started around what you were demanding?

**Lawrence:** Actually our struggle around education was hijacked by PASO because PASO was more organised than us. Because you know at that time we were still new in the township in terms of struggle. PASO was more organised because it was having a national support, you know PAC is national. It was hijacked by PASO and PASO took that struggle and it control it ...our role was just to be a supporter of that struggle. Not necessarily leading the struggle, you see.

**Interviewer:** Okay, you mentioned specifically that you had some successes. Just describe when you took up the struggles...from the beginning and then how it transgressed over a period of time and the response of the state locally? How did they respond initially and how did that change over time as you continued the struggles?

**Lawrence:** You mean the state?

**Interviewer:** Whether it's the police whoever, the arms of the state.

**Lawrence:** How did they respond to what we want?

**Interviewer:** Correct.

**Lawrence:** Yes we had meeting with them but also we had a meeting with the Ward Councillor on regular basis. And the government, municipality promised that they will do this and that. Similarly the Ward Councillor will say, we'll do this and that. But also we used this thing of petition - we used letters as a way of exerting pressure on the structures representative...I think this thing took us for three years before we could see something happening in that informal settlement, and after the three years we saw sanitation, water tap because there were no water tap. We saw a contractor on the site; we knew...we were told that the contract is preparing to build houses now I think they are in the process of building houses. Now we are saying, that is one of our gains. But of course one will debate and say how the government was planning that thing ten years ago to do that thing but I think because of our intervention, we made that thing quicker.



**Interviewer:** Sure, so ... the community structure has had some success in what it set out to do in other words?

**Lawrence:** Yes, we succeeded in that area but not in all areas as I said, in the area of education. But also the organisation is becoming weaker now. As soon as we address some of these service delivery issues, other people will decide, "No we don't want to be part of this organisation anymore" because now we've got electricity, we've got water and so on. They don't see the need of belonging to that organisation forever. I think this is one challenge which faces a number of community organisations because after people see delivery - delivery is happening - now therefore the organisation must know how it will move forward, what's next? I think it becomes important. But in our case I think we lost that constituency because now in our meeting few people were attending now even in our workshop. Now we decided that we have to be creative and go to other areas where there is no service delivery, maybe we can attract people into our organisation, you see.

**Interviewer:** Now you come initially as you described, you come from a background politically, which is socialist. In other words you know, that declares itself as a socialist...so it looks beyond just issues of service delivery and society ... at structures and morality change ...the APF did that to a certain extent, I mean it was somehow a combination of basic kinds of things but with the politics. Talk to me about why you think in community organisation like Tsakane there has been such a difficulty in bridging the gap between the basic kinds of things and the politics of the system and you know, making consciousness?

**Lawrence:** Consciousness, political consciousness?

**Interviewer:** Correct and why it has been so difficult for people on the left like the APF ... to keep activists/people who want to move beyond just the basic issues of service delivery?

**Lawrence:** Yes, I think that was a challenge, it remains a challenge even now. But also one must look at our constituency which we organise. If you organise people in the informal settlement, people are extremely poor, people who are not exposed to trade union, who are not even in formal jobs who are employed in informal economy, people who don't have an education, one will say government proletariat, I don't know if it's a good phrase to use. It's a challenge to bring those people into the fold of socialism as opposed if you're organising in the townships. You see I said we were organising in the informal settlement. In the informal settlement, they are more challenges than in the township in terms of service delivery. Now in our case we're organising in the informal settlement, people were not exposed to trade union and formal education and so on. Now some of them they cannot even read or write, you see. I think some of these factors can...maybe that thing of class awareness not to happen faster you see. But I'm not saying it cannot happen but can take time. And now with Tsakane community project it's not finished, it's still an ongoing thing. We don't know after some time we can have people who are identifying themselves as socialists or who are committed to a socialist calling but it takes time, some of these things. But in the informal settlement, it is much slower than if you're organising people who are exposed to trade unions, to varsities, to different forms of education, who are employed in the formal economy, you see. Those people that are more likely to reach what do you call ... class consciousness quicker

than those who reside in informal settlements. I think Marx said something like that before, you see as like backward class. One says, is backward, as I say one say is proletarian you cannot organise human proletariat or some of those people in the informal settlement. They are not much threat to the state as far as I'm concerned as opposed to organised workers, as opposed to students, as opposed to people in the township. Because in the informal settlement there is extreme poverty there, no one is even in a formal job, those are working poor people. There is only piece job and their level of education is also low, you see. I mean if you can have those people belonging to your organisation I don't think at some point you'll pose a threat to the state, you see, as opposed if you're having students, organised labour. Therefore you can pose a threat to the state. Now the problem of APF is that it was only organising the unemployed, it was more of an unemployed organisation, people who don't have self esteem, who don't have confidence and so on, people who've got poor levels of education, which is one thing which explains why it's becoming more difficult for people to move closer to socialism. I'm not saying it cannot happen, it can happen but it can be...it can take more time. But if you've got organised workers, students, matriculants, university students, people who are affiliated with APF, this workers consciousness becomes quicker ... than if you've got the proletariat - it will be more difficult. But I think there's evidence like you see, like maybe if we were organising students, organising labour than organising those human proletariat it could have been better for us to bring people into the fold of socialism much quicker. I think you understand my theory, yes.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think in the initial years, let's say from 2001 to 2004/5 those years, that the state responded in such a very harsh or very oppositional way to organisations like APF and other new social movements that had risen around the country, most of whom were organising unemployed people...why was the state so concerned about these organisations at that particular time?

**Lawrence:** Why the state was concerned?

**Interviewer:** Yes because if you look at that period, WSSD, WCAR, you look at other things the state seemed to be quite concerned about these new forces...they weren't trade unions, you know, they weren't these working class forces they were these new organisations that had come up ...

**Lawrence:** Yes, I think the state has always been concerned about mass mobilisation, mass struggle you see. Whether that mass struggle is led by community based organisation or by trade union or by political party, the state will be more concerned, you see. Like now service delivery protests in the last couple of months were suppressed by the state, you know the state was deploying more police force, security forces with the aim of ensuring that those things don't get out of control. I think that is a permanent feature within the capitalist society; always the state will be concerned - unemployed, employed ... even now the teachers strike...the public servants strike is facing massive opposition from the state. But if you're unemployed you don't pose a risk to the state. I've never seen even the revolution that has been led only by the unemployed, even the Russian revolution was led by the political party, by the workers at St Petersburg in Moscow, even the Lisbon revolution, all revolutions. Even the ANC it overthrew the apartheid regime because it was organising all sectors of the societies. It might be unemployed, teachers, students and workers and so on and so on. Unlike the APF - APF concentrates only on the unemployed people - that is why it's so poor today, that's why it's not moving forward it's trapped in one place.

**Interviewer:** So your perspective of your time and experience in APF is that the APF should have moved abroad and tried to make itself into a different form or a different kind of organisation. Is that what you're saying?

**Lawrence:** Yes. Actually from day one I've been a member of APF I've been consistent, arguing for APF to forge a relationship with the organised working class but also with the students. I have been pushing the same line of argument but I have found that some people they oppose that thing...only that even if they do not oppose that thing but the implementation became weaker, you see or implementation does not happen at all. Yes I was convinced that APF can only succeed if it attracts organised labour and also students, different sections of the working class. But I think APF failed to do that thing hence today it is about to die, is dead; man it's nowhere to be seen now. Struggle, service delivery struggle every month, it's not leading anything now. But also there are other factors why APF is so weak today, I think this thing of organising labour and students is not the only reason why APF is weaker, there are other factors of course.

**Interviewer:** Can you speak to some of those and give your opinion and your perspective of why that's the case?

**Lawrence:** Why APF is...?

**Interviewer:** Yes why the APF is weaker, is in the state that it is in.

**Lawrence:** It would be the first ones are those that I have mentioned. The second thing; it failed to relate with people who are outside APF, some of those people are within the Alliance and Alliance is a major party in SA so SA politics is ANC politics, it's a bigger party and is having massive support. APF failed to relate to those people but also it failed to respond to Zuma movement from the beginning of 2005. It failed like it was quiet and did not develop a strategy of relating with that movement because that movement was strong, it was strong all over the country, everywhere in each and every sphere of the South African society, and APF never devised a strategy of relating with that movement. I think that's one of the reasons. Secondly we're not looking at ...we're more concerned about things that happen in organisations like internal things, internal issues, we don't become outward looking. I think that's the main problem. But also the other thing within APF is that thing of corruption, you know. Like corruption is in every structure of the APF. APF is corrupt. Actually I feel that...I feel that 80% of community organisations are corrupt. Corruption I think it's one...if there is a struggle there is ...the comrades with us were the ones saying what is it for me, what I'm going to benefit out of the struggle? If the comrade says, 'No I won't benefit anything' then the comrade will say no, organise or go there you will see. As a result you find that few people are at the march, you see. People will sort of instead of bringing two taxis will come, as an individual will take the money you see. I think this thing is widespread, it's everywhere. I think as far as I understand I don't think APF can control each region, even coordinating those committees, those committees they are rotten. They are corrupt by the ANC. The ANC there is big corruption, even in the APF it's big but the problem is that these comrades are getting smaller money but even there are a lot of opportunities, some of the comrades in the ANC they could have stolen a lot of money. Even some of the employees of the organisations actually are corrupt. Yes more evidence but also this thing ...corruption is inherent in the capitalist society not only the problem of APF - all organisations face the same problem. The problem is how the organisation develops the

tactic of dealing with corruption, I think in the era of APF where we have been weak it was growing day by day, day by day. I think some of those things contributed to weaker APF but also that thing of academics, you see. Some have been exploited, exploited, exploited by people on the ground by those people up there who are academics in various ways through research. Academics as soon as they...the problem is that some academics, some NGOs, you see as soon as they see struggle they see an opportunity, they see an opportunity of funding and write proposals for whatever research, some academics, you see. They don't see a struggle as a way of deepening development etc.etc. They see an opportunity for them to have more funding to conduct a research, and some of the NGOs they don't share with the affiliates of the APF - they go and present different papers there by different conferences and they will be recognised. They are more of an entrepreneur of a different sort and when they see struggle they see research opportunity. You see, they don't see opportunity of fighting further; they see a research. And some of them they've got skills which ...but you never see a skills transfer man, skills transfer didn't happen for the period of ten years, they sort of privatised whatever skill they have, not sharing with people. It might be in the area of research, it might be in the area of monitoring and evaluation, It might be in the area of political education, it might be in the area of funding and proposal, all those are ...and they won't share their skills. They will only organise sometime maybe a workshop, they'll call affiliates. Those poor people they must come to the workshop and in those workshops they'll tell those...poor people, community organisations how you must struggle, how you must fight. They will present... poor people will be there as part of the audience, you see and present whatever thing that want to say. Now I think I want to summarise this thing - some academics and students they see struggle, they see an opportunity of writing a research, funding proposal. Other NGOs they'll see as an opportunity of writing a funding proposal to make money for their own respective NGO and so on. And also that thing of education in the APF is lacking, it never happened. The thing it was outsourced to NGO, it was done by NGO and it never became something that is coordinated from internal - it was outsourced, NGO come and do their things ... In other words, one will say it never happened, it was coordinated in a retrograded way, you see. Like it also lead to that thing. Those who are in the know they don't want to share, don't want to share their skills. Yes, I think it is, I could be wrong; it's my view.

**Interviewer:** Sure, there are many different perspectives on that but that is why I'm individually getting your perspectives. Okay, just a few final questions. How would you describe relationships when Tsakane became part of the APF, your relationship between Tsakane as part of the forum? In other words, the APF was made as a forum of community organisations, so in other words relationships with other communities and links to other communities as a result of being a part of the APF, how would you describe that?

**Lawrence:** Ok, How did we relate with other communities?

**Interviewer:** Yes, or did the APF provide opportunities or structures or struggles where communities could relate and create solidarities with each other because as a forum it was designed to try to bring communities together in a large organisation as opposed to just single.

**Lawrence:** Yes, through region, regional structures we related with a number of organisations and that relationship was beneficial to our struggle, was in many different way of conducting a struggle. But also other people come to the township and share

their experiences in relation to struggle, you see. Yes, I think in that way we benefited. But now the problem with the APF is that some of the community organisations they tend to reduce support to money. You see like if...when you say that it gets support from APF provided that we get whatever money that we want from the APF therefore you see that we get support. Beside money, comrades or community organisations are not focusing on another thing other than money. I think that's the weakness ... I think that also was the weakness of our structure as we are not immune to whatever is happening in the APF because we're part of it, you see. But in general, yes.

**Interviewer:** I think you've already covered that question, you've talked about some of the strengths and weaknesses of the APF and you've indicated that as far as the Tsakane Community Forum ... that it still exists in a meaningful way or is it ...is it dormant at the moment?

**Lawrence:** No, it exists but not strongly, it's there on the ground. Now we're having monthly meetings whereas before we used to have weekly meetings. Now we have reduced to monthly meeting and our struggle is not that much stronger as before. We are not rooted on the ground as we used to be. We are facing challenges as I said at the beginning of the discussion yes.

**Interviewer:** And you mentioned in one of your responses about how in your opinion the APF had failed to respond adequately to developing a strategy around the Zuma phenomenon and his rise, to the politics that was going on in the ANC. Just speak and give your opinion and prospectus of how you think the shifts and those battles that have been happening in the ANC over the last 2 or 3 years have affected movements like community organisations and the APF itself?

**Lawrence:** The movement thing that were happening in the ANC?

**Interviewer:** Yes...you've already expressed that you felt there was a lack of proper response and the strategy, but how did, what was going on, impacting the other side? How did it impact on individuals and people who themselves have been struggling against, well many in the state and in some cases against ANC people?

**Lawrence:** How that thing impacted on APF?

**Interviewer:** Yes and community organisations themselves like Tsakane?

**Lawrence:** Yes I think for me the rise of Zuma or as I said before the rise of Zuma movement had an impact on the APF in different way because some of the cadres within APF started to support Zuma. I remember a march that we organised and comrades were singing the song, "Zuma for President" meaning that Zuma was not only popular within the other ends but also within the APF. And we as APF at that point we failed to come with a strategy of responding to that as I said. But now the rise of Zuma affected some of the struggle of the APF because other people thought that Zuma will deliver this and that, that thing of illusion, it bred illusion within different structures of the APF. People they started to believe that Zuma will be different person, we'll see delivery. Actually that's what Zuma was saying, people who were campaigning for Zuma, it's what they were saying. Some of our people in APF bought into that thing, believed that thing and somehow they decided to shelve their struggle, to put their struggle on hold because what is the point of struggling whereas Zuma is coming, Zuma will solve our problem

therefore meaning that there is no point, the Messiah is coming, he will deal with our problems. Partly I think that development affected the way APF conducted its struggle. If I'm saying APF I refer to community based organisations, the way APF conducted its own struggle, you see. Yes.

**Interviewer:** So it had the same ... what you're saying is that it had the same kind of impact at the local community level as well?

**Lawrence:** Yes, because we also suffered as a community based organisations because that thing of Zuma was everywhere, on radio, newspaper, everywhere. On TV, you see and our people believed that thing of Zuma, Zuma will solve our thing. And I remember we had a workshop, we had a workshop around that thing of Zuma - but now in our workshop we failed to convince everyone, you see because we actually invited all these leaders of the APF, Trevor was there, and Wiseman came. Yes Wiseman came and we had a workshop in the sport ground. In the same workshop people were in support of Zuma, you see. Because the aim of that workshop was to conscientise people that this thing of Zuma will not make changes, won't automatically mean delivery, service delivery and so on. But there were other people in the workshop - some of them of course they were our members - they rejected that explanation when we said that Zuma will be like any other capitalist leaders. They rejected it - at the end we failed to convince everyone. Now in that way, Zuma movement also affected us but why it affected us is also because in the era of political depression we're very weak, like we're extremely weak. In the era of political education and conscientisation our APF is very weak. It has never been strong in that area and has never developed a particular strategy of addressing that weaknesses as far as I'm concerned, you see.

**Interviewer:** Just to the last couple of questions. What would you describe now with all the things that have happened over the last ten years - struggles, some successes, lots of failures, weaknesses and so forth - how would you describe, what would you say is the main role of first of all community organisations like Tsakane as weak as they might be or as others might be ... is there still a role and what role is that?

**Lawrence:** The role of Tsakane?

**Interviewer:** Of either Tsakane or a similar kind of community based organisation in struggling around those kinds of issues?

**Lawrence:** I think those community based organisation must be strengthened, must be strong for the sake of service delivery because if those organisations are strong on the ground, it become easy for the municipalities to keep it's promises. Because as soon as they don't keep it's promises the community organisation will began a struggle for this and that. Now in the absence of these organisations, it will become easy for the elected representatives, I mean councillors not to be accountable to the electorate and not to deliver some of those things that are needed by the community. Yes I think they are important for that role like for democratic project like ...democratic project will only be strong if there are those, some of these community organisations. I think, I know liberals is what they will say, like in the absence of these civic organisations, community organisations, democratic project becomes strong, democracy becomes strengthened, you will see Councillors accounting to the community. But if they are not there no one can, no one will pay attention to this and that. It's easy for councillors to be elected therefore they will disappear until next election. I think they are elected for that role. But

also if one is dealing about socialist project, those community organisations are important for a long term solution for the victory of socialism, you see. But now I think socialists, they've never found a way of using these community organisations or this idea of community organisation for the benefit of socialist structure as we discussed at the beginning of this discussion. In the nutshell I think they are important but unfortunately they are dying you see, yes, they are dying out because of a number of reasons.

**Interviewer:** And this is the last question which is partially coming from what you have said ...what therefore - if there is a relevance if there is a role to play - what would you identify as the main challenge for community organisations and a collection of those organisations like the APF? Even if ... the APF doesn't survive there is always struggle going on. So what are the main challenges for people at the ground - mostly unemployed, mostly unorganised - what do you see?

**Lawrence:** What are the challenges?

**Interviewer:** What are the main challenges for those who want to organise, who want to try to take that and to make an impact in the context of now, ten years of existence where we've had a lot of experiences, failures, some successes. When you look to the future what do you see?

**Lawrence:** Actually for the future what I think is that community organisations will not die or resistance, will not die because community organisations they are an embodiment of resistance in the community. I don't think the struggle or resistance or community organisations will die. As long as capitalism is existing you will find community organisations existing. Like APF can die today but tomorrow there will be new organisation replacing APF or our Tsakane community organisation can die but the following day they'll be new emerging organisation responding to whatever is happening in their community. In other words community organisations are a permanent feature of capitalist society, you see. The way capitalism works causes the existence of these community organisations. Of course they will take different forms like community organisations twenty years ago they were different from community organisations now. Of course they are facing challenges in terms of this and that but I think they will develop tactics of overcoming those challenges of whatever meets a shortcoming. But if they don't deal with those challenges and problems etc, etc they actually will die, you see. But their death will not necessarily mean the end of community struggle as I said before, new thing will emerge like ...for example, why I'm saying APF is no longer relevant to do anything, it will respond to this and that and some of these things they are not forever, man. But struggle lasts forever, as long there is capitalism - but community organisations they are not forever. At some point it must die.

**Interviewer:** Okay.