

**Black Liberations Movement Mosaic**  
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Black Liberations Movement Mosaic  
Oral History Interview  
with  
Sister P.M. Tshazibana  
By Flosha Tejada  
Zinyoka, South Africa  
August 12, 2008

Interview with Sister P.M. Tshazibana

Interviewed on 12 August, 2008

Location: Zanempilo Community Health Center, Zinyoka Location, Eastern Cape, South Africa

Language: English

Interviewer: Flosa Tejada

Transcribers: Flosa Tejada

Black Liberation Movements Mosaic

Flosa Tejada: So then again let's start with your name, your occupation.

Sister Tshazibana: I'm [incomprehensible] Tshazibana, I'm the sister in charge of the clinic. I'm newly appointed as an operational manager.

Flosa Tejada: When did you start working at the clinic?

Sister Tshazibana: I started working here on the third of January of 2002.

Flosa Tejada: And you're still working here until today's date, right?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes.

Flosa Tejada: So, how did you come to work at Zanempilo?

Sister Tshazibana: I use my own car, I travel...my own car.

Flosha Tejada: Yeah, okay, how did you end up working here at this clinic? Out of all the clinics in the area, why here?

Sister Tshazibana: I was working at the Bhisho Primary Health Care Services, so I was just allocated to this clinic.

Flosha Tejada: Oh okay so...

Sister Tshazibana: I was from Bhisho hospital.

Flosha Tejada: Oh okay so, it wasn't your choice to come here?

Sister Tshazibana: No, no, I was just allocated.

Flosha Tejada: Oh okay. So, where did you study nursing?

Sister Tshazibana: I've got a degree in Community Nursing, I've got a [incomprehensible] in Community Nursing and Science, and I've got an administration, also.

Flosha Tejada: Okay good. When you first started working here, what was the, the most pressing issue that needed to be taken care of? So what was the, the problem that most people would come with?

Sister Tshazibana: Okay. The most prevalent diseases were the pulmonary tuberculosis, the HIV -because of the low socio-economic status of the community.

Flosha Tejada: Okay, that's interesting. Do you feel that the clinic addresses people's needs? At the time, when you first started working here?

Sister Tshazibana: By the time I was working here, we were understaffed. Only two professional nurses and one enrolled nurses and I felt that I couldn't overstretch, manage all the problems like PTB, PMTCT, VCT problems up until two years back when they did put a staffed well, according to our [incomprehensible], so we are managing well now.

Flosha Tejada: Do you feel that that you couldn't address all these issues because of lack of funding or was it... do you feel that your location has something to do with that?

Sister Tshazibana: No, it's not about the location. It was because of the lack of staff, then. And another challenge now, even though there's enough staff, but the sisters are new, some of them are from the hospital. They are not um... well versed within the clinics, especially with the rural areas, so we have to teach them, all about these programs, you have to mentor them.

Flosha Tejada: You feel that they don't come ready for the challenges of the clinic.

Sister Tshazibana: Yes, yes.

Flosha Tejada: How is your funding, are you well funded, is funding not a problem in the clinic?

Sister Tshazibana: Not as such because this clinic has been taken over by the government, you know

Flosha Tejada: Okay, and you feel like the government gives you enough funds?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes, yes.

Flosha Tejada: To take care of all the problems?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes.

Flosha Tejada: What is the most pressing problem today?

Sister Tshazibana: The most, the most pressing problem is that, as you can see, is that we have got no furniture, we have got no communication system. We are using our own cell phones and it has been a long standing problem, there is no new equipment. We are still using that old equipment that was use by Steve Biko and them, so those are the most challenging problems.

Flosha Tejada: Wow. Now that you mentioned Steve Biko, have you gotten a chance to meet Dr. Ramphele, one of the founders, as you may already know, of the clinic?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes, it was last year when, there were celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday when the clinic was...

Flosha Tejada: So did you get a chance to speak to her?

Sister Tshazibana: Oh no, oh no, they were in a hurry, they came just to look around and then they went off.

Flosha Tejada: Do you feel that, maybe, she can do more since this was, kind of like, her clinic, she founded?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes! Yes, I think she could, you know, because they were the people that started the clinic, there are lots of things that need to be changed. You can see outside that is a nurse's home. Now that I've got a staff, there are so many people that are going to stay at the nurse's home, but there are so many people that are staying at the nurse's home but [incomprehensible] it has got all this, how do you call, an old building, it's a little bit demolished, so its not going to [incomprehensible], they cant do otherwise because they are staying far from here.

Flosha Tejada: So, do you feel like the clinic is not suitable for the patients?

Sister Tshazibana: It's not suitable for the patients.

Flosha Tejada: You feel like we can fix it, do a lot more things?

Sister Tshazibana: Hmm.

Flosha Tejada: That's interesting...hmm...During the time of apartheid, were you already working in clinics as a nurse, or were you training?

Sister Tshazibana: During the time of...?

Flosha Tejada: Do you remember apartheid?

Sister Tshazibana: Apartheid?

Flosha Tejada: Yeah.

Sister Tshazibana: No.

Flosha Tejada: No, you don't remember. Did you ever hear stories about apartheid? Like growing up as a child, you didn't hear stories?

Sister Tshazibana: No.

Flosa Tejada: about the div... [turns to some one in the room] is there a word...

[someone speaks in Xhosa]

Sister Tshazibana: [speaks in Xhosa] Yes, because Steve Biko was the leader of this black consciousness movement, so he was fighting for the rights of the black people.

Flosa Tejada: What do you know, did you ever hear any stories about Steve Biko, or maybe him coming to the... when you first came to the clinic did you hear any stories that were shared by the older people that had been here for a long time?

Sister Tshazibana: yes, I understand that Zinyoka location is what they call this location, it had no clinic at that time, so he is the one who helped them with clinic, and they had the mobile so that they can serve the surrounding areas. So it was really, really something that he can do for our people because Bhisho Hospital was a new hospital that is nearby, 5 kilometers from here, it was not there by then.

Flosa Tejada: Oh, it wasn't there.

Sister Tshazibana: No, not at all, it's new.



Flosha Tejada: Why do you think Steve Biko and Ramphela - why do you think they chose this location? Out of all places, why here?

Sister Tshazibana: I'm sure through the years, research they saw that it was the most remote area and by that time you couldn't go to Grey Hospital even if you are staying at Zwelitsha, even if you are not staying at Ginsberg, you are not allowed to go to Grey Hospital.

Flosha Tejada: And why was that?

Sister Tshazibana: I don't know, I don't know, really.

Flosha Tejada: Yeah, did you ever hear any reasons why?

Sister Tshazibana: I don't know, they only cater for the people who are staying at King Williams Town and the Ginsberg location, but if you are from Zwelitsha you are not attended to. There was a hospital that was called Mount Coke that was meant for Zwelithsa community and the surrounding areas, not Grey Hospital. I'm sure it was meant for white people.

Flosha Tejada: Yeah... Is it still...?

Sister Tshazibana: No.

Flosha Tejada: Are there certain areas that are assigned to certain clinics, certain hospitals, or people can just go wherever they need to go?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes, yes, even people from here, they chose to say they want to go to Grey Hospital or Bhischo Hospital. Is not like that anymore.

Flosha Tejada: Yeah, okay, so it's gotten better over time then.

Sister Tshazibana: Yes.

Flosha Tejada: Okay, with regard to the situation with the lack of funding and furniture and stuff like that, have you asked the government to give you more stuff?

Sister Tshazibana: You can be surprised because last year, when they heard that Dr. Ramphele would be visiting, they were here, we had to write all the furniture that we are going to need, the equipment, the telephone, but up until today nothing has come out.

Flosha Tejada: Wow, have you attempted to write to him again, or contact?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes, we do, we do, because we don't do deliveries because we don't have the telephone to call for an ambulance. We've got to use our cell phones, so they are introducing the system of - I don't know whether if you understand - the call back system. It's whereby the nurses stay at the nurse's home during the night so that they can attend to maternities or the

patients that are assaulted. So they want to introduce that system back again but we can't manage because we have no communication system. If the patient comes here, how can we call an ambulance? We've got no telephone.

Flosa Tejada: So, what happens when someone comes in with an emergency, what do you guys do?

Sister Tshazibana: We use our cell phones.

Flosa Tejada: Oh, okay, wow. Do you guys have any women that come to give birth here still?

Sister Tshazibana: When I arrived here, it was just a something that is new that you wont deliver at the clinic, but because of the dangers that you put the patient in, I just feel that I cannot cope.

Flosa Tejada: So you can't do it anymore.

Sister Tshazibana: I can't do it anymore, I can't risk, because you can call an ambulance now it would come 5 hours later...

Flosa Tejada: So, do you feel like this location takes away sometimes from all that you can offer your patients, because it's so - the location in such a rural area and you don't even have good communication with other hospitals. Do you feel like that takes away from what you can provide to people?

Sister Tshazibana: They have no other alternative. They do come to our clinic, but because we are a nurse and you are a community nurse, you have to use your own transport. Let's say you want to present a case to a doctor, especially, there was a pediatric doctor that used to come to Bhishe hospital. She was a pediatrician that came once a month. So you have a case that needed to be attended by this especially doctor, so you have to go to Bhishe hospital, present the case, and book for the client.

Floshe Tejada: Wow, that's tough.

Sister Tshazibana: That's tough, really.

Floshe Tejada: What are the hospital hours, when is it open?

Sister Tshazibana: It's 24 hours.

Floshe Tejada: Now, the clinic I meant.

Sister Tshazibana: Oh, it's open at 8, 8 to 4.

Floshe Tejada: I am aware that the clinic used to be open 24 hours when it was first opened, is that right?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes, yeah.

Flosa Tejada: And how come you guys close it so early now, what happens to the patients that have an emergency at 7 o'clock, and the clinic is closed?

Sister Tshazibana: They know they have to go to Bhisho hospital, especially if it's maternity, because they know Grey no longer caters for maternity cases, and then for emergencies that is all, that is all stab chest or assault - they have to go again to Grey Hospital because the Bhisho doesn't have a casualty unit anymore.

Flosa Tejada: How do you reach to the community, how do you let them know these things?

Sister Tshazibana: We have got a clinic committee, so these things are being addressed to the clinic committee and then they will meet with the community at large. So they tell the people through a general meeting at the community.

Flosa Tejada: Okay. Does Ramphele play any role in the clinic today?

Sister Tshazibana: No.

Flosa Tejada: So, she doesn't give you any aid, any funding?

Sister Tshazibana: [Signifies no]

Flosha Tejada: How do you feel about that, knowing that she founded the clinic and...?

Sister Tshazibana: We feel so depressed because we know that she can do more, since she is the founder of this clinic. She can do more, really, so that she can meet our needs.

Flosha Tejada: Yeah, do you feel like she's forgotten about the clinic, she's forgotten about the community?

Sister Tshazibana: maybe it's because of the challenges of her new work now. I don't know.

Flosha Tejada: Is that how most people feel, or have other people around the staff, have they expressed this to you, have they told you like - have you guys spoken about this in any way?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes, we do, and we do speak about it, but you know there are these red tapes. If I talk to my supervisor, my supervisor is going to talk to his manager. You can think of it as you've got an office without telephone. How can you work without a telephone, because you feel a chance that you don't want to refer this patient if you can get just a second opinion from the doctor just over the telephone. That's how we used to work at Bhischo hospital. I was a nurse at the casualty. So we used to call the doctor, present the case over the telephone so it would be much better for the client if you treat it here at home, because most of our clients they do not want to be admitted at hospitals.

Flosha Tejada: Why do you think that is?

Sister Tshazibana: It's because they are not - they don't like the situation at the hospital. Our old people like to be sick at home, to be nursed by their next of kin, you know.

Flosha Tejada: Are there staff here that are from the community?

Sister Tshazibana: No, we used to have an enrolled nurse that was a next door neighbor, but she is at Dimbaza health center now.

Flosha Tejada: When you first came here, were there people working here who were from the community?

Sister Tshazibana: It was only this enrolled nurse.

Flosha Tejada: From the community?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes.

Flosha Tejada: How has gender played a role in your job today?

Sister Tshazibana: I had no problem, at all

Flosha Tejada: Being the head?

Sister Tshazibana: Being the head, no.

Flosha Tejada: Okay, I want to ask you a couple more general questions for the research project.

What role did the Black Consciousness Movement play in your life, personally?

Sister Tshazibana: Now that we have got freedom of speech that we can express ourselves, I think it's much better because in those times you couldn't even speak taboo about these things, but now we got the freedom of speech, you can express your feelings.

Flosha Tejada: Did your family ever tell you any stories about the Black Consciousness Movement and fighting and the struggle?

Sister Tshazibana: No, because my family was not the people that - who are aware of politics, no.

Flosha Tejada: You were never involved?

Sister Tshazibana: No, not at all.

Flosha Tejada: How do you think the Black Consciousness Movement affected the anti-apartheid struggle?



Sister Tshazibana: Mind?

Flosha Tejada: How do you think the Black Consciousness Movement affected the anti-apartheid struggle?

[Turns to someone in the room] Do you want to tell her that in [Xhosa]?

[speaking in Xhosa]

Sister Tshazibana: [speaks in Xhosa] Okay, I don't know, with politics really, I don't.

[laughing]

Flosha Tejada: That's okay, you can say that too. Do you remember, I mean since you weren't involved, but do you remember any of the songs that were being sang at the time by the people?

Sister Tshazibana: [signifies yes]

Flosha Tejada: Do you want to sing a little bit?

Sister Tshazibana: I don't remember, really.

[speaking in Xhosa]

Flosha Tejada: Okay, so we can move on. How do you feel about the changing of street names? The towns, the changing of the names of towns and institutions since 1994, how do you feel about that?

Sister Tshazibana: I think history would be lost in some way if you change the street name. How would these people know what was happening then, if you change the name of the street now? I think history would be lost in a way. I'm not quite up to it.

Flosha Tejada: Do you feel the same way about town, about monuments, do you feel that, like, that's making progress? You don't feel like that's making progress when you change the names?

Sister Tshazibana: No, not at all, it doesn't make any difference, because those names have got their own history they tell a story so why do you have to change them?

Flosha Tejada: That's interesting. Are there any specific monuments that you would like to see built or destroyed?

Sister Tshazibana: No, not at all.

Flosha Tejada: So you don't feel like some of them, like commemorating a white soldier and have nothing to do with the struggle of black people, do you feel like that's okay?

Sister Tshazibana: It's okay, if it has got a history that you can tell about that. It doesn't matter whether it's a black or white, if it's something that somebody can learn from I do not see no reason why it's got to be changed.

Flosa Tejada: Yeah. Do you feel like today's youth values the anti-apartheid struggle and all of our history, do you feel like they value that, the youth?

Sister Tshazibana: I don't think so. Instead, they abuse the word called freedom, they don't understand what freedom is. They think freedom is something that you can do anything, to anyone at anytime, they don't know the actual meaning of what freedom is, because they never there, they never fought for anything.

Flosa Tejada: So, you feel they have it easy now?

Sister Tshazibana: [signifies yes]

Flosa Tejada: Are you proud of where your country is today?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes, I am.

Flosa Tejada: You are? Even though the youth doesn't appreciate, do you wish maybe the youth could do more?

Sister Tshazibana: Yes, I think they can do more. In fact, I think they can learn from the history of the youth that fought for free education, you know. I mean that youth of those days, they fought for something, Bantu education, you know, but the youth of today, they don't know the meaning of the word freedom.

Flosha Tejada: Do you feel that they have their own struggle to deal with? Do you feel that they are fighting for something, anything you feel the youth should be fighting for anything specifically?

Sister Tshazibana: I think they have no direction, they have no direction at all.

Flosha Tejada: What do you think are some of the problems that they should be fighting for right now? Like some of the problems that South Africa is facing that maybe the youth could be fighting for?

Sister Tshazibana: The crime, you know. Just recently, I'm sure it was a month ago, there is a school that is three kilometers away from here, those children that were going to that school, they don't have transport to go there, but they were raped and so much that the government has got to employ some people so that they can clear up the bushes that the children go through because of the rapist. I think those are the things that they can stand up for, you know.

Flosha Tejada: Okay, well I think that's about it. Is there anything that you think that I didn't ask you that you may need to say?

Sister Tshazibana: [laughs] No, not at all.

Flosha Tejada: No? No stories left out that I didn't trigger... no?

Sister Tshazibana: Uh uh.

Flosha Tejada: Do you know of someone else we might be able to speak to regarding this topic?

Sister Tshazibana: I think you met Mrs. Nondalana. She was here, that's the person that I know of that knows the history of this clinic.

Flosha Tejada: Well, thank you very much. We have a consent form for you to sign saying that you give us consent to use your video and everything, so is that okay?

Sister Tshazibana: Okay.

Flosha Tejada: Okay, thank you very much.

Sister Tshazibana: Okay.

[End of Tape]