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### **INTERVIEW WITH OLESNAS MAMOHALE.**

**Dale:** Can you tell us your full name and your position in the community?

**Interviewee:** My name - I'm Olesnas Mamohale. Position in the community - I'm the chairperson of Maandagshoek Development Committee.

**Dale:** Have you lived in this community all your life, were you born here or when did you come.

**Mamohale:** I was born and raised here my whole life.

**Dale:** What we want to do before starting about the present situation ... lets just go back a little bit because we are trying to get stories of individuals in their lives. Can you tell us about what your parents did? As a child growing up here, how was life like in this community?

**Mamohale:** At that time the life was difficult because when I was born here to start school my parents were not working in the family; my parents were struggling to get money from selling some fruits, ploughing in the field to get food for the family ... nothing happened at that time. The life at that time was very hard.

**Dale:** What year were you born?

**Mamohale:** I was born in 1968 on 7<sup>th</sup> of April.

**Dale:** So when you were growing up as a child here, how was it like besides the tough life in terms of earning a living and making food and everything ... how was it that you experienced apartheid during those years?

**Mamohale:** At that time when I remember well I was struggling to get education - we travelled about 15 kilometres to get to school. Another thing, if the rain is raining no child could go to school because all the "dongas" are full of water and another thing when I was born here, there is an old man here by the name of Khubejwana, that man was helping us with nothing, I think there is two old shafts that were closed because of water. They told us when they closed they were going to learn how to control water inside the mines but our parents they didn't benefit anything.

**Dale:** So was there any local employment in that mine at that time? Were people here in the community being employed in the mine?

**Mamohale:** I can say yes but not few, there were only few people.

**Dale:** And there was no investment in the community by the mine?

**Mamohale:** Nothing.

**Dale:** Do you remember who owned that mine?

**Mamohale:** The owner of the mine that time was the JCI.

**Dale:** And it was later on bought by Anglo American. What were they mining? Was it coal, platinum, what were they mining?

**Mamohale:** It was a platinum mine.

**Dale:** I understand also that if you were born in 1968, lets say by the 1980s you were a young man you were a teenager. Can you tell us, I understand you were involved in the things that were happening in the country, lots of struggle happening at that time, how did you get involved?

**Mamohale:** My involvement in that story I think it was 27 of March when I was in Daveyton I met a guy by the name of Jack, that guy came from KZN so that guy tried by all means to teach me how is the life and how we can pose the strike forward to get our land back. I remember when Chris Hani was dead at Boksburg even in the funeral of that guy I was there to push the struggle forward because I understand clear that apartheid is our enemy in this country, so I worked very well with that guy for about two years, when I ran away from Gauteng because the police hunt me all the time, I came back to live at home.

When I came home I met the guy by the name of....that guy stays next to me at the place of Crossong, I just remember his surname Boshego we organized together with Boshego, we built a very strong community to stand up to fight for apartheid. When we are busy fighting apartheid I remember one day when we were at the meeting between Maandagshoek and Crossong there is a Mortuary there when we are there at that time to meet or to inform the people of what is happening in the country the police came here and started fighting with us and we started to run away up to the mountain. You see, we spent a lot of time not staying at home, staying at the mountain. Then we start to inform our people to not go and try to buy in town because the white guy were happy because they are benefiting, they get money from us but they don't want to mind about us or they don't want to care about us and they want our money only. So we start to stop the busses and the vehicles which was carrying food inside, so when we are on the way to go to inform people to stop to buy from the town, the police came again with soldiers. I remember there is a shop down there they found me they asked me where is Olesnas Mamohale, do you know Olesnas Mamohale? I said to them I know that guy but now he is not here ... they said where he is, I said I don't know because I'm not staying here, I'm a visitor. They called another guy and they asked him where is Olesnas? That guy said no, I don't know that

guy. When they turned back to go back that side I tried to run away but I don't know where I'm going because even at Daveyton, I'm running away to come back here, even here I'm running away. Where am I going to? I told myself that if I die I will die for my rights I'm staying here until. So at that time it was not nice especially boys, at that time all the boys they are staying at the mountain ... washing down what was happening. So our sisters tried to get food to give us because at that time there was no food. We were trying to get food but it was not easy at that time.

**Dale:** So you were involved for quiet some time right up until the early 1990s in the struggle. You said you have been in Gauteng and came back here in the early 1992. When did you arrive back in Maandagshoek?

**Mamohale:** At the time when I came back I left the job then I came back to stay at home just because when I resign it was the time when I was with my friend at the gate at that time, when the police shot my friend and died at that time, so that thing made it very difficult.

**Dale:** What kind of work were you doing In Daveyton?

**Mamohale:** At that time I was a security guard.

**Dale:** A security guard? For a private security farm?

**Mamohale:** Yes South African security.

**Dale:** You said your friend got shot ... tell me about what happened there?

**Mamohale:** At that time it is in the evening around past 6 to 7, we come from theatre when we were looking for what was playing there, just because at that time when you wanted to have a meeting, you can't make a meeting publicly because the police are looking for you, you must try by all means to get a chance to make a meeting. Like okay, youth can go to the church to sing the song to praise but as you know inside that you are going to meet to talk about what we are going to do as the young people in this country. Another thing just like you know the township is not like the rural areas there is no good place where you can meet together ... then you can a few people around the corner, then you pass and you meet another people that is how you operate, how to inform each other.

**Dale:** And what led to the death of your friend, your comrade?

**Mamohale:** I'm not quite sure because we were just relaxing and sharing some ideas as the friends, so we heard some sounds at the back. When we turned to look what was happening, then the police start to shoot, when the police start to shoot they shot my friend at the head. But it was not my friend Jack though.

**AV:** And what year did you leave Daveyton to come back here?

**Mamohale:** I was start to visit Daveyton when I was young before I left school because my uncle was there at Daveyton. I will go there during the school holidays

always to relax at my uncle's house, so I can't explain clearly how long because I was going every year. I came back to Maandagshoek in December 1996.

**Dale:** We have got a little bit of your history there, I want to ask you ... I was also at the Chris Hani's funeral. How did you feel at that time in 1992-93 when things were happening, there were lots of people dying, there were lots of people fighting but the negotiations were going on. What did you as a young person at that time see in the future, how did you feel at that time? Did you feel very angry or did you think that the struggle was soon going to be over and it would be different soon?

**Mamohale:** At that time I was not feeling good because I'm a citizen of South Africa. I know very well because when our brothers and sisters are dying for freedom I feel painful because the wise guys at that time they were trying to divide us by using money, they can come to me because I'm individual and say brother I can offer you more than 2 million if you can do the right job, go to kill the black people, then we will give you money or maybe we will buy for you a car a luxury car and I'll build for you a very nice house. But at that time because some other people they didn't know where we come from or where we go because as we know that the majority of the blacks they are not educated just because of apartheid and only the minority at that time were struggling to fight for their rights until some other people in the country until they open their eyes and say, those people are right, they are fighting for their rights because we are the people of South Africa.

We learn from the newspapers, from the text book of the history we know about how the white guys came to steal our land because they are using some raisers, some ox and by name of bartering, using that thing let me say they come to you ok, I want this ox I can give you the raiser, that is how that guy came to take our land bartering exchange of goods but not with money. That method is dangerous, I think is the first enemy of apartheid because you know very well when we start to fight, we remember when the white guy told us only few whites came to South Africa without women but when they get here they get our black women and start to have babies and so on. When we tried to follow the right procedure the way the history told us you find exactly that is the truth. So that's why we are struggling to fight until we win this battle, because we know very well that the continent of Africa belongs to the blacks there is not the white guy from the continent of Africa who is staying here but not to say we want to chase somebody because he is not South African, We said we want a free and fair election after that we want peaceful in our land - all of us every human being in this country must get a better life.

**Dale:** When April 1994 happened, when the first elections happened and Madiba was elected as president, how did you feel on that day?

**Mamohale:** On that day I was very happy because I start to see a new president as a black man who belongs to this country, the son of soil. I was very happy because the son of the soil took the lead. I remember well when I hear that Madiba was out in prison, I started to dance and kiss the soil just because I'm happy. I don't know what I must do because I can see that there is a right way to go where I want to go at that time but when the times goes on I think Madiba in other words is the second Jesus in my experience but now it is not the same as that time Mandela was ruling this country ... but now it is difficult.

**AV:** Where were you at the elections? Where were you staying at that time ... were you in Daveyton?

**Mamohale:** No, at the election time I was here.

**Dale:** So, what is it, as someone who has been involved in the struggle, who has been in trouble with the apartheid authorities, who has been with the comrades and all these things, when that happened, when the elections happened we got freedom ... what did you expect was going to happen in this community, your community and what did you think were your expectations of the change? When you were happy then and after that what did you think was going to happen in this community as a result of these positive changes?

**Mamohale:** At that time I was thinking that everything is going to be alright, I think our leader because now is black, he knows very well the life of the blacks. We are the poorest of the poor, we stay in the rural areas, so there are some few blacks who are staying in urban areas those who are educated and if you are not educated you are just like a bird, because a bird can stay on the tree for the whole life. I expected a lot of things at that time because I know very well that Madiba was struggling for freedom for a long time, 27 years in prison so they don't want to bribe, they tried but the white guy to bribe you they don't want to be close to you even now not to say that our government is corrupt, it is only the employees, the leaders of the government those who they are the beneficiary because they are looking for their families, they are not looking for the community.

**Dale:** Ok, we will come to that discussion. I want to ask you when you say you thought things were going to get better because there was a black man there. What things in this community did you expect to change very practically the kind of things that people needed, so not just we have a new president but what did you think was going to happen in Maandagshoek, what was going to benefit the people after 1994? Like water, electricity, all those kinds of things.

**Mamohale:** I want to go back a little bit, if you can look now we are living in the country of democracy but we say we are living in a country of democracy by word. Because if you can look at the location of Maandagshoek, it is a rich country there is a lot of platinum and with minerals, but I want to raise that you can see even in your eyes, you are an eyewitness as from now, there is no roads, there is no electricity, there is no schools, there is no tertiary schools like technical and technikon - but this land is rich there is some other people from outside Maandagshoek, they steal our minerals without consulting us. So when we try to ask why you don't come to us and sit down to negotiate what is going on they go to individual person they give that person money to come and divide us to make a conflict between the communities. As you know the blacks we are hungry, even now you can see my house, is a house by name, but is not the real house. If you can come to me with a ten thousand I am going to accept it and I am going to do what you tell us to do, just because I am hungry I have got no money no food, I've got children and families, you see that is what the mining industry is trying to divide us. Especially I remember when the Modikwa mine started to happen in our country, they promised us things, they promised us roads, they promised us water, electricity, they promised us a better life for all, they said

they were going to empower our children to give them the bursaries, to carry on with their education ... nothing at all.

**Dale:** Let me ask you, you mentioned earlier that you didn't think the government was corrupt but, you thought there are certain individuals, some leaders that are lining in their pockets, now in 1994 and 1999 local government elections, The leading party the ANC basically promised a better life for all, they promised water, they promised electricity, they promised roads, these were the promises made by the politicians. So what did you think happened from 1994 till the time Modikwa happened in 2001. Why is it that those things that were promised by our new government did not come to pass in Maandagshoek, they did not happen? Why do you think as a resident, they didn't happen?

**Mamohale:** After elections I repeat my word again, we have got a problem of a dictator in this country. Not the government, we can't blame the government just because we can see that it is not the government, the government are doing the right thing but in other hands we blame the government because the government they know very well, there is some conflicts down there on the ground the community are fighting but they don't come down to hear what is happening. The community are crying because now there is a national, a provincial and a local municipality. They give a municipality a lot of bucks. Let's say they give the municipality 3 billion but the municipality they don't want to come to the community and say there is money, maybe there is money for water, money for electricity, money for schools, money for roads so and so. That's why I say I blame the government because they don't want to come and monitor the situation where the money is going, because when we are crying they know very well, they are the employees of us - we are the government they get the money from us (our tax) but they don't mind about us when we are crying about the way the leaders are trying to divide us. Because since we elect the new government, the local municipality, there is nothing changed from 1994 up to now you can look here there is nothing, there is no sanitation, there is no RDP houses, there is no water, there is no roads, there is no schools there is no something like halls, there is no tertiary schools anything. We are on the way to struggle together, something like water, I mean to say it is just like during the old time in apartheid. We are just happy because we can raise our voice without someone who is hunting us but it is the same because we benefit nothing.

**AV:** I just want to ask you something. You said there is a dictator can you explain what do you mean by that?

**Mamohale:** Let me put it into this question, our leaders they don't want to come to us even one day, I know him when we are going to elect him that guy that time, when we finish electing him; we didn't know him in anyway. How are you going to deliver without consulting the people, because firstly you must go to the people and the people must tell you what they need but our leaders they just sit down and decide and say this guy if I can give him a trouser is alright you see. That is how the people are now they are starting to hate the government just because the government they don't want to intervene in that matter, because they are, to put that question clear, they are ignoring us but they know very well they are here just because of us. You see, now they are flying on my head going down up, they are staying alright in the suburb and their children are attending a luxury school. They don't mind, they don't care about

us. I can give you just a small example, my province even the new premier, they don't even know where is Maandagshoek, even Mbeki the president they don't come to see us here because they know very well there is no a hall, there is no stadium but this land is rich, how come? When I remember, when he was in Jane Furse, he said Sekhukhune is the first land where government must visit but nothing has happened, we are still staying in the poorest of the poor country.

**Dale:** So, just to try and put those two things together, you talked about the government and the local government and the problems, and then the mine. Do you think that there is the connection between ... so from 1994 to 2000 nothing really happened in the community? The Modikwa and Anglo American show up and they say we want to prospect for platinum, we know there is platinum in this area we want to prospect. Do you think there is a connection between the arrival of the mine and the policies that you say the government really doesn't care? In other words they must just have cared about, ha! There is platinum there and then let's give the green light for the mining companies and then they can help the community. So what I'm asking you is that do you think there is a connection between the arrival of the mine and the failure of the government to deal with the situation with the people?

**Mamohale:** The problem began there.

**Dale:** Tell us about that?

**Mamohale:** Yes, as you know the mine when they come to mine something they come with local municipalities to the community. But when I remember very well the first is the prospecting permit, we gave them the prospecting permit to look where is the ore and how far the ore is whether they make a open shaft or decline shaft or horizontal shaft. After that the mine and the local municipality, they came back to our community they promised the community that now that we accept the offer for the negotiation, we are very happy, we want to make a small ceremony just so everybody to be happy. They started giving the community food to eat after that we are still waiting for them to come and meet with us again in order to take the licence permit to mine because protecting permit is not the right licence to mine. While we are still waiting to see the mines come to us to say okay, we can sit down because there is the demands there people with the baker, they promised us water, tars, tertiary schools, electricity and they are promising us if there is somewhere where the houses are they started to compensate. When we said while we stared to hey, guys just because we are still waiting for the licence but now you are continuing to mine what is the procedure? They started to by some other guys in the community to give them some luxury car and money to divide the community and when we are at that fight we tried to get the solution because we could see there is something inside that is the conflict that is there, there is some representatives from the local municipality they have got the tenders in mines, they have got the contractors in the mine together with the section 21.

**Dale:** Just to stop you there, we know that you are a member or director of section 21 company. Tell us, how did the section 21 company come to be in this situation, this fighting with the mine with whom you are trying to get proper consultation .. why did that happen?

**Mamohale:** Okay let me explain. Section 21 company I think is the Anglo company it does not represent the community because I think it is the strategy to catch up the community because I think they are using section 21 on behalf of the community. Community elected the people in section 21 to stand for the community but after that the mines came back to use that section 21 representative to divide the community. I want to put my question clear; since the section 21 was built there is no money inside to say always all the companies are running loss, since from 2001 up to now the community didn't know who the shareholders of section 21 are, because you know very well after 3 years we are going to re-election. If you are not satisfied about me you can choose another guy to represent you but at the section 21 there is no such things all the directors there are there, they are staying at the office.

**Dale:** Since the time they started?

**Mamohale:** Since they started and we try by all means to push them out but just because all the powers they are in section 21, now they are working for the mines in other words they say they are representing the community but they are not. Because even now I can say to you first of all we are trying to say to them we want to audit the books before you can carry on. They say its alright they bring their own people to come and audit the books, so you can see I'm the owner of this company by name but when you go inside to see the shares, I'm not the owner of this company. My name does not appear inside but outside I'm the owner. Since from 2001 up to now nothing happened in the section 21 there are always running loss they are under subsidy but that people they are Masobyane, they are eating nice, they are driving luxury cars

**Dale:** Tell us ... here we met a man and he brought us his pay slip. He is a winch operator and he said he is working under the section 21 company in the mine as a winch operator. He showed us his payslip and he was earning R1000 per month and he said he works five/six days a week. Can you explain or try to give us from where you are, how that can happen, the situation in which someone who is working full time is getting paid so little amount of money.

**Mamohale:** Yes, that is the problem. I start to feel pain because our brothers and sisters are getting peanuts, they are trying to get food for their families but it is not easy. There is some other guys is our brothers but they gave our brothers and sisters peanuts, at such time there is nobody who is supposed to get R1200 for a full month. When we check there we find that all the money it was taken by Masobyana representative that old directors as I said we don't know what is their whereabouts now because there is the new directors which must go and take the seat but nothing happened. Even now I am a director of Masobyane but my chairman or my secretary he can't call the meeting without calling the mine how come? Because we are the blacks and we know very well that Masobyane is a black economic development so you know very well there are the shares from the mine to Masobyane to empower the people but we don't know who the beneficiary of that percentage is.

**Dale:** Tell us something. I mean you are talking about black economic empowerment and the importance of section 21 is supposed to be BEE. Now we understand that Modikwe is Anglo American and ARM, Now ARM is with Anglo because of BEE, another level as well as Patrice Motsepe. So, how is it that you feel, one as a black man, and two as a Maandagshoek resident and involved in this thing - that actually is



your brothers and sisters there on the other side who are with Anglo-American who are suppose to benefiting but it doesn't seem to be happening. What do you think about what the other BEE is doing?

**Mamohale:** Yes I can say the problem was caused by the leader of Anglo because he know very well that he stand for the black economic empowerment. He knows very well when he came to mine here he knew very well what he must do firstly because he is the black. He knows the constitution of the country which says when we go to the community to mine we must give them proposal agreement okay, when I come to start I will do this and this but now we see very well that is our brothers kill us because they are helping the ones who kill us because now they are busy sitting together with them in Sandton, Joburg, Cape Town where at the time of apartheid only the whites were staying but now they are going to stay with them because they don't want to remember where they come from. So, that is our problem because we can't achieve anything as long as our brothers are still staying on our necks, I think it is difficult situation now.

**Dale:** What do you think in that difficult situation that you described and this present situation ... what do you think needs to be done? What do think this community needs to pass this and began to benefit ? What do you think is the right thing to do?

**Mamohale:** As you know, I think now everybody in the country of South Africa they know their rights, I think the better solution to help us is to fight until we win this battle because without making some toyi-toying showing some other countries like Europe saying don't hear South Africa, South Africa is a liar. Because I'm painful now if you can see our government they are still trying to get some solution outside the country. But its not easy to live with your house dirty and go and clean someone's house, you must clean your house first before you clean someone's house. So they are trying to stop the crisis of Zimbabwe, Somalia, Sudan and Middle East but here is South Africa. They know very well we are crying but they don't help.

So we demonstrate to show the government we are not happy until, we need Mbeki to come down. Because if they don't want to come down to see what is happening down here, I think the next election is going to be tough because I can't elect you several times without doing nothing. We are happy because our leader is black but another hand we are not happy. Because you can see now another thing that makes us angry, is the mine which are taking our ploughing fields and there is no one who is working in the mine. All the youngsters of this place staying at home some they have the certificate of matric but they don't have money to go to university, but the mine is there. The clay mine here is taking all our ploughing fields but we benefit nothing. When we try to demonstrate to give them the memorandum to show them we are not happy we need a fair deal negotiation, they call the police and the police arrest us, they shoot us the police we don't know what is the problem because our problem we want the mines to come down to the community and sit down. But just because there is the division inside the community, because of the white guys, they came to me they gave me money then they know very well you, you know wrong in the community go and buy that guy. You see that is how the mines are operating that is the problem and that problem is created by our brothers because our brothers, if they didn't allow that bribery we can achieve something but if our brothers are still in the same way, there is no way to go.

**Dale:** Do you think that the community of Maandagshoek has hope or the people have lost hope?

**Mamohale:** There are a lot of hopes; they are ready to fight until they die. If there is no changes in Maandagshoek in five years, I think if you can come back you can find all people dead.

**Dale:** Are you saying that the community are ready to fight until they get what they need? Well personally I think that is a good message. Just more of a personal question. You have spoken more about the community development stuff, so for yourself what do you want? What are you hoping for in the future, you as an individual in this community?

**Mamohale:** As I am the chairperson of the community, I want a better life for all, that is my first priority. Even one day when I wake up in the morning I can see some roads and also some taps of water here and some dams, also some Apollo lights all the residents of Maandagshoek - not to me alone because we are ones here and we are not happy.

**AV:** In your life what was the moment when you felt proud and excited about (your whole life from the time you were still a child up to now)?

**Mamohale:** As a resident of Maandagshoek I want to see myself rich but not the way to sell some community but to work hard because each and every man must get the money from his job. So I want to see myself for the next time, for example having BEE company in this community because at all in Maandagshoek there is no one who is empowered. We struggle to get that because those who are empowered they are not the people from Maandagshoek they are living outside but they are empowered because of the minerals of Maandagshoek but they are not the residence of Maandagshoek. That thing worries me because, if our government is really sure that they are going to empower the people why didn't they empower us the residents of Maandagshoek. But they take the man from Rustenburg they bring him here, they empower him so they come back to get money and go back home and at the end we get nothing in our hands and they are destroying our field they are destroying everything.

**Dale:** And if we were to take your message to Joburg to the government what would you want us to say to them as a message from you here in Maandagshoek?

**Mamohale:** My message to all over the country ... we don't say we don't want the people to come to work, so what we need because we are the affected people. So before you can go outside you must face the challenges of the affected people. So we want the development, something like roads and transport, schools water, electricity and bursaries like if a child is alright in education then take him to school and our brothers and sisters must go and work there. But not to say only the people of Maandagshoek must work here because we have got some brothers some they are working at Cape and Joburg. If the government can come up with new idea to monitor the situation here, because our leaders didn't follow the right path they jumped the law, there is no one above the law all of us we are under the law but some of us they

are above. They draft the law for us not for them. If you can see they can come and throw the rocks in your yard and when you ask why they say go to hell and when you go to the police the police will say you are running mad. We are afraid now because our police are not working for the community, always you can see they are on behalf of the community. They come to arrest us because the mine said that guys want to destroy the community, if you can come to my land I want to see the agreement, when I ask okay you want to mine into our land ok you said to me you have got an agreement, and I say who gave you an agreement and where is that agreement in black and white ... but nothing. They want to use force. They take our fields and dig holes and there are some poisons down there, they are done with drilling when we go to plough there, the crops they are no longer right because there is some poison down there and they come to your yard and there is some lot of noise there, they come to your yard and they drill day and night for more than 3-4 days. What about the children? That is the problem.

**Minutes: 55**