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INTERVIEW WITH FLORA MPUSI AND FLORA MAKWA

Dale: Thank you very much first of all for coming to talk to us and we need you to be on the camera. We need to know both your full names and your position in the community ... who you are.

Flora Mpusi (Flora 1) :I don't know the year which I stated living here. My name is Flora Mpusi

Flora Makwa (Flora 2): My name is Flora Makwa.

Dale: What we will like to talk about is ... we have had a lot of discussions around the big issues of the mine and the problems in the community, but we understand particularly with the women in the community, there are issues about the projects, and we would like you to tell us the story about what has happened/not happened with these projects?

Flora 1: We have a project at the mine, is women only, they say we get paid on a yearly basis, we get R150 and some days we get R50 and some days we get R200. Now they tell us that the metals they buy are very expensive but when we ask for a slip, when someone has a contract must take a slip and look at how much is a bucket and how much is a tin

Dale: I want her to explain very well.

Flora 2; Problems are that we have a contract here, it does not pay us, they pay these workers ... we do not get paid. When we ask them why we get less money, they say the metals are expensive. Some times we get R400, some times R250 or R150 in a year.

Dale: What is it that they are providing to the mine?

Flora 1: We are cleaning and washing overalls

Dale: And when you say 150, 250, 400 is that ...every month, every what? A payment every once in a while. How does that work?

Interpreter: They are paying them every year.

Dale: Once a year?

Interpreter: Yes.

Dale: 400 hundred rand for the entire year?

Flora 2: Yes, per year.

Dale: And how often do they go and do this work, in terms of washing these overalls?

Flora 2: The workers work permanent ... ourselves, the contract is ours they are having the workers, the workers get paid every month, but us sometimes we don't get anything, since this year began we haven't got anything

Dale: And how did it come that they signed the contract? What was the initial agreement? Why is it that they were able to own this contract and did they then find the workers to employ them or did the workers come separately?

Interpreter: Come again.

Dale: I'm trying to understand the arrangement, so if they sign the contract with the mine ... right, she owns the contract. Did the mine go and find the workers separately or did they provide the workers as a sort of agency?

Flora 1: They said we will hire people ourselves, but now people are no longer hired by us, they get hired by them at the offices

Dale: So, essentially what she is saying is that they are violating the contract that they signed initially, as a provision of labour?

Flora 2: Yes, but they, its like when you say I will be the older one and you will be the leader, then if we know the slips, thus the slips to see how much, they say transport is expensive. And we say let transport come, since you say transport is expensive; let us buy our own van.

Dale: So, what have you as women attempted to do with the mine, to try and change the situation?

Flora 1: It's not easy my child, it's not easy with the likes of Simon Kgwete who is the leader, it is the leaders who made themselves forerunners, because they are educated. Us, we are named women of the mine, they just forced themselves in.

Dale: Are there any other opportunities for women in this community, to work here in the mine?

Flora 1: Opportunities for women? Yes

Dale: Can you tell us what those are?

Flora 2: Is Ntlhatlhe, Basadi re Maano, Mphuxuku, Mphatlalatsane, these are the names of the projects.

Dale: What other kinds of work?

Flora 2: Others like Ntlhatlhe are doing white wash and Mphuxuku are doing Ubuntu.

Dale: What is Ubuntu? I know the word but what does it mean in terms of working?

Interpreter: Ubuntu means is just the name of the project.

Ahmed: Ok. Did they set up Section 21 companies that you are the owners of? Did they set a project that is Batho?

Flora 2: Yes, they are all there; they are formed by Section 21.

Ahmed: Ok, so you are the owner of Section 21 or who is the actual owner of Section 21?

Flora 1: We own it as a group of ten, we are ten women.

Ahmed: Ten women from this community?

Flora 1: Yes.

Ahmed: Who makes all the decisions for the company now?

Flora 2: Is Simon Kgwete, and the executive directors.

Ahmed: Did you elect those section 21 directors?

Flora 2: Yes we did elect them, because they are wise and we are stupid.

Ahmed: How do feel now about those directors that you elected?

Flora 1: The directors now, I'm seriously disagreeing, they are not useful, if we were being controlled by the useful ones we could be working right now.

Dale: As women in this community here, what other opportunities are there for you to work to gain some salary? Besides what you are talking about.

Flora 2: No, others are working there hired by Modikwa and they are working in the mine, those are Modikwa contract which hire women to work in the mine, but for a hand work duty, there is nothing.

Dale: So women are working underground? Including ones from this community?

Flora 1: Yes, they are working.

Dale: What now, when we talked with the kgoshi there we were talking about the role of women in the more traditional kinds of things ... tending the fields and other kinds of things. What I'm interested in is since 1994 do they feel as though the role of women has been better, that women has more rights or they are better situated than they were before.

Flora 2: No, we just see that we are living nicely, we are able to go to the shops and visit our relatives only, but as to find food, I make pots, I travel to Middleburg to cut broom and sell, when I hear in my stomach.

Dale: Can the other lady tell us how she feels about the same thing?

Flora 2: After 1994 I see no changes towards women. Now when we go to where pensioner money is being distributed, we just walk, we pass here and reach that side. We go to get our pension money by our feet and when we come back boys rob us of our money, we come back with nothing.

Dale: What I was wondering, what I also wanted to know is ... you know the government has been saying women must be involved more in everything, we have a deputy president who is a women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ncuka right, she is a women ... we have women now in business we have women all over the places, now how do you feel about the role of women in the new South Africa?

Flora 1: We don't feel anything, we are just looking at how things work, we don't see anything. Now here is the mine, us who get pension, they could have built a hall where we could get our pension, now we are getting nothing, now we don't see it. The

mine is doing nothing for us, I don't see what it is making for us but they came here to make things for us, we don't see anything.

Ahmed: You know you said you have high blood pressure, tell me a little bit about the challenges that poses for things that you have to do here, the fact that you are a little bit sick

Flora 2: It's anger because I don't get pension, I eat by asking from other houses, as to this contract, it's uneasy

Ahmed: I want to ask about the facilities as well ...but why are you not getting pension?

Flora 2: They have cut my age, I'm the same age as my son ... 30 years, I have been to MEC at Lebowakgomo but it could not help.

Dale: So your ID says you are 30 years old?

Flora 2: Yes

Ahmed: Because you are sick are you allowed to go to the hospital easily?

Flora 2: Yes, but when I get there they say I'm not sick, I don't have high blood.

Dale: How much pension do you get per month?

Flora 1: R800

Ahmed: Flora, did you ever go and see anybody about changing your ID book?

Flora 2: Yes, but I couldn't, I went with others to take other ID but they are getting pension now except for me

Dale: I want to ask both of you as women who have been in this community for a long time ... many people always say and I believe its true, that women are the back bone of the community, meaning women do a lot of things that keep everything together. What do you think are the main problems, as women in this community now?

Flora 1: In our community they could have given us work for women so that we can eat because there is no work, they could have poured water there so that we can sell and get food, now there is nothing

Dale: What do you think about the situation of the children?

Flora 2: There are children and some of them are not working, we have to feed them again.

Dale: Do you think the children are getting a good education?

Flora 1: They don't get good education because when they go to school they think about the distance they are walking to school and that they also have to return home at lunch.

Dale: What do you think are the problems facing this community?

Flora 2: I don't know anything but there are many problems, because we do not see anything.

Dale: Tell about some of the problems?

Flora 1: We want this mine to do something, when they came here they said they were going to provide, now they don't. I was born here and when the mine came I thought it was going to help.

Dale: The chief said that water is just now being under provision, is that correct?

Flora 2: The water just came in now, not long ago.

Dale: So, before then how far did you have to go to get water? Where did you get it from?

Flora 1: We had to move from here to that other side.

Dale: Was the water clean? Is it good quality water?

Flora 2: We just get water from the river that crosses there, we just drink.

Ahmed: Is it good water?

Flora 1: Yes it's clean because we clean.

Dale: Can you describe how life in general is here; describe how a day is to you every day?

Flora 2: Day by day there is no work, when we are sitting at home we just do nothing and until sunset, because the government did not give us work for day-to-day, we don't do farming, we just get woods from the mountain and sell.

Dale: But when you get up in the morning what is the first thing that you do?

Flora 1: I get up and make fire then make tea and the sweep and after, I drink my tea and then I'll be talking in my heart about how I can get work.

Ahmed: And yourself mummy?

Flora 2: When I get up in the morning I take a broom and sweep, when I'm done I make tea on the fire, sit and drink.

Dale: Do they think from their older generation, I'm assuming that when they were young they did not get the possibility to go to school and to get a proper education. Do you think that young girls now have a better chance of proving themselves and getting a better life than they did?

Flora 1: We never went to school, our parents refused and said it's prostituting, saying you are not going to school you will stay at home; we stayed and herd cows ... that's it.

Dale: What do think about the young girls now with the opportunities?

Flora 2: They have possibilities unlike us ... our parents failed us.

Dale: Is there a problem amongst the young girls now with the teenage pregnancies and becoming parents far too early. In other words do they feel like the young girls now have the same responsibilities as they had or are they doing things that are not good, having children at an early age?

Flora 1: Yes, children of now-a-days are bad as compared to the ones at the older generation. They say its rights, these rights take them to danger, and eight years old child has a child. That is not good brought up.

Dale: Is that a burden to them when that happens because often times the older women have to take care of those children?

Flora 2: We don't like it because the next time they will bring another child without a father.

Dale: Do you feel that the changes and the rights ... all of the different things that have happened ... the good thing in other words ... is destroying the morals and the values of people, the culture ... or do you think it is a good thing. Are all the changes good for the community?

Flora 1: It's Thabo Mbeki who helps the children who bears children, as to us it does not help our culture has been destroyed. Children get grants and we don't.

Dale: So are you saying the child grant is encouraging the girls to get pregnant?

Both: Yes.

Dale: It seems to me that there is a lot of anger, disappointment with the way things have been going. Where would they like to see things going for them as women in this community?

Flora 2: In our land for us to get satisfied, they must make roads and provide work for old women ... we will work. If you can open a mine there I can go and work myself, I'm looking for work now with red eyes.

Ahmed: And if we were going to take the message to Joburg and all the people who will see this video, what would you want them to ... what do you want people to know about life?

Flora 1: We will like people to know that in our community there is a mine which does not do anything for us, it does not make roads, we don't have anything and even work ... our children do no have work, they have started to steal and break into shops because the mine is not doing anything.

Ahmed: And yourself mum?

Flora 2: I'm saying our children will learn to steal because of the issue of the mine, because this children are sitting at home, they are looking for work now, they is no work now our children will do illegal things.

Minutes: 39
