

Project name: Alternative History Project
Date of interview: 2007-09-08
Location of interview: Sebokeng, Gauteng
Language of interview: Zulu
Name of Interviewer/s: Dale McKinley & Ahmed Veriava
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Audio file name: AHP_SEB_MakhanyaKateMasabatha_20070908

INTERVIEW WITH KATE MASABATHA MAKHANYA.

Dale McKinley (DM): So we are starting now, if you can just introduce yourself, your full name and where you live here?

Kate Masabatha Makhanya (KMM): My name is Kate Masabatha Makhanya, I stay in 1890/6 Beverley Hills, Albany Street.

DM: Ok Kate, When were you born here? Were you born here in this community or did you move here and when did you move in here?

KMM: I was born in Rustenburg; I came to live with my parents.

DM: What year did you come here?

KMM: I started the crèche at Evaton from 1986, and then we bought this place ... and we shifted to here.

DM: What I am trying to get is the time frame, what year did you move into this area?

KMM: I came here in 1995.

DM: You came here in 1995, Beverley Hills here and before that were you in Evaton?

KMM: Yes.

DM: For how long did you live in Evaton?

KMM: About 21 years.

DM: About 21 years, that's not far from here, how far is Evaton from here?

KMM: Is not far.

DM: Not far?

KMM: Yes, it is at the Eastern road.

DM: So Kate tell us a little bit about your own family? Are you married, do you have children?

KMM: Yes, I have 4 children.

DM: You have 4 children?

KMM: Yes.

DM: Are they grown now, are they adults?

KMM: Yes, they have grown up because my last born was born in 1983.

DM: Is your husband still with you?

KMM: Yes.

DM: How long have you married him?

KMM:...

DM: Quiet a long time?

KMM: Yes quiet a long time, from 1973.

DM: From 1973, it's like 37 years?

KMM: Yes.

DM: Before you started this crèche here, what were you doing in Evaton? What kind of work? Were you a house wife? Were you working?

KMM: I first worked in Vaalpotris in Meyerton, manufacturing things for the toilet, and then later on I moved into domestic at the kitchens.

DM: Just tell us, we're just trying to get to before/after 1994, tell us how was it like when you were working there in Evaton in those years, in the 1970s and 1980s those years?

KMM: In those times it was a little tough because we were unable to stand for ourselves. It was very hard to start my own business unlike now that I can be able to make my own business, because it was not allowed, you have could have got arrested.

DM: And this area particularly in the 1980s was quiet hectic, this area was very active ... a lot of things happening. What did you think about what was happening in the struggles and all of the conflict?

KMM: During those times life was not nice because you would just get killed for nothing. Life was not good because of police brutality, and people were killed without a valid reason.

DM: Can you give us an example of things that happened to you during that time that was bad ... in terms of the apartheid government times?

KMM: During that time, everything needed approval or permission from the police. When you come you have to carry your pass. We had to carry our Identity Documents even at night when we sleep. We had to inform the police about our visitors.

DM: Did you or were your children involved at all in the political activities?

KMM: I can't remember, but one of my sons is a soldier.

DM: So tell us Kate, in the early 1990s, when things started changing, Mandela was released in 1990, the ANC was unbanned ... How did you feel at that time? Did you feel like things were starting to change for real for yourself or how were things here?

KMM: Yes I felt relieved and I felt life was changing because we were not obliged to carry our Identity Documents with us as I said. We were not allowed to walk wherever as we could get arrested.

DM: And how about for you economically not just about things politically, how did you see things in the 1990s for yourself?

KMM: In my life I thought my life has changed; I am now independent, though I suffer a lot because I work with people and sometimes they (child's parents) do not pay me well. I also work with children who don't have parents. I work with people who sometimes do not pay me. It is very hard because some of the kids do not have parents.

DM: Ok, but she is talking about the crèche, but I was still talking about the early 1990s period you know What I was trying to ask is when the political things started to change, how did you feel about your own life, the opportunities for yourself at that time, not now but then?

The interpreter: She did answer that and she said she felt better even though there were still struggles.

DM: Can you share any of those with us?

KMM: I am not feeling any different in terms of my personal life, I never had money and I have been suffering all my life.

Ahmed Veriava (AV): Can I ask you a question that's taking us a little back. Why did you leave when you were in Vaalpotris?

KMM: I left there because I was getting married and my husband said he does not want me to work since he did not like it.

AV: From there when you went to work as a domestic worker, why did you go and work in the kitchens?

KMM: I went to work as a domestic worker after realising that it was tough at my family.

AV: What was making life difficult? Was it just money or was his work situation changed?

KMM: My husband was travelling outside the country a lot; he would go and not come home after a long time, and then I had to struggle with the children and then I felt obliged to work for the family.

AV: When you are saying he was doing country work, what do you mean?

Translator: Basically people who do country work is people who would go to Mozambique for two weeks for work, like working in the mine industry.

AV: What do you mean when you say he was doing country work?

KMM: Working in the mines industry.

AV: And then just to wrap this up ... How did you find working in the... compared to working in the Ceramics in the factory, how did you find the change to work in the kitchen?

KMM: I worked in Vaalportris before my marriage; then after some time, I realised that I was suffering, life was difficult as I was suffering and I never went back to Vaalpotris. Then I decided to look for kitchen work in order to be able to take care of my children.

The interpreter: The question was that what was the different between working at Vaalpotris and when you were working as a domestic worker?

KMM: The difference was money. In Vaalpotris I was earning weekly, it was better off since I was earning R7,73 a week. In the kitchen I was earning R9 per month.

DM: R9 per week?

KMM: No per month, in Meyerton town.

DM: What years were those, what years did you work as a domestic worker?

KMM: It was daily work, I was doing laundry.

DM: What time, what years were those?

KMM: During the 1970s.

DM: Just out of interest, how many hours a day were you working?

KMM: I was clocking in around 07h00 and knock off at 11h00.

AV: I just want to ask you when you were saying when life got better after 1994 ... What changed that you said ok now things are getting better? Was there any moment that you said ok now South Africa is changing?

KMM: A lot of things have changed, but still people are suffering, for example, unemployment.

AV: But how is that, even if you know now that things did change the way you wanted to ... back in the 1990s when things started to change, what was it for you that you have seen as a big change for you, what were the things for you that you saw they were going to be different from now?

KMM: Before 1994, the place that I am staying now was a farm for one man, but now it's a place for us.

DM: And when you were, just before... well after the announcement that there were going to be the elections in April 1994 ... For yourself, what were you expecting for yourself? You said earlier that you thought things were going to change, if you go back to that time what were you thinking and expecting these things to happen?

KMM: I just wished for a good life without poverty.

DM: ... what does that mean to you?

KMM: I didn't want to be rich because I will tend to degrade other people.

DM: Ok, when you are saying normal what kinds of things would that mean? Are you taking about a house, maybe for your children, what do you mean?

KMM: I wanted them to go to school, have a better life, but at the moment no one is going to school. One of my children builds this house for us.

DM: So you couldn't afford to send them to school, is that what you are saying?

KMM: Yes, but all of them reached matric.

DM: And you yourself you said about school, how far did you go to school?

KMM: Standard three.

DM: Standard three?

KMM: Yes.

DM: So when you...after 1994, the elections, Mandela becoming the president and South Africa changes, you said that you moved from Evaton to here in 1985?

KMM: Yes.

DM: Why did you move, tell us about that move to here?

KMM: We moved from there because there we were hired a place, we were staying in a 4 room, that we hired, and we came here because my son built this house for me.

DM: So one of your children built this house for you?

KMM: Yes.

DM: Now this area here is called Beverly Hills?

KMM: Yes.

DM: Do you know Beverly Hills in the United States?

KMM: No.

DM: Do you know that name?

KMM: I was not starting to hear this name but I don't know were it is.

DM: Ok because Beverly Hills is in... you know Hollywood, were the movies are made, it's where the rich people stay, its called Beverly Hills. (All laughing)

KMM: I felt like I was moving to a better place.

DM: Did you feel when you were moving from Evaton you were going to have a better life for yourself?

KMM: Yes, there is a lot of difference.

AV: Can I just ask you, the name Beverly Hills for this area, is it the official name or is it the name that people have given?

KMM: It is an official name because all the documents are written this name.

DM: So you moved here, your son built this house ... What made you to decide you wanted to open a crèche?

KMM: I liked the place because even in Evaton I was renting for my crèche.

DM: So you were renting a crèche from Evaton before you moved here?

KMM: Yes.

DM: Ok, so how long...when did you start the crèche, the very first time that you started the crèche in Evaton, what year was that?

KMM: 1986.

DM: 86, you have been running it for 20 years?

KMM: Yes.

DM: Do you like children?

KMM: Too much.

DM: And you...are you able for yourself, able for the crèche to make a living, did you get income for yourself?

KMM: Not a lot, I just love kids; the income is not that much, the money that we make we buy food. Then I pay people I work with and then I just left with little money.

AV: Can I ask you a question, how did you...in 1986 what made you to decide to open up a crèche?

KMM: When I left working in the kitchen in Meyerton, one of the grannies came over to me to help her in her crèche. While I was there I started to love the job. After my time finished there, children's parents came over to ask me to open my own crèche so that I can take care of their kids.

DM: Were you working for in the crèche ... for an African person or White person?

KMM: No, it was a black person.

DM: So tell us a little bit about when you moved here, when you started a crèche and everything ... Was it very difficult for you to get where you are, purely depending on yourself or did you have any kind of support from the community or from the government, the new government, anything like that?

KMM: What kind of support?

DM: Things like social development?

KMM: There was a time when I felt I was not going well, I was sick and I was supposed to go to the meetings, then I had to work with my sister in laws then they offered us food, the government never helped.

DM: Did you have to register the crèche, I mean officially?

KMM: My daughter has registered it and now she is the one who is working.

DM: Ok, tell us a little bit about...in the 1990's when you were ... you talked about that you expected things to change, you enjoyed, you have moved to a better place and things started being better for you. As you started the crèche in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998 how were things during those years here for you here? And then things started to change, was it good, how was it?

KMM: I was very independent and working for something that I really love, working with children. My life has dramatically changed.

DM: Ok I'm trying to, can you...what has changed and what hasn't changed for you? What do you think has changed and what hasn't for you?

KMM: What has changed for me was that I managed to take my children to school up to matric; I can support my kids though the money was little, they all went to school, and they never slept with nothing to eat.

DM: And have you seen, during that time that you've been here and running this crèche, ... did the community change? How do you feel about the community that you are living in here?

KMM: It was shacks most of them started in shacks, we struggled a lot, but now there are bond houses.

DM: Ok, generally what you are saying is that during these 10 years in this community things became a little better, the life got a little better?

KMM: Recently most of the community has changed but most are still struggling.

DM: And you mentioned earlier that the main problem is jobs, people are not working?

KMM: Yes, most people are not working.

DM: Kate, what do you think just your opinion ... What do you think of the government since 1994, both at the local and also at the bigger...national level, just your opinion in which the way people have governed?

KMM: Some promises have not been fulfilled, people go to sleep with empty stomach, and unemployed people would go around begging for food.

DM: Besides jobs what other kinds of promises were you talking about, what other promises?

KMM: What kinds of things?

DM: I am talking about water, electricity, roads all those kinds of things, how are those things here?

KMM: We now have water though privatised, roads are not fixed ... in the hospital they don't work, you can go there early in the morning at about 06h00 but without help, no medications, they hardly attend to our concerns.

DM: How many children do you have here in this crèche, how many now?

KMM: 56.

DM: 56?

KMM: Yes.

DM: And what are the ages?

KMM: We take from 3 months to 5 years.

DM: 3 months to 5 years?

KMM: Yes. But most of them have grown up.

DM: Is it difficult to take care of a 3 month old child?

KMM: Yes.

DM: How do you...and you said you love children, 3 months that's a very young child?

KMM: Yes.

DM: Did you...or you don't mind taking care of those children?

KMM: I take care of them until they go to primary, some of which start from one month.

DM: Do you have 1 month old children here?

KMM: Yes, but not now.

DM: Not now but you had in the past?

KMM: Yes.

AV: Can I ask you, how many of you are working in the crèche?

KMM: Now we are 3 but one is absent.

DM: How much do you charge now for the parents to send them to your crèche?

KMM: We charge them R100 a month.

DM: R100 per month?

KMM: Yes.

DM: And you said earlier that some of them are not paying. How many are paying? Have most of the people been able to pay that amount per month?

KMM: Many of them don't pay. They hardly pay well. Do not pay on time.

DM: And just tell us about your average day in terms of you running the crèche, from what time in the morning until what time during the day?

KMM: In the morning, I open the crèche from 7h00, clean and I wait for them to enter, and we have already cooked soft porridge meal for them; 09h00 they pray and 10h00 they eat soft porridge. From there the elders write in the other class, the younger ones do

not write-they just draw. At 13h00 they eat lunch and from 14h00 I bath them until the parents come.

DM: This is until in the afternoon?

KMM: Yes.

DM: Is this 5 days a week?

KMM: Yes.

DM: And on the weekend?

KMM: No, not on the weekend.

DM: I know there is one room where you had a blackboard, so you are doing some teaching as well?

KMM: Yes.

DM: What kind of teaching is that?

KMM: I teach them to write their names, so that they know how to write their names, AEIOU and ABCDE.

DM: And the two, the others that work for you, your daughter and the others that work here, what kinds of education or qualifications do they have?

KMM: They have matriculated.

DM: They have matric?

KMM: Yes.

DM: Have they ever been offered ...courses for helping and teaching in those early childhood stages of education?

KMM: My daughter has gone through some teaching courses.

DM: Ok, just a few more questions and then we will be through. The children themselves ... Do you think that the children that come from this community are healthy children, do you see problems or do you see that things are okay in terms of the children themselves as young children?

KMM: In January we find difficulties from the children, but when times goes by they learn to adjust and pickup.

DM: Are most of the children that you are serving coming from very poor families or are some of their parents working?

KMM: Mostly are coming from poor families.

DM: Poor families?

KMM: Yes.

DM: And do you think nutrition is a problem for most of the children? Did they get their food here when there is maybe the problem with nutrition?

KMM: Sometimes when I get there, I find them crying especially the young ones, but after I have served them with soft porridge they start to play cheerfully.

DM: Kate what would you like to ... you are now an older woman, you have got a house here, you are running the crèche and everything ... what would you like to see, the kinds of things that you like to see happening for the community and for yourself lets say in the next 5 years?

KMM: For me?

DM: Yes for you first?

KMM: For what can make me happy is because I have been trying but I am failing, if I can be able to build more rooms for the crèche I would be satisfied.

DM: And for your community?

KMM: More schools, hospitals and clinics since we are running out of them, people here are struggling to get proper care.

DM: Do you look forward to...the last two questions, do you look forward to the future, are you looking for things ahead?

KMM: Yes I am looking and I am hoping that maybe we can have improvements from the government.

AV: Is there anything that you are afraid of in terms of the future ... something that you are scared might happen?

KMM: We are not safe, we just only appreciate when the sun comes out and when its dawn.

DM: Just very last one. Is there anything ... we have asked you a lot of questions ... but is there anything that you want or would like to say or tell us?

KMM: I thank you for coming because in the past it never happened.

DM: And we are very thankful for you taking your time. We are sorry that you are feeling sick today, I wish you get better very soon, thank you Kate.

KMM: Thank you.

MINUTES - 56: 00