
DEEPENING THE PEACE

Zandile Nhlengetwa's Grassroots Peacebuilding in South Africa

By Alicia Simoni, Peace Writer

Edited by Emiko Noma



2008 Women PeaceMakers Program

Made possible by the Fred J. Hansen Foundation

*This material may only be used with permission from the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice.
Contact ipj@sandiego.edu, with "Women PeaceMakers – Narrative Permissions" in the subject line.



JOAN B. KROC
INSTITUTE FOR
PEACE & JUSTICE
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice
Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies
University of San Diego
5998 Alcalá Park
San Diego, CA 92110-2492
<http://peace.sandiego.edu>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	About the Women PeaceMakers Program	1
II.	A Note to the Reader	1
III.	Biography of a Woman PeaceMaker – Zandile Nhlengetwa	2
IV.	Conflict History – South Africa	3
V.	Integrated Timeline – Political Developments and Personal History	10
VI.	Narrative Stories of the Life and Work of Zandile Nhlengetwa	
	a. The Abnormal is Normal	15
	b. The Struggle(s)	20
	c. The Grass Listens and Tells What It Hears	26
	d. <i>Kuzakahle/Zamani</i> (Things Are Getting Better/We Are Trying)	30
	e. A Resounding Gong	36
	f. We Are Wounded Healers	41
	g. Epilogue	47
VII.	A Conversation with Zandile Nhlengetwa	49
VIII.	Best Practices in Grassroots Peacebuilding	58
IX.	Training Exercises – Developed by Zandile Nhlengetwa	
	a. Exercise 1: Someone Else’s Shoes	62
	b. Exercise 2: The Things We Carry	63
	c. Exercise 3: The Tree of Life	64
X.	Further Reading – South Africa	65
XI.	Biography of a Peace Writer – Alicia Simoni	66
XII.	Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice	67
XIII.	University of San Diego	68
XIV.	List of Acronyms	69
XV.	Endnotes	70

ABOUT THE WOMEN PEACEMAKERS PROGRAM

Made possible through a generous grant from the Fred J. Hansen Foundation, the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice's (IPJ) Women PeaceMakers Program annually hosts four women from around the world who have been involved in human rights and peacemaking efforts in their countries.

Women on the frontline of efforts to end violence and secure a just peace seldom record their experiences, activities and insights – as generally there is no time, or, perhaps, no formal education that would help them record their stories. The Women PeaceMakers Program is a selective program for leaders who want to document, share and build upon their unique peacemaking stories. Selected peacemakers join the IPJ for an eight-week residency.

Women PeaceMakers are paired with a Peace Writer to document in written form their story of living in conflict and building peace in their communities and nations. The peacemakers' stories are also documented on film by the IPJ's partner organization Sun & Moon Vision Productions. While in residence at the institute, Women PeaceMakers give presentations on their work and the situation in their home countries to the university and San Diego communities.

The IPJ believes that women's stories go beyond headlines to capture the nuance of complex situations and expose the realities of gender-based violence, thus providing an understanding of conflict and an avenue to its transformation. The narrative stories of Women PeaceMakers not only provide this understanding, but also show the myriad ways women construct peace in the midst of and after violence and war. For the realization of peace with justice, the voices of women – those severely affected by violent conflict and struggling courageously and creatively to build community from the devastation – must be recorded, disseminated and spotlighted.¹

A NOTE TO THE READER

In the following pages, you will find narrative stories along with additional information to provide a deep understanding of the conflict and one person's journey within it. These complementary components include a brief biography of the peacemaker, a historical summary of the conflict, a timeline integrating political developments in the country with personal history of the peacemaker, a question-and-answer transcript of select interviews, and a table of best practices in peacebuilding as demonstrated and reflected on by the peacemaker during their time at the IPJ.

The document is not intended necessarily to be read straight through, from beginning to end. For instance, you can use the historical summary or timeline as mere references or guides as you read the narrative stories. You can skip straight to the table of best practices if you are interested in peacebuilding methods and techniques, or straight to the question-and-answer transcript if you want to read commentary in the peacemakers' own words. The goal of this format is to reach audiences through multiple channels, providing access to their work, their vision, their lives and their impact in their communities for a global audience.

BIOGRAPHY OF A WOMAN PEACEMAKER – ZANDILE NHLENGETWA



Photo credit: Patricia Rogers

A survivor of the political violence that affected her home province of KwaZulu-Natal, Zandile Nhlengetwa is known in her community for her ability to bring calm and stability to potentially volatile situations. She is a community project coordinator for the organization Survivors of Violence, where she designs peacebuilding intervention strategies for communities that have experienced high levels of violence, both during apartheid and now in the post-conflict era when criminal violence is prevalent. Her work includes conducting trauma-healing workshops for survivors and developing income-generating programs to alleviate the effects of poverty as well as facilitating dialogue with traditional leaders to promote development in the province.

After the loss of family members to violent incidents, Nhlengetwa has reached out to young men in prison to help them break the cycle of violence. She and a network of families that have children in prison conduct campaigns to raise awareness about youth violence and drug abuse, and advocate for sentence reductions for convicted youth. She also joined with other women who lost husbands during violent conflict to form the Harambe Women's Forum. The group initially supported one another financially and emotionally; today their activities encompass community-healing forums and the development of community-based structures to prevent violence and promote reconciliation.

After the end of apartheid, Nhlengetwa assisted in the successes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by counseling victims before and after they testified and setting up community assistance programs to support victims. A teacher by profession, Nhlengetwa also developed education and counseling programs for street children through the Department of Specialized Education at the University of Witwatersrand, and worked with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency to assist community members living with HIV/AIDS.



Photo credit: Ryan Brennan/The Vista

CONFLICT HISTORY – SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has been home to human settlement for over 100,000 years. A large portion of its history is marked by confrontation between disparate populations, resulting in ongoing cycles of oppression, resistance and violence. The history of these confrontations is often considered contentious – marked by wide variations of interpretation and infused with politics. Below is an attempt at an objective summary (to the extent possible) of the region's history.

Approximately 40,000 years ago a culture of hunter-gatherers, known as Bushmen, populated the region. Over time herding became the dominant economic activity, concepts of personal wealth and property-ownership were introduced, community structures solidified and chieftaincies developed. At that time pastoralist Bushmen became known as Khoikhoi, and hunter-gatherer Bushmen were referred to as San. These two groups eventually intermixed to become known as the Khoisan.

Small waves of Bantu peoples from the Niger River Delta gradually began migrating into southern Africa, reaching the present-day KwaZulu-Natal Province by A.D. 500. As this southward migration expanded, the ancestors of today's Nguni peoples (the Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi and Ndebele) settled along the coastline. Others, now known as the Sotho-Tswana peoples (Tswana, Pedi and Basotho), migrated to the Highveld. And today's Venda and Shangaan-Tsonga peoples made their homes in the northeastern areas of South Africa.

European ships bound for India started periodically arriving on the shores of southern Africa in 1488. However, it wasn't until nearly 200 years later, in 1652, that the Dutch East India Company established the first permanent European settlement, Cape Colony. At that time the company granted a small group of Dutch men permission to establish private farms on lands occupied by the Khoikhoi. These farmers became known as free burghers, and later as the Trekboers (shortened to Boers). The majority of Boers were of Dutch ancestry; however, there were also numerous Germans, Scandinavians and French Huguenots. This amalgam of nationalities eventually came to constitute the Afrikaner people.

The Dutch East India Company inevitably exercised jurisdiction over the Khoikhoi. In doing so they drove the Khoikoi from their traditional lands and also decimated them with diseases. Many Khoikhoi were left with little option other than to work for the Europeans in an exploitative arrangement that differed little from slavery.

With an abundance of what was perceived to be free land, the Dutch East India Company also began importing large numbers of slaves, primarily from Madagascar and Indonesia. Over time, the Khoisan, their European overseers and the imported slaves mixed, with the offspring forming the basis for today's Coloured population.

By the end of the 18th century the Dutch East India Company had established a pluralistic, stratified, slave-owning society. Racially defined legal status groups emerged as a direct result of company policy, establishing the European community as dominant and relegating all non-white groups to a position of legal and political inferiority.

As the 18th century drew to a close, Dutch mercantile power faltered and the British took control of the Cape Colony. They initially seized the colony in 1795; however, British sovereignty was not legally recognized until the Congress of Vienna in 1815. British governance maintained the existing racial hierarchy, the only difference being the emergence of two distinct language and culture groups among whites. English-speaking Britons dominated politics, trade, finance, mining and manufacturing in the urban centers, while the largely uneducated, Dutch-speaking Boers, or Afrikaners, resided on farms.

As the Boers became increasingly dissatisfied with British governance, Anglicization policies and the abolition of slavery, they left Cape Colony in search of greater independence. Known as the “Great Trek,” the Boers ventured eastward and north-eastward into the interior of the region, establishing the Orange Free State and Transvaal. The trek was later highlighted as the central event in the evolution of an Afrikaans mystique.

Simultaneously, during the early part of the 19th century, Bantu-speaking chiefdoms were experiencing massive upheaval – a time that is often referred to as *Mfecane* in Zulu, or *Difaqane* in Sesotho. A combination of factors – population growth, the depletion of natural resources and devastating drought and famine – led to revolutionary changes in the political, economic and social structures of these chiefdoms. At the same time, the Zulu empire was experiencing significant expansion under the rule of Shaka Zulu. He fostered a new Zulu national identity and strengthened his kingdom’s military means, seeking to shift the region from a loosely organized collection of kingdoms to a centralized state.

History, as written by colonial powers, has represented the widespread territorial changes that took place throughout the 19th century in southern Africa as a fair, rational distribution of land in which black chiefdoms held on to land which was traditionally theirs and white settlers moved into areas that had been left empty as a result of the Difaqane. A more accurate representation is of outright competition between blacks and whites (both British and Boer). Some of the significant confrontations that mark this period include two Anglo-Boer wars, the Battle of Blood River in which the Zulus experienced a massive defeat at the hands of the Boers and the Battle of Isandlwana during which tens of thousands of British were killed by Zulus.

The late 19th century was also marked by significant economic shifts, particularly the discovery of diamonds and gold in the region. Urban centers grew exponentially due to booming labor markets. At the same time an influx of Indians influenced the labor market and thus social dynamics.

In 1910 the Union of South Africa was formed, uniting all of South Africa under a single government. Gen. Louis Botha headed the first government of the new union, under the auspices of the South African National Party, later known as the South African Party (SAP). The union government was explicitly dedicated to consolidating power between the British and Boers, with continued marginalization of Blacks and Coloureds. South Africa’s constitution was shaped on the basis of blatant white supremacy.

Shortly after the formation of the union, the more radical Boers split away under the leadership of Gen. Barry Hertzog, forming the National Party (NP) in 1914. The NP championed Afrikaner interests, advocating separate development for the two white groups and independence from Britain.

Differences in outlook between the SAP and the NP were put aside where “native policy” was concerned. In their various ways – some as farmers, others as mine owners or industrialists – whites were anxious to safeguard their existence as well as their supply of black labor. It was at this time that segregation was effectively legislated. Among the measures passed were the:

- South Africa Act (1910) that enfranchised whites, giving them complete political control over all other race groups;
- Native Land Act (1913) which prevented all blacks, except those in the Cape, from buying land outside “reserves,” and which effectively stole 87 percent of their land;
- Natives in Urban Areas Bill (1918), designed to force blacks into “locations”;
- Urban Areas Act (1923) which introduced residential segregation in South Africa and provided cheap labor for the white mining and farming industry;
- Colour Bar Act (1926), preventing blacks from practicing skilled trades;
- Native Administration Act (1927) that made the British Crown, rather than paramount chiefs, the supreme head over all African affairs; and
- Representation of Natives Act (1936) which removed blacks from the Cape voters’ roll.

In the face of political exclusion and the tightening of controls over their daily lives, non-tribal black political organizations coalesced. The Native National Congress was formed in 1912; it became the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923. There was considerable coordination between African and labor parties – particularly the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) – at this time. Despite concerted efforts to improve their capacity to resist, the African movements failed to find effective ways of asserting their power in the face of widespread oppression.

Parallel to the formation of a black political movement was a growing resistance among Indians in South Africa, led in large part by Mohandas Gandhi. In 1894 Gandhi founded the Natal Indian Congress; in 1903 he established the Transvaal-based British Indian Association, and later the Phoenix Settlement in Durban, home to a printing press, school and health clinic. During his stay there Gandhi engaged in peaceful confrontation conceived of as Satyagraha – a technique of non-violent action for rectifying injustices and righting wrongs.

By 1929 the direction of South African public life was assuredly in white man’s hands. General elections that year brought the NP to power in a coalition government with the Labour Party. Afrikaner nationalism gained greater hold, marked most prominently by the adoption of Afrikaans alongside English as an official language of the country.

As a dominion of Great Britain, South Africa participated in both world wars. The effect of the wars at home was felt largely in the form of a booming wartime economy. In the context of this economic growth, black labor became increasingly important to the mining and manufacturing industries and black urban populations nearly doubled. Enormous squatter camps grew up on the outskirts of Johannesburg and (though to a lesser extent) outside the other major cities. The growth of an urban population, combined with increasingly restrictive racial policies – most notable in laws restricting movement (pass laws) and voting restrictions – helped to further politicize black parties. The ANC Youth League was subsequently formed in 1943.

The policy of apartheid, although already effectively in place, was officially adopted following the 1948 general election. This election marked the transition from a series of legislative

actions to a system of institutionalized racism and white domination. The apartheid system can be differentiated between “grand apartheid” and “petty apartheid.” Grand apartheid involved an attempt to partition South Africa into separate racially delineated states known as homelands. So-called petty apartheid referred to government segregation of education, medical care and other public services whereby black people ended up with services greatly inferior to those of whites, and to a lesser extent to those of Indians and Coloureds.

Although Africans, Asians and Coloureds shared common grievances, they were physically separated and legally differentiated in practically every aspect of their lives. As a result they were not united in their organizations or their anti-apartheid aims. At times they found themselves in violent conflict with one another, as was the case between Zulu and Indian populations in Durban in 1949.

As apartheid intensified, so too did a black resistance movement. In 1952 the ANC organized a mass civil disobedience campaign and in 1955 the Freedom Charter was developed to guide the pro-democracy anti-apartheid movement. In 1956, 20,000 women organized under the Federation of South African Women marched to the parliament buildings in Pretoria and presented a petition with the signatures of tens of thousands of people opposed to the pass laws. The Sharpeville protests in 1960 – in which 67 blacks died as a result of police brutality and several thousand were arrested – further intensified the black resistance movement. Unfortunately these efforts had little effect on the Nationalist government, which was determined to implement apartheid.

The failure to achieve any real success caused a major split in black resistance in 1959. A group of disenchanted ANC members – arguing that alliance with other political parties, particularly the white Congress of Democrats, caused their organization to make too many compromises and failed to represent African interests – formed the Pan Africanist Congress.

As the protests grew, the state responded with brutal force, and in 1960 the ANC and other black organizations were banned. Prohibited from operating peacefully or even having a legal existence in the country, the ANC chose to launch an armed struggle through a newly formed military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK), or “Spear of the Nation.” The government’s response was crushing: It was during this time that Nelson Mandela and countless other opposition leaders were imprisoned or fled into exile. With African political activity severely limited, young people sought alternative means to express their political aspirations. Steve Biko, who was strongly influenced by the Black Power movement in the United States, emerged as a leader of the Black Consciousness movement. He stressed that blacks had to liberate themselves mentally as well as physically.

International pressure against South African racial policies began as early as the first United Nations General Assembly in 1946. This criticism intensified after the mass civil disobedience campaign launched by the ANC brought attention to the extreme oppression experienced by non-whites. As a result of increased awareness, the Commission on the Racial Situation in the Union of South Africa was created. From 1967 onward, the United Nations encouraged the world community to take a wide range of measures to isolate the South African regime. The campaign promoted embargos on arms and oil, among other economic embargos, as well as sports and cultural boycotts. This was the first time any such action was taken against a U.N. member state, and marked a shift in U.N. strategy. By 1975 the South African government was effectively excluded from all organs of the United Nations, and in 1977 a mandatory arms embargo was implemented. Although direct

action was left in the hands of the various national and grassroots resistance movements, the U.N.'s condemnation of apartheid was crucial in legitimizing the resistance movement.

Tensions between the apartheid state and the black resistance movement intensified from the late 1960s through the 1980s. The government policy of resettlement, legislated under the Group Areas Act – forcing over 3.5 million people to move to designated homelands – was one of the key building blocks of apartheid during this period. In 1974 a previously ignored provision of the Bantu Education Act requiring Afrikaans to be used as a medium of instruction in the classroom was enforced. In response, in June 1976 hundreds of high-school students led a peaceful march in protest. The police's brutal response, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of children, marked a major turning point. Widespread riots soon erupted throughout South Africa's townships. In 1977 hundreds of blacks attended the funeral of Steve Biko, who died from head injuries sustained during police interrogation.

Urban riots combined with strikes, consumer boycotts and the ANC's strategy of economic warfare, industrial sabotage and attacks on government targets gradually provoked the state to minimally reform its apartheid policies. Increasing economic and political pressures also caused splits in the white political parties during this time. By repealing some minor apartheid laws in the mid-1980s, the state's objective was to win black support through socio-economic development.

A new constitution was adopted in 1984 and approved multiracial representation, to the exclusion of blacks – this set off yet another wave of opposition. The United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed – representing 575 organizations from trade unions to sporting bodies – and called for non-violent means to persuade the government to withdraw its constitutional proposals, do away with apartheid and create a new South Africa incorporating the homelands.

At the same time black trade unions were taking an increasingly prominent role in economic and political protests – in 1985 the Congress of South African Trade Unions was formed. Much of the unrest was directed at the government, but a substantial portion was between the residents themselves. It became the ANC's aim to make black townships “ungovernable.” As conflict intensified, a national state of emergency was declared in 1984. More human rights were violated, particularly at the hands of the police, during this period than ever before. It became increasingly apparent that South Africa was not only experiencing stark economic struggles, but also was essentially in the midst of civil war.

Also in the late 1980s, rivalries within the black resistance movement – particularly between the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the UDF/ANC – degenerated into conflict. Tens of thousands of blacks, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, lost their lives as a result of “black-on-black” violence. It later emerged, in the 1992 Goldstone Commission, that the police supplied some of the weapons used by the IFP.

In 1989 Prime Minister P.W. Botha met Mandela and agreed, somewhat superficially, to work for a peaceful end to apartheid. However, the state of emergency continued until 1990, when F.W. de Klerk became president and lifted the 30-year ban on leading anti-apartheid groups including the ANC. de Klerk also made his first public commitment to release Mandela, lift media restrictions and bring the Land Act to an end. Very few anticipated the chain of events that followed.

From 1990 to 1991 the legal apparatus of apartheid was abolished. There were fears that the change of power in South Africa would be violent and it was therefore considered essential that a peaceful resolution between all parties be reached. In December 1991 the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) began negotiations on the formation of a multiracial transitional government and a new constitution extending political rights to all groups. Alongside these talks, persistent violence continued throughout the country – in part due to the intense rivalry between the IFP and the ANC. The CODESA talks stalled in 1992; they were reinstated later that year under the name CODESA II. After intensive negotiations, Mandela and de Klerk signed a Record of Understanding, agreeing that a constituent assembly would be created to draw up the new constitution and that there would be a five-year Government of National Unity. The Interim Constitution was enacted in 1993.

On April 27, 1994 the population of South Africa voted for the first time in universal suffrage general elections. The ANC won the election to govern for the very first time. Mandela was inaugurated as president on May 9, 1994 and formed a government of national unity consisting of the ANC, NP and IFP. The task now was to repair the decimated body politic.

The formal vehicle for national reconciliation and unity was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Established by legislation in 1995 and chaired by Desmond Tutu, the TRC aimed primarily to provide restorative justice for victims. It was mandated to investigate the context in which gross violations of human rights had occurred since the arbitrary start date of 1960, and was given the power to grant amnesty, but only after full disclosure. Hearings went into action in April 1996. The TRC report was released in 1998, branding apartheid a crime against humanity and finding the ANC accountable for human rights abuses. Although inadequate on several fronts, the TRC in South Africa stands as a resource for reconciliation.

In 1999 and again in 2004, South Africa held general elections under the new constitution. The ANC won both times and Thabo Mbeki served two terms as president until his resignation in September 2008. Kgalema Motlanthe is serving as interim president until elections in 2009. In 21st century South Africa, white domination and apartheid are no longer the key political issues; however, the effects of a system of institutionalized oppression and resulting culture of violence are deeply entrenched.

The repudiation of apartheid has not meant the end of racial divisions in South Africa, or the end of economic and social problems. The country continues to be divided along racial lines with white, black and Indian populations alienated from one another. Although South Africa has the continent's biggest economy, much of the country's population is impoverished. Rural populations in particular experience de facto discrimination, suffering from poverty and lacking good education and healthcare. Land redistribution is an ongoing issue; the majority of land continues to be white-owned.

Social ills are also widespread. South Africa has the second-highest number of HIV/AIDS patients in the world – approximately one in seven of its citizens are infected with HIV. Despite progressive legislation on women's rights, there is widespread rape and domestic violence throughout the country. There is a large number of refugees in many urban centers from other African countries – including Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Xenophobia plagues the country: As recently as May 2008, violent attacks on foreigners took place, killing 60 people. All

segments of the population suffer from high levels of violent crime. The cost of the years of oppressive rule and conflict will be paid for a long time yet.



INTEGRATED TIMELINE

Political Developments in South Africa and *Personal History of Zandile Nhlengetwa*

14th century B.C.	Khoikhoi and San people inhabit southern Africa.
500 A.D.	Bantu peoples from the Niger River Delta begin migrating into the region.
1497	Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama lands on the coast of southern Africa en route to India.
1652	First permanent settlement, called Cape Colony, is established by the Dutch East India Company (also known as Vereenigde Oost-Indisch Compagnie).
1795	British forces seize Cape Colony from the Netherlands.
1815	Cape Colony is legally ceded to the British.
1816 – 1826	The decade of upheaval (known as <i>Mfecane</i> or <i>Difaqane</i>) brings radical changes to the political, economic and social structure of African communities. Shaka Zulu founds and expands the Zulu empire, creating a formidable fighting force.
1820	The first large group of British settlers arrives in Cape Colony.
1835 – 1840	Dutch settlers, known as Boers, leave Cape Colony in the “Great Trek” and expand their territory eastward.
1838	Boers defeat Zulus during the Battle of Blood River.
1860s	Indians begin arriving in South Africa.
1867	Diamonds are discovered in Orange Free State and Kimberley, unleashing a flood of whites and black laborers to the region.
1872	Pass Laws are introduced to control labor force in Kimberly diamond mines.
1879	Tens of thousands of British are killed by Zulus in Battle of Isandlwana. Despite this victory, Zululand comes under British control.
1880 – 1881	Boers rebel against the British, sparking the first Anglo-Boer War. The British are defeated.
Mid-1880s	Gold is discovered in the Transvaal region, triggering a gold rush and increasing the population of Johannesburg.

- 1894** Gandhi founds the Natal Indian Congress and begins his non-violent struggle for equality, justice and human dignity in the region.
- 1899 – 1902** The second Anglo-Boer War takes place. The Treaty of Vereeniging ends the war.
- 1906** A Zulu rebellion occurs, protesting harsh taxes and reduced wages.
- 1910** The Union of South Africa is formed, including the British colonies of the Cape and Natal, and the Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State.
- 1911** Legislation reserves skilled jobs for whites.
- 1912** The Native National Congress is founded, and later renamed the African National Congress (ANC).
- 1913** The Native Land Act is introduced to restrict black ownership of land to reserves.
- 1914** The National Party is founded, championing Afrikaner interests.
- 1924** The National Party comes to power in a coalition government with the Labour Party, and Afrikaner nationalism gains a greater hold. Afrikaans is recognized as South Africa's official language.
- 1930s** Due to the booming wartime economy, black labor becomes increasingly important to the mining and manufacturing industries, and the black urban population nearly doubles.
- 1948** Policy of apartheid (or separateness) is adopted under the leadership of National Party (NP).
- 1949** Violent clashes between Indian and Zulu populations take place in Durban.
- 1950** Group Areas Act is passed to segregate blacks and whites. The ANC, led by Nelson Mandela, responds with a campaign of civil disobedience and petition for direct parliamentary representation.
- 1955** *Zandile Zungu is born to Zulu parents in Lamontville township outside of Durban.*
- 1959** Racial violence erupts in Durban.
- 1960** The Sharpeville protests over pass laws result in the murders of 70 black demonstrators and the arrests of several thousand. The ANC is banned.

- 1961** South Africa is declared a republic and leaves the British Commonwealth. Mandela heads the ANC's new military wing called *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (or "Spear of the Nation").
- 1960s** International pressure against the apartheid government begins.
- 1964** ANC leader Mandela is sentenced to life in prison.
- 1966** Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, considered by many to be the father of apartheid, is assassinated.
- 1970s** The Black Homelands Citizenship Bill authorizes the withdrawal of South African citizenship from blacks and forcibly resettles 3 million people onto black "homelands."
- 1973** *Zandile begins attending Eshowe College of Education in Zululand.*
- 1975** *Zandile graduates from Eshowe College of Education and accepts her first teaching position.*
- 1976** At least 1,000 individuals, primarily youth, are killed in clashes between black protesters and security forces in uprisings that start in Soweto.
- 1977** Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko dies in police detention. Thousands attend his funeral.
- 1979** *Zandile marries Thamsanqa (Thami) Nhlengetwa and moves to Soweto in Johannesburg.*
- 1980** *Zandile's daughter Silindile is born.*
- 1981** *Zandile and Thami buy their first home in the "black suburbs" of Soweto.*
- 1982** *Zandile's son Thuthuka is born.*
- 1970s – 80s** Thousands of blacks flee into exile.
- 1983** Parliament approves multiracial representation, excluding blacks.
- 1984 – 1989** Civil unrest and township revolts lead to the declaration of a state of emergency.
- 1989** *Zandile's husband Thami, an ANC activist, is killed.*
- 1989** F.W. de Klerk replaces P.W. Botha as president. Secret meetings are arranged between the NP and Mandela. Public facilities are desegregated, and many ANC activists are released from prison.

- 1990s** Widespread political violence continues throughout many urban areas of the country.
- 1990** The ban on the ANC is lifted and Mandela is released after 27 years in prison. The ANC declares the end of the armed struggle. Exiles begin returning to South Africa.
- 1991** The Convention for a Democratic South Africa begins negotiations on the formation of a multiracial transitional government and a new constitution extending political rights to all groups. de Klerk repeals the remaining apartheid laws. International sanctions are lifted. “Inkathagate” reveals the government funded the Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). Major fighting occurs between the ANC and IFP.
- 1992** Whites support political reforms in referendum.
- 1993** ANC activist Chris Hanu is murdered and ANC President Oliver Tambo dies. There is a surge in political violence. The interim constitution of the Republic of South Africa is ratified.
- 1993** *Zandile’s home is petrol-bombed and burns down. Having lost all of her property and no longer feeling safe in Soweto, Zandile and her two children move back to her family’s home in KwaMashu, KwaZulu-Natal.*
- 1994** The first democratic national elections are held. The ANC wins elections and the interim constitution is implemented for a five-year transition period. The Government of National Unity is formed with Mandela as president. Membership in the Commonwealth is restored and remaining sanctions are lifted. South Africa takes a seat in the U.N. General Assembly after a 20-year absence.
- 1995** *Zandile begins work with the organization Survivors of Violence in KwaZulu-Natal.*
- 1996** The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, begins.
- Parliament adopts a new constitution and the NP withdraws from the coalition.
- 1998** The TRC report brands apartheid a crime against humanity and finds the ANC accountable for human rights abuses.
- 1999** The ANC wins general elections and Thabo Mbeki takes over as president.
- 2000** The city of Durban hosts the International AIDS Conference.

- 2001** Durban hosts a U.N. race conference.
- 2003** The government approves a major program to tackle HIV/AIDS.
- 2004** The ruling ANC wins a landslide election victory, gaining nearly 70 percent of votes. Mbeki begins a second term as president.
- Zandile's son Xolani is killed in a hijacking. The boys responsible for his death are arrested and receive the maximum sentence.***
- 2005** Investigators exhume the first bodies in a TRC investigation into the fates of hundreds of people who disappeared in the apartheid era.
- Zandile resigns from her position at Survivors of Violence in order to care for her ailing mother.***
- Jacob Zuma is relieved of his duties as deputy president due to corruption charges.
- 2006** ***Zandile creates the Harambe Women's Forum with a group of 20 women in Mshayazafe.***
- 2007** President Mbeki, often accused of turning a blind eye to crime, publicly urges South Africans to join forces to bring rapists, drug dealers and corrupt officials to justice.
- 2008** May – A wave of violence directed at foreigners hits townships across the country. Dozens of people die and thousands of Zimbabweans, Malawians and Mozambicans return to their home countries.
- September – President Mbeki resigns amid accusations of corruption.
- Zandile travels to the United States to take part in the Women PeaceMakers Program at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice.***

NARRATIVE STORIES OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF ZANDILE NHLENGETWA

The Abnormal is Normal

“This house is filthy. Black children must live here.”

Zandile’s mother’s voice – laden with judgment and derision – pierced the air as her five children darted in all directions. The oldest, a girl, scurried to make the beds. The three middle Zungu children elbowed each other to finish the washing and snatch up clothing strewn around the room. Zandile, the youngest of the five, hunched over a basin several times her size, begrudgingly scrubbing pots.

Zandile, her sisters and brother had spent the afternoon stealthily engrossed in a game of tag. Unfortunately for them, not only had they been caught breaking a rule – no playing outside after school – they also hadn’t finished their household chores. MaMajozi was home from the market – and irate.²

This wasn’t Zandile’s first time ignoring her parents’ persistent directives on where to go and what to do. She regularly relished the privilege of being both the youngest child and under the supervision of uninterested siblings, often frolicking in search of a tree to climb or a friend to play with on a daily basis. But her sole concern on these afternoon adventures was being inside the house before her mother arrived.

MaMajozi was a domineering black woman who demanded perfection from her children. She insisted that they not be like other children in the township – her daughters would not be young and pregnant or her son a drug-addicted alcoholic. Furthermore, they would dutifully eat the food she served and obediently keep the house spotless. Every moment was an opportunity for MaMajozi to teach her children the ethics of hard work, service and humility. According to her faith, Jesus had displayed discipline and obedience at all times; he had labored diligently while showing respect and dignity to every man, woman and child he encountered. Her children would do the same.

As long as Zandile could remember, and likely longer, it had been her duty to wash the pots and help her mother sell foodstuff to the neighbors. She was instructed that when Zandile wasn’t doing her own schoolwork, she should be helping another student with hers. In the rare moments when there wasn’t housework or schoolwork to be done, there was always a Bible passage waiting to be read.

Even more than Zandile resented the constant labor, she was terrified of MaMajozi’s harsh, reprimanding tone. “You are such a bad child.” “Sit properly like a white lady.” “Other children are better than you are.” “Walk straight like a white lady.” The mere thought of her mother’s shrill shout and constant barrage of criticism caused Zandile to flinch.

In the midst of a township fraught with poverty and depravity, Zandile’s mother maintained a fortress of morality. The objective in the household was to be guided by Christ and succeed at morality as a white person would.



The Zungus lived alongside thousands of other black families in KwaMashu township. Unlike the majority of families forcibly moved to the township, Zandile's parents willingly relocated their family there in the early 1960s.³ At a time when apartheid was tightening its iron grip on blacks, KwaMashu – with its newly built homes and close proximity to the booming city center – was both a symbol of unjust segregation and the best opportunity a black family could hope for.

Though her family was crammed into a tiny four-room house and required to show a pass to leave the township, this did not trouble Zandile. Like most adolescents, she was simply concerned with fitting in. And much to her dismay, her family stood out.

“Why do you eat like whites? Are you poor? Your family is a bunch of crazies.”

Zandile never had an explanation or a defense to counter her classmates' constant questions and condemnation. She didn't understand why her mother refused to serve meat in their home. Or why, unlike any of her friends' families, they ate Wheaties for breakfast and tomatoes with cheese for dinner like whites. And no matter how much Zandile protested that it was only the poor kids who didn't buy lunch, MaMajozi refused to give her money for crisps.

Zandile's parents were seemingly indifferent to the tacit mandate that other residents of KwaMashu township adhered to: None of us have anything, but all of us should act as though we have everything. Everyone, except Zandile's parents, noticed they were the only family proudly displaying a used couch, wobbly tables and broken chairs.

It wasn't that the Zungus were poor. Although MaMajozi would only buy used clothes, they had to be garments worn by whites; she would penny-pinch her way through the English, not the black, market. The Zungus were the first family in their area to own a refrigerator, a telephone and eventually a television. They owned things that no one else possessed yet never exhibited a sense of superiority. Instead, it was as though the Zungu household was the shared community center – men and women came, day and night, to store perishable goods in the fridge, queue to make a phone call, or quietly whisper in MaMajozi's ear that they didn't have the money for this week's groceries.

Her family's insistence that the children carry their heads high like whites and share their worldly possessions with anyone and everyone – while simultaneously displaying the trimmings of an impoverished household – bewildered and embarrassed Zandile. Her parents never explained to anyone, including their children, that it was a result of their faith as Seventh-day Adventists that they refused canned food and meat or that they believed it was resourceful, not shameful, to make use of second-hand goods. Like every other black family at the time, the Zungus were struggling to survive. And they were also struggling to shield their children from the hatred and dehumanization all around them.



“Are you sure you are Zulu?” Listlessly perched behind his desk, the Home Affairs Officer's voice lilted with derision. It was as though he was offering MaMajozi an invitation.

“Yes.”

“Do you want to be Coloured?”⁴ This was no doubt an invitation.

“No. I am a Zulu. My children are Zulu.”

Flanked by her two youngest children, MaMajozi stared defiantly ahead. She did not hesitate or waver. She desperately wanted a better life for her children – better jobs, a better home, better schools, everything that being Coloured could offer – but not if it meant denying her own and her children’s identity.

“Are you sure you’re telling me the truth?” Barely moving from his chair, the man snatched a pencil from the otherwise bare desk at his side. Without warning or explanation, he brusquely shoved his pencil into the thick, dark locks atop Zandile’s fair-skinned forehead. She jerked back in shock. The pencil stayed firmly affixed in her hair.

It was official: Zandile must be Zulu. Her hair was too thick for her to be Coloured.

Without another word, the Home Affairs Officer hastily scribbled on and stamped two scraps of paper. With a look of disgust he handed one to Zandile and the other to her brother. They were now the owners of Identity Cards proving once and for all they were Zulu – and therefore inferior.



Educated by American missionaries, Baba Zungu – Zandile’s father – was one of the few “privileged” black men afforded the security of a government job. As a senior clerk for influx control, he was responsible for issuing the permits that controlled blacks’ access to the city of Durban. He had no authority to make decisions – it was simply his duty to implement the laws that subjugated his own people.

Several times a day, identity books bulging with 100 rand appeared on Baba Zungu’s desk.⁵ Each time he politely passed the book back, “I am sorry. You do not qualify. You cannot stay in Durban.” Zandile’s father, unlike many other black administrators, refused to accept bribes – even when they amounted to several times his daily pay.

Nevertheless, men and women in desperate pursuit of work waited hours longer than necessary for a chance to talk to him. Baba Zungu had a reputation; he was the only person in influx control who would listen to a black person’s pleas. No matter how many times he had to do it, he would patiently explain the rules, regulations and options to every person he encountered.

Although Baba Zungu was scrupulously aware of and opposed to apartheid, he, like his wife, was propelled first and foremost by a disciplined commitment to his faith. He believed it was his responsibility to fulfill senior clerk obligations with diligence and honesty, while simultaneously honoring the humanity and dignity of every individual he encountered. In Baba Zungu’s faithful eyes, these were not contradictory endeavors.

Unfortunately, many others did not agree with Baba Zungu’s principled outlook. For the average black man and woman in KwaMashu and other townships like it, the dominance of apartheid was a potent force – dehumanization and degradation had become an accepted norm. And

a man in Baba Zungu's position was seen to be equally as responsible as a white for the system's harsh laws.⁶ He was therefore an ideal receptacle for blame.

“You are an evil man. We are suffering because of you.”

Zandile's blood boiled when she witnessed strangers' attacking her father. She despised these men and women for not understanding that he was simply doing his job. Baba Zungu responded to strangers' derision with serene impassivity, and rebuked Zandile's outrage with patience and compassion. He regularly reminded his daughter, and himself, of what Jesus taught during the Sermon on the Mount: “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other.”⁷ According to Baba Zungu, they were all, blacks and whites alike, victim of the same system. Lasting peace would only come through Jesus.

Baba Zungu confronted the apartheid system much like he did his own children. When Zandile was caught breaking a household rule or displaying disregard for her obligations, he would sit across from her, and with compassion in his voice and eyes would ask, “You are such a good person. What made you do this?” From the time Zandile was a young girl, Baba Zungu challenged all of his children to identify their motivations and to understand the implications of their actions, not as an affront to their characters but rather as a testament to his belief in their unconditional potential for goodness. Similarly, when confronted with news of the brutality and inhumanity of apartheid, Baba Zungu wondered aloud, “No one is born to be violent. We are all born to love and support. What is it that makes such a powerful force resort to this? What is it?”

There was never an answer to Baba Zungu's musings, only increasing accounts of violence, injustice and unrest.



“The dog is dead! The dog is dead!”

The streets were brimming with children and adults, everyone running and shouting in all directions. Jubilant chanting and cheering filled the streets and spilled out of every household Zandile passed as she sprinted home. School had let out early – hopefully MaMajozi wasn't home yet and she would have a few extra hours of blissful freedom to enjoy.

Zandile's hopes were shattered when she rounded the corner to find MaMajozi encircled by dozens of other neighborhood women standing in the front yard. She couldn't make out what the women were saying but instantly Zandile could tell that they too were ecstatic. Amidst all the excitement perhaps MaMajozi wouldn't even notice she was there, or maybe she would have forgotten that Zandile hadn't washed the pots before leaving for school.

Inside the house Zandile found her brother and sisters crouched together on the floor, with a crackling radio nestled between them. Curious to understand what it was they cared so much about, Zandile huddled next to them and listened.

The airwaves were buzzing with breaking news from Cape Town: Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, the “Architect of Apartheid,” was dead.⁸ He had been assassinated that afternoon, Sept. 6, 1966, on the floor of parliament. Questions abounded: How had a messenger gotten away with

killing Verwoerd in the middle of parliament? Was it a political act? Who was behind it? Given that Verwoerd was the father of apartheid, did this mean the system would crumble?

Before long Zandile had forgotten about her chores and her desire to blissfully idle the afternoon away. She was captivated by impassioned speeches on the radio, calling for black unity and denouncing Verwoerd's legacy. As people came and went from the Zungu house, a euphoric energy was palpable in the air. The community was alive and Zandile felt a part of it.

That afternoon, rather unexpectedly, Zandile realized for the first time that beyond the confines of her home and outside the fortress of her family, something very significant was happening. In quiet pockets all around the country people were resisting what she had learned to accept: that blacks were inferior. People were not diligently waiting, like her father was, for Jesus to bring peace.

For days following Verwoerd's assassination MaMajozi persistently declared, "Things are going to get better now. They will get better." But for Zandile, her family and the rest of South Africa, the struggle was only beginning.

The Struggle(s)

Zandile's pleas for a lavish celebration were fruitless. Thami consistently countered her hopes and descriptions of swarms of friends and family and raucous singing and dancing, with distressing tales of innocent children killed in Soweto, reckless violence in the streets and brutal police raids on homes like theirs.⁹

Like many young women, Zandile had been planning her marriage long before she met Thami. She had imagined making her vows with God and hundreds of family and friends as witnesses. She had envisioned herself as a wife: the meals she would cook, the kind of house she would live in and the children she and Thami would have.

However, from the moment Zandile met Thami, little about their courtship was as she had imagined. She was a studious young college student, dedicated first and foremost to her religion and secondly to her education. Over the years, as the struggle against apartheid had mounted, Zandile had increasingly adopted her parents' religious defense: As a Christian she could not support violent resistance.

In spite of her otherwise steadfast religious principles, Zandile couldn't help but swoon over one young man dressed in black, with long dark hair and a beard. It was the mid 1970s, the Black Consciousness movement was at its height, and activists were revered among their peers.¹⁰ Thami was an activist and unabashedly enamored with Zandile, making her the envy of her friends.

By 1979 Zandile had graduated college and moved to rural KwaZulu-Natal to teach in a village school. She and Thami regularly and devotedly exchanged letters as he moved between Johannesburg, London, Botswana and Lesotho. Despite constant deliberation, Zandile remained uncertain of whether Thami's activism contradicted her principles. She had, however, decided she wanted to marry this man. She assuaged her own fears and her parents' – who opposed the marriage – with reminders that Thami was a strategist and therefore not directly involved in the violent military campaign of the African National Congress (ANC). He was fighting for justice; he was not responsible for bombing police stations and government buildings.

When it came time to plan the wedding, Zandile had no choice but to concede to a smaller, and therefore safer, celebration. Thami agreed to one wedding extravagance – a hotel suite where he and Zandile could spend their first night together, away from their families, in blissful isolation.

As soon as she and Thami entered their wedding suite, Zandile busied herself investigating the crisp white linens, plush pillows and private toilet. Stunned by the room's elegance, she did not hear the phone ring or notice Thami's quiet whisper.

Zandile's jovial explorations came to an abrupt end when Thami brusquely kissed her on the cheek and slipped out the door, promising he would be back soon.

Less than 24 hours after a small church gathering, dinner at her parent's home and a brief hotel stay, Zandile boarded a flight from Durban to Johannesburg. Alone and bewildered, she was traveling to Thami's parents' house. The only explanation she had for her husband's absence was a hastily scribbled note collected, after hours of waiting in vain, from the hotel's front desk. The note read: "I must go on an urgent mission. Stay in the hotel. Someone will come for you. They will take

you to my parents.” Zandile’s life was in the midst of changing in ways she never could have imagined.



Each time the mini-bus jolted to a stop, Zandile cradled Silindile’s three-day-old body closer to her own. She was one of a bus-full of mothers traveling from hospital to home with their newborn babies. As the bus rumbled through Soweto, a buzz of eager anticipation filled the air – at each stop a swarm of family and friends flocked to the bus, impatient to welcome both baby and mother home. Zandile struggled to contain the tears welling in her eyes.

Unlike the babies adorned in lavish outfits and blankets, Silindile was swaddled in Zandile’s petticoat. A small pile of second-hand baby clothing awaited them at home – it was the same pile Zandile had defiantly left behind when departing for the hospital. She had hoped to miraculously acquire something other than second-hand clothes, used nappies and a tired bathtub for her baby. But unable to defy reality, she was now carrying her first-born child home as an impoverished, rejected young mother would.

Just as Zandile wished for pristine, new baby clothes to magically appear, she also longed to be dropped anywhere other than her in-laws’ home. For months she had been living at the beck and call of her husband’s mother, who guarded her domestic domain with qualities characteristic of a warrior. According to Zulu tradition, Zandile’s role as the new bride was to counter relentless commands with unwavering obedience.¹¹ Her mother-in-law regularly reminded Zandile of this, chiding her to “Forget everything – your identity, your individualism, everything. You are part of my clan now.”

Every day Zandile woke long before the sun rose to chop wood, boil water, prepare breakfast and wash clothes for the 13 men, women and children she now shared a home with. Every evening she returned from a classroom of rambunctious teenagers to more of the same. Crouched on the dilapidated stool that she dragged along with iron basins filled with icy water into the garden, Zandile’s days began and ended scrubbing clothes. When her fingers were too rigid with pain to wring the wetness out of any more garments, she collapsed into an empty bed.

Zandile had not seen her husband since their wedding day. She did not know where Thami was or when he would return. Her only connection to him came in the form of tattered scraps of paper that mysteriously appeared in the mailbox. Zandile clung to every word he wrote, even when it was only, “I am fine. I hope things are well.”

Zandile replied to each note, not knowing who took them or where they went – she simply knew that Thami somehow received them. She often wrote about her students, how his family was doing and what was new in the community. She had written a note to Thami when she discovered that she was pregnant, and now she would write to him about his daughter.

What Zandile never told Thami was that as she shivered and scrubbed clothes in the early morning and late night cold, she sobbed. She envisioned her parents’ home: her father quietly perched at the kitchen table reading his newspaper, her mother bustling around the house preparing for a trip to the market or gathering her small goods to sell, a constant stream of neighbors coming and going. As Zandile hung the last of the clothes on the line and steeled herself to face the

inevitable criticism that awaited her in her in-laws' house, she inaudibly pleaded for someone to rescue her from this misery. A desperate refrain consistently permeated her mind. "What the hell made me marry this man? What. The. Hell. Made. Me. Marry. This. Man?"



After two years away, Thami finally returned. On a daily basis Zandile reveled in his doting attention, allowing it to slowly soothe the painful degradation that had festered within her. She delighted in Thami's constant desire to bond with her and Silindile – even when it resulted, as it had in this moment, in domestic disorder. The current crisis was a deluge of spilled water as a result of Thami's attempt to bathe his daughter.

Thami's mother shouted, "Get out! Just leave it. I have always told you to leave women's things to women. You are such a stupid man."

Zandile glared at her mother-in-law from across the small, cramped kitchen. The countless times over the years that she had stomached her own frustration and humiliation suddenly bubbled over, not in defense of herself but of her husband.

Zandile bellowed at her mother-in-law, "This is my husband. Yes, he is your son but he is an adult. You don't talk to an adult like you are talking. You don't even talk to a child who made a mistake this way."

The tension between Zandile and her mother-in-law had intensified since Thami's return. Zandile was convinced that this woman would stop at nothing to ensure total control over everyone and everything within her domain. At her best, she monopolized Thami's time and attention. And at her worst, she deliberately pitted the new husband and wife against each other. Zandile's hope that everything would be better when Thami returned had vanished quickly.

On a daily basis, while Zandile attended to her household duties – there were meals to be cooked, countless pots to be cleaned and never-ending heaps of clothes to be washed, hung to dry, ironed and folded – her husband and brother-in-laws huddled together with radios to their ears. The airwaves were brimming with outrage about the unprecedented police brutality in the name of a "state of emergency."¹² Zandile half-heartedly listened as Thami and his brothers debated in hushed tones the merits of the ANC's strategy to make Soweto and the other townships ungovernable. For Zandile the continued struggle to survive domesticity was a far more pressing concern.



There was a truck waiting – they needed to leave right away. If Zandile and Thami didn't take possession of their newly purchased house immediately they risked losing it to vandals. Zandile also feared that if she hesitated for even a moment Thami would cave to his mother's persistent admonishments that he not move from their family home. She frantically tossed everything she owned on their bed, wrapped the small pile of possessions in a bed sheet, and walked out the door. Zandile said nothing as she walked passed her scowling mother-in-law perched in the doorway.

In an attempt to placate an emerging class of black youth armed with education, political will and financial backing, the government was building new township houses. Each home came

complete with a garden and a 99-year lease; these were to be considered Soweto's "suburbs." By a stroke of luck, Thami and Zandile had qualified for one of these homes.

The inequitable terms of their home ownership did not concern Zandile – she was ecstatic to have a kitchen, sitting room, two bedrooms and an indoor bathroom to call her own. She felt like a new woman in this house, like the wife she had always dreamed of being. Liberated from her mother-in-law's derision and control, Zandile no longer spent pre-dawn and late-night hours outside washing clothes. She relished the freedom to manage her own household, to have an indisputable say in what food to cook, how often she cleaned and with how much water she did the washing.

There was only one thing missing from Zandile's new home – her husband. Thami's regular absence and constant preoccupation with the increasingly widespread unrest irritated Zandile. His subtle references to an underground movement he was orchestrating exasperated her.

Why was he willing to sacrifice so much? No matter how many times he assured her, "I am doing this for you, for the children, for everyone," Zandile continued to question his commitment to her and their family. She speculated about where he went for weeks at a time, and accused him of loving the cause more than he loved her and their children. Thami's consistent reassurances fell on deaf ears. Zandile simply wanted her husband at home with her.

As the struggle intensified Thami's absences became more frequent and visits from heavily armed, white policemen more regular – each time they came they kicked down doors, overturned beds and rummaged through dressers. Zandile's naïveté provided a degree of safety: She could respond to the police's harsh barrage of questions by simply stating, "I know nothing." It was the truth. As her parents had done when she was young, Thami strove to shield Zandile from the hostility and bloodshed that enveloped their community by ensuring that she knew as little as possible about the menacing peril the struggle, and his involvement in it, posed.

In the aftermath of a particularly brutal police raid, Thami took Zandile for a drive through the suburbs – not their township suburbs but the white suburbs. As they drove Thami assured Zandile, "One day we are going to live here. One day you are going to own a house on this street and hang clothes in that yard. One day my children will play in these gardens. We don't have it now but one day it is going to happen."



"They are closing in on me. I don't think I will survive here much longer. We need to go."

For months Thami had been cautioning Zandile that someday they might need to flee. In the past she had always protested his warnings, refusing to accept that the situation was so dire. If Thami told her that their car was being followed, she would insist that it wasn't; when he shrieked at the children to stay in the yard, she would chide him for being paranoid.

The flatness in Thami's voice and the tears in his eyes convinced Zandile that things were in fact different now. Thami had not been the same since returning from police custody several days earlier. He barely slept. He jumped every time a car door slammed. He said very little to either her or the children, often just staring blankly into space.

This was not Thami's usual behavior. Typically when he returned from police detention he would hesitantly reveal his scars and bruises to Zandile while proudly boasting, "These boys think they can break my spirit. They can't." Thami believed in the cause to his core. Even as the arrests, beatings and killings intensified, he would steadfastly insist, "It is when morning is approaching that it becomes darker. Our liberation is at the dawn."

It was now 2 a.m. and Thami lay cuddled up against Zandile, explaining that he needed to leave tonight for one final mission, but when he came back they would all flee together. Panic washed over Zandile. She did not know what was different now but something was. She had the inexplicable sense that something terrible was coming.

Zandile clung to Thami, pleading with him not to go. As he reluctantly pried himself out of her arms Thami assured Zandile, "I'll come back. I will come back."



Zandile had been distracted all day, thinking of Thami and their impending departure. She was on her usual walk home from work when she noticed the cars parked in front of her house.

Crowded into the kitchen, Thami's brother and several of his friends explained to Zandile that Thami had never made it to his destination the night before. They had not heard from him all day. No one said it out loud, but everyone knew what this meant. He had either been arrested or killed.

Zandile frantically waited into the night and through the next day for news. Each time the phone rang she willed it to be Thami's voice on the line. The slightest sound provoked elation at the thought of him staggering through the door, followed quickly by a profound sense of dread when she realized he was not there. The worst were the dreadful images of Thami being beaten that constantly flooded her mind. Zandile felt herself slowly crumbling under the weight of uncertainty and fear.

After two days without news, Zandile willed herself to go about the day like any other. She prepared breakfast, walked the children to school and returned home to do the week's washing.

As Zandile stood hanging clothes on the line, she watched a police car slowly pull into the driveway. She was accustomed to police pointing their guns and unintelligibly shouting as they barged into her home. Today, two officers stood quietly poised in her yard, holding nothing other than their caps in hand. The only words Zandile heard were, "We found his body."



For days on end men and women flooded Zandile's home and the streets surrounding it. A tent was erected for the hundreds of mourners that streamed into the neighborhood. A continuous succession of impassioned speeches filled the air. Shouts rang out, "How many times, how many people?" Activists roared for the crowds to remember, "If you are not prepared to shed blood, if you are not prepared to have blood flowing in the streets then you will never get liberation!" It was as though Thami's funeral was a political rally.

Upon declaring that they had found his body, the police also insisted that Thami was a criminal and therefore his body belonged to the state. The ANC refuted this claim, calling on human rights activists and lawyers for support. As allegations of injustice rigorously mounted, the police eventually conceded and released his body for burial. The reason for their initial refusal was painfully obvious – evidence of wanton brutality shrouded Thami’s limbs.

As men and women mourned Thami’s dehumanizing death and revered his dedication, Zandile’s eyes burst open to who her husband was and to the cause that he had fought for so ardently. Countless comrades publicly revered Thami for being precise, meticulous and levelheaded. They stated, “If there was a person I trusted with my back facing the wall, it was Thami.” Zandile had known her husband in the confines of their home, never comprehending what a profound impact he was having in other people’s lives. For the first time, she recognized the significance of Thami’s activities, the depth of his conviction – and the magnitude of both.

The weight of this realization was overpowering. Zandile berated herself for not having understood the liberation cause or the significance of her husband’s involvement. Thami’s persistent efforts to shield her from the severity of the situation felt like betrayal. Zandile chided herself for not having been a better source of support to her husband and to their nation.

Zandile simultaneously rebuked her faith in God. Thami had always reassured her, “Before I leave you, insist that we pray – and with that prayer I feel safe. I feel strong. I feel protected by that prayer.” Where had God been the night Thami died?

For days, Zandile sat solemnly under the massive tent erected in her own front yard, people and voices drifting in and out of her awareness. Zandile told herself as she squelched her aching heart, “I will not cry. Thami’s death belongs to the nation. It is a seed planted. My loss was for the nation. This is not mine to mourn.” Surrounded by hundreds of men and women, all who had also lost a loved one, their home or their peace of mind for the anti-apartheid struggle, Zandile realized she had been blind to their existence, and yet now she was one of them.

The Grass Listens and Tells What It Hears

High-pitched shouts and bellowing wails greeted Zandile as she walked through her back gate. She stopped and watched as a throng of children paraded through the garden. The boys, led by Zandile's eight-year-old son Thuthuka, had their fists raised in the air and were emphatically shouting "*Amandla! Amandla!*" (Power! Power!).¹³ The girls, including her 10-year-old daughter Silindile, trailed behind wailing mournfully. Silindile and Thuthuka, along with their friends, were enacting an ANC funeral.

Zandile's heart sank at the realization that to Silindile and Thuthuka, a childhood game of "playing house" meant being a widow and a comrade. Resistance and death were the norm for her children. Three years ago they had mourned the murder of their father and not long after that been imprisoned, along with hundreds of other innocent primary school children, for the simple act of being late to school. Silindile and Thuthuka were barely old enough to read and write, yet they had already learned to carry a damp handkerchief at all times in case of a tear gas attack.

Witnessing this childhood enactment of grief confirmed Zandile's decision: Silindile and Thuthuka and the students in her classroom would be her contribution to the struggle. She owed it to these children, to her husband and to the cause he had fought for to teach young people about their identity and their country.



Zandile had accepted her first teaching position immediately after graduating from college in 1975. At the time there were two career options available for educated, young, black women – nursing or teaching. Zandile's sister was a nurse so MaMajozi decided that Zandile would be a teacher. Once she made a decision there was no discussion or debate with Zandile's mother; whether she wanted to or not, Zandile would be a teacher.

Although teaching was not her choice, Zandile was a natural. She effortlessly balanced her training which taught her to be authoritative and dictatorial, with the sense of justice and compassion she had learned from her father.

Zandile's official mandate as a teacher of black students was to ensure they knew the bare essentials of reading and writing – nothing more and nothing less. The Bantu education system had a subtly masked objective to cultivate a class of perpetual jobseekers who had no hope of either authority or advancement.¹⁴ Corporal punishment and constant emotional degradation were an unspoken yet widely accepted requirement of every school's curriculum. As a result, Zandile was groomed to believe that her highest honor as a teacher came in the form of students' fear.

Although Zandile practiced this approach, her natural compassion invariably came through in the classroom. To her students, she echoed the inevitably disarming question she had learned from her father, "You are such a good person. What made you do this?" She encouraged them to acknowledge their own powerful potential, despite the barrage of degrading criticism that surrounded them in their homes and communities. As a young teacher Zandile talked to girls just a few years younger than she was about the dangers of capitulating to a man's aggressive assertions. Later, she challenged boys' justifications for why they raped their girl classmates. From her first days as a teacher, Zandile believed in education as a tool for empowerment.



Zandile quietly pulled the classroom door shut and closed the windows. Zulu tradition had taught her that the grass was always listening and ready to tell what it heard. Ever since she stopped following the official curriculum, Zandile had become more conscious of the grass outside her classroom.

Thami's death had ignited an insatiable desire in Zandile to understand everything she could about the past and the present of her country. In books surreptitiously borrowed from the church library, Zandile discovered versions of South African history she had never known – and in the process realized that the education she had received, and resultantly taught, was a biased version of the truth. There was more to the 1879 Battle of Isandlwana than blacks savagely killing innocent white settlers. The Shaka hadn't simply been a barbarian and blacks hadn't willingly given over their land to the whites.¹⁵

Zandile shared everything she learned with her students, but only in the dim light of a shuttered classroom. She also waited until then to remind the young girls and boys huddled behind their desks: "This country needs sharp men and women. The power of white people is flailing. Older black men are dying. We are relying on you for our future."

Oppression and the struggle against it were not new to the 70 12- and 13-year-old students in her classroom. Like Zandile's own children, they lived with the effects of both apartheid and resistance on a daily basis. Many had lost fathers, brothers and uncles in the violence, and all of them had known nothing other than discrimination all their lives. Although only the most courageous spoke about it, fear and confusion were ever present in all of their eyes. All of Zandile's students were scared that they might die soon too.

Zandile tried to provide her students with an alternative to the fear and hopelessness. She talked about why it was important for them to feel proud of their identity, the significance of not using skin lightening creams or straightening their hair, and why it was unjust that they carry identity passes. She often used traditional idioms to emphasize her points, reminding her students, "The darker you are the better. You are like the berries of the river – dark, smooth and preferred." Zandile was speaking the language of Black Power, though she knew enough not to use those words.¹⁶

Whenever Zandile questioned the wisdom of discussing these issues in her classroom she remembered something Thami had often said: "Don't be paralyzed by fear. Don't let your fear keep you quiet." Zandile did not consider herself an activist; however, she did believe that her students' awareness needed to be raised. They deserved to know the truth about their country's history.



By 1993 Soweto township, like most urban areas in South Africa, was ablaze. The revolution was at its height and the government was responding with ruthless brutality – these two powerful forces were at war against one another. The result was violence, bombings and frenzied mayhem throughout communities – and once again, in Zandile's life.

“We need to go. Now. Your house has been petrol-bombed.” Zandile stared at her colleague, speechless. Together they sprinted from the classroom, leaving a room full of students in silent shock.

By the time Zandile ran the short distance from school to home, her house was engulfed in flames. As she stared at the raging fire her only thought was, “Where are my children? Where ARE my children?”

Fortunately Silindile and Thuthuka had been delayed coming home from school that day. Zandile’s family was intact. But all that remained of the objects she owned and cherished was a colossal heap of rubble and ashes. The identity documents that guaranteed her employment, movement and existence were gone, as were the few cherished mementos she possessed of her life with Thami. Amongst the charred debris were photos of Thami that she had regularly gazed at, the shirt she often clasped knowing that it had once touched his skin and the letters that reminded her of their young love. Now all that remained to remember her husband by was a black leather wristwatch, the one he had forgotten to wear the night he left and which Zandile, for the past three years, had clasped to her wrist each day in memory of him.

Moments before Zandile had been swept out of her classroom, her neighbor had watched a white car with no number plates slow to a stop in front of her house. He had stared as a petrol bomb floated effortlessly through the air, silently landing on Zandile’s front door step. He had stood paralyzed, mouth gaping as flames hungrily moved from the front of the house to the back, from the ground to the roof, devouring everything in between.

There was absolutely nothing Zandile’s neighbor, or anyone else, could have done. Calling the fire department was futile – one fire truck served all 2 million people living in Soweto, where countless fires occurred each day. Furthermore, doing anything to help Zandile would be construed as evidence of association and therefore an invitation for punishment.

Zulu wisdom says, “If you want to destroy a cockroach you can’t just kill it, you also have to destroy the eggs and everything that it has touched. Otherwise the poison will continue to spread.” The system had killed Thami and now they were determined to decimate everything associated with him, including his family. This fire was a warning: Zandile must be silent, or be destroyed.

The grass must have been listening and told what it heard.

Despondency overwhelmed Zandile. It was no longer safe for her to teach; particularly not in a way that she believed was meaningful. To return to the classroom would mean accepting herself as puppet of the state or putting her own and her children’s life at risk. Zandile could not fathom doing either. However, without work she depended on other people’s charity to survive. She didn’t have money for rent, to buy clothes or to feed Silindile and Thuthuka.

Zandile felt hopeless, and also terrified. Would the system take her children next? Was she putting others in danger by staying in their home? She couldn’t depend on people’s generosity forever – how would she make a living? For months on end, Zandile spent sleepless nights wrought with endless questions, the most persistent, and anguished, being: Is there even a reason to go on living?



Fourteen years ago, Zandile had left KwaZulu-Natal for Johannesburg in order to do right by her husband's family. Since his death they had ostracized her, belligerently and inexplicably blaming her for their loss. Johannesburg had become home to Zandile, however there was no longer family to bind her there or to help her take care of her family. She had to accept reluctantly that she had no other option now but to return to her own family's home in KwaZulu-Natal.

A sense of shame and dread accompanied Zandile home. She was no longer the naïve, young girl she had been when she left KwaZulu-Natal. Going home was like going back in time, in her own life and in the life of the struggle. Zandile's mindset had progressed alongside that of Johannesburg; violent oppression and her own brutal losses had left indelible marks. The Zandile that returned to KwaZulu-Natal believed wholeheartedly in exposing the injustices of apartheid and overthrowing the system.

However, KwaZulu-Natal was a subtler site of descent. Few people spoke openly about the liberation movement, in part because the state was not people's most persistent enemy. In communities throughout the region, fierce rivalry between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) overshadowed aggression by and against the government. In 1993 Zandile returned to the place of her birth to find individuals and communities decimated from within by devastating "black-on-black" violence.

Kuzakahle / Zamani
(Things Are Getting Better / We Are Trying)

“Trust No One.”

These words greeted Zandile upon her arrival to Bhambayi. Scrawled across a large wooden placard, they boldly proclaimed the community’s ethos. Decades ago Bhambayi was the breeding ground for Gandhi’s satyagraha;¹⁷ in 1995 it was one of the most violent regions of KwaZulu-Natal, of South Africa and perhaps of the world.

With a warning from the taxi driver lingering in the air – “I’d be careful” – and fear firmly settled in the pit of her stomach, Zandile slowly approached the decimated settlement. Huts made of mud, corrugated tin or a haphazard amalgam of both stood huddled together. It took little more than a cursory glance at the men, women and children milling all around to confirm what Zandile already sensed – people here were barely surviving.

Since 1985 political violence between the ANC and the IFP had displaced tens of thousands of people throughout KwaZulu-Natal province, many of whom had settled in Bhambayi. The ANC represented a progressive voice that appealed to young people; for older generations the IFP was a harbinger of Zulu tradition and culture. The origins of factional divisions between the two parties were manifold; the result was violence that had a stranglehold on people’s sense of self and other. One year after national reconciliation and the election of Nelson Mandela as president, a deeply entrenched culture of violence continued to divide the two black communities in Bhambayi.

Newspapers were regularly reporting on the violence in Bhambayi and experts were debating its causes and effects; however, very few people were talking to the 20,000 people living in its clutches. Residents seldom had the means to venture beyond the community’s perimeter, and outsiders – including the police – were too scared to venture in.

Zandile was sent to Bhambayi by the organization she worked for, Survivors of Violence. After a year of reluctantly relying on her mother’s pension to support her and her children, Zandile had finally found work. Her compassionate nature and commitment to empowerment was now being put to use in community groups rather than a classroom. She was seeing KwaZulu-Natal as she had never seen it in her childhood – decimated by violence and conflict. Zandile had resigned as a member of the ANC and was now actively promoting peace and reconciliation.

Her mandate in Bhambayi was to identify individuals traumatized by violence and refer them to counseling. However, Zandile’s intuition told her that a counseling approach would not work here. Unable to share her own pain, anger and fears with a stranger, she could not expect others to do so. Despite struggling to support her family, Zandile knew she had no choice but to defy her employer’s agenda.

Violence had stripped Zandile of her husband, her home and everything she owned, yet she maintained a firm belief that violence is not inherent in anyone; no one is born to be violent. This left a persistent question: What makes someone want to arm himself or herself? Zandile was determined to understand violence from the perspective of its perpetrators and its survivors. Zandile allowed her intuition to guide her in pursuing a holistic approach to building peace.



As soon as she arrived in Bhambayi, Zandile went to the Development Forum office. Located in a “free zone” – a small patch of land 300 meters from homes on either side of the divide – the forum was the official point of entry to the community.

Several months earlier a group of church women had arrived at Bhambayi. Methodist, Catholic, Anglican and those from the African Independent Church – these women had come calling for peace. Dressed in their church uniforms and singing as they walked, the women entered the community through the ANC side and walked from there to IFP territory. Community women joined them all along the way. Before long hundreds of women stood beside the stream that divided their lives and communities, chanting songs of worship.

That day marked the start of a ceasefire in Bhambayi. Negotiations between the ANC and IFP began shortly thereafter. The process culminated with the formation of the Development Forum, comprised of equal representation from the ANC and the IFP and tasked with rebuilding the community’s infrastructure. Thus far that meant building homes and watering taps. For Zandile the first step in building trust within Bhambayi would be gaining the trust of those in the Development Forum.

For eight months Zandile presented herself at the forum meetings every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On the first day Zandile announced her purpose – she was interested in helping community members deal with painful past experiences, create opportunities for community development and deepen existing community peacebuilding activities. That day and every day for the following eight months, Zandile was told to please come back another day.

Each day, without fail, Zandile returned. The Development Forum had no reason to trust her, no reason to believe that she was there to do anything aside from jeopardize their precarious state of peace. Zandile was determined to prove she was worthy of the community’s trust and support.

At the same time she was displaying her respect for the official forum procedures, Zandile was nurturing relationships with Bhambayi’s “invisible” gatekeepers – the men and women who existed closer to the community’s pulse and oftentimes exerted considerable influence over its official and unofficial affairs. Some of these individuals were ex-combatants, some mothers, others children. Conversations with them did not necessitate negotiating a slot on a meeting agenda; it simply required being present, offering acceptance and listening.

Zandile spent days walking through Bhambayi, casually offering an ear to anyone who wanted to talk. Slowly she learned the community’s story. Everyone was carrying the weight of painful, traumatic experiences with them. Many had witnessed their husbands, children or siblings being killed. Most men did not have jobs. Women were beaten in their homes. Young boys were joining gangs. One mother explained to Zandile: “Now when I look at my son I see a zombie, a young man who has no hopes and dreams, a young man who is full of anger, a young man who I fear to live with.” This was life. The reality was fitting for an idiom: Whether you are eaten by a lion or bitten by a tiger the result is the same – you bleed to death. Bhambayi was bleeding to death.

One afternoon, during one of her many walks through the community, Zandile entered a hut and deferentially explained to the woman hidden in the dank darkness that she needed water. The woman stared at Zandile, slowly rose from her place on the floor and walked out the door. Panic momentarily seized Zandile. Had she offended this woman? What would happen now? Zandile's pulse quickened as she heard shouting and clapping in the street. She hesitantly emerged from the darkness to find a dozen women and children gathered outside. The woman whose home she had entered gently touched Zandile's arm and exclaimed: "You are coming to see me? *You* are coming to see *me*? A clean person is visiting me. My life is going to change today!"

By simply entering this woman's home and asking to share her water, Zandile had shown her more respect than she had received in ages. Zandile had helped her reconnect with her sense of dignity and purpose. To Zandile, this was peacebuilding; this was the journey of rebuilding the brokenness inside of individuals, families and communities.

Several months later the Development Forum's chairperson approached Zandile, saying, "I am sorry it has taken us so long to get to you. When can you begin?" He did not realize that work had already begun.



When the Development Forum called a meeting announcing the start of Zandile's project, hundreds of young people appeared. Many arrived carrying their identity documents. As Zandile stood at the front of the room talking about peace and personal development, one by one young men and women stood up and left. They needed someone to tell them how they were going to get food and where they could get jobs. Zandile did not have this to offer. In the end 30 ANC and 30 IFP youth remained, agreeing to work with Zandile on peace issues.

Every week Zandile met with the ANC youth on one day and the IFP on another. In each meeting they discussed their challenges: the anger and bitterness they felt, the violence they witnessed, the hopelessness that surrounded them, the crime and substance abuse that was a constant temptation. For many of these young men and women it was the first time they were talking about these issues. It was also a rare opportunity for them to listen and be heard – some of them had forgotten the sound of their own voice.

These young men and women had all been involved in the liberation movement. From a very young age the movement had provided a sense of purpose; it had been the compass they lived by. Now, without a unit to belong to or a commander's rules to follow, they had nothing. They had lost their status as freedom fighters and were considered by the community to be nothing other than troublemakers.

Participating in the meetings was their attempt to find new direction and purpose. It gave each individual a sense of belonging and restored his or her worth within the community. Zandile encouraged the groups to formalize their structure, emphasizing the importance of having a name to identify with and a set of rules to be accountable to. The ANC group called themselves *Kuzakabile* ("Things are getting better"). The IFP youth chose *Zamani* ("We are trying").



After months of meeting, each group decided they were prepared to take the next step: They would spend a week outside of Bhambayi with their enemy. It was a risk for the two conflicting parties to come together – a risk for each of them and for Zandile. But she was convinced that this was one of the calculated risks that peacebuilding required.

The two groups traveled in separate buses to a game reserve 100 kilometers away from Bhambayi and from the violence and despair that defined their daily lives.

As they sat in separate corners of the same room for the first time, Zandile began the retreat the way she typically began their community meetings – with a “go-around.” Participants had the opportunity to share what they were feeling and why they were there. She also encouraged them to share their names and what that name meant. Whether they were from the IFP or the ANC, all of these men and women had been given a name at birth that meant something in African tradition. Sharing their names was the first of many neutral, non-threatening things they could share with each other.

Zandile then asked each of them to take off one shoe, place it in the center of the room, and choose someone else’s shoe to wear as they walked around the room. A palpable sense of tension lifted as 30 young people stumbled around the room, nudging their friends and chuckling to themselves. After several moments of uninterrupted laughter, Zandile reminded them that wearing someone else’s shoe is like hearing someone’s story – it is not easy because only ours fits, but we need to respect the path others have walked in their shoes.¹⁸

Zandile also asked the participants to reflect on the baggage they all carried with them – the positive and negative experiences that impacted them and that they still carry. Even if they didn’t feel comfortable yet to share their own life journeys, she asked them to think about why it was important to reflect on these experiences and express their emotions.¹⁹

Zandile was gently coaxing these young men and women to take small steps from out behind their walls. She was striving to help them feel safe, so that they in turn could make each other feel safe.

The first three days of the retreat were spent establishing ground rules – rules that did not need to apply at home but that would allow them to spend this week together. The issue that vexed the young men and women most was their weapons. How could they sit in the same room together without their arms? Gripping his gun, one man explained to Zandile, “I’d rather go home than let go of this. This is my life. I feel empty if I don’t have this. I feel vulnerable. You guys are not going to protect me. I have my enemies sitting across from me. What if I surrender my ammunition and he doesn’t? How will we know?”

Zandile could not promise anything. She only knew that it was crucial not to force these young people to put down their arms. Instead she asked them to reflect on why they wanted to arm themselves. If it was a gun that made a man feel like a man, Zandile asked him: What will make you feel like a man without this? If it was a knife that allowed a woman to feel protected, Zandile asked her: What else will help you feel protected? If it was a pistol that provided a man with power and respect, Zandile asked him: How else can you gain respect? If it was violence that helped them all feel safe, Zandile asked them: What can we do to help you feel safe?

They talked about their childhoods, about the difficult decisions they had to make in their lives, about their dreams for the future. Among the various issues that emerged, revenge was a common theme. All of these men and women had witnessed or participated in horrific events and suffered as a result. Revenge was one of the only methods they knew to find relief from their anguish and pain.

One young man stoically explained to Zandile and a small group of companions, “I was very young when our house was attacked. My dad pushed me under the bed to hide me. As I lay there I saw my father get shot and bleed to death, my mother and sister were raped. My sister has HIV and my mother died too. I know the guys that did this. I saw them. I want revenge. I want them dead too.”

Zandile heard the pain and sorrow fueling the desire for revenge in this man’s story and others like his. Her response to each story was, “I am not here to tell you not to seek revenge. Because if I had seen what you saw and felt what you feel I would want revenge too. But if you are going to revenge you need a clear plan. Tell me your plan.”

Zandile asked for the details of their revenge. Do you have a gun? What kind of gun? Have people agreed to help? Does the person you are going after have brothers, cousins or friends you need to worry about? Where will you run to after you do this? What will happen to your girlfriend and your child – do they have somewhere they can go for safety?

As these plans emerged, Zandile asked the participants to make a pact: after this retreat they would continue to talk about their revenge plans and they would not take action for the next six months. Zandile was once again taking a risk. According to the law, she should report each one of these young people to the police. She knew that doing so would only incite more hatred and hopelessness. These young men and women had trusted her with their pain; she made a decision to trust that if she helped them work through that pain and regain hope in the future they would no longer need revenge.

Zandile was touching the nerve of the issues in people’s lives. She was allowing people to tell their stories. The healing process began as they shared these stories and as they listened to each other’s stories. Her objective was not to end conflict; it was to rebuild trust so that people could differ in ideologies and yet live together in peace.

During the last evening of the retreat Zandile watched with joy as these young men and women gathered together, raucously singing and dancing. In this moment it didn’t matter if they were ANC or IFP; together they were *Kuzakable* and *Zamani*.



When they returned to Bhambayi the young men and women from *Kuzakable* and *Zamani* continued to meet separately, as they had before the retreat. As Zandile had hoped, within a few months all the plans for revenge were replaced with plans for community activities and trainings. These young people had a sense of hope that they never had before. They felt, “I am going to miss out on things. I am going to mess up my future if I get arrested. I am involved in the community now. I am not here to fight anymore.”

They also decided to continue meeting together. Their plan was to talk about strategies so they could continue the cross-community work they had begun. Each group selected four representative members, who then agreed upon Wimpy's restaurant as the first meeting place.

But not everyone in their communities was prepared to let go of the pain from the past and reconcile. As these young people sat together, the restaurant was ambushed and sprayed with bullets. Hardliners within the ANC and IFP viewed them as sell-outs; they were a threat and needed to be eliminated. Three died, three were injured.



After this incident, Zandile hesitated to return to Bhambayi. Had she pushed too hard for peace? Were her goals practical? Was the situation too volatile for this work?

An answer came in the form of an embrace and these words from two community leaders – one from the IFP and one from the ANC: “Please continue. We know this is about peace. We want peace.”

A Resounding Gong

Zandile had driven along this road many times before. The only antidote to the inescapable dread that always accompanied the route was a sense of familiarity – Zandile had both driven this road and felt this fear before. She reassured herself continuously, “I drove here the other day. Nothing happened.”

The area, known as Mshayazafe (“Beat him until he dies”), was renowned for violent crime, particularly at the hands of young men referred to as *izintandane*.²⁰ They were merciless, but unlike hardened criminals these boys were prone to an instantaneous chain reaction of fear-panic-shoot. It was common knowledge: If you meet a scared young person with a gun, he will kill you.

Zandile had worked late into the evening alongside fellow community workers – the year 2004 was coming to a close, so they were busy writing a development plan to present to next year’s parliament. She was now on her way home with her son, Xolani, and her colleague, Themba.

Xolani was Zandile’s son by circumstance not by birth. When two of Zandile’s closest friends died in a car accident in 1999, she promptly took in their son, Xolani, as one of her own. From a young age Xolani was a perceptive child; he was always acutely aware of the people and activities around him. He, more than her other children, noticed and responded when Zandile was despondent or anxious. Xolani was a smart, responsible boy; he was also prone to mischief and Zandile suspected he might be a strategist for one of the petty youth gangs.

Zandile had pleaded with Xolani to accompany her to this meeting; she was relying on his keen sense of observation to shield them from danger as they drove through Mshayazafe.



Neither Zandile, Xolani nor Themba muttered a word as the traffic light overhead turned from green to red. As if on cue, four teenage boys emerged from the darkness blanketing the intersection. Zandile did not need to see their guns to know that these boys were primed to attack. She instinctively clutched Xolani’s arm, sternly pleading with him: “Don’t resist. Do not resist. God, help us. Do not resist.” She knew there was nothing he could do to protect them now.

Within an instant the four boys stood poised on both sides of the car. They didn’t ask for, or demand, anything. They simply peered through the windows. And fired. Fractured glass and anguished screams pierced the air. Blood streamed from Xolani’s chest. The boys sprinted away.

Zandile gently cradled Xolani in her arms as he whimpered again and again until he could no longer speak, “I did not do anything. I didn’t do anything.”



Within 24 hours of the shooting police had arrested Thulani Nzama and Nhlanhla Dube. They were 15 years old and guilty of a long list of offenses – burglary, drug abuse, rape, attempted murder. This was not their first time in police custody; however, because they were juveniles they had always been released to their family’s charge after only a short stay in detention.

Anger consumed Zandile. It had been nearly 15 years since she silently endured the murder of her husband and then the bombing of her home. The grief and resentment she had kept pent-up during those years erupted. She wanted the boys who had killed her son to rot in prison. Justice needed to be served this time.

As an empowered woman Zandile felt an obligation to take charge of this situation. She was determined to prove once and for all that although Thulani's and Nhlanhla's age defined them as juveniles, their actions demanded the maximum adult punishment. If she did not take action, there would be nothing to stop these boys from continuing to terrorize people.

With a decade of community work behind her, Zandile possessed the know-how and the respect to garner widespread support. She enlisted the backing of organizations, teachers, women's groups, lawyers and anyone else willing to speak out against the violent crime that racked their communities. Everything she heard about the boys and their families validated her conviction that they were a danger to society. Zandile employed this information at weekly community-policing forum meetings, insisting that the police thoroughly investigate this case. She pressured the court to hold Thulani and Nhlanhla in custody until their trial date.

Zandile would not allow the murder of her son to fall by the wayside, like so many before his. Guaranteeing Thulani and Nhlanhla's punishment would bring the community one step closer to peace. She also longed for their imprisonment to ameliorate her pain and restore a sense of control in her life.



Eight months after Xolani died, Zandile sat at the front of the courtroom as a magistrate convicted Thulani and Nhlanhla to 20 years in prison. As the words settled over the crowded room, Zandile felt neither excitement nor remorse. She was simply satisfied with a job well done. Justice would be served.

Zandile had accomplished what she had set out to do. Yet the tension and helplessness gripping her body remained. She wondered, now what? Thulani and Nhlanhla would be 35 years old when released from Westville Prison. Would the harsh conditions of prison harden them into even more brutal criminals? Would the community be any safer now that they were off the streets? Had she gone too far in seeking a maximum sentence?

As Zandile quietly reflected on the verdict, bellowing cries resounded from across the room. Zandile saw Thulani's and Nhlanhla's mothers for the first time. For months she had asserted that these women were unfit parents. Innumerable people had described them as violent drunks, as drug dealers, as a family of nuisances. Zandile had relentlessly insisted that the fact they were single mothers did not abdicate them of the responsibility to raise decent children. Without ever having met them, Zandile despised these women.

Surrounded by her family and community, Zandile quietly walked out of the courtroom. As she passed through the doorway two women shouted, piercing Zandile with their words. "The way you do things, it's as if you are not a woman, as if you have never given birth. You are using your power because we are powerless."



In the aftermath of Xolani's death, Zandile returned with ardor to her work as a peacebuilder in the communities of KwaZulu-Natal. She led workshops on peace and reconciliation. She counseled men and women against seeking revenge. She encouraged people to understand that by blaming individuals they were exonerating the system of apartheid. She listened to young people express their longing for forgiveness.

But as Zandile preached reconciliation and advocated forgiveness, she nurtured anger and vengefulness within herself. Zandile was unpacking other people's suffering, yet keeping her own pain tightly sealed.

Gradually Zandile realized that she loathed the person she had become. She was neither a peacebuilder nor a Christian – she was a fraud. The words of Jesus' disciple Paul rang true to her: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."²¹ Zandile despised herself for her own hypocrisy, but was terrified to face it. It had become her shield, guarding her from her sorrow.

Zandile turned for guidance to the one constant in her life – her Christian faith. In her prayers, she begged for strength and clarity. She recalled what MaMajozi and Baba Zungu had taught her as a child: Revenge is not yours, it is God's.

Zandile was terrified to face the deluge of emotions that rested beyond her anger and vengeance. She also understood that the courage she needed to relinquish her pain rested in putting her unquestioning trust in the Lord. With prayer and spiritual dedication sustaining her, Zandile committed herself to a journey of healing and reconciliation.

The first step on this journey was to visit Thulani and Nhlanhla.



Zandile was plagued by trepidation. She feared undermining her family's pain and losing credibility within the community. She questioned if she was being selfish. Zandile was not the only one who had suffered as a result of Xolani's death, nor was she alone in pressing for Thulani and Nhlanhla's imprisonment. Family and community members had rallied around Zandile in a long, arduous struggle for justice. When they heard that she intended to visit the boys in prison, these same individuals accused Zandile of betraying her own son's blood.

Again and again Zandile made appointments to visit the prison; she cancelled them each time.

Zandile wanted the support of her family and community, yet she knew that ultimately this was her own journey. As a peacebuilder she had always asserted that peacebuilding required taking risks. This was a personal risk she realized she needed to take.

In the face of persistent fears and doubts Zandile reflected on the lessons she had learned while working in communities. She had spent years encouraging others to find the courage to heal. She had witnessed joy and meaning return to peoples' lives when they shared their stories and

relinquished the pain, guilt and anger they carried within. The transformations she observed in others were now her guide.

Two years after Thulani and Nhanhla's court sentencing, Zandile stood at the roadside wishing a traffic jam would suddenly halt the cars streaming by or that an unexpected rainstorm would flood the road. If only the bus didn't come she could say that she had wanted to go, that she had tried to go. But the bus rumbled to a stop in front of her. Zandile couldn't delay any longer; today she was going to see Thulani and Nhanhla at Westville Prison.

Squeezed among 20 other passengers, all headed to the same place, Zandile listened as they shared unassuming pleasantries – one woman was going to see her son, another to visit her brother, more than one woman was making the weekly trek to see her husband. An elderly man sat next to Zandile. Sensing the rigidity in her body, he patted her hand reassuringly, "This must be your first time. It is hard. When I went to see my son for the first time, it was hard. It is going to be OK." Zandile silently nodded in thanks, all the while inwardly questioning whether he was right.

The bus slowly rolled to a stop adjacent to large metal gates that marked the entrance to Westville. Everyone quickly unloaded and walked briskly in the same direction: toward the visitor's hall. It didn't take long before Zandile was alone, metal gates to her back and a long gravel pathway ahead.

Every muscle in Zandile's body was stiff; it was as though her body weighed more than she could carry. Each step forward was painstakingly difficult. A prison guard breezed by, waking Zandile from her pained daze, muttering, "Ma'am, if you don't move faster visiting hours are going to be over."

Eventually Zandile reached the visitor's hall. Inside, a wire screen divided the otherwise austere room in half, separating the prisoners from their visitors. Small cardboard partitions ran perpendicular to the screen, providing each visitor a semblance of privacy. Zandile found an empty plastic chair, hesitantly sat and blankly stared ahead. When asked whom she was there to see, Zandile mumbled the boys' names, and waited. A guard was sent to bring Thulani and Nhlanhla from their cell.

Anger and bitterness suddenly overwhelmed Zandile. It felt as though everything around and within her was feverishly crumbling. She wondered out loud: "What am I doing here? What the hell am I doing here?" Her body was frozen in terror.

Without warning, out of the corner of her eyes Zandile noticed two tall, thin boys walking toward her. In unison, they sat across from her.

With her eyes glued to the floor, Zandile greeted Thulani and Nhlanhla. Like an icicle melting in the heat of the sun, the rigidness lodged within her body dissipated. Tears poured from Zandile's eyes.

She slowly slid her hands through the small hole in the wire screen and grasped each of the boy's hands. These were the hands that had pulled the trigger, the hands that had killed Xolani. Zandile sobbed; the boys sat in silence, somberly resting their hands in Zandile's palms.

In Thulani and Nhlanhla, Zandile saw her son. For the first time she grasped the rejection, sadness and fear that characterized their lives. She understood that these boys were innocent; it was the system that was guilty. Zandile wanted Thulani and Nhlanhla to have a chance to change their lives.

Zandile didn't stay at Westville long – she left without saying anything more to Thulani and Nhlanhla.



That evening as she prepared food for her family, Zandile chanted: "... His arms are around me and I am feeling free again. I am free again. I am free again!" It was the first time she had sung in years.

Zandile had parts of herself back that she had long ago relinquished. The anger and tension she had carried since her husband's death were draining away. The sense of helplessness was gone. The relief she had sought in punishing Thulani and Nhlanhla came through the process of forgiving them. She was not condoning what they had done to her son, but she was choosing to forgive them. Whether they accepted this reconciliation or not, Zandile had reconciled with herself. She had freed herself of anger and bitterness. When she spoke of forgiveness, Zandile would no longer be a resounding gong.

As she relished in her newfound sense of liberation, Zandile reflected on the words Thulani and Nhlanhla's mothers had shouted at her two years earlier, on the day of the sentencing. "It's as if you are not a woman ..." These words often echoed through her mind. Zandile longed to share her healing with these women; she had started a journey of reconciliation that she wanted them to be part of.

We Are Wounded Healers

Reams of fabric in countless colors, patterns and textures run the length of every wall in Jo-Ann's Fabric store; stacked from floor to ceiling, there is enough fabric in one room to clothe every man, woman and child in a small, South African township. Lack of selection and quantity is not a problem, it is simply the constraints of price and transport that limit Zandile's choices and in turn the tailoring project she has in mind.

Since the moment she arrived in San Diego, Zandile's eyes have been peeled for unique business ideas to share with the women of Harambe Women's Forum. With the right fabric, they could design, tailor and sell "American" clothes to their neighbors. After browsing AmVets thrift store, Zandile is also considering carrying used toys back with her. The women could sell the toys for a small profit in their corner shop. Perhaps they could also open a stroller rental stand, like those at San Diego's SeaWorld Park, on Durban's beachfront.

In the face of devastating poverty, violence and trauma, Zandile and the 20 women of Harambe Women's Forum are striving to do the near-impossible: They want both to earn an income and build peace. Each of the 20 women needs money to buy food, pay school fees, reinforce her mud hut and clothe her children. As a group, they need the funds to hold monthly meetings and coordinate regular public workshops. For now, the women have decided to focus on funding a march for mothers. They've also approached a human rights organization about facilitating education for young prisoners. Eventually they would like to invest in literacy classes for themselves – one of their many hopes is that someday more than just two of the 20 women will be able to read and write.

Although Zandile's work with the women in Harambe Women's Forum is similar to community work she has done in the past, it is also different. This project is far more personal.



The last time Zandile saw Sibongile and Lindiwe they were racked with rage as the magistrate sentenced their sons to 20 years in prison. Now, two years later, Zandile stands, gripped with terror in the middle of Sibongile's dilapidated one-room hut.

She just informed the two women of her visit to Westville prison to visit Thulani and Nhlanhla, the boys who killed her son. Zandile's words hang heavy in the air as Sibongile and Lindiwe stand frozen and expressionless.

It is as though Zandile is the predator and Sibongile and Lindiwe the prey. To these women, and in this community, Zandile is the enemy. She robbed them of their children. Zandile is certain that many people in the community, including these women, at one time believed that she deserved to die.

After a long silence Sibongile's tiredly mumbles, "What business do you have visiting our sons? Why are you here?"

Zandile's instinct compelled her to arrive uninvited on Sibongile's doorstep; now that she is here the only thing she can do is talk and hope that Sibongile and Lindiwe will listen.

“I am here because I care. Because your sons were the same age as my son. Because I want us to talk about what happened to us. We were affected in different ways. My son is dead. Your sons are like dead in prison. We all have something in common that binds us. We don’t have loved ones. And what binds me to come here is that we are all mothers. We are women.”

It is as though Zandile’s words pass over Sibongile and Lindiwe as silence. They remain expressionless.

Zandile doesn’t press them for a response. Instead she simply states, “I’ll come back in two weeks,” and quietly walks out the door.

As she hurriedly walks to the roadside bus stop Zandile can’t help but silently rejoice: “They didn’t chase me away!”



As promised, Zandile returned in two weeks. This time Sibongile and Lindiwe are prepared for her visit. They do not remain silent and instead relentlessly volley accusations and blame.

“Why are you trying to analyze and understand our situation? You are just trying to make yourself feel better.”

“You are a cruel person. You think you are a Christian but you are just a cruel person.”

“Why didn’t you come to us as women before and we sit down and talk about it? Why are you coming now when things have gone your way?”

“It is because we have no money. You were able to influence the system so that our sons received the maximum sentence. You feel guilty. That is why you are here now.”

Each statement felt like a piercing knife. Zandile’s impulse was to defend herself, however, she knew that much of what they were saying was true. She had overreacted; she had taken the law into her own hands. Her vengefulness had ensured that their sons received the maximum sentence. Zandile recognized Sibongile and Lindiwe’s anger; the rage visible in their reddened faces, tensed hands and rigid limbs had at one time consumed her body too. Zandile had blamed these women for her own pain just as they were now blaming her for theirs.

Zandile had a choice. She could resist their accusations or she could accept their condemnation as an expression of their pain. If she yielded to their anger, perhaps they could forgive.

Zandile calmly responded to Sibongile’s and Lindiwe’s barrage of accusations, “I was angry at that time. I had lost a son. I was focused on losing my child and that was the irrational way I had to respond. If I were in the right state of mind I would have done it differently. That is why I am coming back. I think I took it too far. I am sorry.”

Their only response was more expressionless silence.

Although Sibongile and Lindiwe appeared impassive to her words, Zandile was not deterred. Every two weeks she returned to Sibongile's hut. They never invited her back, however, they never chased her away. For Zandile, each visit felt like a step closer to bridging the divide between them.



Several months later, Zandile arrived one day to find six women crammed into Sibongile's tiny hut. Immediately Zandile's curiosity and hopes were raised. Sibongile and Lindiwe had invited other women to join them – was this a show of their acceptance? Could this be a step toward reconciliation? Inwardly she cautiously exclaimed, “Perhaps I've built a bridge!” However, worried that the slightest misstep would upset the tenuous trust they had established, Zandile kept her excitement to herself.

For no particular reason, Zandile had brought roasted chicken, a loaf of bread and a liter of coke with her that day. The food she had intended to share with two women was now divided among eight. As they sat awkwardly huddled together sharing food, Zandile turned and casually asked the woman next to her, “How do you prepare chicken at your house?”

As though waiting for this cue, the women began effortlessly exchanging recipes. Some preferred frying to roasting, others refused to serve chicken without onions or tomatoes. Zandile readily shared her insights, telling the women of the recipe she had learned years ago to woo her husband. Before long the women were laughing together as they shared stories of the first time they had cooked chicken for their husbands. They went on to lightheartedly squabble over which shop sold better eggs and to laugh at how entertaining it was to watch their children chasing after chickens in the yard. The tension was broken.

Aside from Zandile, the women all knew each other. Yet they rarely had the opportunity to sit and simply talk together. All of the women were single mothers whose husbands had died during the struggle. Some, like Zandile, had also lost children to violence. Others had children die due to AIDS. Several, like Sibongile and Lindiwe, had sons in prison. All of them struggled to both survive and live with the painful stories they carried within.

In hopes of sharing more laughs, and with their shared pain and common issues in mind, Zandile, Sibongile, Lindiwe and the other women decided to meet again. They longed for the opportunity to discuss the challenges they, their children and their communities were facing. They sensed that together they could find comfort in one another.



“If you feel that you are not ready to talk about an issue, say ‘Pass.’ If you don't want to continue, it is OK to stop. Only share what makes you comfortable.”

Zandile was preparing the women to participate in the Tree of Life exercise.²² She had developed this exercise several years ago while working with the ANC and IFP youth in Bhambayi. The women were gathered in a circle, anxiously anticipating experiencing the exercise for themselves.

Throughout KwaZulu-Natal, trees are regarded as a traditional symbol of interconnectedness. People gather under the shade of a tree for significant events; it is customary to refer to an important individual as the tree of a community. Zandile employed the symbolism of a tree in the hopes of urging individuals to unite around their commonality.

Encircled by the 20 women and with a blank sheet of paper in hand, Zandile began as she always did, with her own story. She drew roots – this was her background, the people and events that had influenced her childhood. She moved from there to the trunk – the religious, cultural and political influences that had shaped her. She worked up to the branches – the decisions she had made in her life. As she sketched and shared, Zandile encouraged women to ask her questions. Not judgmental questions like “Why did you do that?” but supportive statements such as “That must have made you feel very bad when that happened.” From the branches stemmed the leaves – these were her emotions. Mixed amidst the leaves were a colorful assortment of fruits and flowers – they represented her achievements. She ended by drawing buds – these were her hopes. At every stage of the process Zandile shared significant, often painful, details of her life. She was left at the end with a bountiful tree, adorned with her life story.

One by one, each woman followed suit. Surrounded by trusting support, each woman sketched her tree. Just as Zandile had done, she started at the roots and moved up to her hopes. Along the way each woman relayed sorrowful experiences she had not talked about in years, unearthed painful memories she had buried in order to survive, and recounted moments of pride she had long ago forgotten. At the end of her turn every woman held an image of her life, complete with its joys and sorrows.

With trees in hand, the women could view their own life alongside others. From a new vantage point they could see where their life was now, where it had sprung from and how circumstances had shaped their growth. For the first time in their lives, several of the women understood that they were not to blame for the horrible things that had happened to them – they hadn’t been raped because they were immoral and their children weren’t in prison because they were terrible mothers.

As each woman shared her story a chorus of quiet “Uh huh, uh huh” filled the room. Every woman’s story was unique, yet they all shared a common past. Some of the women had unknowingly gone to the same secondary school, experienced the same riots or attended the same church ceremonies. They had all experienced a similar sense of hollow emptiness when climbing into bed for the first time after their husbands died; they shared a sense of helpless rage toward the system that had stripped them of their education. For each of the women, dismal circumstances continued to weigh like a dark, heavy cloud on their lives and their thinking. What was different after this exercise was that they no longer felt isolated in their sorrow or glorified by their pain. Together they were helping to heal themselves and each other.

As they prepared to leave Sibongile’s hut that day, the oldest woman in the group stood up and proudly declared, “When you’ve been hurt you are able to understand the pain and hurt of other people. And you are able to help them. We are wounded healers.”



The group of women that first met and shared chicken, bread and cola in Sibongile's hut now call themselves the Harambe Women's Forum.²³ The group has grown to include 20 women. They have all agreed: "We have the potential to destroy ourselves because of what the apartheid system has instilled in us. We need to feel safe as people so that we are able to make our community safe."

The women meet together once a fortnight. Each meeting begins with a "go-around." The women take turns sharing what they felt after the last meeting, what they accomplished that week and what they are feeling that day. The go-around serves as a barometer for each woman. For a few moments, it is as though she is holding a mirror, reflecting on herself and the small steps she is taking to improve her life. It provides a rare opportunity for a woman to say, "Yes, I did it. I did do the washing yesterday. This week I did go visit my son in prison. Last week I didn't believe it mattered whether I bathed or not, today I do."

The Harambe Women's Forum calls their meetings "empowerment gatherings." They share emotions, discuss problems and explore solutions. In these meetings, each of the women is encouraged to speak and listen in a non-judgmental way. With each other's support, they are regaining their sense of self-worth and confidence as mothers and as women.

Many of the women regularly admit feeling powerless to discipline their children. As uneducated women, they do not believe they have useful knowledge and therefore insist they are incompetent as parents. Their children need guidance, support in dealing with their pain and a structure within which to confront their challenges – all things that the women feel incapable of providing. Zandile counters their persistent self-denigration, telling them: "Respect yourself. No one will respect you unless you respect yourself."

In the past, most of the women in Harambe Women's Forum had nurtured a sense of self-respect and belonging by participating as "women of uniform." Throughout KwaZulu-Natal, Thursday had traditionally been recognized as "Sheila's Day" – a day for women, young and old, of every religious denomination to don their church uniforms and sing together, pray in community with one another and join one another in visiting the community's sick and destitute. The color and style of her uniform varied depending if a woman belonged to the Methodist, Anglican, Adventist or African Independent Church, yet universally a uniform signified her standing as a just, moral member of the community.

Pervasive oppression and unrest during the apartheid regime decimated community structures and support systems, the tradition of Sheila's Day notwithstanding. Stripped of their uniforms, many women also surrendered their sense of identity and belonging. What they gained in return were reluctant roles in communities rife with illegal drug use, rampant alcohol consumption, widespread unemployment, violent crime and pernicious rape. Lacking alternative means to feed their families and aware of the ceaseless demand, women sold beer and drugs. They received stolen goods and money as payment. Many of the women in Harambe Women's Forum had long ago internalized a sense of themselves as powerless purveyors of their community's self-destruction.

Participating in the forum provides women with a new source of identity and belonging, as well as the empowering, albeit embarrassing, opportunity to acknowledge their complicity in the community's dissolution. Meeting after meeting, the women struggle to address the same questions:

“What are the causes of our problems? As community members what can we do to address these causes?”

Buttressed by each other’s support and armed with increasingly renewed self-confidence, the women in Harambe Women’s Forum have begun to tackle the issues that plague their families and community. By acting collectively they believe their actions have more power and strength. Their individual decisions to forego brewing beer and selling drugs are a powerful testament of their courage. They no longer feel powerless to their circumstances.

The women are driven by the uncertain hope that they can make a better future for their children. However, consistently they confront the same challenge: they are poor. Having opted out of the illegal economy and in need of an income, the women pooled funds to open a small shop and purchase a plot of land for vegetable cultivation. It is not enough though. Individually and collectively, the women are barely surviving.

Often the only thing keeping them going is the knowledge that, “To fail is part of life. It’s a chapter in everyone’s life. We always live to avoid failure. Yes, you should aim to achieve but you can fail. It is part of the way to achievement.” If their efforts fall apart, Zandile, Sibongile, Lindiwe and the other members of Harambe Women’s Forum know that together they will pick up the pieces.



Recently, Zandile burst into laughter as she read an e-mail from members of the forum. They received the money she had wired them. And are using it to buy chickens.

A chicken project is something they had all discussed before Zandile left to come to San Diego. The other women are certain that raising chickens and selling the eggs will be a lucrative business; Zandile is convinced they will invest the money and the chicks will die.

Her laughter is that of welcome relief. Zandile is ecstatic to know that the women made this decision despite her concerns. In doing so they are saying, “This Harambe Women’s Forum, it is ours.” The power in the women’s voice rings through their e-mail. The eventual success of their endeavors will come through this empowered sense of ownership.

Zandile radiates with pride as she explains, “I’ve worked in communities for many, many years but my sense of achievement is what I am experiencing now, in a way I never have in the past. Working with that group of women – it’s like for the first time I’ve just touched the nub of community development.”

Epilogue

The following is from peace writer Alicia Simoni.

I presented this letter to Zandile when she departed San Diego in late October 2008. It offers a small window into the experience we shared together, she as peacemaker and I as writer – a journey of documenting, discovery and healing. I am indebted to Zandile for the occasion to hear her stories, for the privilege to write about her life and the opportunity to reflect on my own story. During the eight weeks we spent together, I learned in a profoundly personal way what Zandile means when she says that peacebuilding is about sharing our stories and opening ourselves to reflect on our own pain in the process of hearing about someone else's.

Oct. 30, 2008

Dear Zandile,

During our second day together at the IPJ, you were assigned to interview me as part of an orientation session. In order to do so, you used what I now know to be the 'Tree of Life' exercise. You asked me to share what influenced me as a child, what my hopes and fears are as an adult and where I turn to for support. Without hesitation, I found myself telling you that I lost my mother when I was young, that I fear being abandoned by those I love, and that I hope to live my life with purpose and passion. It was in those moments that I realized what a gifted listener you are, someone who seemingly effortlessly creates a space of safety and acceptance.

I went home that night filled with anxiety. Would I be able to live up to your example? Did I possess the ability to be a good enough listener for you? That night, on the eve of our first individual meeting together, I decided that above and beyond anything else I would strive to provide a supportive, compassionate ear for you as you shared your story. No matter what the end written product was, this would be my priority.

Over the past eight weeks as I have listened and endeavored to capture in writing many of the most painful and joyous times of your life, there have been several moments when a simple comment you've made has resonated with my own deep-rooted emotions. In the moment I did not share these feelings. I felt it was important to offer you a space that was yours alone; I did not want you to worry about how your story was affecting me or what it was evoking in me. However, I always knew that eventually I would tell you.

As I struggled to find the right words to describe how you held Xolani after he was shot, images of when my own mother was murdered flooded my mind. I connected with the countless times I have imagined what it might have felt like to hold her body.

As I wrote about you visiting Thulani and Nhlanhla in prison I imagined what it would be like if I could meet the person who murdered my mother. For many years I have longed to forgive that person; I crave the closure that I imagine forgiveness provides. The transformation that forgiveness has inspired in you encourages me – even if I never know the person who killed my mother I will forgive them.

During one conversation, you described challenging young people to reflect: What is it that makes someone want to arm themselves? Even just writing this question now brings tears to my

eyes. It seems like such a simple question, yet for me it touches a place deep inside of me. I've asked myself that same question countless times before. I hoped that an answer would help me understand why someone murdered my mother. I've thought that maybe an answer could lessen my pain.

In the past I have always felt alone in asking these questions; I assumed I was isolated in my sadness. After my time with you, I realize that perhaps in doing so I have glorified my pain. Listening to you share your sadness as well as your insights has helped me see that I am not alone. You have, often unknowingly, provided me with a profound sense of comfort.

Zandile, with gentleness and love you have touched a place deep inside of me. You have done what you speak so eloquently about – your story has inspired me to reflect on my own story and in the process I have taken important steps in my own healing journey.

Thank you. Thank you for having the courage to acknowledge the strengths and the weakness in yourself. In doing so you have become a model for me. Among other things you have encouraged me to acknowledge both the compassion and the pain within myself. I have come to believe, more than ever before, that the ability to see and acknowledge both the good and the bad in ourselves and in others is what lies at the heart of peacebuilding.

In my eyes, the vulnerable emotions you have shared during every aspect of this process – your anxieties about public speaking, your sadness about past memories, your fears about documenting your story – have revealed an incredibly strong, powerful, emotional woman. You are an inspiration.

Thank you for sharing yourself. I can only hope that in some small way I was successful in doing what I set out to do: provide a supportive, compassionate space for you to share your story within.

With thanks and love,
Alicia

A CONVERSATION WITH ZANDILE NHLENGETWA

The following is an edited transcript of select interviews conducted by Alicia Simoni between Sept. 10 and Oct. 23, 2008.

Q: How do you define peace?

A: I would say it is when there are no weapons, there is no fighting, there is calmness. There are no killings and war has stopped. I would define it like that. But on the other hand I would say, as much as the war and the killings would have stopped there would still be conflict and tensions amongst the groups that are in conflict. And the difference is that as much as there are conflicts there will be systems in place to deal with those conflicts. Conflict is part and parcel of humanity. We can never live without conflict. But we need to be empowered on how to deal and handle conflict. I would define peace like that – conflict is there but there are systems of peacebuilding that are initiated at different levels. If there are systems in place we might have conflict but life will go on because there are systems that are containing the tensions. We are not saying conflict is going to end. But we would make the communities safe enough that they could differ in ideas and ideologies and still live in the community.

Q: How would you describe peacebuilding?

A: I would say peacebuilding is defined differently by each community. In my experience youth wanted income-generation projects and they wanted to go to school. For them, initiating those projects was peacebuilding. The women were interested in getting more involved in being better parents because they never had good role models during the apartheid system. For them, that was a process of peacebuilding in their own personal lives and personal development. For women, peacebuilding was also having literacy classes where they can learn to read and write and have skills to sew – it was about empowerment and acquiring skills. For leadership, peacebuilding was about programs that would restore their dignity and regain their authority as respected figures in the society. I think when the average man in the community defines peacebuilding it would be when they are able to find jobs and get skills and be able to support their families. So I think it is important when you deal with this issue to listen to how people define it, not the way we would define it.

Q: Why do you think community-level peacebuilding is so important?

A: Most of a conflict happens at the grassroots level. Usually conflict that happens at a high level, the government and the politicians are able to handle that. But conflict that happens on the ground is usually undermined and there is no focus on that one. The strategies that are normally used on the ground are different than strategies the politicians would take when they are in conflict. They would take the traditional way where they sit and there is a mediator, whereas going to communities, the same principle could be there but it needs to be contextualized to the community situations.

Some of the approaches that are implemented at the community level dealing with peace and reconciliation issues are slightly different because building relationships with people in conflict is very important. Being visible, allowing people to check on you, to test you, is important. Talking to people, I am able to understand the different levels of leadership and power structures that are there. That is community entry – not just barging into a community with your ideas. And the second level

of it that I feel works very well is to work with a vehicle for peace that the communities have identified as authentic.

Q: At the community level, what are the different aspects of peacebuilding?

A: Personal development is the foundation of peace. Violence breaks the social fabric – people distrust one another and become enemies. There is anger and hatred. So when you want to build peace you start with those emotions. This is the foundation. Then there is economic, community and social development. But if the personal foundation is not right after violence, then everything else is going to fall apart. You can't develop the community if you forget personal reconciliation and cleansing. You stop the fighting, the killing, the gun shootings, but at the same time you have a process where you heal people inside.

You can't work in a community when people are busy running around and shooting. That is important, that process needs to happen. But to ensure that there is stability and continuity you have to help people overcome the need to fight. You are allowing them to think and giving them options. The option they were socialized and inculcated with by the political organizations and the apartheid system was violence. That was the only option they knew. But this process is saying there are many other options. People were broken inside so they need rebuilding – families were broken, communities were broken, so that social fabric needs again to be knitted together.

“The option they were socialized and inculcated with by the political organizations and the apartheid system was violence. That was the only option they knew. But this process is saying there are many other options.”

Q: Is there a link between poverty and peace?

A: Poverty is the big issue and within it there are so many issues. But it's all linked to poverty. For a lasting and sustainable peace to be secured, it is about development – that there is water, good infrastructure, jobs.

Q: You talk often about “deepening the peace.” Can you explain what you mean by that?

A: I mean that the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] did build peace at policy levels to break the pillars of the apartheid system. It framed hurt and trauma in terms of what was done by the government, the police and by political organizations. It is easier to talk about – you don't have to go back and live with those perpetrators. But the violence and hatred happened within families and within the neighborhood and within races. So when I talk about deepening processes of peace, it is when you go into the communities that experience high levels of violence and try to make interventions that are actually relevant in that community. Communities became dysfunctional – they were disintegrated because of the violence. There was distrust amongst neighbors. So deepening those processes is to go back into those communities and begin the process of reconnecting people and rebuilding trust, rebuilding the social values that people had but were

broken down by systems, by the apartheid system, by the liberation struggle and by the political violence that took place. So deepening is rebuilding the social fabric in the communities.

“... deepening [the peace] is to ...begin the process of reconnecting people and rebuilding trust, rebuilding the social values that people had but were broken down by systems, by the apartheid system, by the liberation struggle and by the political violence that took place. So deepening is rebuilding the social fabric in the communities.”

Q: Do you think the TRC was effective in what it did?

A: It was an important part of the process. But it was rushed. It opened old wounds. People were getting by, coping, and this process opened wounds and left people having to deal with the past again. It was just too rushed. It takes time to share your pain. The TRC did not do that.

Q: How will the social fabric in South Africa be rebuilt?

A: You do this through weekly meetings, support groups, connecting people, giving people space to reflect, giving people space to reconnect with their dreams – this is an opportunity to pursue those dreams. Deepening peace is reviving structures to support whatever projects are going to be done in the community – if youth want to do a sports event, then it is finding a respected structure that would support that. So it is reviving structures that are there, reviving respect for authority and encouraging parents to revisit their part as people who give directives to their children. So that is deepening peace because the apartheid system and violence broke down all those systems. When those systems are unpacked, parents are taking authority, leadership has direction, youth are involved. There will be tensions amongst peoples but all these systems that have been revived can contain any sort of differences. And it could never erupt into violence because people are connected and understand each other.

We have what is known in South Africa as *Ubuntu* – humanity. That is, when I look at you I see another human being, and if you are the same as me I need to treat you as I would like to be treated. So reviving that. Deepening processes of peace is reviving Ubuntu so that we begin respecting each other and giving support to one another as human beings.

Q: Are there still issues between different races in South Africa that need to be dealt with?

A: The attitude of racism is still there because it was a negotiated settlement in South Africa. We need to look into those issues. The ANC and negotiators looked at the bigger picture and said these issues are there, but we can deal with them later on a long-term basis. Unfortunately, now there are no mechanisms to deal with these issues that are there. You feel it, you get it all the time, whereas in a war you fight and one is defeated, so the party who is defeated knows they have to give up things. In South Africa, nothing was taken from whites.

Q: What is being done about these issues?

A: At the moment the mechanisms that are there are focusing on blacks but they are not focusing on whites. All the whites who are working are working for the black communities; they start NGOs for the black community. They are not starting NGOs that are going to focus on white attitudes. The argument they say is that whites have resources and we can't spend a lot of resources on them. So it's an area that no one is working on. So they still have those attitudes. You feel it. You experience it. It's obvious.

Q: What do you think these mechanisms need to be in order to deal with race in South Africa?

A: I think when you deal with blacks and whites and other races you need to come up with different strategies so that people are able to live with diversity, because we have been separated so much that I do not understand white people. I have assumptions and stereotypes. White people have stereotypes about blacks. Programs that focus on those issues need to be instituted. What is happening in the black communities is that we are consciously doing that. People should be willing to engage in these processes. The difference with white people is that there is some kind of resistance in South Africa – that they don't need this.

There is a group of white people that are saying, "Yes, we had a hand in this in one way or another. Although I did not sit in parliament, being a white South African I contributed to it in one way or another." There is a group of white people doing that. But there is a large group that is saying, "I never did anything. I have a business or a farm and I worked for what I have so I deserve it. My parents were just good citizens, were just working and not involved." White people feel they didn't do anything. They didn't hurt anyone. So there is a lot of resistance. This kind of deepening the peace is happening in black communities only.

Q: Why is it that you focus on working with black communities?

A: My focus is on the black community because they were at the bottom of the ladder in the hierarchy structure. They were at the bottom of the ladder so that when you do reconciliation with whites, they are not at the same level. One is still going to dominate. It is important to lift blacks up first so that they are able to challenge issues because they feel confident. Their dignity has to be restored. So I think that is my focus. To uplift them to a higher level where they are able to talk and negotiate. It's still going to take time because there are not many organizations focusing on that work.

Q: Is there a hierarchy of races in South African society?

A: It is white man, white woman, Coloured man, Coloured woman, Indian man, Indian woman, Black man, Black woman. Black women, we are nothing. A black woman has to struggle to beat all these levels just to survive. It is not there on paper but it is still there.

Q: What advice do you give to someone like your daughter, a young black woman? How do you encourage her to face the reality that she is at the bottom of the hierarchy of races in South African society?

A: You have to always wonder: Is this undermining my skill or me as a woman? If it is, then you must strike. It is necessary to survive. The rules and laws are there but you have to fight the system. You have to claim your rights all the time. You have to be extra alert to take your rights. Women who are at the bottom of ladder are unable to do that. You always have to have your senses alert to what is undermining you.

Q: What do you think is the relationship between the current criminal violence in South Africa and the apartheid system?

A: It's the situation that was created by the apartheid system. The apartheid system created criminals. When people were employed during the apartheid era, black people were not seen as people who need to rest, who need to be paid a decent wage, who need to have lunch, who need to have proper labor rules which protect them as workers. There was no system like that, so people were pushed into being dishonest. People had to cheat and lie in order to find work and people started stealing because they were underpaid. Dishonesty, untruthfulness and defiance of rules became a value system. It was a survival tactic within a system that was dehumanizing and disrespectful of people's rights.

“The apartheid system created criminals. ...Dishonesty, untruthfulness and defiance of rules became a value system. It was a survival tactic within a system that was dehumanizing and disrespectful of people's rights.”

It was inculcated that when you are in power you need to exploit, you need to disrespect and you need to ill treat people. That is what young people witnessed. The whole system removed respect from men as heads of families. And then men, to instill that respect in families, opted to use manipulation and violence. There was an increase in domestic violence – men had to do things to show power. And during political violence, children witnessed their fathers hiding under the tables and pleading for mercy from youth criminals.

So the whole system was dysfunctional. People had to provide their own means of survival and they started opting for getting involved in criminal activities. If they didn't steal then their families would suffer. The whole thing, in terms of criminal activity, was bred by the apartheid system. The apartheid system was a criminal system itself. We are always blaming people and then the genocide of the apartheid system gets away with it. The biggest crime was the apartheid system.

Q: Is there a culture of violence, particularly between men and women, in South Africa?

A: Yes. When colonists came they took away power from the black male. Black men were not abusive, but it was their power that made women respect and feel protected by them. The colonists abused our males and then inculcated a culture that when you are powerful you must be an abuser. It became accepted that once you have power you must be an abuser of people who are lower than you. That affected families and communities. Women became oppressed and men became abusers.

Because men were not respected, they had to regain their dignity and strength and power and respect. Males had to be aggressive because their dignity was tarnished.

Q: When you imagine a future for your grandchildren – the South Africa they will live in – what do you see?

A: I think there are opportunities for young people growing up now. South Africa is a country that is youth-sensitive. One recommendation of the TRC was to focus on young people so youth in South Africa are a priority. I think education is going to be a weapon for young black people to survive. What I see is that blacks are grabbing that opportunity big time. More black children are at university. So if they are highly educated they will be able to challenge the system because of their knowledge and skills.

They will be able to look at white people with confidence and authority, whereas with my generation our education was inferior. Children who are growing up now attend multi-racial schools so they are able to interact with children of other races. For my generation it is still quite difficult in relating with white people – we still see them as bosses. You need to be aware that they are your colleagues, not your bosses. It was a culture that was instituted and it was enforced by our parents when we were growing. So to reverse that you need to be conscious all the time because if you are not, you will find yourself saying, “Yes, boss. Yes, boss.”

Q: You have been identified as a Woman PeaceMaker and are at times asked to speak as a representative of other women in South Africa. How do you feel speaking on behalf of women in your country?

A: I worry if I am really reflecting women on the ground – women from the communities that experience high levels of violence. I am focusing on women on the ground, not on the privileged and the elite women. I worry if I am representing them in the right way. They are really powerful women. They have impacted my life in a big, big way. At times there is an assumption that because they are out there and they are poor that they are stupid. They are not. They are highly intelligent. They are women with wisdom. I have worked with them and seen that. A woman will talk and analyze a political situation, and I will say “Oh my word, this woman could be the president of the country.” They are highly intelligent. It is that the situation they are in doesn’t allow them to use all the skills they have. And also the situation does not allow them to see how powerful they are. So I worry that am I reflecting that. Am I reflecting powerful women or am I saying these are the helpless women that need to be supported? I am not sure I was able to balance that in my presentation – that these are powerful women but the circumstances they live in robbed them of showing off these powerful skills.

Q: Do you think this is a widespread struggle – that when we talk about women we talk about what their challenges are, not what their strengths are?

A: Yes, I think we do. We focus on helpless people. I don’t think women want to be seen as helpless and hopeless. I don’t want to do presentations where people pity women. It happens a lot in South Africa. I want to focus on women’s strengths – for example, where they are able to come together and do income-generation projects. It is a difficult balance because at the same time, that is the situation they are facing. And because it is overwhelming helplessness, it is difficult for you to move beyond that and see the strength.

That is why some of us as development workers fail to look beyond circumstances and see a human being who is powerful. That should be in our consciousness when we move into communities – that you are not dealing with stupid people. You are not dealing with voiceless people – they have a voice and they can say what they want to say. I would like conferences to invite these women. Invite a woman and bring an interpreter to help. That is empowerment. What funders do is that they want me to go and present about women, whereas they could have me translate because I am a professional and can help a woman formulate her presentation – but let her be the voice and the face. For me that is quite important.

“...some of us as development workers fail to look beyond circumstances and see a human being who is powerful. ...[Y]ou are not dealing with stupid people. You are not dealing with voiceless people – they have a voice and they can say what they want to say.”

Q: What have you learned from the women you have worked with?

A: One thing that is powerful that has impacted my life from these women is love. I have seen love for one another. They really care for one another. In that hopeless situation I have seen how much they would sacrifice for each other in that community. They know who doesn't have food today and they themselves don't have much, but they would share the little they have with other people. So that is one thing that impacted me. To love people unconditionally, irrespective of who they are – that is what I have seen in them.

The second part of it that I have seen that impacted me is their surviving in the hopeless situation: The attitude to live and not give up. At times when things become difficult I give up, but they hang on with a spider's web string that things are going to be better in life. They can still smile. In the photos I have of them they are laughing. And you can see that it is coming from deep inside. At times they will joke about their situation, they will laugh at it. For me I would be ultrasensitive if you joke about my situation. They laugh about their situation. I realized that I need to laugh about my situation and my pain. So I think that was quite powerful for me. That made me shift about issues that I grapple with.

Q: You have said that your work is a conviction not a choice. What do you mean by this?

A: A choice is something that I sit down and choose, and then after some time I can choose again not to do it. Whether the situation demands that I continue or not – if emotionally, maybe physically or circumstantially I feel that I don't want to do it anymore – I can stop doing it. But when something is a conviction it is a belief that if I don't do it, I am not involved in it, then I don't exist anymore. It is a value system to me. If I stop doing it I lose a value system that holds my being. It is passion. Without it I become non-existent as a person because this is who I am. It's like waking up in the morning and washing your teeth. It's a lifestyle. It's not just what you do, it's who you are.

Q: Does your Christian faith play a significant role in the work you do?

A: I believe that Jesus is the prince of peace. If I accept him as my personal savior, accept the prince of peace, then when I talk about peace issues then I become more powerful because I am being driven by the prince who is going to empower me with skills, with intelligence in dealing with issues, with decisions, with roles that I need to play. My belief, my drive – it comes from here. It's a spiritual foundation.

Q: Do you talk about your Christian values in your community work?

A: South Africa is a very, very strong Christian country. Even the apartheid system used Christianity a lot. Liberation songs were all Christian songs. It is part of the culture. You don't have to impose it or talk about it – it's just there in the communities. But I would never say, "The Bible says in verse so-and-so," unless I talk to a person in depth, because some people – although the Christian influences are there – they have strong ancestral beliefs. So it means if I push my Christian beliefs, I would be undermining their belief system. It is a value system for them so that is not my approach. It is crucial to respect people's value system. Once you undermine that then you destroy that person.

Q: It is almost time for you to go home to South Africa. What have you learned in your eight weeks here? What has the impact been?

A: One thing I have learned that was quite powerful to me is that it is important to rest and reflect. Because if you don't spend time to rest and reflect you find yourself not improving on your intervention strategies. But when you reflect you always see an opportunity to improve and move forward. That is what has happened when I reflected on the projects I have been doing and on my own personal life and development. When you do this kind of work, rest is important; it gives you time to reflect.

The second part of it is the importance of documenting what you do. It is for history – our children need to read and learn. It is also for the world – that at times we find it hard to solve problems because we are reinventing the wheel; things that were solved and spoken about many years ago were never documented. So the importance of documentation and also keeping photographs. I come from an era where security is important. I work in volatile situations where I have to make contracts with people that "this is not going to happen," "I am not going to do this." But at the same time I am seeing that it is important to have photographs.

And the third part is that I am now linked internationally. It is important to vigorously educate women about issues of abuse and define it and simplify it to them so they understand it. At times I don't emphasize that there is a resolution, this is a law, these are your rights. But the conference really emphasized that to me²⁴ – the importance of making women on the ground aware of these laws. At times abuse is continuing because women don't know, they don't know how to access what is there outside. I think that is quite powerful to me. I need to go back and focus on that. When you talk about women's issues and peace and security, women should understand this. Let me interpret this resolution for women so that they know and are connected globally to what is actually helping other women around the world.

Fourth, what I am taking home is to walk the talk. The IPJ is talking about peacebuilding and respect and I saw it in them – how they related to us, the kind of respect and dignity they showed to

us. Look at the five-star house they gave us with no restrictions. I remember when [Interim Executive Director] Dee [Aker] wanted to use the house she actually asked if she could come. For me, peacebuilding is about walking the talk. This experience has reminded me that I need to walk the talk. If you talk about peacebuilding you must be a peaceful person not only to other people but to your family – my son, my daughter, my grandchildren and my church group.

BEST PRACTICES IN GRASSROOTS PEACEBUILDING

Outlined below are strategies that Zandile Nhlengetwa identified as best practices in her work as a grassroots peacebuilder in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Her peacebuilding work is done with the base of black society – a population that experienced firsthand deep-rooted hatred and animosity and is involved in a day-to-day effort to secure food, shelter and safety.

Zandile’s work is based on the idea that a necessary foundation in all grassroots peacebuilding work is personal development (trust-building, trauma healing, reconciliation, personal empowerment). She believes that without this strong foundation, efforts toward community peacebuilding, social advancement and economic development are not sustainable.

During the life of a grassroots peacebuilding intervention, any or all of these strategies may be relevant – regardless of the intervention’s context, theme or target group. The objective of these strategies is to ensure the sustainability and integrity of a peacebuilding effort. The examples illustrate a context in which Zandile has utilized the strategy.

Strategy	Description of Implementation	Example
Community Entry	Upon entering a community to start an intervention, talk with different levels of community leadership, e.g., elected officials, outspoken youth, the woman who owns the corner shop. Allow different people within the community to verify the credibility and reliability of the individual and/or organization; this shows commitment and builds trust.	Zandile spent eight months informally meeting and talking with women, men and children in a community prior to being granted a meeting with the elected community leaders.
Needs Assessment	Conduct focus group discussions with women, youth, leadership, etc., in order to identify community challenges and needs. Use these ideas to design an appropriate intervention.	Upon entering a community, focus groups were held with various segments of the population. Although the organization had originally identified women as its target group, after these meetings and in collaboration with the community, it was determined that youth would be the target group.
Holistic Approach	Interventions should address: 1) personal/emotional development, 2) economic development, and 3) community development. Personal development (trust-building, trauma healing, reconciliation, self-esteem) is the foundation for the other work.	A youth group began by doing trust-building exercises in order to lay the foundation for sharing stories about past painful experiences. Simultaneous to dealing with personal emotional issues, the group explored income-generation opportunities and ideas for community initiatives and partnerships.

Strategy	Description of Implementation	Examples
Storytelling	Storytelling addresses personal development. It enables both individual and group healing, allowing people to connect with one another and see multiple layers of trauma.	A women's group dedicated time during each meeting to any participant who had a story she would like to share, either from the past or that is currently going on in her life. The objective was for others not to give advice, but to listen.
Group Identity and Structure	Create formal group structure to implement community interventions. This provides a sense of belonging and identity. Establish the group name, constitution, committees and activities.	The ANC youth group name was <i>Kuzakable</i> and the IFP youth group name was <i>Zamani</i> . Each group wrote a constitution and elected members to committees. They implemented income-generation activities, trainings, etc., based on what the group identified as relevant.
Support Meetings	Organize consistent meetings with 15 to 20 members of the target group. Participants determine the frequency and location of meetings. The objective is to establish trust between group members and discuss issues hindering community activities (e.g., jealousy, trauma, etc.).	Ex-commandants from ANC's Youth League met together once per week in a church hall. Discussions often focused on interpersonal conflicts within the group and issues affecting the group's ability to manage the shop they ran together. Time was spent exploring root causes of these conflicts.
Community Ownership	A group should meet independent of externally facilitated meetings. They should connect and work with pre-existing community structures.	A women's group met two times per month with a facilitator. Meetings were also arranged without a facilitator on the alternate weeks. The group approached the community health clinic to inform them that they were available to help organize an HIV/AIDS awareness workshop.

Strategy	Description of Implementation	Example
Utilize Exclusive and Inclusive Approaches to Security	Exclusive approaches are quicker and look at security concerns that come from external factors. Inclusive approaches are long-term and provide stability and security from within; they bring everyone to the table and prevent one segment of the population from sabotaging an intervention.	In order to address violence within a school, an exclusive approach built security gates around the perimeter of the school and monitored activity on the school grounds. An inclusive approach involved students, teachers, parents, gang leaders and police in every stage of designing and implementing an intervention.
Use Pre-Existing Community Structures	Coordinate activities with authentic, pre-existing community structures that people see as having authority. Keep eyes and ears open for influential community members (gatekeepers).	Drug dealers are influential members of the community and have the potential to either assist or thwart an intervention – they have established networks of authority and command. They were involved in the early stages of the project and the intervention worked through their established networks.
Integrate Traditional and Political Structures	Use both traditional and political structures within a community, taking into account power relationships and value systems.	Traditional music has historically been used as a weapon of war, with songs being co-opted by political parties and sung to incite violence. A community event was coordinated that showcased music as a tool to promote peace. Leaders from political organizations were invited to speak about the importance of music.
Use of Food	Sharing food offers people a sign of respect and shared dignity.	Money for bread and cheese was included in the budget for a women's group's monthly meetings.
Residential Workshops	Bring people to a location outside of the community. Allow space and time to reflect on one's personal life and the life of the group. Use time for intensive work on identifying short-term and long-term goals. It is important to involve the group in planning the workshop (meals, accommodations, etc.).	The ANC and IFP youth groups went on a five-day residential workshop to a game reserve. Prior to departure, each group was involved in choosing food for meals and planning sleeping arrangements. The first of the workshops was spent establishing ground rules to ensure that participants felt safe and trusted each other.

Strategy	Description of Implementation	Example
Impact Assessment	Develop indicators with the group so that people both inside and outside of the group can see progress. The group should be involved in the process of monitoring itself.	The women's group brainstormed indicators to track their progress on their income-generating activity. A portion of the monthly meetings is dedicated to tracking these indicators.

TRAINING EXERCISES –
DEVELOPED BY ZANDILE NHLENGETWA

Exercise 1: Someone Else's Shoes

Objective: To help participants understand the importance of respecting each other's stories.

Materials Needed: None

Time: 15 to 20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Ask each participant to remove one shoe and place it in the center of the room.
2. Ask each participant to choose a shoe – that is not their own – from the pile and wear it.
3. Have participants walk around the room for five minutes wearing one of their own shoes and one of someone else's shoes.
4. Ask participants to reflect on what it felt like to wear someone else's shoe and what it felt like to return to wearing his/her own shoe.

Discussion: Wearing someone else's shoes is like hearing someone else's story. Some will be too big for us and some will be too small for us. Someone else's story will never fit us. The story that is yours fits you. What is important is to respect each other's stories – to listen without judgment and not question each other's actions.

Exercise 2: The Things We Carry

Objective: To help participants understand why it is important to reflect on their experiences and express their emotions.

Material Needed: Flip Chart, Markers

Time: 15 to 30 minutes

Procedure:

1. Ask participants to take two minutes to quietly reflect on both positive and negative experiences that have impacted them – beginning in their childhood and continuing until now.
2. Draw a jerry can on the flip chart. (If a jerry can is not relevant to context, choose an object that is commonly used in that culture to carry things.)
3. Ask participants to share their experiences.
4. Ask participants to think beyond themselves and share experiences that others go through.
5. Write participants' experiences inside of the jerry can. Use a red marker for writing negative experiences and a blue marker for positive experiences.
6. Ask participants: What happens when you are carrying water and your jerry can becomes too full?

Discussion: The jerry can represents the things we all carry with us through our lifetimes. Beginning in our childhood, things get thrown into this can – both good and bad things. Sometimes they are things that happen directly to us and sometimes they are things that happen to the people around us – because what is happening in our family, in our neighborhood, in our society impacts our lives.

What happens when your jerry can becomes too full? It spills; it makes you wet and uncomfortable; it makes the people around you wet and uncomfortable. That is also what happens when we carry our experiences inside of ourselves too long. The emotions overflow – the anger, the hurt, the sadness, the rage. It affects you and it affects the people around you.

Exercise 3: The Tree of Life

Objective: To identify common themes and experiences in participants' lives. Contextualizing the experiences everyone has gone through in order to understand how circumstances have affected themselves and others.

Materials Needed: Flip chart, Markers

Time: 1 to 1.5 hours (approximately 10 minutes per participant)

Procedure:

1. Begin by explaining the objective of the exercise and the importance of this being a safe, respectful space for people to share sensitive stories.
2. Discuss the difference between supportive and judgmental questions. Encourage participants to ask supportive questions of each other during each person's turn.
3. Remind participants that they should only share what makes them feel comfortable. If they want to stop at any point they can, and if they decide they do not want to share a particular story they do not have to.
4. Ask one participant to go first.
5. Begin by drawing the roots of a tree. The roots symbolize the participant's background. Ask them to share the major people and events that influenced their childhood. Note these on the roots.
6. Draw the tree trunk. This symbolizes the religious, cultural and political influences that shaped the participant's life. Ask them to share to what or whom they turn to for strength, guidance and support. Note these on the trunk.
7. Draw the branches. These symbolize decisions (both positive and negative). Ask the participant to share the decisions he/she has had to make in life. Note these on the branches.
8. Draw the leaves. These symbolize emotions. Ask the participant to share the emotions that he/she has confronted during different times in life. Note these on the leaves.
9. Draw the fruit and/or flowers. These symbolize achievements. Ask the participant to share the significant achievements he/she has made in life. Note these on the fruit or flowers.
10. Draw the buds. These symbolize hopes. Ask the participant to share his/her hopes for the future. Note these on the fruit.
11. End by reviewing the tree and what it illustrates about the person's life.
12. Ask each participant to take a turn drawing their own tree and sharing stories from their lives.

Discussion: This exercise is about connecting people and identifying the common ground between them. It is also an opportunity to provide support to one another and reflect on our own pain in the process of hearing about someone else's. We are not alone in our pain and we do not need to glorify our own pain. Other people have suffered similar experiences. Letting go of our defenses and animosity allows us to understand why we behave the way we do and why others behave the way they do.

FURTHER READING –
SOUTH AFRICA

- Beinart, William. *Twentieth Century South Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Biko, Steve and Aelred Stubbs (ed). *I Write What I Like: Selected Writings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Byrnes, Rita, (ed.) *South Africa: A Country Study*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1997.
- Davenport, Rodney and Christopher Saunders. *South Africa: A Modern History*. 5th ed. New York: MacMillan Press Ltd, 2000.
- Hochschild, Adam. *The Mirror at Midnight: A South African Journey*. New York: Viking, 1990.
- Hunter-Gault, Charlayne. *New News Out of Africa: Uncovering Africa's Renaissance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- MacDonald, Michael. *Why Race Matters in South Africa*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Mandela, Nelson. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. London: Little, Brown & Company, 1995.
- Sparks, Allister. *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Thompson, Leonard. *The History of South Africa*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Worden, Nigel. *The Making of Modern South Africa*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001.

BIOGRAPHY OF A PEACE WRITER –
ALICIA SIMONI

Alicia Simoni's life experiences have inspired a career and research focused on the gendered implications of violence and on women's capacity to create positive change. As an undergraduate studying anthropology at Johns Hopkins University, she worked with homeless women in Baltimore and, while studying abroad, Protestant women in Northern Ireland. After graduating, Simoni began work at Women for Women International where she contributed to the design, implementation and monitoring of programs in several post-conflict and conflict contexts, including Afghanistan. In 2007 she completed her M.A in International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame's Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. During her graduate studies, Simoni spent time in Uganda working for The AIDS Support Organization and researching the role of masculinity in peacebuilding. She returned to Women for Women International as a monitoring and evaluation officer, where she was surrounded on a daily basis by evidence of women supporting each other through traumatic events and encouraging each other to challenge the status quo.



Photo credit: Patricia Rogers



JOAN B. KROC INSTITUTE FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

The mission of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ) is to foster peace, cultivate justice and create a safer world. Through education, research and peacemaking activities, the IPJ offers programs that advance scholarship and practice in conflict resolution and human rights. The institute, a unit of the University of San Diego's Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, draws on Catholic social teaching that sees peace as inseparable from justice and acts to prevent and resolve conflicts that threaten local, national and international peace.

The IPJ was established in 2000 through a generous gift from the late Joan B. Kroc to the University of San Diego to create an institute for the study and practice of peace and justice. Programming began in early 2001 and the building was dedicated in December 2001 with a conference, "Peacemaking with Justice: Policy for the 21st Century."

The institute strives, in Joan B. Kroc's words, to "not only talk about peace, but make peace." The IPJ offers its services to parties in conflict to provide mediation and facilitation, assessments, training and consultations. It advances peace with justice through work with members of civil society in zones of conflict and has a focus on mainstreaming women in peace processes.

In addition to the Women PeaceMakers Program, the institute has several ongoing programs. The Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series is a forum for high-level national and international leaders and policymakers to share their knowledge and perspective on issues related to peace and justice.

WorldLink, a year-round educational program for middle school and high school students from San Diego and Baja California, connects youth to global affairs.

Country programs, such as the Nepal Project, offer wide-ranging conflict assessments, mediation and conflict resolution training workshops.

Community outreach includes speakers, films, art and opportunities for discussion between community members, academics and practitioners on issues of peace and social justice, as well as dialogue with national and international leaders in government, nongovernmental organizations and the military.

In addition to the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies includes the Trans-Border Institute, which promotes border-related scholarship and an active role for the university in the cross-border community, and a master's program in Peace and Justice Studies to train future leaders in the field.

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

Chartered in 1949, the University of San Diego (USD) is a Roman Catholic institution of higher learning located on 180 acres overlooking San Diego's Mission Bay. The University of San Diego is committed to promoting academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse community and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical and compassionate service.

The university is steadfast in its dedication to the examination of the Catholic tradition as the basis of a continuing search for meaning in contemporary life. Global peace and development and the application of ethics and values are examined through campus centers and institutes such as the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, the Values Institute, the Trans-Border Institute, the Center for Public Interest Law, the Institute for Law and Philosophy and the International Center for Character Education. Furthermore, through special campus events such as the Social Issues Conference, the James Bond Stockdale Leadership and Ethics Symposium and the Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series, we invite the community to join us in further exploration of these values.

The USD campus, considered one of the most architecturally unique in the nation, is known as Alcalá Park. Like the city of San Diego, the campus takes its name from San Diego de Alcalá, a Franciscan brother who served as the infirmarian at Alcalá de Henares, a monastery near Madrid, Spain. The Spanish Renaissance architecture that characterizes the five-century-old University of Alcalá serves as the inspiration for the buildings on the USD campus. The architecture was intended by the founders, Bishop Charles Francis Buddy and Mother Rosalie Hill, to enhance the search for truth through beauty and harmony. Recent additions, such as the state-of-the-art Donald P. Shiley Center for Science and Technology and the new School of Leadership and Education Sciences building carry on that tradition.

A member of the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa, USD is ranked among the nation's top 100 universities. The university offers its 7,500 undergraduate, graduate and law students rigorous academic programs in more than 60 fields of study through six academic divisions, including the College of Arts and Sciences and the schools of Business Administration, Leadership and Education Sciences, Law, and Nursing and Health Science. The Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies opened in Fall 2007.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Union
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IPJ	Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice
MK	<i>Umkhonto we Sizwe</i>
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NP	National Party
SAP	South African Party
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDF	United Democratic Front
UN	United Nations
USD	University of San Diego

ENDNOTES

¹ A version of this paragraph first appeared in the article “‘Women Cannot Cry Anymore’: Global Voices Transforming Violent Conflict,” by Emiko Noma in *Critical Half*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2007). Copyright 2007 Women for Women International.

² It is traditional in Zulu culture for the mother of a household to be referred to as “Ma” followed by the family name.

³ The Group Areas Act (1950) extended the provisions of the Natives Land Act (1913), dividing urban and rural areas in South Africa into zones in which members of only one racial group could live. The government had the power to forcibly remove people from areas not designated for their particular racial group. Furthermore, in 1958 the Durban System was introduced – this controlled the influx of black people into Durban by requiring them to carry permits in town. According to apartheid ideology, Durban belonged to the whites and Indians; blacks could be there only upon request.

⁴ See p. 52 for Zandile’s explanation of the hierarchy of races in South Africa.

⁵ The rand is the currency of South Africa.

⁶ Apartheid – the system of legal racial segregation enforced in South Africa between 1948 and 1990 – is often referred to as simply “the system.”

⁷ Matthew 5:38-42, *New International Version*.

⁸ Hendrick Verwoerd is called the “Architect of Apartheid” for his role in shaping the implementation of apartheid policy when he was Minister of Native Affairs during the early 1950s. While the apartheid program drew upon many existing laws, it was Verwoerd who elaborated apartheid's unique socio-economic policy innovations.

⁹ On June 16, 1976 thousands of black students gathered in Soweto township in Johannesburg for a rally to protest against having to use Afrikaans in school. The protest was in response to the “Afrikaans Medium Decree” of 1974 which forced all black schools to use Afrikaans as a language of instruction. The decree was deeply resented by blacks as Afrikaans was viewed as “the language of the oppressor.” The student protest was intended to be peaceful, however, the police responded with brutal violence, inciting a frenzied uprising that lasted two days and resulted in over 500 deaths and thousands injured.

¹⁰ The Black Consciousness movement was a grassroots anti-apartheid activist movement that emerged in the mid-1960s. It represented a social movement for political consciousness.

¹¹ The Zulu are the largest South African ethnic group of an estimated 10-11 million people who live mainly in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Zulus are renowned among other South African ethnic groups for being stubborn warriors who are steadfastly honest. Zandile’s family as well as her husband’s family are Zulu.

¹² Increasing civil unrest and township violence led to the government declaring a state of emergency in 1985. More human rights were violated under the state of emergency than ever before. It became a criminal offense to threaten someone verbally, possess documents that the government perceived to be threatening, advise anyone to stay away from work or oppose the government or to disclose the name of anyone arrested.

¹³ *Amandla* was one of the primary ANC chants during the liberation struggle.

¹⁴ The Bantu Education Act (1953) decreed that blacks be provided with separate educational facilities under the control of the Ministry of Native Affairs rather than the Ministry of Education. In the words of Hendrik Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs at that time, black students would be trained “in accordance with their opportunities in life” which he considered did not reach “above the level of certain forms of labor” (Byrnes 56).

¹⁵ Refer to Conflict History and Timeline for a more in-depth description of South Africa’s history.

¹⁶ Black Power was the slogan used to emphasize an ideology of racial pride. It is also often referred to as Black Consciousness.

¹⁷ Satyagraha was the name given to the method of resistance Gandhi developed to counter Indian oppression in South Africa. It was characterized by non-violent non-compliance with the offending law.

¹⁸ See p. 62 for the “Someone Else’s Shoes” exercise.

¹⁹ See p. 63 for “The Things We Carry” exercise.

²⁰ *Izintandane* is the Zulu word for orphan. It is used colloquially to refer to young male criminals whose parents are perceived to have no authority over them.

²¹ 1 Corinthians 13:1. *New International Version*.

²² See p. 64 for a description of the “Tree of Life” exercise.

²³ *Harambe* is the Swahili word for “unity.”

²⁴ Nhlengetwa participated in the 2008 Women PeaceMakers Conference, “Crafting Human Security in an Insecure World.” The final report can be found at <http://catcher.sandiego.edu/items/peacestudies/2008-FINAL-CONFERENCE-REPORT.pdf>.