



Interview with: Zinhle (30)
Interviewed by: Nomkhosi
Date of interview: 8 December 2016
Travel: Ndwedwe - Durban

Zinhle: I am Zinhle. I left Ndwedwe and came to Durban. Here in Durban I did not get a job so I came to stay here (Thokoza). As you can see, I am doing beadwork. [My living comes] through the money I make from beadwork.

Aunt: You must pose questions that are easy for her to answer.

Zinhle: Yes.

Nomkhosi: It's not supposed to be like that.

Zinhle: Well, sister, this interview won't take that long then.

Nomkhosi: No, but it has started fine. You can talk in a way that suits you. I don't want to have it all my way with the questions I ask.

Zinhle: Personally whenever I get a job, it doesn't last long. So I survive by selling. Ay ... this is enough.

Nomkhosi: Wait a minute, Zinhle. Maybe you could tell me about the situation at home which caused you to come to the city?

Zinhle: I was just staying at home and being unemployed. I thought I would come to the city and get a job but I did not [find a job]. So I started doing beadwork and that's how I get money.

Nomkhosi: Can you expand a bit on your survival strategies?

Zinhle: When I was young I did not see a reason to make money. As I am a grown-up now I know that I have to work. I had to find a job. So I went to work.

Nomkhosi: At Ndwedwe?

Zinhle: Here in the city. I arrived here and went to work, but I was not making enough money. So I started doing beadwork. I sold [items] and saw that there was money in doing beadwork. Another question?

Nomkhosi: Maybe you can tell me more about your beadwork business?

Zinhle: There is money in doing beadwork. I make more money than those who work. I am able to go out and sell my work and I can make about R500. (Long pause ... *Ay ngeke*).

(Somebody interrupts by walking in, coming to one of the sisters).

Zinhle: (to the newcomer) Sister, please finish your conversation and leave us in peace. We are in the middle of something.

(The lady leaves, seeming irritated.)

Nomkhosi: Can you please say a bit more about your life, without saying it in short cuts? You came here and you did not find a job. I am sure there is more to that. Can you say more? Please tell me when you came here and who you came with. Did you come here on your own? I see a child in your lap. Is it your child and how did she come? Does it make a difference to be unemployed with a child or not? Please share with me.

Zinhle: Yoh ... it is so difficult being in the city.

Nomkhosi: Well, this is your life. It's not somebody else's [life]. It should be easy to talk about it.

Zinhle: I came to Durban with my mother. (Pause) Ay ... can you move on to other people?

Sister Lungi: Did you come with mama or did you come to mama?

Aunt: This other one (Lungi, Zinhle's biological sister) should not disturb you.





Zinhle: But she said she was not going to answer [for me]. Okay, I came to my mom in Durban. I stayed here until I had a child. Now I am the one who is raising this child. Eish ... Zama, *ay ngeke*, come in and talk. I am failing now.

Cousin Zama: You fail at something simple.

Aunt: This thing would be easy if there were questions and she answers them. (To Zinhle:) she asks and you answer.

Zama: But she did give you ideas about what to talk about.

Sister Lungi: It's easy, but I said that I do not have time to do it. But you can tell a story about yourself. When Phumzile asked us about this, I said I couldn't do it because of time.

Aunt: It is easy when you have to explain yourself. As you are talking about your beadwork, you could also be talking [about other things].

Zinhle: After I had the baby, I started selling peanuts to get money to take care of my child. After that, I got a job.

(Baby crying)

Cousin Zama: If it was just the two of us, I would talk.

Zinhle: I do not know how to talk in front of people.

Nomkhosi: All right, okay it's fine. Let us try and get some privacy.

(Break)

Zinhle: Aunty has said everything that I wanted to say.

Nomkhosi: But aunty was telling her own life story. You have to tell your own.

Aunt: You must say that you lived in the rural areas, that you had a child and the father did not pay maintenance. When you reached the urban areas, you had another one.

Zinhle: There, she is talking on my behalf.

Nomkhosi: No. Each person tells their own story.

Zinhle: I left the rural areas. I went to school there and got as far as Standard 8 (Grade 8?). Then I had a child. The father of the child never paid maintenance. I applied for a grant and that's how I raised my baby.

Nomkhosi: Is this the baby that I just saw here?

Zinhle: Yes.

Nomkhosi: How old is she?

Zinhle: She is five. Her father is not responsible. He does nothing at all, but he works. So I came to the city and I started working next to USave.

Nomkhosi: Where did you work?

Zinhle: In a shop that sold fried chips. I worked there and after that I fell pregnant.

Nomkhosi: Same father or different father?

Zinhle: Different father. I started selling peanuts while I was pregnant.

Nomkhosi: How old is the second child, the boy?

Zinhle: She is [over a year]. It's a girl.

Nomkhosi: (Laughs). Oh, I am sorry. I thought it was a boy.

Zinhle: With the second one, the father used to be responsible. He used to buy [things] sometimes and sometimes he would not buy. Lately I am the only one who is buying. He does not support the child anymore. He lost his job and went back to the rural areas. Then I realised that life is tough and I have to face it alone.

Nomkhosi: Are you guys still together?





Zinhle: Yes.

Nomkhosi: You guys knew each other from Ndwedwe, but started dating here?

Zinhle: Yes. After that, I sold peanuts, taking care of this child and buying formula.

Aunt: Hey, Zinhle, you must go to the bus stop. When will you go?

Nomkhosi: Who told you to sell peanuts?

Zinhle: My mother. When I fell pregnant she gave me money to go and sell peanuts. She was here then. I would leave her with aunt and go and sell peanuts. I would come back and go and buy nappies for her.

Aunt: Zinhle, you must go to the bus stop.

Zinhle: I will go to the bus. Then I saw that selling peanuts was too much work. I had long distances to walk, so I stopped.

Nomkhosi: How did you sell them?

Zinhle: In the road. I would walk around shouting that I am selling peanuts. This was in Phoenix and Chatsworth.

Nomkhosi: Oh, so you did not go knocking on people's doors?

Zinhle: No. I would even go to the harbour to sell and I would come back very tired. My aunt said I should sit down and she would teach me how to do beadwork, and so she taught me. I sat down and saw that it was better that I do beadwork and sell it like the rest of the people. I am independent in my life. I am responsible for my children. I am also responsible for myself. There is no one who looks out for me. Even my mother is not working, she sell peanuts.

(She says all these things in front of the aunt who taught her beadwork. Her aunt helps her with child-minding.)

Nomkhosi: Where does your mother sell the peanuts?

Zinhle: In the same areas where I used to sell. My brother, the one who comes before me, used to work but he lost his job. The other one does not work. And the other one is doing Grade 11 at school. If he passes he will go to Grade 12. We do not know what he will do when he finishes school because the one who just lost his job also had matric but he is now unemployed and not doing anything. If there is anything that he needs, he asks my mother or myself.

Nomkhosi: Where does your mother stay?

Zinhle: Here at the hostel, room number ...

Nomkhosi: Oh, so she is out selling now?

Zinhle: Yes. So when I run short of cash, I tell her and ask her to give me money.

Nomkhosi: Does she give it to you?

Zinhle: Yes, she does sponsor me in whatever way she can. We support each other. When I am short of nappies, I would ask for money or I borrow money and, after making sales, I am then able to pay it back.

Nomkhosi: How did your mother feel when you left the business that she introduced you to?

Zinhle: It was she who said I should stop working while I was pregnant because the walking was too much. After I gave birth she said I will have to go back in selling peanuts. But for now I do not have money to [purchase stock].

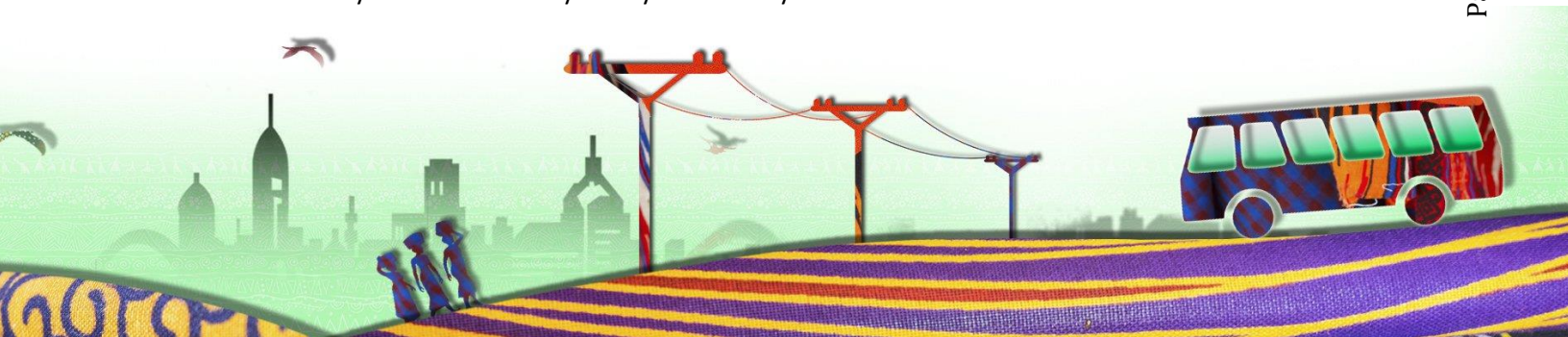
Nomkhosi: How much does it cost to order peanuts?

Zinhle: R400 a bag.

Nomkhosi: Really? How big is that bag?

Zinhle: 50kg.

Nomkhosi: Do you cook them or you buy them ready-made?





Zinhle: I cook them.

Nomkhosi: So you buy for R400, and buy your own oil to cook, and buy packets for packaging?

Zinhle: These are the ones you roast, without water and oil. There are also ones you cook using water.

Nomkhosi: How?

Zinhle: You just put them in a pot—no oil, no water, just peanuts. And you just stir them. You eat one from the pot to taste if it is ready. If it is ready you take them out. If they are still raw, you continue stirring.

Nomkhosi: How long do you keep them on the stove?

Zinhle: Maybe 30 minutes, or 1 hour ... ay ... I don't know.

Aunt: It's an hour.

Nomkhosi: So you will still go back to selling peanuts?

Zinhle: Yes, I will go back.

Nomkhosi: But you said beadwork is doing well?

Zinhle: Yes, it is, but I do not want to survive on one thing only.

Nomkhosi: Oh. So you will do both?

Zinhle: Yes, when I come back from selling peanuts at around 4pm, I will sit down and start doing my beadwork. I will work on two things at the same time. Here, my children expect me to take care of them and there is nothing I can do.

Nomkhosi: Who would you leave the children with? Do they both live with you here full-time?

Zinhle: No, the [older] one is visiting.

Nomkhosi: Where does she stay?

Zinhle: With the family of her father.

Nomkhosi: And her father?

Zinhle: He is not responsible for her.

Nomkhosi: Is it her granny who takes care of her?

Zinhle: As well as myself.

Nomkhosi: Is she also from Ndwedwe?

Zinhle: Yes.

Nomkhosi: But is she okay?

Zinhle: Yes.

Nomkhosi: Why don't you live with her?

Zinhle: I wanted to stay with her, but her granny asked for her, so I let her go.

Nomkhosi: Do you get along with her father's family?

Zinhle: Yes, very much so.

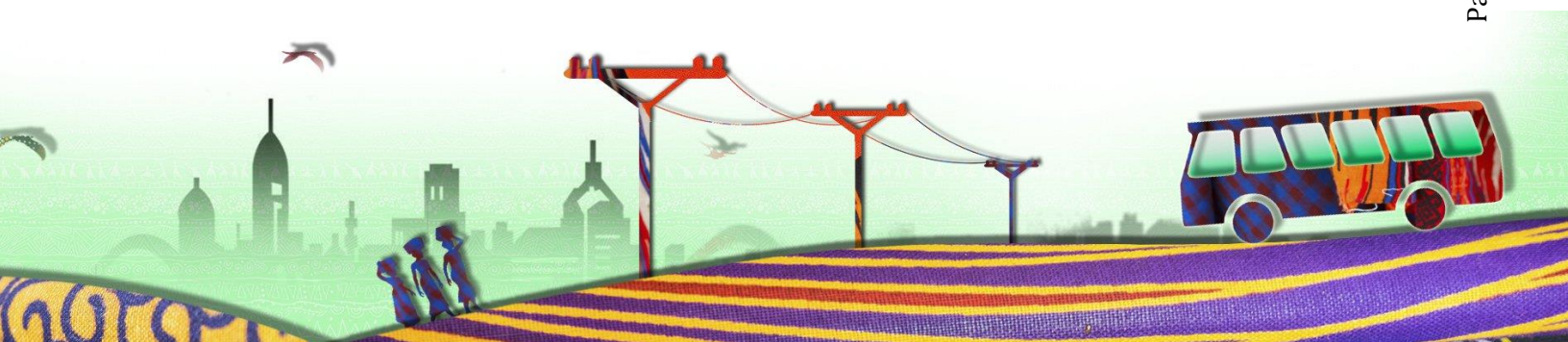
Nomkhosi: Are you able to get her (the child) anytime you need her?

Zinhle: Yes, I can fetch her anytime I need her. When I feel like fetching her, I do. When I need to send her back, I do.

Nomkhosi: So now you have a plan to sell peanuts and do beadwork. How much do you pay your aunt for taking care of your child?

Zinhle: Sometimes she asks for R30 per day. She is lenient with me because she knows that we are both unemployed.

Nomkhosi: What happens if you do not have it?





Zinhle: She does not have a problem. She does not demand it from me. It happens that you are not able to sell much. You go for the whole day and you come back with only R20, or sometimes you come back with R50.

Nomkhosi: What is the maximum amount that you have been able to make, per day?

Zinhle: I don't know. I have never taken note of how much I sell every day.

Nomkhosi: How can you work and not know how much you make per day?

Zinhle: Do you mean one specific day?

Nomkhosi: Yes, what is the maximum amount that you have been able to make, per day?

Zinhle: It's R500.

Nomkhosi: You have made R500 in one day? When was that?

Zinhle: Ey ... I do not remember. It could have been last year.

Nomkhosi: What was the deal with that year?

Zinhle: It was busy. People really liked them on that day.

Nomkhosi: For how much do you sell your items?

Zinhle: For a jam tin it is R10.

Nomkhosi: What is a jam tin?

Aunt: She fills a jam tin with a certain amount of peanuts.

Nomkhosi: Wow! You made R500 from peanuts? I thought that that amount was made from the beadwork.

Zinhle: No, this is only the second month that I am doing beadwork.

Nomkhosi: Oh, so you have not started selling beadwork?

Zinhle: I have started.

Nomkhosi: How much have you made since you started?

Zinhle: Maybe I have made R300.

Aunt: You think R300 is a lot of money?

Zinhle: That is a very small amount of money.

Nomkhosi: But she just started selling.

Zinhle: But I am selling.

Aunt: In September beadwork brings in a lot of money.

Zinhle: I sell and when I make a sale, I go to aunty to make an order [for more beads]. Maybe I come back with R50. I then see what I am short of.

Nomkhosi: How much is the item that you are doing now?

Zinhle: It is R10.

Nomkhosi: You sell it for R10? Why do you guys sell this thing for such a small amount of money when we buy for such a high price?

Aunt: There is no money that we get from this. Those who benefit are the ones who buy from us and who have their own shops.

Nomkhosi: Why don't you guys organise a small table for yourself and display and sell your stuff there?

Zinhle: Where can we sell it?

Nomkhosi: In town or by the beach. It's not that expensive. You get a permit and you pay rent of maybe R500 for the whole year.

Zinhle: Where will we find the money for rent?

Aunt: Where will we get money to buy initial stock? Where would we get the space to sell?

Zinhle: Where will we get all that?





Nomkhosi: That option seems better than selling these items for R10 each. Even a loaf of bread is more than R10 now.

Zinhle: At least we can put cents together. You and your friend can put half-half together and you buy a loaf.

Aunt: I am also selling this ... don't you want it?

Nomkhosi: What is this?

Zinhle: It's mud.

Aunt: It's mud for cooking.

Zinhle: Aunty, give her some to taste in her hand.

Nomkhosi: Give me some more information.

Zinhle: It is very nice. You put it in the pot when you are cooking your stew or curry.

Nomkhosi: Why are you putting it in a lunch box?

Aunt: We will use it for cooking. The [rest] in the bucket I will put aside.

Nomkhosi: I thought you were making money with it?

Aunt: No, this is mine. I bought it for personal use.

Zinhle: Where is mine?

Aunt: Go and take your lunch box.

Nomkhosi: Where do you buy this mud?

Zinhle: At Chicken Licken'.

Nomkhosi: What do you ask for when you buy this?

Aunt: Mud.

Nomkhosi: Please excuse me. I have not seen this thing before and I have never heard about it.

Zinhle: It's nice.

Aunt: How come you do not know this because the women from Ntuzuma and KwaMashu come to buy this thing?

Nomkhosi: My mom has never bought this.

Aunt: Women from township sell this for R10 a cup.

Nomkhosi: How much do you buy it for at Chicken Licken'?

Aunt: I bought it there for R50 per 10kg bucket.

Nomkhosi: So this is the oil that remains after they fry meat and wings? They don't throw it away?

Aunt: Yes, people like it, so they sell it. These crumbs together make a delicious stew.

Nomkhosi: When do you add it to the pot?

Aunt: When you put your soup in. This thing is really nice. Many people from the townships sell it.

Nomkhosi: So you said you are sending it to your mother in the rural areas?

Aunt: Yes.

Nomkhosi: Is somebody going home?

Aunt: We send it with the bus.

Nomkhosi: And you pay the driver?

Aunt: Yes.

Nomkhosi: How much?

Aunt: Same as a passenger.

Nomkhosi: No, it can't be that much. How much is a bus fare going home?

Aunt: The bus is R30 and the taxi is R35.





Nomkhosi: If you pay R30 to send it home, that means it totals R80, including the money you bought it for.

Aunt: Yes.

