



**Interview with:** MaNdlovu (22)  
**Interviewed by:** Nomkhosi  
**Date of interview:** December 2016  
**Travel:** Johannesburg - Umlazi - Durban

**MaNdlovu:** I am MaNdlovu. I was born in Vryheid but when my parents passed on we moved to Durban. The children are now in Johannesburg. There are not many people here except the children of my sister and they are at Machobeni.

**Nomkhosi:** Machobeni, in Inanda?

**MaNdlovu:** Yes. So I am based here. I used to work in a hospital. I lived here but we still had our home when my aunts were still alive.

**Nomkhosi:** Where was your home?

**MaNdlovu:** It was here at ... (indistinct). Through quarrels in the family, my aunt sold our home to her [Christian] brethren. So because of that situation *impithimphithi* (there was confusion) that is why I continued staying here. I thought I should register for RDP housing but [my applications] were never successful. Even the councillor, someone called Ncanana, left knowing I was at the hostel and looking for RDP housing, and that was the end of that. Nothing came of it. Here I am living through the child of Shembe, something that is known at eBuhleni. The brother that is responsible for *iladi* (cultural tradition for remembering the dead) is from Swaziland. He is the one who is my pillar.

**Nomkhosi:** The brother that is responsible for *iladi*, is this your brother?

**MaNdlovu:** Yes. My brother is there at the temple. I am renting here and this means that I can leave this place anytime. When I look at the situation, I see that there is not much. All we can do is try (work) with our hands. As women we have debt. You also know the situation (*uyalwazi udaba nawe*). We must pay our debt here in Durban. Here we have clinics and hospitals, which we go to all the time. So, that's it. I am paying my rent. I am always up to date and there is nobody who complains about me, as you can see. We are busy with what you see (*wenza ubuhlalo*). There is nothing else.

**Nomkhosi:** When did you first come to the city?

**MaNdlovu:** No ... I cannot say in which year I came here. It has really been a long time since I arrived in the city. I came from Umlazi here to Thokoza.

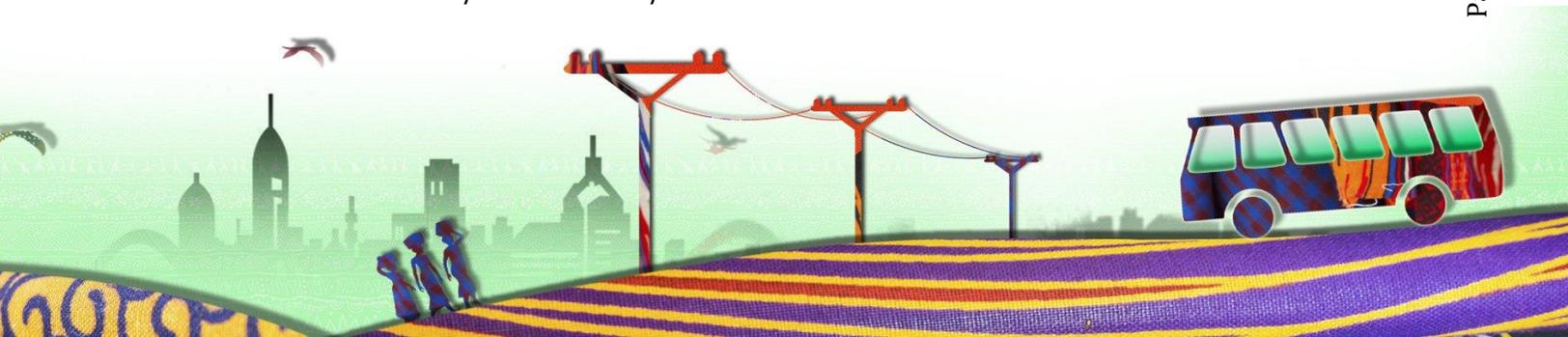
**Nomkhosi:** You were at Umlazi before coming here?

**MaNdlovu:** Yes, I was at my aunt's house (*kwamamkhulu*). I am somebody who is from the city. But the place that I stayed in for some time before coming to the hostel was Umlazi.

**Nomkhosi:** Does that mean you grew up there?

**MaNdlovu:** No. I [went there when I] started working. All my family is in Johannesburg. My mother's children are in Johannesburg. The few that remain are in Johannesburg. At Thokoza we live as people who are renting. There is nobody who causes noise or [trouble] for us. Even in this room of ours, all is well. You take care of your needs, and go wherever you need to go. Each person goes where they need to go (minds their own business). Those that go to temple, go to temple, or anywhere else they need to go. There is nothing much more to say. Since I have been staying here, I have never seen anything bad, but I don't yet have a place of my own. But I do have my own place there where my brother is. I am able to go there and stay for a long while without any problems. As [I am] a person of Shembe, I would stay there without any problem.

**Nomkhosi:** Where does your brother stay?





**MaNdllovu:** He stays at eBuhleni, exactly opposite the gate of the temple.

**Nomkhosi:** So there is no place you call home, since your aunt sold your family home?

**MaNdllovu:** No. My aunt has a house and my child also has a house, but I do not count these as home. My brothers passed away. If I were to visit my small aunts, the ones who are remaining, I would go to Kagiso in Johannesburg. But we are under the wing of Shembe, and we do not go [far] or anything.

**Nomkhosi:** You are safe?

**MaNdllovu:** Yes, we are safe because there is nothing wrong.

**Nomkhosi:** Please tell me a bit me about your life at the hospital.

**MaNdllovu:** Wemntakababa! I will not tell the story of Wentworth. It is only rubbish.

**Nomkhosi:** *Hawu!*

**MaNdllovu:** It is only rubbish.

**Nomkhosi:** Did it not treat you well?

**MaNdllovu:** I worked there and I had a good record. But it's never nice when you work with people. People look at you and they look at what you do and then they decide that you probably don't deserve [your job].

**Nomkhosi:** What did you do there?

**MaNdllovu:** What can I say ... I was in the theatre department. Then I went to work with the surgeons. I worked in the offices on the [UKZN Medical School] campus. I worked on the Board of Directors. That was towards the end of my career.

**Nomkhosi:** Why did you stop working?

**MaNdllovu:** I stopped because my health was not right.

**Nomkhosi:** Work life or health life?

**MaNdllovu:** Health life?

**Nomkhosi:** Health.

**Nomkhosi:** Was this something you decided on or was it a pressing issue?

**MaNdllovu:** It was pressing. In reality I was not okay health-wise. I was supposed to have been boarded earlier. However, that was during the time of apartheid.

**Nomkhosi:** So it has been a long time since you stopped working?

**MaNdllovu:** It's been a long time. I have been at the hostel for a long time, many years. I am 65 years old now.

**Nomkhosi:** You are the same age as my mother.

**MaNdllovu:** It's like that. There is nothing else, my child.

**Nomkhosi:** So tell me, is the beadwork something that you always liked or it is something that you saw people doing and you also started doing it?

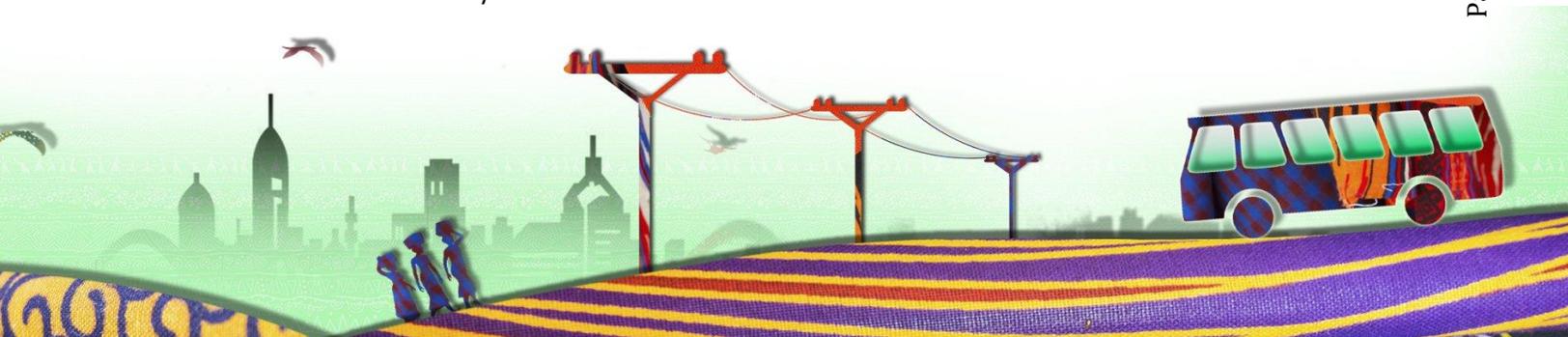
**MaNdllovu:** I saw people doing it and then I also started doing it. I learnt it here at the hostel. However, they were also doing it at eBuhleni and they made me do it as well.

**Nomkhosi:** How did you start going to eBuhleni?

**MaNdllovu:** I was not born there but I have been [part of] them for a long time. I started when Baba Ilanga was still there. MaNgubane was from Pietermaritzburg and we were introduced early. [We learnt a lot there. We did not know much but] in a way we grew up there. [We were taught many things there.]

**Nomkhosi:** eBuhleni is at Inanda or ekuPhakameni?

**MaNdllovu:** eBuhleni is a separate place and is at eMatabetulo. Now that is the end of my story, my child. This is all I have to say.





**Nomkhosi:** Do you only have one child?

**MaNdlovu:** I have children and they are with my relatives. There is one who is married and she is in Johannesburg. I have two boys who are quite grown up.

**Nomkhosi:** They are not yet independent?

**MaNdlovu:** The children are disabled.

**Nomkhosi:** Oh really? Both boys?

**MaNdlovu:** Yes.

**Nomkhosi:** Are they twins?

**MaNdlovu:** No.

**Nomkhosi:** How are they differently able?

**MaNdlovu:** I would say that they do not know a woman and money. That's how I would put it. (Interruption).

**Nomkhosi:** So, mommy, are you willing to continue or you would like to stop here?

**MaNdlovu:** I am done now.

**Nomkhosi:** Thank you very much, mah, for sharing your story with me.

