

NYASHA NHORO

Albert Luthuli Young
Historians Award
2011

WCED - Western Cape Province

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Topic

Refugees in South Africa

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Why I choose this topic

Through engaging with learners at my school and in the Community I found that there was little understanding amongst South Africans as to why refugees come to seek refuge in South Africa. I thought in doing this topic I would be able to create awareness at my school and in the Community.

Key Question

Why do Zimbabweans flee their place of birth and come to South Africa?

Zimbabwe location

Zimbabwe is truly Africa's paradise and according to my interviewee Thembile Chimatira who is a Zimbabwean refugee she said "*the country Zimbabwe looks good*". Zimbabwe is a country located in the southern part of the continent of Africa, between the Victoria Falls, the Zambezi River, Karina Dam and the Limpopo River and borders Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana and Namibia.



History of Zimbabwe



Zimbabwe was the former British colony of Southern Rhodesia and its capital was then called Salisbury. Zimbabwe was granted independence on 18 April 1980 and its capital Salisbury was changed to Harare on 18 April 1982 to mark its two years of independence. Mr Chimatira one of

my interviewees described his experience of growing up in the then Rhodesia to me when he explained *"I grew up in Harare, Mbare during those days I was a big boy and we were not allowed to walk in the streets, because we would be knocked by a car because we weren 't regarded as anybody, its was like Blacks were seen as third class "....*

Zimbabwe also had strong ties with Mozambique as it named the main street in Harare Jameson Avenue in honour of the late Samora Machel, the then President of Mozambique, but Zimbabwe did not only have a strong tie with Mozambique Mrs Abduragman explained how *"before the Mugabe era, Rhodesia was seen as a province of South Africa "* this was during the apartheid era when Zimbabwe was *"seen a fifth province along with east Africa "*.

According to Irene Dzurume one of my interviewees a Zimbabwean living in South Africa she explained *"that Zimbabweans came to South Africa long before the Zim decline to work in South Africa, saved their money and some bought them houses from the money they earned in South Africa "*. So 'wenera' migration to South Africa happened a long time ago already.

Mrs Abduragman a South African school teacher and one of my interviewees expanded further on the wenera Situation ... *"we have a long history of migrant workers in South Africa and so refugees are part of history ... we have mines that are developed not by South Africans but by migrant workers of other countries "*.

Zimbabwe economy

Zimbabwe had the most diversified structural economy of any African nation apart from South Africa. Mining, agriculture, and manufacturing were all well developed and the country's financial Services sector and infrastructure were highly sophisticated.

President Mugabe followed a socialism system and relied on international aid but then came Mr Chimatira takes the story further in my interview with him and explained *"All of a sudden things started to change because of some sanctions "*.

Zimbabwe decline

The economy faced severe problems; primarily inflation and devaluation of the currency, Zim dollar, State spending and no new Jobs were created to accommodate the thousands of well-educated school-leavers. Mr Chimatira takes the story further in my interview and explained *"...then it started to change, the money was less value and you just couldn't get anything from the shops nofood, and a lot of Zimbabweans went to South Africa; so me teachers fled, and other employees they also run awqy to South Africa or Zambiafor better pastures "*.

Factor that led to Zimbabweans leaving:

Land ownership

Many whites left Zimbabwe for neighbouring South Africa after independence because of landownership. The land was forcibly invaded by the police and military and redistributed

Fear and brutality in Zimbabwe



Then there was the build up to the elections, which saw violence and intimidation. They called it "Operation red finger" if they didn't see the mark on your finger, you will be in serious trouble. Motorist, were stopped by militant groups, who requested to see the finger, if you could not prove that you voted you had to turn back and go and vote, such was the levels of intimidation. The levels of fear, beatings and torture were extraordinary. The decline in economy, fear and brutality led Zimbabweans to South Africa seeking asylum.

Deterioration of the educational System

The educational System which was regarded as amongst the best in Africa, went into crisis because of the country's economic meltdown. Many teachers left the country and corruption crept into the educational System

Getting to South Africa



so many times but without much luck.

To get to South Africa refugees need to crawl under a wire fence to walk over the border. According to Thembile Chimatira she only left *"with a few items of clothing"* and in the case Irene Dzurume „she *"Heft everything behind in their land of birth "* and when I asked Thembile Chimatira if she had tried to get some of her belongs in Zimbabwe to South Africa she explained *"I've tried to do*

Despite the hardships of getting here *"most South Africans were not welcoming.* A person who I spoke to but did not want to give their details said *"it's embarrassing that a little kid can call one names just because one is a foreigner ...the name calling is particularly painful"*

Xenophobia



Africa *"taking our history into consideration, we cannot throw out anyone. Because we were given a safe passage in the 48 years we needed it by African countries "*.

Top leaders in our country had released Statements about accepting foreigners in our communities because of past kindness. While this was a positive sign it does not quell the Xenophobie violence nor does it give a long term Solution. Mrs Abduragman explained how she feit about refugees Coming to South



South Africans are angry about poor Service delivery, competing for resources and that is the government's responsibility. Mrs Abduragman a South African explained: *"we've always had black on black violence in this country and its historical, endemic and part of our history"*.

Xenophobic attacks started in South Africa. Some South Africans went on rampage burning down foreigners dwellings and looting shops. Foreigners fled, some took what they could other left with nothing.

Fighting xenophobia should be made a priority for the government. People can only kill that which they do not know or understand, especially if they believe that it is a threat to their well-being.

Stopping Migration



Stopping foreigners entering South Africa is not the Solution as refugees have the right to enter South Africa whether legally or illegally. What could be working towards a Solution is that Home Affairs issue paperwork immediately as refugees arrive thus checks and balances are in place. Mrs Abduragman explained the African Union the

former South African president Thabo Mbeki's dream to me: *"Thabo brought a vision that takes Africa to a different part of the world that is equally breathing and that is the vision we need to have"*.

Jobs and skills

The xenophobic attacks happened because there was a perception amongst South Africans that foreigners are taking their Jobs.



Many foreigners come with skills that are lacking in South Africa and create an opportunity for unemployed South Africans to learn those skills such as braiding hair.

In my interview with Ms Mtini she explained *"it does not matter whether you're foreign or not if you're suitably qualified and experience*

then you need to get the job "

Nothing refugees do in South Africa they will ever be able to go back home with them when they decide to return to their homes. Some of their skills and labour was used to build Stadiums but the Stadiums will stay behind when they leave South Africa.



Educating the nation

Xenophobia goes beyond competing for Jobs and other scarce resources. Many foreigners feel unwelcomed in South Africa by being exploded by landlords and falling victim of harassment by government officials.

Refugees have left their homes and families for a better life in South Africa they came to South Africa traumatised by what they were experiencing in their own countries and then fled their dwellings in South Africa with xenophobia and lost everything for some this loss had happened more than once. We as South African must find a means of opening our communities to foreigners.

Ms Mtini explained *"in the days of apartheid Zimbabweans opened their heart to South Africans to come and seek refuge when they fled from the nationalist government, we must never forget that"*

"South Africa is seen as a major economy in Africa" explained Mrs Abduragman. We as South African must find a means of opening our hearts and communities to foreigners. We need to understand that we are all Africans living on the same continent and all human beings have a right to life and live.

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Bibliography

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We came for Mandela

Keith Adams

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Personal interview with Irene Dzurume 15.8.2011

Follow up personal interview with Irene Dzurume 29.8.2011

Personal Interview with Sibongile Mtini 7.9.2011

Personal interview with Mrs Abduragman 22.9.2011

Personal interview with Thembile Chimatira 27.9.2011

Personal interview with Mr Chimatira 27.9.2011

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Interviewees

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Choice of interviews

Irene Dzurume

35 Barbados Way
Port lands
Mitchell's piain

Mrs Dzurume is a Zimbabwean who made her way to South Africa during the time when the dollar was devaluating. I though it would be beneficial to hear her experiences and how she was fmlaly settled in South Africa.

Sibongile Mtini

NY4-69 Gugulethu

Ms Mtini she is a South African who lives in a township were foreigners are likely first to search for shelter. Her experience in living with refugees and her relationship with refugees would be of value.

Thembile Chimatira

No 2 Merrydale Road
Portlands
Mitchells Piain

Thembile is a Zimbabwean who travelled with her children but without her husband from Zimbabwe to South Africa and when she came to South Africa she had to survive with her children.

Mr Chimatira

No 2 Merrydale Road
Portlands
Mitchells Piain

A Zimbabwean who lived in the country before and after independence and he could share some of the early history and experience with me.

Miriam Abduragman

10 Market Street
Grassy Park

Ms Abduragman is a South African teacher who showed great interest in refugees.

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Interview Guide

Interview questions for locals:

My name is Nyasha Fm a grade 11 learner at Cedar high and Fm participating in the Albert Luthuli Young Historians award. The topic I choose is the flight of refugees to South Africa. My focus is on the struggle of the refugees to South Africa, their journey and their stay in South Africa. For recording purposes could I have your full name please?

- I. How do you feel about refugees Coming to South Africa?
2. Do you think there is enough Space for everybody in South Africa?
3. Do you have any refugees staying in your area?
4. Describe to me your relationship with the refugees in your area?
5. Was there ever a time that you felt scared or unsafe because of refugees living in your area or being around you?
6. Last year we had the Xenophobia attacks and now its mushrooming again what did you think of the black on black violence?
7. Do you think refugees come to South Africa to take the Jobs of South Africans?
8. Would you say refugees contribute to the economy of South Africa?
9. Why do you think there is such a great influx of refugees to South Africa?
10. Are the borders adequately controlled for the influx of refugees?
- II. Do you think there is sufficient education around refugees Coming to South Africa?
12. What do you think needs to happen for us all to live peacefully?

Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me. Fm sure the Information you shared with me will be beneficial for the award.

Interview Questions for refugees

My name is Nyasha I'm a Grade 11 learner at Cedar High school and I'm participating in the Albert Luthuli Young Historian award. I choose the topic "Refugees in South Africa". For recording purposes could I have your full name please?

1. In which country were you born?
2. Describe to me how the country looks?
3. Describe to me what it was like growing up in Zimbabwe?
4. What did you take with you when you left your country?
5. Describe to me how you felt when you left your country?
6. When you left Zimbabwe did you know which country you were going to?
7. How many countries did you go through before you arrived in South Africa?
8. For how long did you stay in each country?
9. Do you have any family members still living in Zimbabwe?
10. Have you ever tried to access the things you left behind?
11. What was your expectation of South Africa before you came to South Africa?
12. Was it easy for you to fit in with the Citizens of South Africa when you first arrived here?
13. What was the attitude of South Africans towards you as a foreigner?
14. Was it easy for you to get your paperwork processed through Home Affairs in South Africa?
15. There are again talks of Xenophobia attacks what do you think South Africa can do to avoid these— Xenophobia attacks?

16. Do you feel safe in South Africa?

17. Do you miss your country?

18. If you had the opportunity would you go back to your country?

Is there anything I did not ask you that you —think is important for me to know for this award.

Thank you so much for granting me this interview Fm sure I will be äble to put this Information to good use for the award.

Transcripts

Nyasha Nhoru - **NN** - **Interviewer**
Miriam Abduragman - **MA** - **Interviewee**

NN: My name is Nyasha Nhoru, grade 11 at Cedar High, I am participating in Albert Luthuli History Award. I chose the topic Refugees in South Africa. My focus is on the struggles of refugees in South Africa, their journey and staying in South Africa. For the recording purpose would you just state your name and surname?

MA: It's Miriam Abdurrahman

NN: Ms Miriam, how do you feel about refugees coming to South Africa?

MA: I think in today's world in terms of the times we live in what is happening is every country has to accept refugees. In taking our history into consideration; we cannot throw out anyone. Because we were given a safe passage in 48 years we needed it by African countries.

NN: Okay, do you think there is enough space for everyone in South Africa?

MA: Yes I think there are challenges in this moment and time, but there is enough space for everyone in South Africa.

NN: Do you have any of them in your area?

MA: Yes I do have but I don't know how many.

NN: Describe to me your relationship with the refugees in your area?

MA: In terms of where I live it's taken as neighbours as the way we take other neighbours but nothing extra, because I don't really know their story.

NN: Was there a time you felt scared or unsafe because of refugees living in your area or being around you?

MA: No, I just it was different growing up in South Africa and being born in Apartheid.

NN: Last we had xenophobia attacks and its mushrooming again, what do you think about black on black violence?

MA: Um we've always had black on black violence in this country and its historical, endemic and part of our history. Um is part of some of us in the broader Diaspora and of Africans to relook and a way to deal with it because it's Africa against African.

NN: Do you think refugees come to South Africa to take the Jobs of South Africans?

MA: I think at the moment anyone Coming into South Africa has no space that is put aside for refugees, they are forced to integrate into the Community slave for themselves because we are not a social wealthy State. We barely able to deal with the social needs that our own nationality so South Africans feel antagonistic in terms of refugees the Jobs but I think as for me the qualified person should getthe job.

NN: Would you say refugees contribute to the economy of South Africa?

MA: Yes they do, many of them bring vital skills in terms of Africans refugees many of them are skilled labourers with good professions and to use the term "black Africans" many of do not have the skills and that were the strife Starts.

NN: Why do you think there is such a great influx of refugees to South Africa?

MA: South Africa is seen a major economy in Africa, the biggest economy in Africa we seen as I would say as the "USA" of Africa and people come here looking for a dream. They are looking to get rieh, looking for a better place, they see a better Integration of the world that very first world, and very third world at the same time. And in many ways we have a very developed infrastructure. So they come here looking for their economic dream. Obviously many of them come from countries that are not so developed politically, socially they have broken.

NN: Are the borders adequately controlled for the influx of refugees?

MA: At this moment in time there is many in terms of border control and I don't think it does matter what various methods you put in place or what different ways are out there, there will always be challenges. We have in Africa and that is war, famine, I am talking about political strives, dictatorships, unless problems are solved we will always this problems of influx of refugees.

NN: Do you think there is sufficient education around refugees Coming to South Africa?

MA: Um they are entitled to all the rights the same as South Africans too. The Constitution works better for me and for the refugees, so they are entitled to the education that South Africans are entitled to.

NN: What do you think need to happen for us all to live peacefully?

MA: The AU needs to become more relevant to Africa, we need to have different (pause) perhaps Thabo Mbeki dream of a reigning South Africa needs to be a reality, unless we have his dream we won't have a lot of problems. I do give a lot of credit to Nelson Mandela in terms of heritage but Thabo brought a vision that takes Africa to a different part of the world that is equally breathing and that is the vision we need to have.

NN: Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me. I'm this Information you shared with me will be beneficial for the award.

MA: The other thing I just wanted to bring about you didn't focus on is that we had a long history of migrant workers in South Africa and so refugees are part of history. So we've have mines that are developed not by South Africans but by migrant workers of other countries. If we look at a country like Zimbabwe, before the Mugabe era, Rhodesia was seen as a province of South Africa and they played a part of a white era. They have always seen a fifth province along with east Africa. So many Zimbabweans refugees have been Coming here for decades working in mines and going back home. Now that this have gone bad because of political issues that have brought about economic problems in Zimbabwe they feel that and during apartheid we seek refuge and they feel it's an extension that we owe them that is why it so difficult for the South African government solve the problem because of the history.

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NN: Thank you Ms.

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MA: You are welcome.

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Nyasha Nhoru - **Interviewer** - **NN**
Thembile Chimatira - **Interviewee** - **TC**

NN: In which country were you born?

TC: I was born in Zimbabwe.

NN: Describe to me how the country looks?

TC: The country Zimbabwe looks good because I was born in Zimbabwe, I can't say my country doesn't look good. It is good for me because I was born there.

NN: Describe to what it was like growing up in Zimbabwe?

TC: Growing up in Zimbabwe was good during my childhood; it only changed when I was a grown woman. We five in my family, I didn't know what was wrong and what is good we just felt comfortable in our country. Because my family is all there, my father and mother are all there.

NN: What did you take with when you left your country?

TC: I only take few of my clothes with.

NN: Describe to me how you felt when you left your country?

TC: You feel discouraged, you like you are leaving your family for good and you are not going to see them forever.

NN: Did you come with your kids the first time you came to South Africa.

TC: I first alone and then I had to find ways to get my children.

NN: When you left Zimbabwe did you know to which country you were going to?

TC: I was going to South Africa because that is my neighbouring country I just have to cross the border and I know I am in South Africa.

NN: Have you ever been to any country before you arrived in South Africa?

TC: No!

NN: Do you have any family members still living in Zimbabwe?

TC: Yes most of my family members are still in Zimbabwe.

NN: Have you ever tried to access the things that you have left behind?

TC: Of course I tried a lot of times

NN: What was your expectation before you came to South Africa?

TC: I thought if I come to South Africa things would be much better for me and my children will have better education.

NN: Was it easy for you to fit in with the Citizens of South Africa when you first arrived here?

TC: It was a little bit difficult because I couldn't speak their language and they expect you to speak their language because you look alike but after they understand it will be alright.

NN: What was the attitude of South Africans towards you as a foreigner?

TC: Their attitude all of the m are different; some of them are good to foreigners and some of them are not because they feel like um you are Coming here to take their Jobs what they think belongs to them but most of them are good people.

NN: Was it easy for your paperwork processed through the Home Affairs in South Africa?

TC: It was easy for us.

NN: There are again talks of xenophobia attacks what do you think South Africa can do to avoid these —xenophobia attacks?

TC: I think South Africa should be harsh with the people who are doing this by arresting them so that won't do this again.

NN: Do you feel safe in South Africa?

TC: I feel safe, yes.

NN: So you miss your country?

TC: I do miss my country a lot.

NN: If you had the opportunity would you go back to your country?

TC: I would definitely go back to my country.

NN: Is there anything that I did not ask you - think is important for me to know for this award?

TC: Yes maybe you should have ask me about the difficulties I go and renew my papers because everytime I have to wait long lines and it' very difficult. The other thing I just want to say, is to put foward is about the children that we send to school; we won't have maybe money to send them to university when their finish with matric and it is difficult because they want all the money from foreigners. They can't without paying cash which we can't afford because we are refugees, we don't have good Jobs we can't afford to send them to the university and they need somebody with a proper job for loans or bursaries, so we can't get access and want to ask if they could do something for foreigners who study here because those children would like to work in South Africa because they studied in South Africa. There is no other ways they could go back home to Zimbabwe because their education is from South Africa; if they could also give access to foreigners so that could also study and then work for the of the bursaries for some years for them to have to good education . By not studying at home we chose to bring the children over to South Africa so that they can have good education which maybe won't work again after sometime

NN: Thank you.

Nyasha Nhoru - Interviewer - NN
Mr Chimatira - Interviewee - MC

NN: Could you just State a brief history of Zimbabwe before its Independence.

MC: You mean before it Zimbabwe, was ruled by the blacks.

NN: Yes.

MC: Well it was then called Rhodesia; before 1970 - 1980 and it was okay, but not that good because er some advantages some disadvantages as Citizens of Rhodesia; in my part I grew up in Harare, Mbare during those days I was a big boy that was 1974-1980 and we were not allowed to walk in the streets, but in the pavement sothat we won't be knocked by a car because we weren't regarded as anybody, its was like Blacks were seen as third class, White were are first class then second were Indians and Coloureds and Blacks were the third class. They were the right people for the land, anywhere that was that in that time. I fmished my grade 7, and there were no high schools and girls were extremely few because they couldn't go further but boys had access up to secondary school or up to A level, of course things were still okay you could be able to put bread on the table and everything but we were earning a little bit of money. I started working in 1976, in a factory and was being paid about 1 Idollars per week which is about 45dollars per month. It was okay but it could not sufficient to buy something tangible like a house or a car. It was different for white people could earn a lot because they were he first class and we (blacks) were last, that was something I was bitter about. I even worked in the prisons then it was 1979 until I retired, even there they also shows the difference between a white man and a black man, the beds were in good condition and were given trousers but blacks were give shorts throughout the year with no jersey, no nothing even in winter. And then Muzoriwa came and then with Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo and then it was the Independence, Muzoriwa just ruled for six months only and then came Mugabe as president on the 18 of April 1980 the day of Independence. Well, things were still all okay because it was just after the white rule to black empowerment. All of a sudden things started to change because of some sanctions and I as still working

for the government, then it started to change, the money was er less value and just couldn't get anything from the shops no food, and a lot of went to South Africa; some teachers fled, and other employees they also run away to South Africa or Zambia for better pastures. But there they were not recognised as er as people with their certificate or with their degrees and they were lower paid again and regarded as foreigners. Everywhere that is the thing because it was better during the white regime and now things are tough and if they get better I would like to go back to Zimbabwe because its my country and I like it better and we also want it to change.

NN: To ask another question what was the relationship between Rhodesia and other African countries?

TC: It was good because Rhodesia was governed by British, it well developed and I would say the best in Southern Africa. Even the money had the same value, the pounds which was used then and the rands were all the same. I even got the chance to use the Zim pound. The Zambia and South Africa along with Zimbabwe were all called the Rhodes State.

NN: Another thing I want to ask is did Zimbabweans used to come during that time?

TC: Yes they used to come in 1976 or 77, I remember they used to work in mines, in building the roads and get paid and come home because they used the same money and they were all called Southern Rhodesia from Zambia to South Africa, it was like a cake, they just shared like to cut the cake.

NN: Thank you so much Fm sure this would be beneficial in achieving this award.

Nyasha Nhoru - NN- Interviewer
Sibongile Mtini - SM - Interviewee

NN: My name is Nyasha Pm a grade 11 at Cedar high and Pm participating in the Albert Luthuli Young Historian award. The topic I choose is the flight of the refugees to South Africa, their journey and their stay in South Africa. For the recording purpose would State your full name please?

SM: My name is Sibongile Mtini.

NN: Sibongile, how do feel about refugees Coming to South Africa?

SM: I don't have any problem with them Coming to South Africa, they hungry like us, so they are looking for the Jobs. But the people are spreading rumors about them Coming to take our Jobs and I don't think it's true cause there are South Africans undermining the money, so they are there willing to take the job even if they money they do accept the Job; but us we are undermining the money; we want a lot of money which er the white don't have, or maybe they not able to pay us that kind of money.

NN: Do you think there is enough space for everybody in South Africa?

SM: I think we do have enough space for everybody but what there do are unnecessary things like the cricket field, it's huge.

NN: Do have any refugees staying in your area?

SM: Yes I do have and some are my friends.

NN: Describe to me your relationship with the refugees in your area?

SM: Um, I have a friend who has a tuck shop Container, they are very nice even if the one has a saloon ya and able to speak Xhosa, and Fm very impressed about that, and she almost 3 years in Cape Town but she can speak Xhosa very well. Us we don't want to speak their language that is why they know our languages.

NN: Do you have any personal relationship with the refugees in your area like friends?

SM: Yes I do have a friend at my salon Hazel but I don't know her surname.

NN: Was there a time you felt scared or unsafe because of refugees staying in your area?

SM: I think 2 years back or 3 years back there were xenophobia attacks I was here at work but my friends they called me and told me that at my township they are beating the foreigners but I don't what was the cause but they say they are taking our Jobs and they must close their shops. But what I like about them is at home I am around 7 o'clock and their shops are still open until 9 o'clock in the evening; when I want bread for my lunch and airtime I do get easily where else our shops would be closed.

NN: Last year we had the Xenophobia attacks and now it's mushrooming again what did you think of the black to black violence?

SM: I think who are causing the fight is the shop owners -because they believe that their price are cheaper than theirs. So they have jealousy because they- we can afford their prices and if your money is 50 cents short they do give what you want to buy where else our people they don't give. I would say there is jealous between black shop owners and black refugees, yes.

NN: Do you think refugees come to South Africa to take the Jobs of South Africans?

NS: As I said they come here looking for the Jobs, their hungry like us.

NN: So does that mean they are taking Jobs away from you?

SM: I don't think so it depends to the qualification that you have, (referring to a foreigner) a higher qualification than me; then you must get that post

NN: Even if we have the same qualification

SM: And when we do have the same qualification then I will demand, they must take me first. And I have a lower qualification than you have then you should get the job

NN: What do you think there is such a great influx of refugees to South Africa?

SM: I won't blame the refugees but there are people coming without their papers like crossing the border with passport but I believe it's the South Africans who are in charge on the borders; why do they allow them to come without their passports

NN: Do you think there is sufficient education around refugees coming to South Africa?

SM: Maybe, because here at U.C.T there are a lot of refugees as you can see there are more foreigners to come here.

Follow up questions

NN: When you see a foreigner, what do you admire about them?

SM: They are very creative, I must tell you because they are making dollies they are making mud animals which we don't have those skills but we do have jealousy about them

NN: Thank you very much for taking your time of your busy schedule to meet with me. I'm sure the information you shared with me will be beneficial for the award.

UNRECORDED CONVERSATION WITH IREEN DZURUME

Nyasha Nhoru NN- Interviewer

Ireen Dzurume ID - Interviewee

NN: When did the Zimbabweans started to come to South Africa?

ID: During the 1970s there were a lot of black Zimbabweans who were not employed; these people were sent to work in South Africa by the white government for a number of years. They were allowed to migrate here; work in the mines and roads or digging tunnels. People called it "Wenera" because it was one route in which a man could decide to take, get rich by living his family behind for number of years. I do recall that I started to know my mom's eider brother at the age of 6. When he came back, he was married; and had two children. All we used to know is that he went to "Wenera". S o refugee migration did not statt now; but long ago.

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Process

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My oral history training started last year in the fourth term when the Centre for Popular Memory ran a project at our school called Digital Divide. In the second term of this year they came back to our school and we were introduced to Albert Luthuli Young Historians award. At first I was hesitant, but then I was up for the challenge.

Step 1

We were given an overview of what is required for the award and the various time frames

Step 2

We were told to choose a topic in each participant is supposed to select one. I decided that I was going to research Refugees in South Africa. I chose my topic and Mrs Allie spoke to me about the different ways in which I could approach the topic and which people I could possibly interview

Step 3

I went to the library and researched refugees in South Africa. Fortunately the library had a book and I read the book "we came for Mandela". I also got some information from family members regarding the treatment of people during the xenophobia attacks.

Step 4

I formulated my interview questions ensuring that I had a mixture of open and closed questions on refugees and locals who I thought they had more experience regarding the topic.

Step 5

I set up my interviews with couple of people whom I knew they would help me.

Step 6

Transcribing

Step 7

I compiled my portfolio and worked on my presentation

Self Reflection

- The oral history training provided me with time management skills - managing my time with school work, interviews and home cores.
- The interviews gave me an insight into what South Africans say and think of refugees
- The xenophobia attacks gave me both sides of the story so to , speak
- I developed confidence in interviewing and being able to ask questions from my own understanding.
- It helped in having a quick memory and being able to think quickly within limited time.
- I was able to select facts from personal opinions
- It also helped in being able to express myself through public speaking and presentation.