



Growing up in a time of AIDS: Abaqophi basOkhayeni Abaqinile Children's Radio project

Kungcono ehlathini / It's better in the forest **Mthokozisi, 14 years old, 2007**

SFX: Umsindo wezimpangele - *Guinea fowls calling*

Mthoko: Seniyahamba ngiphethe ibhakede. Eysh! kumakhaza, yo! Lapha ngiphethe intambo nenduku ngiyobopha inkomo. Igama lenkomo uMakoti. Umbala wenkomo ibomvu. Izinkomo ezikamkhulu.

I am walking and I am carrying a bucket. Shew, it is so cold! Here I have a rope and a stick to tie up the cow. The cow's name is Makoti [bride]. The cow is red in colour. The cattle belong to Grandfather.

SFX: Umsindo wekhwela - *whistling*

Mthoko: Igama lami nginguMthokozisi isibongo ngingowakaGumede ngihlala eMaranatha ngineminyaka ewu-14 ngiwuhlanganise ngoMarch. Ekhaya ngihlala no-anti, nogogo nomkhulu, nabafowethu nabodadewethu, nabobhuti bami naboskwiza

My name is Mthokozisi Gumede. I live in Maranatha. I am 14 years old, I turned 14 in March. At home I live with my aunt, Grandmother and Grandfather and my brothers and sisters, and my sisters- in-law.

Mthoko: Abazali bami sebashona bonke. Ukushona kwaqala ubaba. Ubaba yena ngambona-ke bamngcwabela ekhaya, kodwa umama ngezwa kuthiwa ushone nga eStanger ngangaya kodwa khona. Nokhuthi ithuna lakhe likuphi angikwazi, kodwa lapho ayehlala khona ngiyakwazi nasekhaya kubo ngiyakwazi.

Both my parents have died. My father died first. I was at my father's funeral, they buried him at home. I heard about my mother's death in Stanger but I didn't go to her funeral. I don't know where her grave is, but I know where she lived and I also know where her home is.

Mthoko: Engimthandayo ekhaya umkhulu ngoba uyanginakekela uma ngifuna izinto ngicela kuye bese uyangipha uyanginika. Mthoko: Njengokuthi nje uma ngingenalalo ipeni ngiyalicela ngithi 'mkhulu ngicela ungiphe ipeni'. Njengokuthi nje uma mhlampe ipeni lami njalo uma lino-ink omncane ngiya kumkhulu ngithi kuye'mkhulu ngicela ipeni' kodwa uma ngiqala nqa ngiqale ngimenzele izinto. Emotweni ngishanela imoto phakathi, ngiyithele amanzi bese naye uyahamba-ke ngayo. Ngiyazi lapho ngeke ahlale naye anganginiki.

The person I love at home is my grandfather because he cares for me and when I want something, I ask him and then he gives it to me. Like if I don't have a pen I ask him, I say "Grandpa, may I please have a pen?" Or if my pen has little ink, I say to him "Grandfather, can I have a pen", but first I do something to help him: I sweep the car inside and then I wash it, and then he drives the car. After that I know that he will definitely give me what I have asked for!

SFX: Umsindo wobisi lungena ebhakedeni kuyasengwa – *sounds of cow being milked*

Mthoko: Isimo sezulu, eysh, kumakhaza! Ezandleni nje, eysh, ngiyagodola. Ngiyagodola ngoba ngisho umbele angisawubambi ngisho nakahle la ngathi sekubuhlunu iminwe. Owangifundisa ukusenga umkhulu ngangineminyaka ewu-9 kukhona inkomo eseyafayo engangifundela kuyo.

The weather, shew, it is cold! My hands are freezing! I am so cold I can't even grab the udder properly, my fingers hurt. My grandfather taught me to milk when I was 9 years old. The cow that he used to teach me has died now.

Uma sengiqedile bese ngiyahamba ngihambise izinkomo le ezansi phesheya komgwaqo ngifike ngizifake ensimini bese ngiyazivalela. Bese ngiyabuya ngiya ekhaya ngiyageza ngiya esikoleni. Uma sengibuya esikoleni angiyi ekhaya ngiqale ngizilande ensimini. bese ngiyamuka. Kuthi ntambama bese ngiyazibheka uma sengizitholile bese, uma sebadlule engizitholile ngizibeka ngapha eceleni kwegrawundi, bese ngidlala ibhola.

When I am finished I drive the cattle down there across the road and I leave them in the field and close them in. Then I return home to wash and get ready for school. On my way back from school I don't go home: First I go and fetch the cattle from the field and then I go home. In the afternoon I look for them again and when I find them I leave them next to the soccer ground and I play soccer.

Ngihluke ngokuthi mina ngiyahamba, mhlampe ngibone izinyosi ngizikhokhe zizodwa kodwa abanye abazikhokhi zizodwa, kodwa abanye sebatathe bayazama, bayazama ziyabaluma abakwazi ukuzikhokha zizodwa. Okunye akekho umuntu ofana nami njengokuhamba mhlampe ngihambe ngabo-08h00 ngize ngiyobuya ngabo 13h00, akekho omunye umuntu ongakhona ukuhamba njengami.

What makes me different [to other children] is that I go – sometimes I go all by myself [to the forest] and find beehives and get the honey out. Others can't do this easily on their own: some try but they get stung and they don't manage to do it on their own. No one else goes out [wandering in the bush] for so long: I can leave home at 08h00 and come back around 13h00. I don't know anyone else who can go for such long walks as I do.

Ngiye ngithande ukuthi ngingene ehlathini kakhulu mhlawumbe uma ngiphethe izihlilingi ngijabuliswe izinyoni, nokunye nje ukudla kwehlathi. Ukuya ehlathini ngafundiswa ubaba. Ukuya ehlathini ngafundiswa ubaba. Ubaba wayengibiza ngisemncane engibiza ukuthi ahambe nami mhlampe uyogawula izingodo naye apha the isihlilingi eside-ke yena. Manje isihlilingi sakhe lesi sasinghlula, sasinghlula ukusinweba ethi uzongiboleka, uzongiboleka, uzongiboleka. Ngithi mina kungcono angisikele engenzele imithiyi ngidubule ngakho. Kusho u ngithi mina baba sengiyamuka sengilambile. Ngithi kanti kukuphi ekhaya ubaba angikhombise imizi yabantu athi nakhu ekhaya sekuseduze sesiyamuka sesiyamuka, kanti ubaba udlala ngami akafuni kumukwe kukhona lapho ayecuphe khona angazi kwakukuphi sengikhohliwe igama lakhona. Wayecupha izinyamazane, namavondwe, zonke nje izinyamazane. Kwakugcwele-ke le ehlathini. Ngithi mina sengiyamuka athi ubaba, 'Nakuya ekhaya', ngithule kanti kusekude ekhaya. Ngisuke mina ngikhale, ngikhale, ngikhale. Ethu ubaba angingakhali nakhu-ke

ekhaya, singene khona kanti ubaba uyangikhohlisa. Akusikhona ekhaya udlula ucela amanzi. Kusho ukuthi edlula ecela amanzi ngathula-ke mina, wathi ubaba angithule nakhu-ke ekhaya sesiyangena. Ngathi mina akusikhona ekhaya la. Wathi ubaba phela indlu bayayipenda ngomunye upende. Ngathi mina, 'oh'. Ngasuke ngamlandela ngagcina lapho-ke ukukhala uma ngihamba ehlathini. Yikho nami ngize ngifunde amahlathi.

I like to go to the forest especially when I have my sling. I love hunting birds, and eating other food that is found in the forest. Father taught me about the forest. He would call me when I was young and we would go together to get wood and he would also bring his sling - which was big. I couldn't use his sling, I couldn't get it to work when he lent it to me. I said that he should make me one, so I could shoot too. Then I would say to him, "I am hungry I want to go home!", I would ask him where home is and my father would point out other people's houses and he would say "There is home, we're nearly there". We would walk and walk and it would turn out that my father had been tricking me: he had not wanted us to leave the place where he had set a trap - I forget the name of the place where he would trap antelope; the forest was full of different types of antelope. Then I would tell my father again that I was going home, and he would say to me "There's home!" just to get me to keep quiet, but after a while I would start to cry and cry and cry, and again my father would say I should stop crying, and he would point out another home and say "Here it is!" and we would go in, but again my father was lying to me. We would ask for water, when he asked for water I would be quiet, my father would say "Be quiet because we are home", and I would say "This is not home!" and my father would say they have painted the house a different colour, and I would say "oh!" [and believe him]. So that's the story of how I started going with him into the forest, that's how I learned about the forest.

Mthoko:

Ukuvalelisa indaba yami ngothanda ukuthi mina ngiyathanda ukuhlala nabazali, khona kumnandi ukuhlala nabazali ngoba uma besekhona bonke ngoba wenza noma yini oyithandayo ekhaya kini. Manje ekhaya ngibuye ngikhumbule, ngifikelwe usizi, luvele lufike kakhulu-ke, yikho lokho bese ngivele ngiphuma ngingazi ukuthi ngiya kuphi kanti kungcono ehlathini ngithi ngishaya izinyoni ngibe ngibona nokunye nokunye okudliwayo ngikukhe ngikudle.

To end my story I would like to say that I would love to live with my parents: it's nice to live with your parents while they are still both alive because you can do anything that you want to do at home. Now at home I miss [them] and then I feel sad, and then the sadness overwhelms me – that is why I leave [the house] without knowing where I am going... Its better in the forest where I hunt birds and find things to eat, and I pick them and eat.



**Zisize
Educational Trust**
Working Towards a
Brighter Future in South Africa



For further information contact:

Helen Meintjes
HIV/AIDS Programme, Children's Institute
helen.meintjes@uct.ac.za
+27 21 689 5404

Bridget Walters
Zisize Educational Trust
bridgetw@iafrica.com
+27 35 572 5500

Web: www.ci.org.za/depts/ci/prg/radio_project/index.htm