

IMBEWU (SEED) South Africa

We had the pleasure to meet Lungile Nkosi-Hill when she attended the Intensive, 'World in Relationships'. Lungile talked to the group about her experiences growing up under the Apartheid Regime in South Africa.

The Intensive course was about facilitating in relationship. And it was about how our history structures our relationships, and how facilitating our interactions can in that sense change history. When there was an opportunity, Lungile asked a fellow South African woman if she would be willing to have a facilitated conversation with her in front of the group, to explore their relationship, as White and Black South African women.

In our work, we sometimes see individuals who have come through a profoundly painful history, able to bring eldership and the attitude needed to facilitate very challenging situations, to focus on the long haul. When we pointed out this quality of eldership in Lungile, she referred to Steve Biko and others who gave their lives to make it possible for her and her South African colleague to be able to sit down to this conversation.

Some months later, Lungile attended another training on 'Dreams' with Jean-Claude. One evening when all the participants were gathered at the pub, she told me (Arlene) about her dream to bring this work to South Africa, to support communities to find their voices, grapple with internalized oppression, and find pathways to build their communities.

So, the Project 'Imbewu' began, as part of our 'Seeds' Programme.

Lungile Hazel Nkosi-Hill

"I remember very well it was on a Tuesday February 11, 2014. Arlene's words were "Do it". That was after she had spent an hour listening to my dream. My name is Lungile Hazel Nkosi-Hill. I am a black South African woman. I was born during the Apartheid Regime. I grew up under this brutal, racist, sexist, violent and inhuman regime. I grew up experiencing violence around me in this system, culture, home and society.

It's not surprising that I too was a victim of this violent system. This Apartheid System was not only violent and inhuman, it was introduced in order to make sure that the majority of African people were not educated, lived in sub-standard housing, received sub-standard health facilities, and aspire to work as garden boys and housemaids or labourers.

Those who spoke against the System were imprisoned or hanged by the courts. This resulted with the majority of oppressed people not talking about the injustice and oppression. Everyone around me did not talk. As a child growing under this System I experienced fear, low self-esteem, doubt, violence, injustice, inequality, poverty, alcoholism, domestic violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, self-hatred, pain, suffering, hopelessness,

unemployment, and the pre-mature death of loved ones.

Given all the pain and suffering, I now know why I never enjoyed my great-grandparents, grandparents, uncles and aunts because they all died prematurely. My own father died at the age of fifty. He never lived to enjoy his own grandchildren.

It is my experience under the Apartheid System and the experience of millions of African people in South Africa that makes me dedicated and passionate about giving back to my country.

I have gained a lot of privileges in Europe. I have travelled extensively around Europe, studied and gained higher education and lived in a free and equal society. I know that my freedom and rights as an individual are protected by the legislation in the UK where I live currently.

It was during my participation in an Intensive course on 'Dreams' that this project was born. Previously, I had attended the Intensive 'The World in relationship' and I'd been able to look back and revisit my experience growing up under the Apartheid Regime. It was a privilege to share my painful past experience, (being in the middle with a fellow South African woman), and to feel the support of facilitators and the group to talk about the reality of Apartheid, its legacy, and to gain invaluable awareness about other people's stories.

It was in this supported environment that I realized the importance my voice, of telling one's story, and it being heard. My voice - my story – our collective story. It is this that I feel passionate about and want to pass on.”

It is my personal responsibility and my passion to go back to the Republic of South Africa, and to support communities, by creating a forum for individuals to find their voices, and support their communities.

The project is called 'Imbewu' (Seeds). We will hold a series of live forums of facilitated dialogue, training awareness and advocacy, and working in partnership with organisations involved with education, health, housing, social services, police and other community matters.