

Life Story of Itumeleng Ramoseli

My name is Itumeleng Ramoseli.

I live with my family in the township 'Namibia Square', Phahameng Location in Bloemfontein, Free State Province, South Africa.

I am 30 years old and unemployed, but I'm an active community member. I'm the co-founder of 'NABS Unite Community Social Group' for which we meet once a week to discuss the challenges that we are facing on a daily basis.

I was born in March 23 1983 in Bloemfontein.

I am the second child of four: I have two brothers and one sister.

I grew up in Botshabelo in the outskirts of Bloemfontein, about 50km away. I went to school in Botshabelo at Mmulakgoro Primary School till grade 7.

Even though I was a good student I left school, because I didn't get support. My father wasn't willing to pay my school fees nor for my school uniform or for the books I needed.

He just didn't give any support.

In contrary my father was abusive towards me. He was changing women each and every year since my mother left our family in 1989. They were all abusive towards me to get his attention. They discredited me and so I was beaten all the time. I didn't get all the basic necessary things I would have needed for my education. He never got anything for me.

So 1996 I escaped to the family of my cousin, daughter of a sister of my mother, where I stayed and worked for two years before I eventually went to my mother. She was very happy to welcome me, but I couldn't go to school because she already had children from another partner. They also needed to go to school. I knew that she loved me so much that she would have sent me to school instead of her children, which I couldn't accept as a sacrifice. So I went and sold newspapers for four or five years. When I turned 18 years I went to Nonqubela Adult Center (adult education), where I did abet level 3 and 4.

Unfortunately my mother got injured, not during her work, but she had a job then. She had to leave her job. I also had to leave school and earn money, so that we could survive.

Again I went to sell newspapers. Later I worked for my father, but when I realised that he still didn't respect me and continued to discredit me, I left that job and I worked about five year for an Asian shop.

2010 I started working for the 'SA Fence and Gate' company in the 'New Multi Pipeline Project' for about 10 months and after that I left that job, since they treated us workers in a very demeaning way. I went to work for a job agency called 'Capital', who made me work in many different jobs for many different companies. I was specializing in merchandising, stock counting and rotation until June 2012. Their monthly payments weren't reliable and so I left the job.

That's when I started with 'NABS Unite Community Social Group'.

Now I work in partnership with the University of the Free State in the 'Trauma, Forgiveness & Conciliation Unit' and we are doing a project about the changes in society 'Post Democracy of 1994'.

Another project for 2014 is in the pipeline: 'Picture Voice'

My vision is to get a qualified education as social worker so I can help young people to stay away from drugs, help people who have been abused and more than anything to help the poor to

overcome poverty by providing educational support for a better life.

My dream is to find a place where I can set up a business where I can offer the healing skills I acquired in the 'Skills Training Workshops' at Platfontein October 2013 (facilitated by the Lyndi Fourie Foundation).

As soon as I am done with my education, I would like to start a youth club for the young ones in my area which provides life skills and offers arts, sports and culture programmes. Hopefully I can find funding for a community centre and a soccer field for that vision.

I am now taking in making sure that I secure a better future for my community, myself, the young ones and the general public.

I would like to be able to support the children of my family to go to school and get a good education. My long-term dream is to build a house for my extended family, since we are overcrowded and there is not enough space for everyone to live.