

**Melodious Gumede (née Blose).**  
**Inanda student, 1944-1946.**  
**Dorcas Sibusisiwe Meyiwa (née Gumbi).**  
**Inanda student, 1944-1948.**  
**Nomangcobo Sibusisiwe Zamakhosi Bhengu.**  
**Inanda student, 1949-1951.**  
**Interviewed together in Inanda, 20 January 2009.**

*Let's begin with some background information on all of you. I'll begin with Mrs. Gumede—your maiden name was Blose, correct?*

Melodious Gumede (MG): Pronounced Blos-ey.

*And when and where were you born?*

MG: I was born at Umlazi Mission... In February 1928.

*[To Bhengu] What was your maiden name? Can you please spell your name?*

Nomangcobo Bhengu (NB): My maiden name is Ngcobo. See my name here, Nomangcobo Sibusisiwe Zamakhosi Bhengu. Married to Bhengu. Otherwise my maiden name is Ngcobo.

*When and where were you born?*

NB: I was born at Umzinyathi Mission.

*Where is that?*

NB: Under Ndwedwe magisterial district.

*And was that an American Board mission station?*

NB: Yes, yes. I was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1935.

MG interjects: I never knew you were such a baby!

*[To Meyiwa] And what was your maiden name and when and where were you born?*

Dorcas Meyiwa (DM): My maiden name is Gumbi. My name now is Dorcas Meyiwa.

NB: And her second name is the same as mine, Sibusisiwe.

MG: I didn't know that!

*And when and where were you born?*

DM: I was born in September, 19 September, 1929. I am eighty, too, this year.

MG: You are turning eighty, too?

NB: Join the club! [All laugh.]

DM: I don't have money to celebrate.

NB: I am only in my seventies, but I am already in the club because we are all enjoying the bonus.

DM: Bonus years.

*I made up a list of questions for Mrs. Gumede, but I'll just apply them to all of you. First, I want to know a bit about your families and your early childhoods. Actually, before we go on, Mrs. Meyiwa, you were born on a mission station as well?*

DM: Amahlongwa station, an American Board station.

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*OK. So for all of you, I would just like to know your family background, where they came from originally, what was your parents' background, what were their professions?*

MG: You want to know about my family? My family now or where I was born?

*Your family, where you were born.*

MG: I was born at Umlazi Mission Station, at an Anglican mission. My father was a laborer, he was working in Durban. My mother was just a housewife. And I had five sisters and two brothers. At the time of writing this all my sisters are alive; my eldest sister is eighty-eight, the second one is eighty-six, then there were two deaths before I was born, the other sisters are still alive. Only my brothers are dead.

*Your family was Anglican?*

MG: Yes.

*Did your sisters attend Inanda as well?*

MG: The one I come after was at Inanda Seminary.

*And when was that?*

MG: Must have been in the late 1930s. And she is eighty-six now.

*And Mrs. Bhengu, if you could tell me a little bit about your family background?*

NB: My mother also was educated at Inanda Seminary, so that's why I think she was interested in sending me there. In my family there are fifteen of us. I am the eldest girl. I was born and bred at Umzinyathi [Mission Station]. And I belong to the Qadi royal family. My great-grandfather who was inkosi of this Qadi tribe was the first to allow Christianity in the area.

*That was Mqhawe, your great-grandfather?*

NB: Yeah, Mqhawe. And also he allowed the missionaries to occupy some land in the area. And so education also came in with the missionaries.

*So you're descended from Mqhawe on your mother's line, is that right?*

NB: On my father's line, Ngcobo.

*What was your mother's maiden name, where did she come from?*

NB: My mother's maiden name was Msomi. Her first name is Nazareth.

*And so she attended Inanda in the 1910s, 1920s?*

NB: I wouldn't say. But at Inanda there was a teacher, Sibusisiwe Makhanya, who taught my mother. And so I think my mother liked that teacher because she named me Sibusisiwe therefore when I was born. I should think, yes, she had an influence on my mother.

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DM: I am Sibusisiwe too. Because my grandmother taught at Inanda Seminary. She could have taken the name from Sibusisiwe Makhanya.

NB: Oh yes! Oh yes! Really! Because her teacher was, she used to tell me, her teacher was Sibusisiwe Makhanya at Inanda Seminary, so she named me Sibusisiwe.

*I've done a lot of research on Sibusisiwe Makhanya, so that's pretty exciting.*

NB: Oh yes! Have you been to the school at Umbumbulu?

*No, I haven't, but I really want to go down there, she was a really fascinating woman.*

NB: That is not far, Umbumbulu.

*Well, that's a really interesting background story.*

NB: So, that Christianity was active as from his time until the time I was at Inanda Seminary. Because we used to have Sunday School at Inanda Seminary. And we were also Sunday School teachers. So we used to go to the nearest mission stations and do some Sunday School under the leadership of Miss Wood, Miss Carter, when Dr. Lavinia Scott was principal. Because she was our principal.

DM: And we used to go far out.

*So, Mrs. Meyiwa, what was your family background?*

DM: My background? Eh... My grandmother was at Inanda Seminary, maternal side, and my grandfather too, maternal side, they both taught at Inanda Seminary.

*And that grandmother taught with Sibusisiwe Makhanya, is that what you said?*

DM: No, she taught Sibusisiwe Makhanya.

*What were their last names?*

DM: Ngcobo. So, we're [she and Bhengu] related.

NB: Yes, there's a connection between us, because later on we taught together.

DM: My mother never taught. She was a teacher but never taught.

*My next question is, where did you attend primary school, and how did you decide from there to attend Inanda Seminary? Why did your families send you there?*

MG: Umlazi.

*And why did you decide to attend Inanda Seminary?*

MG: Just because me sister was there, she attended there and was quite happy... I wanted to go there too. Because in those days there were not many black boarding schools, good boarding schools, especially girls' schools. Inanda Seminary and Saint Hilda's. Yeah, mother wanted that we

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did not have temptation. St. Hilda's was the Anglican mission. My younger sister went there. But the two of us went to Inanda Seminary.

*And you, Mrs. Bhengu, went there because your mother had gone there?*

NB: Yes, I had my lower primary education at Amadigwe, and I then proceeded to Umzinyathi, which was then called Intermediate School, and from there, straight to Inanda Seminary, but I did my teachers' training at Adams College, because those were both American Board Mission schools.

*And you also had that family history at Inanda.*

DM: Yeah. I had my primary school education at Amahlongwa Primary School, and then my grandmother insisted that I go to Inanda Seminary. And for that matter, Inanda Seminary was really established for Zulu girls, for the girls around me. Although during our time, I think it was open even for Sotho girls, people from Botswana, people from the Transvaal, from Zimbabwe which was then called Rhodesia—

MG: From Kenya, one of the girls there was from Kenya. Girls from very far away. My aunt went to Inanda Seminary. And my grandfather on my mother's side said, 'Nkosazana yami...' [Difficult to hear. He did not agree.] So he went there to go and fetch my aunt, my aunt was the eldest one in my mother's family... I think my grandmother wanted her to go to Inanda Seminary. I don't think my grandfather knew about it because he got very angry, went to Inanda Seminary, and took his daughter back home to Ndwedwe.

NB: Yes, many families that wished their daughters went would take their daughters to Inanda Seminary, sometimes with or without permission, because they knew that they would be brought up in the right way... Most men at that time did not want to educate girls, because they felt that a woman's place was in the home, in the kitchen. You must learn household things, and get married.

*So during your time at Inanda you saw this, or was this more for your parents' generation?*

DM: Many parents would never let their children get educated.

*In what years exactly did each of you attend Inanda Seminary?*

DM: 1944.

MG: She was the same class as me.

NB: 1949, I was there in '49. And I went there til '51.

DM: I stayed on through '48.

MG: You did Matric, I didn't do Matric. Matric started while we were there.

DM: I was in the first Matric class, in '47.

MG: Then I went to King Edward Hospital.

*Were there many students who went to King Edward Hospital?*

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MG: Yes, there were. Though most of them used to go to McCord's Hospital, which was connected with Inanda Seminary.

*What was your curriculum like at Inanda? What sorts of classes did you take? What teachers do you remember?*

NB: One thing I know is, even if there were subjects like languages, biology, history, we had to take housecraft, and we had it as an examination topic. We also had to do Bible study, which was also an examination subject. So I think all Inanda Seminary girls had a sound foundation. In my case it [Bible study] was a school subject.

DM: Music, maths. Latin.

MG: Yes, we had Latin.

NB: Yes, but I can only remember one word, aqua.

DM: But it does have a lot of words in English, a lot of words stem from that.

NB: We did have Latin during our time, but then it was abolished. It wasn't very popular.

*What did you like the best?*

MG: I used to enjoy my English, and cooking.

NB: Housecraft, cooking.

DM: Housecraft, cooking, baking.

NB: All the girls had to go to domestic science building.

MG: I always think it's a pity that had to be closed.

NB: And sewing as well. Girls today cannot even sew their hems...

*Yeah, I can't sew anything.*

MG: I still like my crocheting. I used to love cooking.

DM: I cook sitting down.

MG: I cook a simple meal now. But I used to enjoy cooking from the book, testing everything. This amount, that amount, don't just pour.

NB: Inanda Seminary was one of those schools at that time that looked at a young woman as a whole and wanted to mould her in the right direction. Because they would care for you intellectually, physically, spiritually.

DM: We would do working on Sundays.

MG: Exercises before classes.

NB: Even spiritually we were cared for.

DM: A girl from that school was just a different girl in the community. Because you knew you had a role to play in your community. You had to be exemplary in all ways. In your speech, in your behavior.

MG: You had to shine where you are!

DM: We ought to sing for you our old songs. [All chuckle] I'll try to remember.

MG: I still have my hymnbook.

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*Do you remember any of your teachers? Can you tell me anything about the relationships that you had?*

DM: There were some lazy ones.

MG: Oh yes, no... Let's start with the good ones.

NB: Miss Sibisi, who later became Mrs. Yengwa... There was a teacher...

DM: That was a teacher.

MG: Miss Goba, who later became Mrs. Shabalala. Mama Nduna. Mama Nduna.

DM: Oh yes!

NB: All the advice that she gave us, all that, oh my, oh my...

MG: That one really made us ladies.

NB: Yes, and know who you are.

DM: With a smile.

NB: Each time you take a step, you must know who you are.

MG: She would say, 'Walk straight, my child. Walk straight.'

NB: Present yourself in such a manner...

MG: 'Don't bend when you walk. When you sit, you must sit straight.' And I still sit like that.

NB: The principal herself, Dr. Scott, used to carry herself in a dignified way, so you knew you had to be straight when you talked to her, when you got called into the office, when you had visitors and you had to go on the office veranda...

DM: Oh, Dr. Scott.

NB: And I understand Miss Scott is still alive?

*No, she passed away a decade or so ago.*

DM: She passed away some years ago.

MG: Oh, my... Miss Ngobozi. She taught us Zulu, I think.

NB: There was a lady I think who came from America, Miss Stavrolakis, who would sing beautifully! And Miss Munz, who taught me biology. And our matron.

MG: What was that one's name?

NB: Miss Cowey. From Australia.

DM: Used to walk in a special way, and would never allow a girl to walk slowly, to just relax when she walks, she would actually step on you, say you move! She was wonderful. When you clean the floors, they must be cleaned so much that the rags look white. We did all the work.

MG: Campus Care meant cleaning the whole school.

DM: And we used to work for Sunday offering.

MG: That's how the chapel was built.

*So you've mentioned Sunday School, Campus Care, what other kinds of activities did you do?*

NB: What we also enjoyed was when the school invited preachers and ministers from outside to come to address us. Some of them were Inkosi Albert Luthuli, who would come and give us a lecture. There was a lady, Miss Nyembezi, who had gone on mission in Mozambique, Inhambane, she would come to Inanda Seminary and tell us about her life there. And many American

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missionaries would come and visit the school. Even though it was a Christian school, we were lectured on politics of the time.

DM: There was also a good teacher, Miss Khumalo, who later became Mrs. Ntloko.

NB: A history teacher who would give us articles about what was going on in Parliament.

DM: She had a low voice, and if you were not listening to her you would not hear what she was saying. And she knew history from beginning to end. She would never open a book. What she would do, she would sit on the table and swing her legs, and oh! Listening to her, you knew everything that she had said. If you listen to her, you would never forget.

*What kind of history did she teach? Did she teach the history of South Africa?*

NB: European history, as well as the history of South Africa.

DM: Very little on South Africa.

NB: European mostly, mostly on Napoleon Bonaparte.

*So you didn't learn much of African history?*

DM: No.

*And American history, did they talk about that?*

DM: Yeah, they did.

*So what were some of the other political lectures about?*

NB: What they picked up from newspapers, what they thought was fitting for us to know, they would have us do.

DM: There were always newspapers in the library. It was during the war, so we had to know what was happening around us. And there was Miss Brenneman, the pianist...

*So how would you describe the other students at Inanda? You said that some of their families didn't wholly approve of them coming there. Were most of them from mission stations?*

MG: Some came from mission stations, some came from just townships, Johannesburg.

DM: And from townships around Durban, some of them came although their parents were poor. School fees were five pounds at that time.

NB: Twelve pounds a year.

*Was that relatively expensive?*

MG: It was expensive.

NB: If people came from needy families, they would go to the principal, and the school would help.

*How did all of you come to pursue the career paths that you did after leaving Inanda? What, if anything, in your high school educations informed what you decided to do?*

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MG: Well, I had a role model. In our mission station we had Mrs. Dlamini, who used to teach us as children. She used to teach our mothers how to look after their children, what to feed them, and so forth. Most of the mothers were just normal mothers and didn't know much about hygiene and so on. And as a result my mother was so strict with us. 'Never eat food that is left by somebody else.' She always talked about germs. 'You mustn't eat from the same bowl, drink from the same cup... Never wear a dress that is torn under the armpits. Never eat on public transport; you mustn't eat there, it is not good, not ladylike.

*[To Bhengu]: And what did you do after high school?*

NB: Well, as I said, there were many of us at home. My father fell ill when I was in Standard Seven. So after completing JC, I felt I had to apply to Adams College, where I did my teachers' training, and Inanda Seminary helped me find a bursary to go through. Unfortunately I only got a loan bursary, but it helped me a lot.

*So where did you teach, after your teacher training?*

[Ladies giggle.]

NB: I started teaching at a school just beyond Inanda here, Ngcukwini Primary School. From there, I went to Umzinyathi, my home school. Then I got married. And during our time, girls—or ladies—were not allowed to teach when they were married. I could only take temporary teaching jobs. So I went to Amatata, and from there to Inyoni, to cover when somebody was sick. Those are all primary schools. Then I went back to Umzinyathi, where, during that time, I was studying my matric privately. I passed my matric, especially arithmetic, and there was a need at Mqhawe High School for an arithmetic teacher, so I proceeded to Mqhawe High School. Named after my grandfather. From Mqhawe High School I went to Dabeka High School, where I was vice-principal—Dabeka was one of the inkosi of the Qadi. From there I proceeded to Kwabazothini High School, where I was principal for a few years, and then I went on pension.

DM: It was an early pension!

*[To Meyiwa] And what did you do after Inanda?*

DM: I wanted to be a nurse too, but Miss Scott refused: 'No, you are too small.'

*Too small! You can be tiny and be a nurse.*

MG: She was so tiny.

DM: I was tiny.

MG: *Hhayibo!*

DM: And Miss Scott said, you cannot do that, you must do the teacher's course and you can grow. You know what was good about Inanda Seminary, was that it directed the girls, they had to direct us, they knew what would be good for us. So Miss Scott said, 'You are too tiny.'

*Did you go to Adams College as well?*



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DM: Uh-uh, I studied at Mariannahill, but I finished at Adams. I did post-matric.

NB: Really!

*Then where did you teach, after that?*

DM: I was afraid to teach in high school, I didn't grow. I was still tiny.

NB: But when you do postmatric, you're supposed to go teach high school.

DM: But I did not. I did primary school. When I got married, I had to go teach high school.

NB: Because your husband was teaching in high school.

DM: I started teaching at Oakford Prairie High School.

*What differences did you see between Inanda and other high schools that you taught at?*

NB: She hasn't finished her story. Because she hasn't gotten to the part where we were together!

DM: Okay, at home I had five girls and two boys. I am not used to boys. Fortunately Oakford was a girls' school, and everything was done for you. Children were spoonfed, teachers were spoonfed, hawu. Just different from other schools. Boys can be rough. And I hadn't grown big; I was still tiny. But I was very strict. I taught in many schools, but we were together again at Mqhawe.

NB: That's the part I wanted you to get to.

DM: I was teaching maths and isiZulu... They say they don't understand, I had to stop teaching maths. Then I went to Ohlange High School until I retired. You know Ohlange? I taught there for twenty years, until the end of 1992.

NB: 1991.

DM: Yes, 1991.

*And what differences did you see between these high schools and Inanda?*

NB: When we taught in high school children were still obedient. There wasn't much. We did what was done to us in high school. Even if boys would be rough we could manage them.

DM: They knew that a teacher was a teacher.

NB: Unlike now. I think I would have a problem now.

DM: I would leave straightaway.

*[To Gumede]: And you went on to work for the YWCA. When did you do that?*

MG: It was after we went to Maphumulo, with my husband.

*Your husband was a doctor.*

MG: Yes, we used to work together. I was his nurse.

DM: Were there other nurses, or were you the only one?

MG: There was one, another lady, but I used to go out with him into the clinics, I used to go with my husband, and I would get together with other women, and I would teach them how to cook,

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how to make marmalade and jam, how to cater for our husbands, for visitors. Our home was like a hotel—

DM: A resort.

MG: Because we were out in the country, you know, and people used to come from Durban, all the people from around Durban used to know that when they got to Maphumulo they could stay at that place.

*And were both of your husbands high school teachers as well?*

DM: Mine was.

NB: Mine was a policeman.

*And how many children?*

MG: I had four children, now there are three (it was my son). I have seven grandchildren and one great grandson.

DM: I don't want to die before the great-grandchild.

NB: I have four children alive, three died. I have six grandchildren and one great-grandson.

DM: I had five, now I have four. My boy died. Boys are dying. And eight grandchildren, two each.

*Did any of your daughters or granddaughters go to Inanda Seminary?*

MG: Mumsie, my daughter went to Inanda Seminary [in the mid-1970s]. [She is now an accomplished environmental scientist living in Howick.] By the time my grandchildren went to school the white schools were opened.

NB: My daughter Nomsa went to Inanda Seminary.

DM: None of mine went—to Mariannhill, St. Augustine's, an Anglican school, Dlangezwa School.

*Did your children all decide where they wanted to go to school, or did you direct them to different places?*

MG: I don't think they decided. We sent them to schools where we thought they should go. My husband was at Mariannhill.

DM: My father was at Mariannhill.

MG: My daughter went to University of Zululand, but she was only there for a short while.

NB: There was a strike then.

MG: Then she went to Swaziland, where she did environmental courses. My eldest daughter went to Mariannhill, from there to Fort Hare, then she got married and went to Swaziland, then she got a scholarship to study medicine in Ghana.

*[To Bhengu]: And your daughter was at Inanda in the 1970s as well. Did either of you notice any major difference between Inanda when you and your daughters attended?*

NB: Nomsa finished matric at Mqhawe, now she is a schoolteacher. All my children are teachers except one.

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*To wrap up here—on whole, what difference would you each say Inanda made in your lives?*

NB: I think I am able to manage whatever.

MG: Yes, that is something it taught us.

DM: And it taught us to be thrifty. We are very thrifty.

NB: I can deal with challenges. I wouldn't say I have been a failure in life, no. I am happy about the life I have led.

MG: Inanda Seminary, it made us what we are. I always think that, we are what we are because of Inanda Seminary...

*Would your daughters be willing to talk with me?*

MG: Mumsie is in Howick... We should take a drive up there one day...

NB [to me]: We should tell you about our fun club.

MG: We have an old girls' fun club.

*A fun club, is it?*

MG: Yes, we call it the Golden Girls Fun Club. Yeah, and we have about twelve of us. We enjoy getting together once a month, where we just sit and chat, talking about old days, and we have traveled as a group. We first went to Sun City, then we went to Mauritius, and we went to Cape Town together as a group. We still go out sometimes, we go and have dinner out as a group, and we sit and eat.

NB: And sing.

DM: And sing! [All laugh.] Old days' songs.

MG: We really all enjoy it, because most of us now are without husbands...