

**Constance Koza (née Dlomo).**  
**Inanda student, 1941-1945; principal, 1980-1986.**  
**Interviewed in Centurion, Gauteng, 2 June 2009.**

Constance Koza: Inanda Seminary was a missionary college, you know, and it was started in 1869 by missionaries from the London Missionaries in England and the American Board women's group. And what had happened is they had had a number of South African men study abroad in the Theology Division, and our early missionaries had educated a number of men into theology so that they could come back and lead in the gospel. So, when they came back, one of them married a white woman—he came back with a white woman from Scotland. Another one—you know, Seretse Khama from Botswana—married a British girl, and there were so many of them overseas, in America and London, and these missionaries said no, it cannot happen that way, all the time, those boys must look for a wife abroad. We should go and open a seminary—that's why it's called Inanda Seminary. It was a school that the missionaries had thought they would be able to prepare the women who would be wives to these men. And their main objective was really to teach the girls the Bible—they read a lot of the Bible, and they were taught about religion... and then, because these girls were rural, and at that time the Zulus could not understand—they brought up girls with an eye toward getting cattle, and expanding their riches, that was the background of the girls. Then they had to come to school, and they never came through permission, except one or two—most of them ran away, because they were being married to old men. So there were runaway girls, and you know one or the other kept on coming, and Mrs. Edwards was the first principal. And, you know, when she slept, she always set a bag full of nighties and soap and everything next to her, because practically any night, police came and arrested her. And you know they fetched their water from the river, and they didn't have uniforms... they dressed like the missionaries... When I went there, Inanda Seminary was going up to JC.

*What year did you start at Inanda Seminary, as a student?*

In 1941.

*And you finished when?*

In 1945.

*So you did the matric?*

No, 1944. Yes, we were the first matric class. You know, they had JCs all the time, but by the time we came they thought we were brilliant enough to start matric. So the fourteen of us who passed well started the first matric. And then, when I left—in 1944, I went to Adams College, and when I was in Adams College I did a teachers' training course, but I had really wanted to be a doctor. Doctors were very few, and I thought maybe I could learn to be a doctor, or a nurse or something, because McCord's Hospital—

*A lot of Inanda alums went to McCord.*

And, after matric, I also went to McCord's, and whilst I was there for a month and I was getting excited by the neatness of the nurses and they had very lovely starched uniforms, Miss Scott came and she said, Connie- Miriam, you are going back to school. I say, why? She said we have communicated with your parents, we have started a matric class. So... Form One, is '41. Form Two, is '42. '43 I did my JC. So it was early '44. And I was just there for awhile, and I was one of those who they chose to come back.

*What was your name when you were a student at Inanda? Is Koza your married name?*

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I was Miriam.

*And what was your last name?*

Dlomo. D-L-O-M-O. I was Miriam Dlomo.

*How did you come to attend Inanda Seminary? Did other people in your family go there as well?*

I learned about the school from my great aunt in Zululand...

*Did you feel well-prepared for Fort Hare? Did Inanda prepare you well?*

Yeah, but I had never been at a school with boys. Adams College introduced me to boys and they were really frightening. The very day I arrived they were striking for food. That was the time of the big strike. It was a very frightening thing. I was not used to their voices, and they were in crowds. I was so nervous I hardly could sleep. Anyway, it took a week and it quelled... When I went to Fort Hare, I found that two of the students from Adams College had gone there too. They were Zimbabweans. Chitepo was one of them. And so we were there, and I studied, and I never failed. Then I did UED after BSc. It's University Educational Diploma [an extra year after bachelors.] Now what can I tell you about Inanda? Inanda was a fantastic college. Most of the doctors, lady doctors, are all from Inanda. Right now, Pretoria here, at the university, lecturers are from Inanda. And most of those in Parliament are from Inanda. The success that Inanda had was because, whilst we were at Inanda, we were taught not only about books, but we were taught about self-respect and the fear of God. Inanda was a missionary school and there was a demonstration every day of your life that you can give your life for other people. The calling—you learned that everybody has a mission to do on earth, everybody must achieve something to give back to the people. Inanda Seminary girls studied their Bibles continuously, and we had a variety of ministers who visited—not only ministers, but all people of repute, you know, people of any meaning, they addressed us whenever they came around Natal. So we had so much exposure—Inanda had so much exposure for the girls that they couldn't find anywhere else.

*Who do you remember visiting, in particular?*

Like for instance, John Dube. John Dube was the minister not far from us, but he had studied in America. Whenever he came to preach he gave us a word or a vision that enlightened you. I will never forget one sermon that he gave to us. He spoke about a rose in a bud. That is the type of teaching you got. My favorite was that, and I never forgot it. It was during my first year at Inanda, and he looked at us and he said, 'How wonderful you all look. You are so clean, your uniform is beautiful.' He says, 'You remind me of a garden full of roses.'

*That's sweet.*

Yeah, and he said, 'When a rose grows, it starts to bud. It gets into a bud before it opens up. During that time, the bud will start small. And it will grow, and grow, and grow, until it is quite big. And then it will start to shoot.' Then he said, 'When you own a rose garden, when you walk through there, you see all the beautiful buds, and you say, 'I will have a lovely rose garden. I will get so many roses for so long because the sizes of the buds are different.' And he went on to speak about how the rose grows, and how the buds develop. And he said, 'Some buds never blossom. You will find them in your garden, hard, dry, hollow. They did not develop. Before they could even sprout, the inside was already finished, eaten by ants and worms.' And he said, 'There are so

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many worms in life, that these roses I see in front of me will encounter.' He said, 'Some will get children before time, prematurely—children that have no father, because no one will say, 'It's my child.' The boys never say, 'It's my child.' They will leave them there, and they will never blossom. They are eaten in the bud, before they even are ready, some just fall along the wayside.' He said, 'I won't forget the day I saw a bud produce one fantastic petal.' He said, 'The petal is so large, just think if it had been given a chance to blossom, what a wonderful rose it would be.' But the other side of the bud had dried up, it had been eaten. And he said, 'The roses, after they have blossomed, you can smell them from a distance. They have a fantastic smell.' And he said, 'Some of the girls that leave Inanda, you can see them blossom, beautifully. And they can provide all the scent that the world so much needs for a happy life.' And, using the rose all the way, he was showing how some people just fall along the wayside because they get into bad habits, because they get into bad company, because they don't know God. They have no feeling of a goal that they work towards.' And he said, 'If you know God, you will fear to do anything that will not please him.' And then, you know, he just went on. He was on a chair, he was very old then.

*Yes, he was very old. Did his wife ever come to speak to the students— Angeline Dube?*

No, but I went there—when I was a student I don't know her—but when I became a principal, she sent for me. And she started talking to me about the girls, and my challenge, and that she would pray for me every time. And she would send me baskets of scones, lovely scones that she made.

*Did you know anything about the Daughters of Africa, the organization that Mrs. Dube led?*

*Ja.*

*Were they ever present at Inanda Seminary when you were there? Can you tell me a bit about them?*

You know, the Daughters of Africa were really concerned in learning to sing, to praise God tremendously. And the song that was really a favorite, that was really an anthem for them was 'Give a Thought to Africa.' And the Daughters of Africa were aiming at spreading the word of the Lord so as to protect the women. They also taught people skills of sewing, and cooking, and health. It was kind of an organization that said to you, 'You are not here for no reason. Find your calling. Be excellent where your calling is, and be focused in that calling.' We have different gifts— I may have a gift of speech, you may have a gift of music, use it to your best. Let the Lord say well done, be good and faithful.

*Did women from the Daughters of Africa preach at Inanda, did they speak in chapel there?*

Oh, they did, now and again.

*Do you remember which women came?*

Soga. Mina Soga came and preached. And you know, when I grew up, I joined their group.

*Do you know how long the group continued to exist?*

When I joined, it was no longer called the Daughters of Africa. Together with the whites, we had what we called the National Council of Women. We called it the Council of Women. And we met and mixed with the whites who were in the group. Because of apartheid, we had our own groups, but we had occasions where we came together... And in fundraising we helped each

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other... You couldn't easily go to a government office then. But with the help and connection the whites gave us, yeah, we went to them.

*Did anyone else come to Inanda? Did Bertha Mkhize ever come?*

Yeah, she was very involved. And over and above, the ANC came and they got involved. Many of the Daughters of Africa needed an organization that would direct them to how they could give back to the country... Inanda, when I was a student, and I continued it when I was principal, had a group of women who would council the girls. The baby girl is a very delicate object in South Africa. Then, you know, men were ruling everything, and we were at their mercy. So we continuously groomed our girls not to fall prey. Whatever they undertook in their love affairs, they were to bear in mind that it must be within God's limits and God's will.

*Who was in this group of women? Teachers, women from the community?*

Other teachers and I were really the ones who promoted it. I had a friend from Natal, Nomsa Buthelezi. She came to our school very often and we motivated the girls in the YWCA-kind-of-group, and we had an Evangelistic Band that would go out every Sunday and preach to the people about the Lord. And when I was the principal, there were shacks, when you come from town, and some of them were terrible, and someone told me there was a dying woman there. And I said to the girls, 'You know, we are at Inanda. We have all these people to go through the Evangelistic Band to tell them about God, we should be able to spread even self-help amongst them. So I started a group... I used to have these girls go on Extension Work, we would go to houses where women are very poor, we would raise some cents and buy them some mealie meal and sugar, from our own money, we would collect, or we would sell things in school, like sweets to the children, and take some of the proceeds and give it to people who were very needy...

*So how did you come back to Inanda? What did you do in the intervening years between Fort Hare and Inanda?*

I did B.Sc., my aim at Fort Hare was to become a doctor. And whilst I was studying my father died. So my mother said, do teachers' training... I taught biology, science.

*Where did you teach?*

At Orlando High, that was the first place I taught... Then I went to Mamelodi High as a science teacher, then I was promoted as a principal teacher...

*Did you stay in touch with people at Inanda Seminary when you were working in Mamelodi?*

Oh yeah, I visited all the time. They invited me for At Home. I was the speaker twice... When Miss Scott left, she asked me to become principal... After Miss Scott left, a white American came to take her place, but they were pushed out by the apartheid government. And I was a teacher then, and Miss Scott wrote me and pushed me to go back to Inanda because they are driving away the Americans... But then I was director of InterChurch Aid [for the South African Council of Churches]... I had been to Swaziland as a national home economist, and you know I had studied in America also.

*When did you go to America?*

I was in America in 1972—I went after teaching, and I did home economics.

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*Where did you study?*

Wisconsin.

*At the University of Wisconsin?*

Yes, Madison... It was in 1979 that I came to Inanda, and then I left in 1986. I stayed long.

*What were the differences that you saw at the school?*

I built two dormitories there, and I tidied the school like you'd never seen before, because it was so dilapidated and I couldn't stand that. I fundraised... I was able to renovate that place unbelievably... [She suggests Maurice Lewis was South African, but seems confused about this.] Toward the end of my term, we were getting very much stranded, because the government had been forced to change the salaries of teachers, so they actually paid them more than Inanda Seminary teachers...

*How were the students when you were principal there?*

Oh, I brought them under so much control, you couldn't believe it.

*I had heard that there were strikes and unrest.*

No, it was organized—by teachers who felt I was too strict. But I was doing it for the students. You know, when I got there they were studying for the exam which was the National Exam, and I said no, when I was at Inanda, I passed my matric with the Joint Matriculation Board, which is above all—with a Joint Matriculation Certificate, you can go anywhere in the world. That very year, I changed. The students were going to write JMB. And I had 100% matric passes. I really raised the standard of education in the school. If no one else will say it I will say it for myself. We became really the top in the region—we were no longer striving for the pass, what we were striving for when you get to matric at Inanda was the First-Class. Every Form Five would pass at Inanda Seminary, as long as I was there. We didn't get failures. It's where God had appointed me during that period and was with me. Inanda Seminary became a different place and we received all the respect that you can imagine...

*Anything else that you remember about your students—were they engaged in politics at all?*

[Answers quickly] No. That was my weakness, I did not involve my children in politics, because I felt that you need to be equipped before you can have full participation. You cannot do two things at the same time... They were taught to think, and to take decisions. And therefore if they wanted to go out, they could go out. Because whatever they decided upon, they had thought through. That was all I taught them. I couldn't belong a politician because I was helping children from the different parties, and I could not favor one party over another. For that reason I told them I can't be a politician, I can't register into any politics. Well, they punish me now. Because I was never in ANC, my life in everything was just blotted out—it's just unfortunate. But the fact is, I was not working to be praised on earth. I look forward to seeing God and him saying, 'This, you did very well.' I don't have to be a politician in honor to get praises, or money... [After her was a South African, Mr. Campbell. Of the successors, she said] They just messed my work up... [She noted later, 'I believe the present principal is doing very well. I hope she will take the school far along the right path.']