

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

TIME IN CODE	QUESTIONS	CONTENT	TIME OUT CODE
01:00:21:10	Can you tell us about where you are from, when and where were you born and who's been the person in your life that has shaped your younger years?		01:00:40:09
01:00:41:15		I was born around here in Hillbrow at Florence Nightingale Hospital in 1993 on the 20 th of August so I am a Leo so I resonate very well with lions, I was raised by my mom for the most part but together with her parents, like I was raised by a village but a very small one because it's my mom and her close family so I truly appreciate kingship, I truly appreciate the institution called the family, I owe my entire being to my family, I think when I make many decisions I often think to myself, what would my grandfather say? By the way, I've got like two sets of grandparents, not paternal and maternal but on my maternal side I've got two sets, my mom has her biological and her step-parents on both sides so it's a lot, so I literally think to myself, what would my grandfather think, what would my aunt think, what would my uncle think? So I was born in Hillbrow, my mom and them were the cool kids of that time living in what is called Ponte building but it's the tall building with the Vodacom sign and the Coca Cola, I don't know what it is now but they lived there back in the days, my grandparents had wanted their children to come and study in town, Joburg, so that they can get a better education so they moved them outside of Siyabuswa Mpumalanga area and Springs area and they brought them into Johannesburg so they sort of grew up in a ... my great grandmother would take care of all	01:03:33:00

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		these kids, I think there was like 10 of them and she sort of treated the home as a hostel, the primary school kids and the high school kids so my mom and them grew up like that because their parents moved them closer this side and of course then they would go home during holidays, they would go either to Siyabuswa in Mpumalanga where most Ndebele's are from, so that would be my mom's stepfather's side or she would go to her maternal side which is in Kwa-Thema, Springs, or her biological paternal side which is Pollak Park, Springs, so that's where they would go during holidays but they would come back to Joburg so she had me in Joburg, that's where she met my father.	
01:03:33:03	So do you identify as Ndebele?		01:03:34:12
01:03:34:18		That's a very tricky part, not that I don't like it but I often feel like it's a schlep because I have to explain it, so people would say, okay so what are you, are you Zulu? And I would say, no I'm Nguni or actually I rather say I'm black, then they say I'm black too so I say no, I am Nguni, okay but what does that mean? Okay, I am Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, Swati and they ask how? My mother's biological father whose surname I carry, Mkhathshwa, is Swati and when I was born my mother was on his medical aid so I became a Mkhathshwa and then my blood of course, the blood that runs through my veins is that of my biological father Ulangeni who is Zulu, but then I'm raised by my mother's stepfather uMahlangu who's Ndebele and for the past 17 years I have lived with my mother and her husband, my stepfather who is Skweyiya, he is Xhosa so having been raised by all these people and sort of appreciating how I am a part of all of them, I am a product of all of them, it's really hard to say I am Zulu or	01:05:52:22

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		Ndebele or Xhosa or whatever and I'm really okay with it because it's fine, that's how I grew up but it's also hard to explain to people what are you so I literally say I'm Nguni because its broad enough, I don't have to explain it, people ask what language do you speak at home? That's so hard because literally in one sentence I could be using Xhosa and Zulu, when I was growing up and I was younger because I lived with my mother's stepfather more, I actually used more Ndebele jargon in my speaking but now I think it's probably bottled down to Zulu and Xhosa and also growing up in Gauteng, we don't speak Sepedi, we don't speak Setswana we speak Se'Pitori and S'Jozi we have our own language this side in Gauteng so that also sort of plays a huge role in terms of what language I speak at home.	
01:05:53:00	Do you think your background has been to your advantage in terms of your leadership skills?		01:06:00:07
01:06:00:12		Sure, I think I am definitely inclusive and dynamic and able to appreciate people's differences and our diversity more, I think I am truly able to understand. So having grown up in a home as diverse as mine, I really believe that it has contributed positively to how I operate in spaces that are very diverse. When you look at many spaces which you lead as a leader you won't find one particular type of person, even if the school of thought in that space is Marxist, Leninist, you will still find people who differ within that space, even if we all agree or adhere to feminism there are different types of feminism. At some point I thought I understood feminism, when I entered SASCO, the South African Student Congress because the way it was presented	01:09:42:20

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		<p>to me was that as long as you are anti the sexist, patriarchal, misogynist space and you seek to see the polarization between various genders done away with, then you sort of adhere to feminist ideology and so it was easy to say I'm a gender activist and I subscribe to feminist ideology and as time went by and I felt as though I was not able to articulate this particular feminist academic language, it felt above me, like I'm not too educated to articulate myself or well-read to articulate myself in a feminist way and I felt that maybe I'm just a gender activist, look you are a woman, you are a man, you are the same, you gay, you lesbian, you are the same, you are equal, well we are not the same because we often think that saying people are the same is equality, acknowledging the fact that people aren't the same is equality, not the same but there's nothing inferior between you and I just, because we have different genders, so I thought okay you know what, I am a gender activist because I just felt that I wasn't intimidated by the jargon but I always say that we learn, leaders learn every day and we go through a cycle of learning, what I may believe today or what Mandela believed at the beginning of his journey in the African National Congress Party and what he believed at the end of it is two different things so now I'm back at a point where I am getting more comfortable in saying I am a feminist because we've been addressing the fact that the patriarchal nature society has presented feminism to be beyond approach and something that the ordinary woman or man cannot sort of engage in and many feminists and women and just gender activists have problematized it to say no, we are all the same and we mustn't eliticize this idea</p>	
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		of feminism so I'm at a point where I can say that I adhere to feminist ideology but I'm still learning.	
01:09:42:23	What kind of a student were you in high school, what were you into? Were you academic, were you involved in sports, involved in the LRC and school issues or you pretty much kept your head down and just wanted to finish your matric and go off into the real world?		01:10:03:06
01:10:03:12		So being raised by a single mom and the kind of family that I was raised in, and because my mom had me at an early age, I was almost the last born of them but in actual fact I was their grandchild but I almost felt like these are my bigger sisters and brothers so everyone did something, I remember my aunt Nonto she did everything from the Mahlangu side, she played netball, basketball, she was a prefect and she used to pick me up from school or I would walk from my school to her school when she was in high school and sit and we had to wait for her to finish everything and then we would walk home but even if I look at the Mkhathshwa side of the family, my aunt on that side and my uncle on that side, they were also very busy at school and that sort of becomes engraved in you so you also grow up thinking this is how things are done and so I was that child, I played netball, I did athletics, I broke records in athletics, always A-team netball, I think in grade 5 I was in the B-team and I was highly devastated for a week and then they changed coaches and it was from a black coach who put me in the B-	01:13:55:24

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		<p>team and then a white coach came and put me in the A-team and that was confusing because you grow up feeling like white people don't want you to succeed but now this was someone of my race who was now putting me back so I was so confused. I was a very active student, Student Christian Association, public speaking, student intercultural club, I used to dance, I used to krump, my generation would know what krumping is, I used to pop and lock and I think when I share this with comrades now and I say comrade I was part of a hip hop crew, they like no, how? And I say really, I was a cool kid but I was always conscious, I did grow up active, I did lead a lot. So I want to intertwine these sort of conversations, I'm an active child who goes to model C schools from grade one to matric but I spend 6 months in Kwa-Ndebele with my great grandmother, my mom was going through a bit of a change in her life and she just wanted me to have stability while she's going through that change and so I go stay with my great grandmother in Kwa-Ndebele for 6 months and it was so traumatic because I stuck out like a sore thumb, I'd come from Pretoria and this was in grade 2, so I've come from Pretoria, at school we speak English at home we speak Zulu and then you are being judged for the way in which you articulate your English and you are being judged that you come from Pretoria and all those things and it was very difficult for me to comprehend that but these are my blood brothers and sisters, they are the same colour as me, why are they making me feel bad, basically saying you are a "coconut" and I spoke Zulu, I didn't speak IsiNdebele and that was an issue and there were these two Indian kids at the school who spoke Ndebele fluently and they didn't understand why</p>	
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		I can't speak it when these Indian kids can speak it, but in essence I go through model c schools throughout my whole life.	
01:14:00:20	Did you have any white friends throughout your schooling years?		01:14:04:07
01:14:05:06		We lived in a complex, we moved to Pretoria I think at the age of 3 from Joburg and I had a white friend called Midi and her and her mom taught me how to swim and Midi's mom used to say to us, it would be raining and I'm sick and she would say to my grandmother, no Zomi bring her, she is going to get better if she swims and at that time I've got flu and my grandmother is like no, the child won't get better if she gets into the cold water and she's got flu, what are you talking about? But yeah, I had a friend called Midi and she taught me how to swim, I remember that and I think going throughout primary school and high school I did have white friends and then of course you get to varsity and nothing, not even one.	01:15:06:24
01:15:08:15	What do you think the reason is for not having white friends anymore in terms of racial dynamics in South Africa for people born in '93 up until now, people expect you to have a gang load of white friends?		01:15:26:09
01:15:26:15		I think how I chose to associate myself in varsity just determined a lot of things going forward. When I was, I think probably 5, but very young, we watched Sarafina and I was like oh, okay alright this is hectic but at the same time I	01:16:56:00

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		was inspired, I was very young, I was a toddler, I was inspired because I was like these kids did this, wow, so that I can be where I am today, but those people treated those kids in this manner, how could they? Why would they? I was so confused but till today I know that watching Sarafina is sort of what struck me, I think in the house we always discussed, I would hear it but I don't think I understood it, I don't think I understood the issues of race and class, I know they were discussed but then when I watched Sarafina I got it and after that I just was always conscious and aware of the race imbalances in society.	
01:16:56:03	Besides watching Sarafina and understanding the imbalances, were there other interactions with your white friends or maybe a white teacher where you were like okay here is the imbalance? An incident perhaps where you lost your innocence in terms of race relations?		01:17:14:20
01:17:19:14		There are incidences but when those incidences took place I was already aware, if I think back I remember being called a <i>bobojan</i> by some white kid at drumming practice, I was a drum majorette and I remember being called a <i>bobojan</i> by a white kid and when I was called that I knew immediately that was being racist and I think I was in grade 6 so I don't know at what point it hits me but I'm well aware of the racial inequalities in our society, throughout probably even in grade 3, I think I could understand that okay she is white I am black, there are issues there and of course we try to be	01:18:36:05

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		beyond our race or our racial differences, we try to be above them, we are the same, we are equal, etc. But you're well aware of it and the way black kids gravitate towards each other, the way it's not a thing to go to a white friend's house, so I don't feel like there was that moment but you're just aware of it.	
01:18:46:10	When you were in high school what did you think you were going to be, what were you planning to go to varsity for?		01:18:53:12
01:18:53:17		Okay so in grade 5 I said I'm going to dance, sing and act and every time I used to practice dancing and acting I'd always sing songs by Miriam and Letta Mbulu and Caiphus and Stimela so I'd always sing those sort of songs every time I practice and I'd even practice the Sarafina dance and all those things so that was me being an artist which was quite conscious, so I am not singing Spice Girls, so it's very clear how what's happening in the household is shaping what I think and what I believe as I grow so I get to high school and I know in grade 9 or 10, if I can remember, people start calling me president, president 2045, I put a date, I said I'm going to be the president in the year 2045 and then it was just a thing ... but for whatever reason I said in the year 2045 I am going to be the president of South Africa and in history people were very cautious of how they spoke and what they said because I would respond in a particular way, I remember this one girl said something highly out of order and the whole class gasped and looked at me waiting for my response and I think this is grade 10 or 9, I remember a time when we were told to write an essay, people were given	01:24:44:07

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		<p>different sides of the essay and I was given the topic having to basically affirm the fact that black people are the reason why they were colonized, it's our fault that we were colonized and when my teacher was handing out these slips, I got mine and everyone was like, what did you get and I said what I got and they said, no Ma'am she can't do it, no Ma'am come on just give her the other one, she won't be able to do it so people were always well aware of the fact that I was very conscious of my blackness and it was just that thing. But grade 10 onwards, my history class, I really appreciate the way our educators engaged us because people always complain about the history that they were taught and they say that the education system taught them a very biased education, I don't know perhaps because of my own exposure outside of the school I was able to take what I was receiving and make sense of it in the way in which it made sense to me, but also I look at the conversations we were having in class, I really believe that my teachers were open to our different perspectives and as pupils and learners some of the people who were in my class then are in the UN now and they are doing great things internationally in international organisations and that perhaps why my experience wasn't so bad and these are white girls and they are now doing great things in the world, in international organisations, but I think back then we were the ones dominating the discussions within the classroom as well so for me my history experience in high school was not bad but I left grade 10, I said to my mom, I'm going to become a politician and she says to me, my child so what are you going to study in varsity? So I said to her, I'm going to do political science and she says, no, why? You can be a</p>	
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		<p>politician but not do political science, go get yourself something more concrete, I fight with her, it becomes very heated for three years but then I decided that I want to do a BCom PPE, WITS doesn't take me for BCom PPE, they say my maths is too low for BCom PPE but they say I must go do a BSc in Mathematics, that was very confusing, so I end up doing a BSc in Geography and I thrive in it because basically my focus becomes human geography and basically the earth and the environment and how it relates to human beings and the relationship between the two so I thoroughly enjoy geography and I find politics within geography so I'm fine in it and my mom gets her BSc which she thinks is concrete so that's great but when I left high school, I think in grade 11, I was already a member of the ANC Youth League WITS Facebook account. There was a young man called Godfrey Maja who I had competed with in the Albert Luthuli Oral History competition in Pretoria so we were Facebook friends so it was very clear that I'm ANC, like my home is, one of those things where you just don't have a choice but also because you grow up knowing that the African National Congress was at the forefront of our liberation, that's what it is and you read up more about what the organisation stands for and you stay there, these people stood for what's good, the documents and the policies of the organisation still stand for that and you learn to understand that just because a few individuals in the organisation are not adhering to what the principles, standards and norms of the organisation are, it doesn't mean that the organisation in its totality is meaningless.</p>	
01:24:44:10	Who do you look up to in the organisation? We are trying		01:25:09:02

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	to tell this big story of how the Constitution was made from way back in the 1800s, who would you say is the person we should not forget in the story and make sure we represent them in a particular way?		
01:25:10:13		With a bias towards women it would be two of them, Charlotte Maxeke and Nontsikelelo Sisulu because they are women, because they were there and I know the space was patriarchal and thinking about the many women who fought in movements now, whose voices are suffocated, I can't begin to imagine how they felt then in the space when we are still struggling with the issue years after so I would want to see Charlotte and Nontsikelelo in your museum.	01:25:57:20
01:26:01:00	So you are Godfrey's friend on Facebook and everyone knows that you are ANC because of your home background?		01:26:08:17
01:26:09:00		Yes, I tried to go COPE for a week, this is grade 10 so no one can judge me really, I was like a kid, so I go COPE for a week and politics was a thing, we used to talk about politics in class probably because of me but I got to class in grade 10 and I was like, Ma'am you know what I've been looking and perhaps COPE, and that was for like a week and I came back on Monday and I was like, Ma'am I'm sorry I was very wrong, I'm back to the ANC.	01:26:39:10
01:26:39:15	What was it about COPE, what happened in that week?		01:26:42:09

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01:26:42:11		So in that week I was being sold the idea that if something is not working, you can't resuscitate it more than, at some point, it can't be revived. I think it was 2009 but all I know is that I was sold that we can't revive the ANC, I think it was the time when Thabo was out and Zuma was in, I think that's where it was and COPE was being formulated and everyone was saying COPE is the better party but I also had a church friend who was selling me COPE and in the household everyone just looked at me like, you are a kid anyways, if you are ANC or COPE whatever you are just going through your things because I was in grade 10 I was 16.	01:27:44:21
01:27:46:03	Do you find that people don't take young people's political views seriously?		01:27:52:01
01:27:57:10		Young people is broad and I always say this, youth is very broad because my sister who is 16, she's been youth since she was like 13 or 14 till 35 year olds so I mean at 16 I was allowed to have input at the dinner table on political issues and in the class room I could say what I wanted to say, at church I could say what I wanted to say and I felt like I was listened to. Varsity, that's the next place right, I think we are listened to, I don't think it's an issue of age, perhaps I think it's an issue of, so you look at communities where people are fighting for basic services, they are older than us but they are not being listened to, you look at varsity, young people are fighting for lower fees, they are fighting for free education, they are not being listened to so I don't think it's the thing of age, I think it's an issue of those who are supposed to deliver on particular services not being able to deliver on them and therefore people feeling as though they	01:30:45:05

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		are not being listened to so I really don't know if it's an age thing, of course there is ageism, definitely there is ageism, there are lesser voices of young people in various spaces in society and that is why young people really ought to soar the ranks from local government to national government, to companies, to institutions, churches, everywhere, young people really need to occupy these spaces particularly because we are the biggest demographic in our society and so we need to be represented accordingly. I think if anyone would not listen to young people today you'd be making a big mistake because surely you should have seen the power that we have when we are united as young people and sometimes we forget, we get comfortable and then we decide to fight amongst ourselves but I think when we are all agitated enough we remember that we can unite and when we are united we are your worst enemy so I think it would be really wrong not to listen to young people today.	
01:30:45:22	So how did you get to join the ANC Facebook page?		01:30:50:19
01:30:51:01		So I went through this COPE moment, it was 5 days and I wasn't even a member I was just taking a look. So Godfrey, we go to this competition and we're friends on Facebook after the competition, he goes to varsity because he's older than me, he starts posting about the ANC and the ANC Youth League, he's always just political and I'm like that's so cool so I start following him and then I follow this group and so I was the member of the ANC Youth League, Mxolisi Majombozi branch, WITS University before I even got there on Facebook, only when I got to varsity did I know exactly where I was going, when I got to WITS campus I had asked prior to say how do I subscribe to various club	01:32:23:15

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		societies and organisations and people took me right to the gazebo, the ANC Youth League and SASCO gazebo, I filled in my forms and at that time I didn't know that SASCO still existed because I had learned of SASCO in history but I did not know that it actually still existed so I was very excited because it was SASCO, Steve Biko and so I subscribed to these two organisations and from orientation week because orientation is a week before school, I was there and that was my life throughout varsity.	
01:32:23:18	Did you choose WITS because you were already a member of this ANC Youth League WITS Facebook page or would you have gone to another university and just maintained that Facebook connection?		01:32:33:10
01:32:33:14		It was really an application situation, WITS took me, I hadn't applied to UCT because I don't understand the craze, like everyone was like, I want to go to UCT and I'm like okay yeah whatever but I did want to go to Grahamstown because of its political history, I really wanted to go to Grahamstown, I remember going to the Grahamstown Festival the year before and I saw the Steve Biko student centre or something like that and I took a picture by Steve Biko's name and I took a picture by Lilian Ngoyi Hall so I really was excited about going to Grahamstown but I didn't get in because I can't remember why so I went to WITS. WITS took me and it was okay because I had my aunt there from the Mkhathshwa side, I had Godfrey so I was okay, day 3 of orientation week I had gone up to the SRC offices	01:33:56:23

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		already to ask how I can volunteer because I was well aware of the fact that there's no way I can be SRC in my first-year so I went and asked how do I volunteer? How do I help out the SRC and I found a guy called Tshepo Biko Lethia, Biko is just his nickname and he today is one of my closest friends, like he's my best friend and he literally took me through my political journey at WITS, from day 3 to when I graduated and left WITS.	
01:33:57:08	When do things then escalate, when do you formally join the SRC and how does that happen? What were the issues before the Fees Must Fall journey that you guys were dealing with as the SRC, what student issues were you tackling?		01:34:16:19
01:34:22:10		In my first-year, I'm in the subcommittee of the Secretary General of the SRC and I basically help her with overhauling the communications of the SRC and then in the first quarter I think the first issue that I was active in was the unfair dismissal of the 17 workers by Royal Mnandi, they were workers who worked in the dining hall so they were dismissed unfairly by Royal Mnandi and we had a hunger strike for 5 days, from Sunday till Friday and we occupied Senate House Concourse which is now called Solomon Mahlangu Concourse and that was my first sort of protest, I think there were probably things before that but they were more like awareness protests but I think this was the first one that we were responding to an actual issue on campus and the workers were brought back into the system and I	01:36:32:22

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		felt like I was a part of something very big and then it continues and mid-year we have the fee rally led by president Tebogo Thothela and basically that was against the increment of fees in that year, I can't remember what the percentage was but I was in first-year so I was just like that kid who was just there, there was probably about 6 of us, some of them are the likes of Mbe Mbele who is now in the EFF, who I led with in the Secretary of SASCO in my second-year and he was also at the forefront of fees must fall at WITS, the likes of Sive who were also at the forefront of fees must fall at WITS as well along with us so that was my first-year, 2012, so there was 17 unfairly dismissed workers and then we had the fee rally.	
01:37:15:11	So in the first-year it's the 17 unfairly dismissed workers and the fee increment rally, how are your studies at this time?		01:37:23:24
01:37:24:04		I'm getting A's, okay I got one A but I'm getting like 70%, I'm getting good marks also comrades did try to study together a lot, there was a huge culture of chant and pass, even at occupy concourse we were there with our books, people would go to class and come back, like if you had a TAT you would leave and come back and others were able to lobby their lecturers to say, can we please bring the TAT to concourse in solidarity with the workers, that solidarity made me realise that when we unite as people, as society we can do so much. Some comrades did go on the hunger strike the whole week, others would just excuse themselves from the space and go eat somewhere and then come back because we just said you can't be eating in this space	01:42:34:00

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		<p>because it's a hunger strike and we understand other people can't not eat because of their health reasons but please excuse yourself from the space. Then I run the elections team, EMC, Electoral Management Committee of the Progressive Youth Alliance which is SASCO, the ANC Youth League, the YCL, Young Communist League and the MSA, Muslims Student Association so I am a first-year and comrades are like, in order for you to soar at the ranks you must make sure that you work very hard within the EMC and deliver the PYA to SRC so it's an elections team for SRC and so I go there and I work very hard, I don't sleep, I remember my birthday even, I was going door to door in Braamfontein and it really taught me a lot about the organisation, I understood issues of deployment and elections and electioneering, the rules and so forth, it's also very empowering because you are in first-year and comrades are saying, here take us to SRC and that's a big responsibility, the t-shirts, the posters, the campaign strategy, everything and comrades say here as a first-year let's see if you can actually lead an organisation on campus so that's what I do and we get 14 out of 15 seats and the only reason why we didn't get 15 out of 15 is because our one candidate was disqualified and that was a great thing and then my second-year, I'm deputy secretary of SASCO, the South African Student Congress on campus leading with Mbe Mbele as my secretary who then moved to the EFF at a later stage, I can't remember what the big issues were in that year but I know, issues of Israeli apartheid, the Israeli pianist who came onto campus and the comrades of the Palestinians solidarity community at WITS University had a protest against that and many of them were charged for</p>	
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		<p>their actions there but they just felt that while people are dying in Palestine we can't be having kumbaya sessions of piano players on campus, what's the posture of WITS and this is an Israeli pianist so that was the sort of issues there. There was also an issue of the university outsourcing in that year, I think as well, so Israeli apartheid, outsourcing were the big issues that year, gender based violence was a big issue as well, so there was outsourcing at WITS, basically when the university outsources its services, the cleaners, the ground staff, basically various staff within the institution and they outsource them to other companies and the biggest issue there is that you can't hold those companies accountable for the mistreatment of the workers and those workers work within your institution and you can't really dictate the pay, you can't dictate the contract, there are many issues that reflect negatively on you as an institution, as WITS University so when its insourced you are actually able to hold the university accountable and workers are able to have more sustainable contracts within the university, to have better benefits within the university and a better experience of being a worker within the university and that's why it was important for us to move towards the insourcing of these workers into the institution.</p>	
01:42:34:03	<p>Did the workers understand all this? Did they understand what outsourcing means for them or is it something that you had to explain to them that they don't sign up for this?</p>		01:42:44:21

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01:42:45:08		<p>At that time, we were saying no to outsourcing but it was already a thing but we realised that the only way we could address some of the challenges that workers were going through was if they were actually part of the university system and I think the workers did have an understanding of what it meant, so that was second-year. So I had two third-years, I am now chairperson of SASCO on campus, I'm the second woman to chair SASCO at WITS University, Mbali Hlophe was the first woman to chair SASCO at WITS and then I was the second woman to chair SASCO at WITS and Nthabiseng Mohale was the third woman to chair SASCO at WITS just after me, between Mbali and I, there was a 6-year gap that was just men. I remember the year before, when I was deputy secretary, we were having great debates, we had a week of great debates leading to the National SASCO Free Education March so SASCO nationally had a free education march every year and this was initiated by a comrade, the former secretary general of SASCO, Lazola Ndamase and so the week before the march, in my second-year we had the great debates and basically we would go to various residencies and we would invite different students and say, let's argue the feasibility of free education, to have it or not to have it so the issues around free education the discourse was there long before us, Lazola, I think he was the SG of SASCO way before I got to university and they were leading this conversation and before him there were probably others as well. My third year my studies are not looking too good, I'm passing but not the way I want and you sort of say to yourself, look people's lives are changing for the better so as long as I'm just passing it's okay but</p>	01:45:41:20
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		people's lives are changing for the better, that's your thinking at that point.	
01:45:41:23	Is that what you were saying to your mom about your studies? Was she protesting about your marks?		01:45:43:17
01:45:45:10		<p>She was not paying my fees so I think I was sort of like, I'm getting my own fees paid because she couldn't afford it, I have two younger sisters ...</p> <p>She had other ways of protesting, there were times when I would be home for holidays and she would refuse for me to go to protests and marches and I would be so upset because she would say something like, there is a lot of laundry and the aunty is not here because the aunty would go home during school holidays and she would tell me about doing the laundry and I would say to her, oh my gosh! If I was a boy would you say that to me, would you really say don't go to the protest because there is laundry to do? You wouldn't say that to me, why can't I do it when I come back and I defied her, I did go to the protest, it was a BDS protest, Boycott, Divest and Sanction Israel protest that was held in Pretoria outside the American embassy and I really went, I said to myself this woman wants to disturb me in my activism so I went to the protest.</p>	01:47:02:04
01:47:02:06	So there is tension at home, your grades are okay but they are not where they are supposed to be but you are rising in the ranks?		01:47:10:23

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

01:47:11:08		<p>I was rising in the ranks I guess, it's very hard as a woman, as a model c kid it's a bit tough in the political space as well, it's not easy. As a woman you also have to affirm yourself, you also have to work harder, you have to be almost apologetic for leading sometimes, like I'm the chairperson but you have to be apologetic, as a model c kid you almost feel like you have to prove your credentials, your authenticity in the space, your consciousness, but I think at WITS it was better because we used to tease each other and say but you, you are bourgeoisie, you are from the township but we know you so we used to tease each other but when it came to other campuses, WITS as a collective, was seen as elite and that sort of protected you because then you and your comrades don't pick on one another within your branch because now you have to defend yourselves from being picked on by other branches particularly those from the likes of the Tshwane University of Technology, the University of Johannesburg Soweto Campus, Vaal University of Technology, those campuses would sort of be antagonistic towards us and you have to almost prove that as WITS'ies we are very revolutionary, very conscious, very radical, we are just like you comrades. I remember my friend Lesego Mokoena who's also led in various spaces in the organization, she had a St. Andrews accent, I went to Pretoria High School for girls but Lesego went to St. Andrews and she would be there trying to articulate Marx and Lenin and comrades are looking at her like this girl! Beyond the content they are just listening to the accent and it was so difficult for us, you lead a song and you are a woman, there are just so many things, you are beautiful, I think everyone is beautiful and there's all these things and</p>	01:50:54:15
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>you just always have to prove how radical you are and it gets so tiring but at some point we own it, we say we are going to come as women into this space looking beautiful and then what? We are going to articulate Marx and Lenin in this accent and then what? It doesn't take away anything from how much I am committed to the struggle and the plight of which we commit ourselves as an organisation at that particular point in time and so comrades outgrew it because we said also, what kind of a young person is coming onto campus right now? We need to be relevant to those that we lead and we need to be reflective of those that we lead, it can't be that we try and keep this space to a particular type of student and we exclude those that we claim to want to represent because we say we want to represent all students and so we overcome it eventually.</p>	
01:50:55:18	So in third year you were the chairperson and then you left?		01:51:05:04
01:51:05:15		<p>So after my chairperson year of SASCO, I then become deputy chairperson of the ANC Youth League in my second third-year. If you are a university student, you have year 2.5 or 1.5 so some students will understand what I'm talking about, so I'm in my second third-year also because I had changed courses when I had 6 months left, it's a lot. So my second third-year, which is now 2015, I am actually leaving, I said to myself I'm leaving student politics, I'm deputy chairperson of the ANC Youth League and I am working part-time at the ANC Gauteng Ruth First Research Institute and this has been a huge issue for me in terms of the narrative out there, a lot of people say I worked at the ANC Luthuli House, I've never worked at Luthuli House and for</p>	01:53:09:02

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		me working at Luthuli House in relation to Fees Must Fall is very different to having worked at the ANC Gauteng offices and it was a research institute that planned, monitored and evaluated the progress of municipalities within Gauteng, that was my work and I would understand if people were saying to me but you went and you marched to Sisulu House or Ruth First but the argument is you went and you marched to Luthuli and you work at Luthuli and I don't work at Luthuli but in any case also, I think who but the ANC kids or kids of the ANC to hold the ANC accountable? I mean if we as the kids of the ANC don't feel like the ANC is representing us right now, it only makes sense that we go hold it accountable.	
01:53:09:13	Can you explain this dynamic, why people and students had a problem with the fact that you marched to Luthuli House, what's the thing with student politics and political affiliation?		01:53:27:13
01:53:27:20		At WITS University and some other universities still hold it but many universities are trying to do away with it. When you contest SRC, you can contest as an independent, so an individual, you can contest as some group that you want to call yourselves Spice Girls, whatever you want to call yourselves, you can contest as a political party, you can contest as a church, you can contest as a sports group or netball team girls want to go contest SRC elections, okay go, so you can contest in whatever formation you want to contest in, you will have a candidate number, you are candidate number 24 from the Progressive Youth Alliance	01:57:04:06

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>and so we would contest as the Progressive Youth Alliance, SASCO, the ANC Youth League, the YCL and the MSA, as an alliance we would contest for SRC, we'd put in 15 candidates to take up all 15 seats of the SRC, now WITS is a highly politicized campus, it's known in the country and many have said that it's a problem and I don't think it's a problem, I think spaces being politicized is not a crisis but political intolerance within the space becomes a crisis, when we are not able to respect one another beyond our political affiliations it becomes problematic and so we must be able to differentiate between the two and those who are leading institutions of higher learning ought to contest that and argue that we need to do away with the toxicity of the nature of politics currently in institutions of higher learning, that's the crisis, it's not the politics of it, I mean the beauty of Fees Must Fall WITS University when it started was that it was being led by a collective of students from different political organisations and the whole country cheered to that and so when we went to Luthuli House there was a view from students that we want to go and hold the governing party accountable on this particular matter, we want to lobby the governing party to push forward this particular agenda and so that was the premise on which we were marching to Luthuli House and we are an SRC that is affiliated, that is deployed at that time by the PYA which is affiliated to the African National Congress, yes, but at the end of the day we are an SRC, our mandate comes from students and if students say to us we need you to go to that place and hold them accountable, we ought to go to that place and so regardless of whether I'm ANC, EFF or whatever, it may be my mandate at that particular time</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		came from students or our mandate at that particular time came from students and also it's an issue of democracy, it was majority of students who were in that mass meeting who were saying we want to go to Luthuli and so would it not have been dictatorial if we said no we can't go because we are employees of an organisation affiliated to the African National Congress, it would have been highly problematic and so we had to go to where students were sending us to go to represent them and I felt it was appropriate that in fact it was the children of the African National Congress that were holding the African National Congress accountable.	
01:57:06:03	Why were you thinking of leaving student politics?		01:57:08:17
01:57:08:22		I was old, I was doing third year 2.0, I was going to do my honours the next year, I felt that I was old, one thing people always need to understand is that being a student means you come, you go to university, you leave. You come to a university as a student and then you leave, of course sometimes you may be a postgraduate student which is a different argument and even if you are a postgraduate student the way in which you position yourself in student politics must become different, it must become that of a senior comrade, advisory roles, leading in the postgraduate associations, things like that, coming in with policy ideas and inputs so the way in which you position yourself when you then become a postgraduate, I think ought to be a little bit different unless circumstances really push that you be the one who is now at the forefront but I really feel like it's unfair to have, and this is the difficult thing about student politics that you can be a student at 40 and be a student at 16, there are kids who come into the university at the age of	02:07:46:00

Nompendulo Mkhathswa Interview

		<p>16 and now imagine having to fight politics with them, a 16 year old fighting with a 40 year old, that's just not fair, your experiences in life are totally different. You come into university and you leave, I came, I did my degree, I was about to finish, I'm leaving, if I was coming back to do my honours I would reposition myself. As I am about to leave, comrades are saying we have a crisis of leadership and I'm not old at that time, I think I'm 21 or 22 but I feel old already and my comrades say we need leadership, we have an issue, we going to SRC elections, we have a leadership deficit on campus so I say okay, I am doing two modules at that time and I say okay I'll come back into the space, I hadn't really left it, I was just less involved, senior leadership, I am leaving campus now so you act like senior leadership and I'm forced to go right back into it and I had also felt that I had missed my time to contest SRC because my peers all contested much earlier than me, Mbe contested SRC in our second-year and I felt like second-year was too soon so I go and I contest and I'm so nervous because I think I'm irrelevant to students but I go and do my part and I think I was number four on the outcomes and between number one and two it was Thami Pooe who now runs Tshimong and Fasiha Hasaan who was the secretary general in my term and then Ntokozo Ntimande who was the CSO officer and then I was number four and I was so shook because I was like oh, students know me? And then of course the PYA, I think we had 12 out of the 15 seats which was great because the previous year we had fewer seats so we were really happy to have gained relevance on campus again. After you make it in as candidates there then becomes an internal process within the Progressive Youth</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>Alliance of saying who is deployed where in terms of positions, so who becomes president, deputy president, SG and who takes what office in terms of portfolios so I was then deployed by the organisation as the president of the SRC given probably my experiences at that time, this is in third-year 2.0 in 2015 September. And so then Fees Must Fall takes place in the handover from president Shaeera Kalla's term to mine which was 2014 to 2015 to 2016 and now she is handing over so I'm shadowing her and she says to me president, lets go to council so that you can see how it operates and you can have an idea of how council is and council is the highest decision-making body of the university, very intimidating space populated by white Caucasian men, old Caucasian men and then black men and then white women and then a black woman, it's a very intimidating space as a young black woman, so we went to council and her position in council was that there ought not to be a fee increment in that year. So every year the SRC would sort of speak up against fee increment because every year the university is going to increase fees because of expenditure, life cost they go up every year so the university would always want to increase fees every year and student leadership would always speak out against it and so Shaeera spoke up against it and she presented her case that she had already presented to FINCO, the Financial Committee of the university and now was going to council to be discussed and I got to sit in and it was very hard for me to analyse what was going on in the meeting but eventually I pick up okay, she's making her case now and then I realised we've just lost and so we lose it and as we walk out of the council meeting she says I think we should protest, I've done my</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>part as president in the spaces of which I sit in, as the SRC we've tried to raise our concerns against the increment of fees and we've lost it so now we just need to resort to the masses, we must protest because there's nothing else I can do now in my own personal capacity so I said okay ...</p> <p>She is suggesting but we are in the handover period so technically she is still president but technically it's like there's two presidents in the space but you would not dismiss the outgoing and you won't dismiss the incoming so it becomes very complicated for the university at that time because they had to call both presidents to everything that happens.</p> <p>... So she says to me lets protest and I say yeah I think it's a good idea, I mean Tebogo Thothela did it, I think Sibulelo Mgudlwa did it in his year, perhaps Shafi also did it in his year, these are all presidents now and so sure, lets. So we start planning the protest for about two weeks, long meetings at night, I'm working and I'm leading and I'm a student, it's a lot, sometimes I would get to campus at 10pm at night and have to sit through a meeting and catch up with certain things up until like 2am in the morning and then wake up again at 5 to go to work but it was worth it because when you think of the bigger picture, when you think of if this does become successful how many lives does it better, you literally can go for days without sleeping if you think of it that way. A week after the department of education and universities wanted to hold a leadership capacitation seminar or workshop and I said to comrades, look there's this opportunity, it's a perfect time for us to use it to problematize what's happening in institutions of higher</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>learning across the country because fee increment is not exclusive to WITS, it happens throughout various universities in the country so we go there and comrades are outside and they protest outside, I'm in the meeting at that time, it was minister Buti Manamela who was on the podium representing the youth in presidency and they were saying, who are these people making a noise outside, attempting to sing outside so that also agitates the student leadership inside the meeting and we clarify and say these are the issues and quite frankly we don't think that we should be going through some workshop of being taught how to lead when we are very well capable of leading and when institutions of higher learning have a crisis of fee increment across the country that is going to have a horrible effect on students who are in the system and those who are going to try to enter the system and so we collapse the whole workshop and we're going into commissions around fee increment across various universities and we all plead our case the next day and that was sort of the start of agitating spaces building up to Fees Must Fall.</p>	
02:07:46:03	In your meeting are you calling this protest Fees Must Fall?		02:07:49:04
02:07:49:09		<p>No, at that time in that meeting we are just speaking up against fee increment. Fees Must Fall comes up now when we are actually going to shut down campus so in order for things to trend you have to have a hashtag so the hashtag on twitter for the shutdown because it was a shutdown was #WITSFeesMustFall and we had planned that in the morning at 6am we would be stationed outside various gates of the university making sure that no one enters the space so</p>	02:12:28:15

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>comrades woke up and they stationed themselves across various gates of the university and basically creating a human shield where you just sit at the gate, not even a shield just sit at the gate because no one is going to drive over you so you just sit at the gate and no one is going to pick you up because its harassment, we sit at the gate and then we caused traffic and our station was the one on Empire at the bottom of Yale road and we apparently caused traffic all the way to Melrose, apparently, I couldn't get off campus but that's what the reports were saying at that time and again, remember the whole thing of being aware of our racial disparities but like again you see it but also you see class dynamics but also you see issues around consciousness for example you'd have white people being utterly rude, racist, aggressive towards us, the white community; students and parents and educators and staff and people who were just entering and exiting the university and you see it, people saying things like if you can't afford WITS University why are you here? Why aren't you wherever they think we ought to be as black bodies, you have black people saying, I need to write my exams I don't care about you and your fees I just want to write my exam okay, and you would have to literally say, my brother give me one second, you will write your exam, not today, no one is going to write their exam today but you will write your exam and trust me ours is not to hinder you from the brightness of your future, that's not ours, we just want more people to have the chance that you are about to have and it was hard, it was very hard, your black brothers being very angry at you because you're just hindering their future, rightfully so because you are hungry as a black child, as a</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		black child you don't have the privilege to miss a single day, a single minute from the next step that you ought to be taking to bring you to who you want to be so it was very hard trying to make our own people understand, other kids would say I'm on NSFAS I'm fine and then you have to explain to them how flawed National Student Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS is.	
02:12:30:22	So you and the outgoing president plan this protest, it takes two weeks, is that the human shield part or the protest?		02:12:38:18
02:12:38:23		That's the protest, Fees Must Fall started off by people just sitting at gates, that's all we did. The way we planned was that, that we are going to sit at the gates because if you sit at the gates and you don't let anyone come in, the university can't operate and the whole point of a university is for people to study for it to operate so if no one is coming into the school it can't function and the university is closed for the day and no vice chancellor wants that for their institution, particularly if its WITS University so that was the plan that the university will not be functioning that day and we succeeded, the university didn't operate, it didn't function, people did try but it didn't function and there was then conversations around what do you want and the then dean of students Pamela Dube came down and she was saying okay, what are the issues and then we presented our memorandum with our demands and part of the memorandum included issues that affected workers, part of the memorandum included issues that spoke to free education and the memorandum at first was drafted solely	02:19:36:05

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>by the SRC but when we were on the ground and there were other organisations that wanted to also make inputs to it, we had to be open to it because the only way you can strengthen a movement is if you allow people to contribute to it, the moment you become exclusionary you lose people's participation and people try contest the space because they don't feel included so they try to create their own spaces, their own movements, their own protests and people try to create a parallel leadership structure, when the SRC is saying this which is the legitimate voice of students, others will say x, so the easiest way is to always try and get as many voices as possible when it comes to decision-making so that everyone can hold an account to those decision. So Fees Must Fall escalates on campus, more students join it, other campuses pick up on it because they are also going through the same thing that we are going through, there is a conference in Durban at that point in time, we ask for other people to present our case on our behalf at that conference and it literally moves from campus to campus and then the WITS Fees Must Fall drops to Fees Must Fall because it is not about WITS anymore so the WITS part of Fees Must Fall drops and it becomes a Fees Must Fall of the country. Progress is made on a Friday I think, Habib comes to the university and we have a conversation with him, Adam Habib, the vice chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, WITS University, he comes to the university and we have a conversation with him on basically what students are demanding and the partnership that we also demand from the university in terms of addressing this issue on a national level so if the university is saying that it's beyond them not to increase fees and that they don't have</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>the capacity to not increase fees and they saying that it's the government that can assist them in this sort of decision then the university ought to join students on this particular plight. There are few concessions made between the students and the university and I think we left Solomon Mahlangu Concourse at around 4-5am in the morning. So the protests spread throughout the country, concessions are made within the university, eventually we go to Luthuli House, Luthuli sort of acknowledges what we've got to say and that was for me, as a young person of the African National Congress, a great moment and as contradictory as society may think it is to be standing there wearing an ANC doek but holding the ANC accountable, I repeat myself, who else but the children of the African National Congress to hold it accountable? That level of democracy, I don't think in many countries we could have done that when I think about it, particularly countries in the African continent, I don't think we could have walked all the way to the ruling party offices in the manner which we did, at the moment which we did it, remember it was impromptu, I don't want to say we wouldn't have been allowed because at the same time we had to have conversations as students, we had agreed that we were going, we had to have conversations to say you need to back down the police as the African National Congress because if you guys shoot at students it will be the African National Congress, the ruling party of South Africa that has shot at students who are coming to plea to the ruling party of the country for something that is very basic and you would have shot at them, so we had to say to them, look if you are worried about people occupying your building and burning it and whatever, that's not going to</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		happen, all that students want is for the ruling party to listen to them, that's all we want and to demonstrate the power that the students have at this point in time so you better back down those police because it's not going to look good on you if you keep those police there.	
02:19:36:18	So you take a decision at an SRC meeting that you are going to march to Luthuli House?		02:19:42:13
02:19:42:17		We take the decision not at the SRC offices, not even at the meeting of SRC, in a mass meeting, so as a governing structure you don't have time to think about logistics, we do operate in a country where you have to apply to be on the streets of the country so we don't have time for that because students want to get off campus and they want to go to Luthuli now and so yours is to make sure that students arrive there as safely as possible and so that was the conversation that we were having as we were walking, that can you guys make sure that you just put the police down, we coming and we come in peace but we come with very clear demands and all we need is for you guys to listen to us.	02:20:26:11
02:20:27:02	Had something happened when you decided to march to Luthuli House, why escalate the protest and go to Luthuli House?		02:20:36:02
02:20:37:15		I think there were about just three days of nothing, yes we speaking to the government, we had now occupied concourse, workers were not working, we were running the university as students which was very beautiful to see in	02:25:04:00

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>terms of collaboration and collective effort, there were teams of students who would clean the floors of concourse because that's where we had our meetings, that's where we ate, that's where we studied, that's where we slept so students would wake up and clean the floors because it's our space so it had to be clean and it's a very huge space if you've seen the images of it, it's a very huge space to have to wake up and mop and clean, students would clean toilets because workers were not cleaning anymore and those are our toilets and it's our hygiene and students would clean those spaces because we said that we are going to run the university, students would organise waste on campus, they would organise it, clean the grounds of campus and have a pick up point for a truck to come in because we closed off all the gates so the university would have to communicate with us that they are going to bring certain people on campus and we'd tell them exactly where to collect the waste from. Buses at night, we would demand that the buses operate after our last meeting of the night to take students back home, the university would frustrate us because in the mornings they never gave us buses because that's mobilization so if they avail the buses then lots of students would come on to campus and that's mobilization because even though students are coming onto campus, there's no studying so they wouldn't give us buses in the morning so we would have teams and people in charge of students, so if you are coming from education campus coming onto main campus there'd be someone in charge of bringing that collective from education to main campus and then at night we would have to have very, very heated discussions with the university to say that there's no ways you can be</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>expecting students to be walking back to Hillbrow and Parktown at this time of the night, even if you don't agree with our protest, these are people's children that you've committed to take care of whilst they're in your institution so you must avail the buses at night for students to go back to their residences. Food, we were in charge of feeding thousands of students because dining halls would sometimes not function, so it was hard, so you protesting and certain systems because of your protest collapse because you are protesting but then you have to incur the responsibility of making sure students are fed, that there's medical assistance, we would have a section within concourse that was used as a medical space and there was a space where students studied and there was a space where students had robust discussions about various issues in society and ideologies and things like that and there's a space where students slept so the whole concourse just became a very interesting space of existence for those who were a part of the movement, and so yes, when we went to Luthuli we were tired of sleeping on the floor, of course we would have slept longer if that's what it meant, if it meant that for us to get what we want we must continue then we would have continued but there was agitation within the space when we went to Luthuli House. There was also concern at that time of who's commanding the space? There was a bit of concern in terms of that and what are their intentions?</p> <p>So you lead but you lead with instruction because you are not a dictator but yours is to sort of have an understanding of what the collective wants and how best to go about attaining what the collective wants.</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

02:26:38:05 Take 2	What stories about others who were involved can you tell?		02:27:09:11
02:27:09:13		<p>There are so many untold stories, like the ones who used to clean the floors, like what's your story? How did you feel when you were cleaning the floors, the ones who used to make sure food is always ready, the ones who used to marshal the masses, huge numbers of people's kids, how do you feel that yours is to make sure that you protect people, those who used to bandage people's kids, help them when they can't breathe, what were you going through? So I really think that there are many people whose stories should be heard because it's a huge operation, it's not just Nompendulo, Mcebo, Shaeera, Mvuyane walking in the front and then boom its Fees Must Fall, no, it's the people who feed the people, who need to be there every day because without food people's momentum dies out, without water you are not hydrated on the streets, without medical assistance when people get hurt you won't want to come back into the space because you are hurt, you will leave, without figuring out proper transport system, if I walked to campus in the morning and walked back home at night and then I must walk back I would not want to come so those who used to fight with management to make sure that buses come at night, those who used to write the memorandums while we protesting, you'd literally leave campus and say okay we are going to Luthuli, you can't as a leader now go sit somewhere and fix the memorandum but people used to walk with us and say, let's double check are you guys still sticking with point 2, point 3, point 4 what must we change? Change ZXY and run and find an internet</p>	02:32:55:18

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>café, print the memorandum and make sure it's there by the time we get to the place we marching at, those people they are a part of what became this historic moment in society, it's not just the four of us. I think we've had to be so apologetic, it's like no matter how loud you recognise your peers, people don't hear it, I think of the Destiny Magazine cover, the whole article is about Shaeera and the student movement, I don't think I'm profiled, I actually don't think there's a part that's about me. So when they asked, I said okay, let's go Shaeera, actually I think the first thing I said was, can't you just take a picture from the protests? That's the first thing I said and they said no, we would like to blah blah blah and I said okay, it will be Shaeera and I, or can we have a number of young women who were involved? No, we would really like it to be you, then Shaeera says, president you should take it because you are the incoming president so you should affirm yourself as the incoming president and so I go, very agitated actually throughout that whole shoot and I think that's why I looked angry because I'm actually not comfortable but having sat with a few of my comrades the night before, we discuss the politics of who deserves to be on the front of a magazine cover? A model? A singer? Who? Why can't it just be a president of the SRC because then I might not be from a rural area but any young girl who comes across it wherever they come across it must think oh, she is not an actor, she's just an SRC president really of the students and she's in the front of a magazine cover, oh that's cool, so who deserves to be on a front of a magazine cover, that was the argument at that time and I don't regret it because other counterparts from opposition parties who are men who were on magazine covers, they</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		were never chastised, so is it because I'm a woman? Or is it because I'm ANC? What exactly is the issue?	
02:32:56:00	When you took the photo, did you expect backlash? So you went in knowing that this may be controversial but I'm doing it because?		02:33:03:17
02:33:04:04		I believe that my question remains, who deserves to be on the front of a magazine cover? Who? Winnie Mandela was on a magazine cover before she became "Winnie Mandela", so I think also personally, perhaps I was like this is so cool.	02:33:25:20
02:33:27:23	Do you think people sometimes forget your age?		02:33:30:00
02:33:31:06		All the time and I think often when the judgment comes, the criticism comes, that time I was 22, I'm a kid, there are people who have lived three times my age and they have never experienced some of the things that we've experienced, never had the responsibility that we've had and so if I'm going to make mistakes it's okay I'll learn from them but also can my judgment be fair and I think the space didn't allow for that, us being judged for being politically partisan was so confusing because students know our political lines, students know that when they go to vote they are voting for someone who is affiliated to the ANC so it was so confusing when society then started commenting in the space and those who are anti-ANC or anti-establishment or anti-Zuma were then now judging us because we are the children of the ANC and now when people opportunistically used the space to then fight national politics, now all of a sudden ANC kids and EFF kids are fighting on campus when we have been so fine over the past couple of weeks, it's	02:37:17:22

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>been hard because we are of different political schools but we were working and all of a sudden it's a problem that I'm ANC now, because I'm ANC I'm a sellout, because I'm ANC my positioning is of conflict, all of a sudden being ANC is a problem but on day one when you saw us in our different colours you celebrated it. So it really became confusing at some point and one began to ask themselves am I being used as a pawn in bigger politics? Because honestly when I look at the work we've done, have we really done wrong? If I was of a different political organisation, if I was a man, would I have been judged this harshly for some of the decisions that have been made and as president you take the positive and the negative, there are some things that I had no say in that happened but I had to carry them and you think that they won't carry into, I have been at WITS since 2016 and I only led Fees Must Fall 2015 but I still have to account for things today that I don't know about, everyone expects you to know because you were the leader, you were the president of the SRC and by virtue of that you are then the face of the movement and I always say this, it could have been Thembi, Thandi, Zandi, it could have been anyone else who was president at that point in time and they would have had to take upon that particular role of a president, you would have to speak to media as president, you would have to address masses as president and therefore you automatically become a face of the space because you have to account for what is happening in that space that you lead and that's honestly what it was.</p>	
02:37:20:00	So you go to Luthuli House and you hand over the memorandum, what happens		02:37:46:07

Commented [KN1]: Is this all correct? Should it be "I haven't been at WITS since 2016..."?

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

	next? Do you go back go concourse and you occupy? What happens for the remainder of 2015 regarding Fees Must Fall and at that time are you reading papers and seeing that this is getting big?		
02:37:49:08		So at that time I think I had phone problems, I was using a tablet, a Samsung tablet as my phone and it had a horrible battery so I'd leave it and I went and bought a small phone and at some point it was really hard to charge things so I honestly didn't have a phone during FMF and I think there were few nights when one could go to res to change really or to shower, sometimes we would just wipe ourselves in the bathroom close to concourse because if you leave campus, you're giving your masses to someone else to lead and any leader knows that you always need to be there so we would just wipe ourselves on campus, Shaeera would try to put on some eyeliner so that she doesn't look too puffy and this is all in the bathroom of concourse so sometimes when we would go to our rooms or go shower at home quickly or to just change whatever, you'd get time to sort of catch up quickly but most of the time you just depended on what people were saying around you and showing you but Shaeera always had her laptop with her so when we would sleep at concourse at night, we would just go through and plan the next day, sort of go through the news and check updates but to be honest we weren't really aware of a lot of what was being said and printed and done but when media would mis-tell our story, people would always make us	02:40:43:16

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		aware of that and then we would have to work on the narrative the next time we got to be on media, sometimes it would be social media strategies on Twitter, mainly to say the real WITS story, #TheRealWITSStory so if media was saying x, we would have to counter that and say the real WITS story, to tell the truth of what was happening on campus, even my Facebook I could never catch up with Facebook, till today I have not caught up with my Facebook from that time because it was just a lot, one day maybe I'll sit for like 2 weeks, I could never catch up on what was happening on my Facebook during that time.	
02:40:45:18	And how is the government reacting? Are they taking you seriously?		02:40:49:03
02:40:50:18		So we went to Luthuli, the whole country is in awe, that's one thing I know, I don't remember when my mom came to campus but she came I think once or twice to campus to also bring like Oros or to bring something, I don't remember what she brought but she came to contribute water or something and it was really nice to see her, it was really nice to have my mom and my grandmother there, they were very shy so they did not want to meet people, they were just like okay, we came to check if you are alive, lets feel your skin, okay here, here's the food, you are fine, you are alive okay bye, it was really nice to see my mom and because she couldn't get a hold of me but she would always call Tshepo and say Tshepo, is my child alive because all she had was TV and newspapers and radio and that took a lot on my family, my mom, my grandmother, all of them because they like, this is our child, to them I'm their child, to society you are a leader, so she would always call Tshepo	02:43:26:02

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		and ask Tshepo, is my child alive? Is she okay? And Tshepo would be like, yeah she's fine, she's here, she's okay and I wasn't aware of this up until later, I would hear stories, Tshepo would be like, your mom used to bother me during Fees Must Fall, every time she couldn't find you she just calls me and sometimes I'm not next to you but all she wanted to know was that I'm alive and I'm fine, of course she can see I'm alive on TV but beyond that.	
02:43:32:00	From Luthuli House what then happens leading up to the march to the Union Buildings and the famous picture being taken?		02:43:38:18
02:44:39:00		I'm not sure if it was the day after, I'm not sure if it was the Thursday or the Friday but I think we went to Luthuli on a Wednesday ... but from Luthuli we then go to Union Buildings, there's an idea of what should happen, there's the ground influence, there's aerial influence in terms of social media and blah blah blah and then there's you guys as the SRC and the decision that you have to make so it's a lot of factors that come into what should we be doing next and there are times when you feel like what should we be doing but as a leader you always need to come across as though you know exactly what you doing.	02:45:43:12
02:45:47:02	What happened at the Luthuli House, did you achieve what you wanted to achieve?		02:46:10:18
02:46:29:23		So at Luthuli we handed over the memorandum to the then secretary general of the African National Congress, comrade Gwede Mantashe and to be honest, the ANC signed the memorandum and acknowledged what our demands were	03:10:00:10

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>and that's what it was and theirs as a party is to narrate to government what the masses want on the ground because they can't themselves give us free education but they can mandate their employees to government to address the various needs that were on that memorandum and the main reason why we protested, this is something that always gets lost in translation, when we woke up and we shut down the gates of WITS university, we were fighting for a 0% fee increment and as employees of the South African Student Congress it was automatic that in our language we also speak about free education because that was the ultimate but that morning when we woke up, just like they did in 2012, president Tebogo Thothela and their fee rally, president Sibulele Mgudlwa, just as they did when we woke up that morning, we were speaking about 0% fee increment in context of the political school which we come from that says that we want free education, so free education was there as a matter of principle but it's not something you could have demanded from a university but it's something that you can demand in principle in the university space and lobby the university to be with you as you go and challenge this issue on a national level and so that's what was happening when we were at WITS University, when we get to Luthuli House we are now really amplifying the call for free education, we are still speaking about the 0% fee increment because that's what we want now but we are speaking about a very tangible, concrete, stated commitment from the state on when will they roll out free education and this is also looking at the policy positions of the African National Congress at that time in this demand so when we go to Luthuli House that's what we are speaking</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathswa Interview

		<p>about. When we go to the Union Buildings we reiterate our position that we took to Luthuli and we are saying it now to the state, we've said it now to the ruling party who ought to be the ones who mandate their employees in government to fulfil this particular demand but now we are holding the state accountable. One thing, when we were leaving campus that day, that made me feel as though there will be a positive outcome is the fact that there was preparation for it, if people aren't going to give you a positive outcome they won't prepare themselves to receive you, that's how I feel, particularly at that magnitude at the Union Buildings, they won't prepare themselves to receive you but there was preparation, people were waiting for us to come that's how I felt, so when we left campus I felt that something positive will come out of the march at the Union Buildings and indeed something positive did come but the leadership of WITS University did not go into the meeting inside the Union Buildings so myself and Shaeera who were presidents, who were governance, who were actual presidents at that time because Mcebo Dlamini was the former president of the SRC at WITS, Vuyani Phambo was, I don't know what they call them in EFF terms but he was sort of the chairperson of the EFF on campus at WITS University and so we would have gone into the meeting Shaeera and myself, but we agreed as the four of us, that let us be on the ground with our students and we agreed that the state knows what we want, they received the memorandum at Luthuli, they've heard of the memorandum on various media platforms, the memorandum would be taken through by other student leaders from other campuses and institutions into that</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>meeting and so they know what we want so really there's no need for us to go into this meeting, it's okay for us to be on the ground with our students, with our masses also because you can't leave your constituency on its own on the ground so we stayed with students on the ground and on the day it was huge to see young people from all walks of life there in that space, mothers, fathers, ordinary members of society with students, it affirmed the authenticity and the legitimacy of what we were demanding. If what we were asking for was ridiculous no one would have come, it would have been just ourselves speaking to ourselves but parents were there with their children and so surely what we were asking for was legitimate. The space was chaotic of course because there are various people with their various motives in the space so the space was chaotic at some point but we were able to sort of restore order, it was just unfortunate that when we walked in finally as the WITS collective, someone had instructed students to throw rocks at the police just as we as the WITS collective were about to address the crowd that was there, someone decided to instruct students to throw rocks at the police and of course the police will retaliate and that dispersed us because when the teargas, the rubber bullets, the stunt grenades were now coming out, we not going to stay at the bottom part of the Union Buildings and that destabilized our formation at that particular point in time but by the time they dispersed us, the announcement was out, actually before we even walked in the announcement was out that the president and the government had agreed to the demands that we had had so at that particular time the three main demands were that we want no fee increment in all institutions of</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>higher learning in the country, we want the insourcing of workers and the government ought to assist in the facilitation of that process in various institutions of higher learning across the country and that the government ought to commit to free education and revert as soon as possible with a plan of action on how they are going to roll out free education, so those were the main demands and those were the main positive outcomes of that protest and of Fees Must Fall 2015 in general, if we talk on a national scale those were the outcomes. And then when we left Union Buildings, I was quite upset because the way we left it was not the way I had hoped we would leave it, being dispersed by teargas, stunt grenades and all those things and as you walk down the streets of Pretoria there was just chaos and that's not how I had thought we would leave the Union Buildings, particularly as a person who advocates for non-violent protests and just non-violence in general in society, I was really upset that that is how we left, I left that space running and helping students who were hurt, I don't think we needed to have left the space in that way but when we got home and we saw that there were other students or young people who had remained and cleaned the grounds of the Union Buildings those sort of things made one feel good to be a young person because it was so quick for the narrative to shift to no, they don't care, they are just hooligans but if we just hooligans we wouldn't clean up the space that our counterparts and our peers messed up, very kumbaya like politics but I believe in active citizenry and I believe in us as citizens taking care of our state and just finding the best way to go about doing things, when I left I just didn't feel like it was necessary for us to have left the</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>space in that way because it almost made us forget that we actually left with a positive outcome, of course the positive outcome was not what the people were saying, there was a confusion, so people were saying fees have fallen and I guess that was the tricky part in terms of the hashtag and the demands, so yes we said fees must fall but we were talking about an increment and when people said fees have fallen they were correct in saying the increment has fallen but fees hadn't fallen and we started introspecting in how we could have better termed it but Fees Must Fall would be free education but at that particular time when we said fees must fall the immediate demand was 0% fee increment and the ultimate demand was free education so having to explain that and say okay well we are happy that we have 0% but we actually don't have free education yet but we do have a commitment to it, it was a bit tricky trying to explain that to society and we also had to introspect in terms of the language that we were using to communicate to society. So many radical students and young people would come out and say no fees haven't fallen and we had to explain what that meant, it didn't mean that we didn't achieve our immediate goal, we did achieve our immediate goal which was 0% and hence we were very angry in the following year 2016, when the state then had an increment of 8% because that was regressive, you can't go from 0% to 8% and hence there was so much anger within students in that year because protesting is not nice, it's not fun, it's not like we wake up and we like yay we are going to protest, it's like yay we want to study, yay we actually want to go work, yay we actually want to contribute to the economy and the growth of this country so to have to force us into a position where</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>we have to go back onto the streets, not that we mind, we will get on to the streets if we have to get on to the streets but to force us into that position I don't even know how to explain it, but it was very disappointing and hence students were very angry in 2016. But we get back onto campus post Union Buildings and we doing damage control, we having to make sure we can account for students who were hurt, buses that were lost, we are just accounting for a lot and then we have a mass meeting to pave the way forward, okay how do we feel about the announcement? And where to from here? And there was a sentiment that okay, well it's not yet Uhuru, yes we've gotten the 0% but we want free education but now we have to go into conversations of what kind of free education? Free education for who? Free education when? How do we want this free education to look like? And at that time I felt that people weren't wanting to have those conversations, people were just saying we want free education now, it was very confusing and that's when some of us started being called sellouts and that's when the space becomes antagonistic towards various students, I remember standing up in front of a mass meeting and saying, at what point did we become so intolerant to each other's voices and views because not so long ago this space was welcoming and I've been saying that if you have a different view come up and line up for the mic and share your view here, don't heckle and howl at someone on the podium because as students, as scholars we ought to be able to be tolerant around different views, that's what the academic space is all about, it's about being able to state your position and your case in a conducive manner and this space wasn't allowing for that anymore,</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>people were just heckling and howling at you if you wearing ANC colours, if you weren't saying the protest must continue, if you weren't saying what a few wanted to hear and what I analysed from that space was that you had a huge mass of students, you had a minority loud voices and another voice that can't find expression but it seems like students want this voice to find expression but it can't because of this small voice that is very domineering and its toxic, it's not healthy, its aggressive, it was so confusing. So certain voices couldn't find expression and students then lost faith in the space and momentum was lost and so faith and trust in the SRC was lost because it was hard for one to affirm their space or assert themselves within the space and your students want you to lead them but you yourself, you're intimidated by the space and there's so many different voices in the space and that's when the clashes start, that's when the differences start and that's where I think we as student leaders, we as student activists, because you will have a mass of students who will come to the protest but there's a core of maybe 40 or 50 activists who actually determine what happens in this space and this is activists across the board, across political parties, just activists and I think we failed students because we got caught up in our own issues and we failed students and we couldn't rise above our own issues and our own differences and say, well we differ but how do we communicate our differences without making the space regressive? And I think we failed students in that regard and so politics at WITS became toxic that whole year, 2016. So from end of 2015 we make sure students go write exams and there were those who would make arguments that the protest should</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>continue, so the issue when we came back was that there were voices that were saying but we didn't get free education, there were voices that were saying but workers issues have not been addressed so we must continue protesting and there were voices that were saying okay, yes these issues haven't been addressed but how do we reposition the nature of protest in order to accommodate where we are in the year because people must write exams because people must go become professionals because people must go feed their families because people are on NSFAS and they take the R3000 that they get as NSFAS stipend and they send it home so if you are saying that they mustn't work next year because they weren't able to write their final exams, whatever it may be you are basically stopping a particular household from having income in that household for the next 12 months, there are students who are international students who are here on permits, it's a schlep to try and get permits for studying for different students, you are saying they must waste a year, that's what you are saying, there are parents who have budgeted for until November 30th after that come back home, they've budgeted R400 that needs to bring you back home and they are not going to be sending you pocket money for December so now you are saying a parent must extend that budget for two more weeks, so you are saying a lot of things, no we will put them in South Point, okay fine, as a governance structure you know how it works so you go and you calculate a room per day and how many students will we need, its billions, okay where are we going to find those billions? No, we will find them. So at that time being in governance and the political nature of the space really</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>clashes because in governance you need to come up with solutions, it's not romantic at all, as governance we are now thinking like governance structure and also our political schooling tells us that you can't kill the energy of your people, people need to win something or attain something, and breath, collect themselves and reposition themselves and then okay lets go again but you can't have rolling protests, you going to kill your people because they going to keep on getting hurt, it's going to take even longer to get certain concessions on various demands and then the momentum is lost because we are not winning anything and that was very hard to communicate because we all from different political schools but our political school says that comrades, you need to come back, look at what has happened, re-strategize, pick it up from here, where to from here? So that moment wasn't allowed, that moment was seen as a moment to kill the movement hence then the narratives like sellouts, but then the academic year is saved, students do write their exams in December and January and as a president of a governing structure, when you sit in the graduations in March, June and December, I don't care what you say, but when I see a mother ululating at their child, a mother going up and down the aisles of the Great Hall which many parents don't have the privilege to even enter, you are like, no its okay, its fine, you might not understand it but it's okay and the whole idea of sacrifice, sacrifices must be made in order for gains to be made, I think it's highly problematic that we want to compare ourselves to pre-apartheid, highly problematic, its highly problematic that the idea of protest that we have is very quick that we get to strategies of the apartheid era or of our struggle</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>movement, I do believe in mass action like that but I also believe that we need to reflect the era in which we live in so before we get there what else can we do? One of the greatest protest actions I would love to do is to live hack into systems and shut everything down, that's moving with the 4th industrial revolution, for example I would love if students protest in 2 years' time or whenever they protest they must send out an email to all students and say, you can all study for free but to do that come and sign up a form at x counter and there you have mobilized your mass by hacking into the system, I used to think about things like that as well, I used to think about this in 2014-2015 but we are very quick to think of marching before we think of how to hack the technology of which runs our lives right now and which plays a crucial role in how we function as society so how do we evolve the manner in which we protest as well?</p>	
03:10:00:19	<p>So it's the Union Buildings, it's the clashes, it's exams, it's school break, it's graduation, where are you in all this? Did you write exams, did you graduate, did you step down from the SRC, what happened to you after that?</p>		03:10:26:22
03:10:27:10		<p>It's hard, for me at that time it's hard, politically it's so challenging, in governance we are doing okay. What happens then is that the SRC becomes highly politicized so it's not like in other SRC terms where all you could focus on is throwing a fresher's party and things like that so I end up doing a lot of things on the national scale in terms of conversations around policy, reform that's related to access</p>	03:20:02:24

Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>and success within the education system, working together with the department of higher education and so forth so I'm hardly on campus because I sort of get pulled into the national discourse and then Motheo Brodie the deputy president then steps in to sort of work on the governance issues that are also not on the policy level of the university in terms of council and so forth but like actual things that students need, it might not be food but it's a need that students want that's part of governance and balancing that becomes so hard but Motheo pulls through and burns out so many fires because we become this SRC that's recognised on a national level, that must be part of national discourse and Motheo pulls through and holds the fort in terms of campus and I really to this day appreciate the relationship that we had, Motheo and myself. Shaeera, her term is done and my SRC is officially in term and she tries to advise but she also tries to keep her space because you don't want to be seen as though you are leading from the grave so she tries to allow us that space to do well and to make our mistakes but she's also there assisting but also playing a role in the national discourse of access and success within the education system. I can't remember what I'm doing academically but I graduated the March after, I was very nervous actually I kept on wondering how my marks look like, I was owing fees so I couldn't see my marks so I was wondering did I pass so I was very nervous because as the president of the SRC I can't fail and also we were always about this narrative of chant and pass so I was very nervous, I was crossing my fingers but at the same time I was like, I am fine, I am okay, so it was very great in January when I got my transcript and I saw that I actually did pass and I was</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>graduating in March which was also very inspiring because many members of my SRC term did graduate and I think there was 6 or 7 of us who graduated in March so society and students were very inspired by us because many people would have thought that we would have failed post Fees Must Fall but we actually pulled through and the whole narrative of comrades do graduate was then amplified. The SRC is juggling the national discourse and issues on campus. So as SRC president and I think the exec of the SRC you are allowed to take a sabbatical in your SRC year, where the university basically allows you to not do school work but I thought I'd be superwoman so I registered for 2 modules which I did not finish so I had to do my honours again the following year but I didn't do them, I did my honours with UNISA for the first 6 months and then I realised I want to go into education so I left my honours, my family was shocked because I was doing so well I was getting distinctions and everything and they were like how do you just leave a qualification in the middle like that which was also different because post SRC I then go back to being an A student again, I get A's now even today I get A's, my recent transcripts for my postgraduate certificate in Education has like 4 distinctions and the rest are B's so I'm doing better again academically which is also very inspiring because in as much as you accept the sacrifice you making when you are in varsity and your marks are slacking, you tend to feel like maybe I'm not smart so having the time now to just focus on my academics as well is a confidence booster so the marks are looking good now. So I left the Sciences and I got into Education because basically I was trying to figure out what makes me tick, what can I wake up and do every day?</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>And I realised people, I can do people every day, but like where? So I had to find a niche and I said okay education, where in education? Higher or basic? I said higher would be cliché, I think a lot of people are focusing on higher education right now, then I remembered how in SASCO we always used to speak about bridging the gap between basic and higher education having acknowledged the disjuncture between the two, when students come out of basic education into higher education they look like they were never ready so I then decided that I would go and focus on basic education so the journey then as someone who did a Bachelor of Science in Geography is that I have to do a bridging course called a postgraduate certificate in Education and then I can do my honours, masters and PhD in Education, ultimately I want to be a specialist in Education, the things I'm passionate about are increasing access and success for black bodies within the space, learners, teachers, parents, the education space is very micro aggressive towards black bodies, those that are educators, those that are parents and those that are actual learners also looking at the curriculum but focusing more on history, I think history is very pivotal, I'm a supporter of the fact that history is being made compulsory in our schools together with life orientation, that's one of my other majors as an educator, history, geography and life orientation. I think only now as a young adult I'm beginning to appreciate life orientation and what it taught me, you know certain things but you not sure where you know them from but if you think about it properly you did them in life orientation and you just felt like this is so unnecessary but a lot of the things that you know subconsciously as an individual you</p>	
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		<p>actually did them in life orientation so perhaps we need to look at how life orientation is being structured as a subject within schools, it's very important for people to have a basic understanding of life, what can I do with my science? How does my science relate to everything else in society? And history, maybe my bias comes from the fact that I am progressive, I don't know, but history is very important, we need to understand where we are, why we are, a lot of things even in the technology space makes sense when you go through history, the French Revolution, when you look at the Great Depression, when we speak about the 4th industrial revolution now, when we look back at where it comes from, it comes from those teachings that we were learning in high school. So that's basically what I'm into now so I want to focus on that, curriculum reform, access and success for black bodies within the education space and also perhaps also accommodating different ways of learning, we all just comprehend differently, we all have different skills and we need to learn how to bring out the best of each child in order for them not to just become a number as they grow up.</p>	
03:20:59:20	<p>Having come out of such a significant chapter in your life at such a young age which came with a lot of lessons that some people only learn much later on in their lives, you probably then understand someone like Nelson Mandela and putting yourself at a time where</p>		03:22:15:13

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	there are different factions, people think the country should move in a certain direction and everything just falls on you and being called a sellout, what do you think interests you about Mandela's life now, what do you think you understand about his life especially as a political leader?		
03:22:15:19		He always used to find a way to say, it's not me, it's all of us, I can't quote him exactly now but he would always find ways to sort of emphasize the fact that it's not him and that he is just a part of a collective and he's just an individual that had to play a particular role in this collective, that's one thing I've learned and it's one thing I've found myself always having to articulate in various spaces and I always feel like I'm not being heard but the mere fact that its recorded in various spaces is okay for me, I mean there was a day when we were invited by the South African Women in Dialogue and I said, Shaeera said, president let's protest, she said that and I know people remember that so it's okay, one day people will remember that I didn't say I did it, it's just how society sort of chooses who it wants to lead them, it's beyond us, it's really beyond us and I think it was beyond Mandela as well and a lot of things happen and I'm like why me? There are also other people and my mom always used to say, its life and sometimes you'll want something and you say why didn't I get that? And that's just life, that wasn't meant for you even though you think you would have done	03:30:18:17

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		<p>best at it. But I want to speak about Winnie as a woman, it was the second time that I had met her but the first time I met her I didn't get to talk to her, it was just hi, how are you and a picture, I accompanied her to go vote and that's all it was but when I got to sit with Mama Nomzamo Madikizela Mandela and it was with people but I actually got to say something and she actually got to respond and I shared how the space is for a young black woman and how you just become the face and the backlash that comes with that and the patriarchal nature for all women, so women end up fighting each other but it's not because women don't love each other, it's not because women don't have each other's backs but it's because of the makeup of the space, the patriarchal nature of the space where you then become isolated, one moment people are saying no, you must speak because you are the president and then the next minute they saying, why is it only her that's speaking but they just affirmed you and all that confusion. Sharing the experiences of various women within the space and sort of having to portray a very masculine way of leading, of having to sing in a very masculine way in order for people to follow you when you sing, just sharing the challenges that we had in the space, not being heard, the aggressive nature of the police and feeling violated, the aggressive nature of the state, the state was very aggressive towards us, aggressive nature of various institutions within the system and when she responded, she understood and she sat and she listened, she understood and the more you read about her and her past and how she was judged for things she had never done, she had to account for things she had never done, her name was tainted for things she had never done,</p>	
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		<p>she always had to affirm herself in a very militant manner when Winnie loved to look good, Winnie had to at times portray a very masculine nature in order to assert herself in various spaces. So basically when I talk about, for example, me post FMF, people tried to make me feel bad for being myself and I wondered how did Mama Winnie balance it because she loved to dress well and look nice but she was a guerrilla, I get my nails done without fail, even Mama Winnie, every time you go see her, her nails were just always done but she is a guerrilla at the end of the day so why must I be apologetic? How do my aesthetics define how revolutionary I am and so when you share these things with her and you see her nod and then she responds and she can relate to what you saying and she affirms the pain that you are feeling and she says, you are not crazy to feel hurt by XYZ, you not crazy to feel let down by your people because she was let down by the African National Congress and we experience this, women who were in the forefront of Fees Must Fall, part of the African National Congress, part of the Progressive Youth Alliance, we were let down by our own comrades and she could relate to that as well and so I see Tata Nelson Mandela but Winnie makes sense to many of us and her passing away was devastating because I remember the last time I saw her and one time I emailed her great grandchild and I said, can we just sit at the porch and just listen and ask and listen and just take as much as we can take from her because we always talk about intergenerational dialogues but when they happen in these seminars and these workshops and these great spaces we don't actually get as much as we want to get but to have the opportunity to just sit down with her and just have tea the</p>	
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		whole day, I think we could have learned so much more hence I'm very passionate right now on the idea of production companies and various creatives archiving as many stories of our living legends, as much of their stories as possible and even the young ones and I think it's very important that those stories are captured because they really give us an understanding of where we come from and where we are going and where we currently are, when Mama Winnie could resonate with our issues we felt better, we left there feeling like okay, we are not crazy to feel the way we feel and so Mama Winnie makes sense.	
03:30:28:18	If you had to organise a march now like the women did during the struggle, marching for different things, what would the march be for? What's the new struggle?		03:32:27:14
03:32:35:00		I think the dignity of women in its totality and I want to call it the dignity of women in its totality because it's gender based violence which is like a joke, I don't understand what must happen for society to get it right, we live in an extremely abusive society and I spoke at a SANRAL event commemorating Mama Albertina Sisulu last year November and I asked what's in the air? Everything is getting rotten, you go to church it's a mess, you go to work spaces it's a mess, you go to schools it's a mess, I am actually getting tired of having to wake up and when you go into a WhatsApp group you see something depressing, there was a time I think towards the end of last year, I felt so depressed, I was just like I can't, why are we even living because every	03:36:31:12

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		<p>day you wake up and there's something so disheartening in the news, threads about people's children, about people's wives, I don't know, it's like we need a cleansing, I've never believed in like the world coming to an end and then the rebirth but sometimes I feel like that, like we all just need to disappear and we need to allow this earth to start again. We need a cleansing of society in all spaces, government is a mess, public sector is a mess, our communities are a mess, people don't have proper homes, people do the most atrocious thing to each other, I feel like we need a cleansing, I don't know how we are going to get that cleansing but that's what I feel like because it's almost like you fix this and something else gets messed up every day and I don't know, I don't know how we going to fix it, I don't know if it's political will that we need, I don't know if it's some religious divine intervention that we need but the world is in a huge state of deterioration, when you look across our borders there are things that are happening that are just shocking, we need a cleansing, I don't know what else to call it because there are just too many issues and I think the moment you get out off campus and you become an ordinary member of society, the more you see life, society because on campus you just think its campus issues, students, students, students but the moment you get out of campus you realise that there's just so much more that needs to be addressed and I think as an active citizen it becomes so overwhelming because when you are in university it becomes easy for you to focus on your niche but when you get out of university it just becomes overwhelming because you want to touch here, you want to</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathswa Interview

		touch there, you want to touch everything so if I were to protest, I would protest for the cleansing of the country.	
03:37:12:10	Would you say “cleansing of the country” reflects on how you feel about you party, the ANC?		03:37:16:08
03:37:17:01		I’m a staunch member of the African National Congress and I don’t know where else I would locate my politics, as an activist, I don’t know which other space would accommodate my politics and therefore I will remain in the space which still represents the sort of work that I still want to do and I reiterate the fact that we cannot reduce institutions to individuals, the church can’t be shunned upon just because there are few crazy pastors and priests in the world and so the African National Congress cannot be disowned because of a few individuals and it’s up to us as young people within the African National Congress to revive that and not only as young people because even within ourselves I must be honest there are those of us who don’t seem to understand what we are trying to achieve here so those of us in general, the old guard, the young guard, those of us who want to see the African National Congress represent what it truly represents need to stand up and unite with one another, it is hard, it’s always hard for the good people, people who want to do right but I can’t see any other political party leading this country so the one that I can see leading this country, I need to continue putting in my effort, my little part, I can’t fix all of it but I and the next person can contribute to fixing a segment of it until it in its entirety is whole again.	03:39:01:07

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03:39:02:04	What does the Constitution mean to you?		03:39:32:10
03:39:45:13		I think for me, I grew up with people who would say we have great policies, we have a great Constitution, we have great frameworks, South Africa on paper is brilliant, we just don't know how to use South Africa on paper to the best of our ability and so for me the Constitution represents a document that I can use to advance the lives of the people that are most marginalized in this country and to create equality within this country, equality being ensuring that we acknowledge the differences that we have as human beings and appreciating them, working on bettering the lives of people, having appreciated our differences working towards bettering our lives in order for us to then be equal and that's what it means for me right now so I acknowledge, like Reverend Jesse Jackson says, that we are free and through this freedom that we have, we need to use the Constitution to create equality within our country, so we are free but not equal so that's what the Constitution means to me, it's a guiding document, it's the book that you can say, but I can, no, but you not allowed to, which I think a lot of countries even though they have constitutions, I think it's so hard for people to do that and I know in our country it also is hard but having lived in other parts of the continent I think in South Africa the Constitution still means something because in many countries in the continent it means nothing.	03:41:35:15
03:41:41:15	Final thoughts?		03:41:56:08
03:42:04:00		I think one, I'm very grateful for my family and how they've been able to shape the young person that I've become and the individual that I am because it's the values that I'm taught within my family that move me as I go on through	03:52:32:11

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		<p>life. My genuine care for society, basic care, nothing complicated, nothing ideological, nothing sophisticated, just genuine care, if I have XY why can't the next person have it? Genuine care, a person shouldn't go to bed hungry, a person shouldn't have to sleep on the streets, that simplicity of care, I don't want to over exaggerate it. Values around greed, we are greedy, we have but we are just never full as people, I just don't understand it, like you can have it all girl but like you don't have to have it all and we must just learn as human beings to say thank you but I'm okay and to allow the next person to also have and I don't understand why we just can't do that and it is human nature, according to Archaeology studies apparently, we are innately greedy and we are all about the survival of the fittest so that's the one thing I appreciate and I wish society could just inculcate that sort of culture and values into themselves that it is that simple.</p> <p>I also want to then speak on the issue of women and various genders in this space, we are not different as people and I think this is the whole issue around triple oppression, gender, race and class, when you look at Archaeological studies we are all the same and so at what point did the one group decide that they are going to be superior to the other? And so I want us to think about that as human beings, of how race and gender has been used to create class disparities within society and how do we do away with that, so that's also very important to me. And I want to also appeal to men in this space, to truly think about the privilege that they have and before they open their mouths to really double think, even those that think they are</p>	
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		<p>progressive, to really think about what they are about to say about gender issues in society, I think men are very ignorant about the way in which society does not favour women, does not favour those that are gay, lesbian, queer, transgender, asexual, they just don't consider the LGBTQI community.</p> <p>I also want to then talk about young people, it's no lie that young people have always been at the forefront of change in society and so if we want to move as South Africa and I always say this to president Cyril Ramaphosa, if we want to move as South Africa, why not just have the bulk of young people at the forefront of various spaces in our society because we are not scared, we've got nothing to lose, most of us don't have houses so there's no bond that we have to pay, many of us don't have children so the whole idea of young people feel like they've got nothing to lose is really true so just allow us to go there with our crazy ideas and just be at the forefront of the necessary change that we need to make in society, of course I am generalizing when I say we don't have bonds and we don't have children, you know what I'm trying to say. So I really want to advocate for young people to be at the forefront of various spaces in society and I also want to advocate or encourage young people to be united and support one another and it's the same thing I want to say to women, you can't do it on your own, you've never seen mass change take place because of one person so we could never do it on our own as young people, as women, as marginalized bodies, as black bodies, we can never do it on our own, the more we unite the more progress we can make.</p>	
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Nompendulo Mkhathshwa Interview

		<p>Education, everybody ought to have access to education and it ought to be education that is considerate of what we trying to achieve as a country, an education that will consider all of our different skills and abilities and understand how to use them to the best of our ability and to the progress of our country. I also want to advocate for educators to be taken seriously by our state and by our society, as an educator I don't understand how the people who we want to create engineers and to create astronauts, the people that we want to become doctors and to move us in the 4th industrial revolution, these educators who are supposed to create these amazing people, we take so for granted in our society, I don't understand it at all and I want to further question the education that we provide to our educators, I can't be learning outdated knowledge as an educator because what's going to happen when I teach my children? So I really don't think we are focusing on the education space in that's sense.</p> <p>I think just in general if I were to speak to South Africans, we must definitely guard from being our own worst enemy, there is so much good and potential in our country and I think we sometimes get so caught up in the noise, the noise that's fueled for various reasons because people always want to make you feel like you not doing well as a people and ours is to make sure that we don't get caught up in that noise and that we always try to see the potential and the good that is within our country and how do we capitalize on that, how do you see a kid in the township who has a particular skill and how do you as someone who's working</p>	
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		<p>in private sector or who has a particular network, how do you help that child broaden the spaces in which they can do their work, it's that simple. How do you as the state have corporations with young entrepreneurs to ensure that there's young blood within the space but also give them opportunities that will open more doors for them. I just think it's so easy to move our country from point A to point B, well not that it's easy but it's doable and I also think that perhaps we shouldn't be too harsh on ourselves, I think sometimes we are very harsh on ourselves, I know I'm contradicting myself but we need to move but also we need not be too harsh on ourselves and we are a young democracy, we must appreciate our democracy, we must protect and guard our democracy ... We need to protect our democracy, we need to guard our democracy, in South Africa we still have a democracy, in many countries around the continent they say there is democracy but when you look at the lived realities of the people in those countries and the way in which they engage in various spaces in those countries, they don't have what we call democracy and at no point should we take our democracy for granted as South Africans and we need to guard against it and so that is why I want to advocate for young people, particularly old people because sometimes old people tend to give up and be complacent, we need to continue being active as citizens of South Africa because it is our country, Thomas Sankara used to speak about his people building their country, he made his people build the tracks in their own country, if we don't build South Africa who is going to build it? We need to build our country, no one but South Africans must be building their country, we must stop complaining and sitting</p>	
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Commented [KN2]: Or cooperation?

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		in our various corners and get out there and do the little that we can do.	
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