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I was born in Sophiatown an African residential area township if you like in Johannesburg, which was declared a white (spot) area, as a result an Act of Parliament "Group Areas Act" was passed which led to our eviction to Soweto, a complex of townships, Johannesburg's Black residential area where I was raised and educated up to matriculation.

I am the first child in a family of three (3) a boy and a girl whose ages are 26 years and 18 years respectively. My parents are self-employed, my mother is a shopkeeper and my father is a coal merchant.

After matriculating in 1970, I joined the Johannesburg City Council as a cashier clerk in the Liquor Department. My duties with the Council were not that of a cashier clerk only, I was also a junior supervisor of our depot the Wermer Hostel Liquor Depot.

Wermer was one out of the three (3) Black hostels situated in the heart of Johannesburg and had the highest number of inmates, whose greater percentage consisted of migrant workers from all corners of South Africa and neighbouring countries viz; Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, South West Africa and Rhodesia, employed in the sanitary department of the council, manufacturing industries, iron and steel industries, smelting works, commerce and various other industries dotted in and around Johannesburg.

My exposure to the inmates' way of living in the hostel(s) which was particularly emphasised by drinking as a form of recreation (recreation facilities in the city being for whites only, and movement to the nearest being limited by time and Laws "Nag Pas" a night permit required to be produced on demand by members of the police force), whose results were family negligence, alcoholism, violence and numerous other ills. All these experiences stirred, kindled in me a feeling of participating in activities that would help make their wasted lives turned into purposeful and fruitful lives. As I had no basic skills of working with individuals, groups and communities, I joined the University of South Africa as a part time student with the intension of pursuing Social Work so as to acquire the knowhow and skills of helping the inmates help themselves lead adequate lives and learn whilst in Johannesburg, which has traumatic effects on country folk. The load of work and responsibilities with the liquor department, could not allow me rather give enough time to concentrate on my studies. I then applied for transfer to the influx and efflux department (which deals with the issuing of reference books "Pass Book") which controls the flow of people into Johannesburg coming for job opportunities. My participation in the venture of improving the ways of living of the inmates, led in my falling out of favour with the authorities who interpreted the whole exercise as political.

I left South Africa in 1972 and abandoned my studies, and in the same year joined the Nsamizi Training Institute to pursue a Diploma in Social Development (Works). During my training, that is, in Uganda now, I did my practicals with the National Hospital of Uganda, Mulago Hospital Social Work Department and the Ministry of Culture and Community Development Rehabilitation Section working with physically handicapped people both adults and children.



On completing my studies I was awarded a scholarship to do communications in West Germany, hence my studying the language, but before completing the whole course with the Goethe Institut (German Cultural Centre) I was awarded another scholarship by my present sponsors "International University Exchange Fund" based in Geneva to do a course in Radio Production with the All Africa Conference of Churches Communications Training Centre as a preparatory course for my studies in Germany whose scholarship was now tenable in Leeds University Britain.

Because of the deteriorating political, social, economic situation in Uganda and the present escalation of brutality hundreds of people flee to seek asylum in neighbouring countries viz; Kenya. Until very recently such asylum seekers, that is, Ugandans in Kenya could not be taken care of by the existing Refugee bodies, the reason being the East African Community treaties. It is out of this deadlock that the AACC Refugee Department decided to take the responsibility on humanitarian grounds, to answer the plight of Ugandans in Kenya.

An emergency programme was created to look after the welfare of Ugandans, when this decision was taken. A need for a sound worker arose as the existing machinery within the AACC was inadequate to carry the necessary services effectively. The AACC has its headquarters in Nairobi and administers various branch activities in 16 African countries. I was approached by the AACC to take up the responsibility which thing I did and postponed my studies. My responsibilities with the refugee department are counselling and placement both educational and occupational. I also issue business loans. I cover the whole range of rehabilitating and resettling displaced people. I do not handle Ugandans only but refugees from various other African countries viz; Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi and South Africa. Placement of refugees is done in and outside Kenya, the emphasis being to settle or place them in Africa, depending, requires constant contacts with Embassies etc. I also attend meetings, seminars consultations planning and programming meetings which mold and take or make decisions about how best can the refugee problem be handled in Africa.

My employers together with the International University Exchange Fund one of the agencies involved with refugee work have awarded me a scholarship to pursue studies so as to be equipped to handle my responsibilities more adequately.

#### EXTRA CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES:

Reading, writing poems though I have published none, Music, Karate, Softball, Soccer and Yoga. I am a member of the Nairobi Judo Club and the International Meditation Society.

As a student at home I was captain of our High School's first division softball team and was second base man, pitcher and outside fielder of my home town team Matadors Softball Club and were the Round Robin and the Johannesburg and District Softball champions for five consecutive years

ALEXANDER MKWANAZI.