

# **REPAIRING THE PAST: REPARATIONS AND TRANSITIONS TO DEMOCRACY: DEBATES ON TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE: WHERE ARE WE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Mr Tlhoki Mofokeng, Director and Dr Marjorie Jobson, Chairperson

Khulumani Support Group: March 2004

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Khulumani Support Group appreciates the key question being raised in this consultation – that of what countries are doing on behalf of victims of gross human rights abuses, as opposed to what countries are doing against perpetrators of past abuses.

Khulumani Support Group is an organisation of victims of the apartheid-era violence in South Africa. Through its programmes, the organisation advocates for and supports victims in their efforts to restore their own dignity and to rebuild their lives with the goal of facilitating their reintegration into mainstream society.

The organisation was started in 1995 in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process, to support and enable victims and survivors to participate in the Commission. The organisation has its national office in Braamfontein, Johannesburg and it has active branches in seven provinces.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act (1995) gave the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa, a limited mandate of responding to human rights violations involving harm or injury to individuals, namely killing, abduction, torture, assassination or conspiracy to carry out any of these. It did not cover many of first generation human rights (civil and political) and definitely not any of the second or third generation rights (social, economic and environmental), which are entrenched in the 1996 Constitution. It also had time limitations. For these and many other reasons, the TRC process was historic, but imperfect.

The TRC in South Africa did strive to end impunity and to hold to account perpetrators of gross human rights abuses by offering them the possibility of amnesty for full disclosure of their actions. It sought to provide space for the uncovering of the truth of acts committed by human beings against other human beings in South Africa. It was a necessary process, given the reality that violations can lie dormant over centuries even, creating the impetus for revenge, unless they are acknowledged. The TRC was successful to some extent in making known the 'fatal whereabouts'

of some who disappeared and in narrowing the range of permissible lies, but the rejection of the TRC final report by the ANC sadly served to delegitimise the TRC. The failure subsequently to wholeheartedly embrace the reparations proposals of the TRC has been very disappointing and painful to victims, and the issuing of Presidential pardons to some, refused amnesty by the TRC, has further harmed the legitimacy of the TRC.

But, overall, the TRC did serve to construct a limited truth and to constitute some rupture with a very divisive past in order that a new future could be built on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

## **WHAT HAS GOVERNMENT DONE FOR VICTIMS OF GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SOUTH AFRICA?**

In South Africa, government provided for the payment of urgent interim reparations of around R 2,000 each, while some of the work of its subcommittees, most notably the amnesty subcommittee, was ongoing.

Government subsequently delayed the process of dealing with the final reparations process for almost five years. Victims felt deeply disappointed by government's procrastination on the matter of final reparations, stating that *"There are so many languishing in pain, where is government's loyalty to its citizens?"*. This was especially problematic as amnesty was granted to a number of applicants, guilty of the most heinous crimes, without the rolling out of final reparations as recommended by the TRC, leaving victims with the impression that the TRC process in fact gave far more to perpetrators than to victims at whose cost the transition in South Africa had been secured.

Fr Michael Lapsley, of the Institute for the Healing of Memories, repeatedly sounded the warning, that those who had *"sacrificed the most to free South Africa, had not yet tasted much of its fruit"*. They had in fact become increasingly unpopular with government, as they continued to make demands for the resolution of the outstanding business of the TRC and the implementation of its recommendations. Khulumani Support Group feared that the failure to honour agreements could have the potential to cause harmful long-term consequences to the maintenance of peace and stability in the country.

At present, government is in the process of paying out once-off reparations packages to victims identified in the TRC processes. These amount to one third of what the TRC had recommended as adequate reparations. The TRC recommendations in themselves were modest – and the amount required totalled only one half of a percent of the national budget a year for six years.

## **The inadequacy of government reparations payments**

Government in South Africa has failed to be wholehearted in helping or meeting the needs of victims. In the words of Tony Reeler, former Director of the Amani Trust in Zimbabwe, the problem of what helps a victim is both simple and very complex: simple, because it is very evident that what people wish who have been the victims of abuse – whether deliberately or not – is expressed by them very eloquently; and complex, because it is inordinately difficult to deliver this. The empowerment of victims is beyond them and their helpers. It is interesting to tackle this problem in the land of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, probably the most publicly witnessed victim empowerment programme ever seen on this planet. I am very uncertain that the victims were empowered by the TRC, although it is true that the society was helped to a degree and some form of reconciliation has taken place.

But, Khulumani Support Group, the only organised group of victims in the country, has been very clear about the nature of the help its members have requested and it continues to support its members in advocating for the reparations pay-outs that are the primary mechanism by which victims can rebuild their lives and be reintegrated into the mainstream of society.

While government is proceeding with its reparations pay-outs to those identified by the TRC, and many are losing out because of the flawed nature of the process, it has still not actively sought dialogue with victims in the process. The fact remains that government consistently failed to communicate properly with the registered apartheid victims and then announced the settlement of final reparations as a single payment that is a fraction of what the TRC recommended (R30,000 vs. 6 years x between R17,000 and R 24,000); while also leaving out many victims who should qualify, such as those now mentally disturbed and unable to represent themselves, and those whose cases were mistakenly dismissed or who did not find the courage to come forward previously (a common feature of all torture victims). In proposing a “one size fits all” solution, government has also ignored actual costings for lifelong medical and other care. Khulumani’s research has shown that the minimum required to meet the actual needs of victims is around R 47,000

## **Government failure to comprehensively address issues of reparations**

Khulumani has asserted the right of its members to claim for compensation and rehabilitation, aspects of reparations which are always possible. Compensation refers to monetary compensation for damages sustained, whether physical, mental or emotional, and rehabilitation refers to long-term medical and psychosocial care.

As Lutz states, *“Even states faced with severe economic problems must honour their duty to provide redress to former victims of human rights abuses. A state’s shortage of hard currency may, as a practical matter, delay some portion of compensation payments, but it should not be an excuse for failure to review claims or award appropriate damages. The very process by which a state acknowledges that a former victim is legally entitled to compensation is likely to restore that person’s sense that justice is being done and may have a positive impact on his or her mental health.”*

Thus, while reparations is the main mechanism to avoid victims being left with a sense of injustice and betrayal, monetary payments alone do not suffice and Khulumani has made proposals for the creation of a permanent structure to deal with the long-term and ongoing needs, including psychosocial and medical, of those designated as victims. It has identified the need for the following:

- The establishment of a Reparations Desk in the Office of the President or at the South African Human Rights Commission
- The creation of an adequately funded Disappearances Department within the National Prosecuting Authority to complete the processes of investigation of cases of the many disappeared and the exhumation of their remains. Too many people have not secured closure on the disappearance of their loved ones.
- The granting of an adequate budget to the Human Rights Directorate of the National Prosecuting Authority to pursue prosecutions where necessary. Since the start of reparations pay-outs, two persons who were refused amnesty by the TRC Amnesty Committee have been brought before the court for the initiating of the process of prosecuting them for their ‘crimes’
- The inclusion of victim representatives and former TRC Commissioners on the Board of Trustees of the Business Trust so as to participate in its decisions. The Business Trust has been identified as a major partner of government in funding community reparations programmes
- The inclusion and full participation of victim groups in the planning of all memorialisation processes. Government has not formally included Khulumani members in these processes to date.

- Agreement on transparent mechanisms for overseeing and managing the distribution of the resources of the President's Fund. This has remained solely in the hands of government and its officials.
- A proposal for the dedication of a percentage of all taxes paid to the South African Revenue Services to work to redress the damage created by the past, to remain in place until the last identified victim has died.

### **Government failure to open a dialogue with victims**

Government has not yet opened a dialogue with organised victims around the meeting of the long-term needs of victims of gross human rights abuses. Its stated position has been that all black people as a group were victimised. The TRC, however, created unequivocal categories of victimisation based on harm or injury done to individuals, through killing, abduction, torture, assassination or conspiracy to carry out any of these. It is these identified individuals who require special measures to facilitate their healing within an overarching framework for healing both of victims and of their society.

### **Government opposition to the Khulumani – Jubilee international lawsuit for reparations**

Sadly, government has not only been half-hearted in its approach to domestic reparations, but has also opposed efforts being made to secure from international corporations some acknowledgement of their role in "aiding and abetting the apartheid government" and enabling its survival, despite the imposition of embargoes by the United Nations.

On the basis of careful research, Khulumani Support Group with Jubilee South Africa as the plaintiff, has brought an action on behalf of individual claimants who suffered torture, extra-judicial killing, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, sexual violence, long unlawful detention and the disappearance of relatives, against some thirty four companies which have been shown to have profited from loans and exports to the former South African government of white nationalists, thus helping to prop up the regime. One of the few defendants to speak publicly about the issue, albeit long before the lawsuits had been filed, IBM conceded to the *Washington Post* in 1985 that its equipment may have been used for repressive purposes, but that "it's not really our policy to tell our customers how to conduct themselves."

The South African government claims that this action of victims to seek legal redress in a foreign court, one which is competent to hear such a case, could prevent foreign capital from investing in South Africa and could create a surrogate government.

This has been disheartening in the extreme, given the reality that both international and domestic corporate capital, have failed to date to acknowledge the organic and institutional connection between the political and socioeconomic oppression of the apartheid system and their own business activities. Their position represents *“nothing less than a cynical attempt to reinvent and rewrite South African history.”* (McKinley, 2004)

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, has appealed to presiding Judge Sprizzo, urging him to support the litigation. Njongonkulu Ndungane, the Anglican Archbishop of South Africa, has said the lawsuits had been filed "out of sheer frustration" after calls for corporations to participate in dialogue have not been taken seriously.

The lawsuit is important not only for South Africa, but also to set a precedent to hold not only individuals, but also corporations to account, for dealing with and profiting from business dealings with illegitimate regimes. In the global economy, where national governments often find the ability to control their own affairs restricted by the actions of private capital, this is an issue of the utmost importance. Even where democratic institutions are firmly established, citizens often feel powerless to influence national policies. They and their governments also feel more subject to international forces that they have little capacity to control. (Deepening democracy in a fragmented world)

Both international and domestic corporate capital have not acknowledged the institutional connection between the political and socioeconomic oppression of the apartheid system and their own business activities. Claiming that there is no connection is a *“cynical attempt to reinvent and rewrite South African history.”* In South Africa, individual business people refused to approach the TRC and to make full disclosure of their complicity with the apartheid regime – action which clearly constituted an act associated with a political objective.

## **WHAT DOES KHULUMANI PROPOSE IN RESPECT OF REPARATIONS**

Out of its commitment to a comprehensive approach towards victims, both those who testified and those who were omitted, Khulumani has assembled a set of recommendations on reparations that can inform the process and secure the outcomes of which we as a nation can be truly proud.

These proposals seek to address the unresolved issues of the TRC. They review policies and programmes that re-empower victims after situations of gross human rights violations and that end impunity for the perpetrators of these abuses and violations.

They evaluate the TRC recommendations and compare these with government’s current proposals.

They review international experience with regard to the compensation of victims of politically motivated human rights violations and how this experience can inform South Africa's policy proposals.

They specify the costings of a comprehensive plan to provide for the lifelong medical and psychosocial needs of victims, taking into account numbers of victims and the nature of care to be provided and also how to accommodate those who missed out on being identified as victims for reasons such as having been found to have psychiatric conditions resulting from their traumatic experiences.

Most importantly, they suggest a comprehensive approach towards community reparations by restoring the competence of victims through managed programmes of extending economic rights to families and dependants of survivors.

Khulumani believes that failure to implement wholeheartedly a comprehensive approach to bringing closure to the pain and division of the past, will not augur well for future of the country. Most importantly, the satisfactory resolution of the many issues related to transition in the country, depends on transparent and inclusive dialogue involving all parties and the recognition that citizens never have to accept poor decisions of government. They can seek redress elsewhere.

Khulumani believes that government does need to keep the issue of reparations to victims of apartheid open for some time to come and to listen to those victims with greater empathy - as the country wishes, so that the TRC process ends with official magnanimity and so that the tenth anniversary celebrations of the coming of democracy to our nation, can be celebrated by all South Africans, and especially by those who contributed the most.

This would be the fulfillment of the vision which carried victims through times of extreme hardship and suffering, and would enable victims to rest secure in the knowledge that what has been wrong in our society has been fixed and that it will not happen again.

One clear issue that it did not address was the needs and situations of specific groups or communities, where entire communities were victimised in very specific ways. Such communities need specific interventions that include the community as a whole, not only individuals within such a community, if we are to succeed in rebuilding their social fabric. To this end, Khulumani is proposing a series of community rehabilitation programmes.

## **WHAT IS A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMME?**

A community rehabilitation programme is a programme to invest funds within an organised structure within communities that meet particular criteria as having been particularly damaged by apartheid-era violence. The community members, through their control of resources invested in them as a community development association (CDA), would be enabled to become a partner with local government in that area.

The mandated task of local government in South Africa, is to realise local economic development. At present, this is taking place in a very uneven and halting manner in most rural or township areas. Local economic development is in fact best facilitated through participatory processes in which community members participate with local government, as active and capacitated citizens. That means, citizens who have been empowered with resources which enable them to take responsibility and to who act through organised local entities to improve the available opportunities and the quality of life of all members. Rather than waiting for local government to deliver on services, such communities are able to complement local government and to play a leading role in the rehabilitation of their localities and, acting jointly, their regions.

The Community Rehabilitation Programme, being proposed by Khulumani, would be a partnership between organised business in South Africa, organised communities with an active Khulumani membership and the local government within those specific areas of the country. This approach, was presented to government in October 2003 in Khulumani's policy proposals and details workable strategies for enabling the meaningful participation of affected communities in their own development initiatives.

It is proposed that communities identified as damaged by apartheid be invited to explore and to take up the 'offer' to become flagship rehabilitation programme members. Upon that decision, communities would organise themselves as a Community Development Associations (CDA). They would then be eligible to receive Investment Rights under known programme terms and conditions. The CDA would be guided and assisted in the implementation of their investment programme by regional 'support systems' formed by local civic, research and training bodies answerable to the member communities. Business and Local government would have representation on these 'support systems'.

Khulumani communities are likely to want to move beyond investment in productive assets and infrastructure to re-thinking Child, Health and Education Rights so that public funding becomes programme rights and associated budgets within registered communities. These are either first spent to create local demand, rewarding local production, to bind all adults together to protect and

to secure the development of all children (and thus parents and pre-schools), to use School Feeding monies to fuel a local agricultural revolution by buying locally, or to remove the false dichotomy between public and private health and education that ruins both systems and denies community members and parents (now financially secured by Investment rights) from playing key roles as policy requires.

Each community development association (CDA) would receive and oversee the use of resources committed as a community investment programme and transferred into their account. While the CDA would implement their own chosen programme in the area, it would also enable its members to participate in government programmes, where these are operating. Khulumani members as members with other community members in a CDA, and with control of an annual investment budget, would become both the owners and beneficiaries of the development process in their area and become active partners of local government.

This 'reform' model of Local Economic Development (LED) sets up a parallel flow of civil society investment funds against known rules so that citizens can organise and act. The public sector (the local council's Integrated Development Plan) and civic society (the economic rights programmes) can now act together to form a synergistic two part budget and joint decision-making platform. By doing so, they incorporate residents into local economic planning as competent actors. Business thus finds viable partners in low risk regional economies that are opening up as local demand multiplies rapidly.

#### **QUANTIFYING THE SIZE OF THE INVESTMENT REQUIRED: THE EXAMPLE OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN METSIMAHOLO, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

In Metsimaholo in 2002, the family income gap was some R227 million a year. It was suggested that the Community Investment Programme (CIP) should provide all CDA adult members with 24 days of work a year, or two days a month to bring all families up to a target income (after buying Work Rights within CDAs. The rate for a day's work, purely for budget purposes, should be R35 (less than current employment rates on gang labour, which is presently around R110 per day).

The CIP grants investment budgets to CDAs according to the number of registered members using a formula of  $R35 \times 22 \text{ days} \times 2$  (to provide for transport, materials, engineering services, etc). Thus, Metsimaholo's 55,000 families, each having 2.5 adults or a total of 137, 500 adults, would receive an annual investment grant of R211 million. Of this amount, roughly 40% would go to wages and 10% to local services, resulting in additional local family income equal to half the total investment expenditure or R106 million a year or R9 million a month. This is much less than the required income of R227 million a year or R19 million a month. The model reached the family

income target by way of a greater local multiplier, labour contributions, other rights programming and the benefit flows and economic opportunities from that investment stream over time.

Converted to a 'national' Investment Right, each adult member of a CDA should receive R3000 per year, roughly half of which would be wages or local payment incomes. Unlike the BIG, membership is self-selecting and has to mobilise and organise first. Some 40% of adults might form CDAs, or some 10 million members. That would require a programme budget of R30 billion p.a. after some years when, however, early member communities were graduating to more normal forms of funding. Admin, training and technical support should be budgeted at 22%, including for the first three years external book-keeping and payments.

A realistic total costing would be R2 billion, R6 billion, R20 billion, R30 billion for four years, then a decline over five years to a 'maintenance' of this very dynamic citizen investment, ownership, social consumption financing and competence system of R20 billion p.a. Much of the money exists in public works, local IDP, poverty and other mostly inefficient public budgets. It is a question of the Business Trust's members organising the re-direction of these considerable funds to higher and more financially, historically, economically and socially dynamic purposes.

## **THE SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE BENEFICIARY COMMUNITIES**

Khulumani's extensive research and archive of victims enables it to select communities with associated community-wide apartheid-era damage. The communities which would qualify for a community rehabilitation programme would be those which were apparently deliberately obstructed from actions to enable them to look after themselves and their families and were thwarted in their efforts to contribute productively to their own community.

As a member-driven body, Khulumani will retain a role in assisting with the implementation of the programmes, in monitoring them and in liaising with local councils to bring the 'reform' LED programmes to these communities as a priority and as an appropriate rehabilitation strategy. In this way, the victims and their associated communities would be enabled to create a tradition of economic and social rights. Community level rehabilitation programmes that build the joint ownership of productive resources and enable communities to act for themselves with local government would restore the competence of citizens and would ensure long-standing peace.

## **AN EXAMPLE OF A PROPOSED BENEFICIARY COMMUNITY**

The Whittlesea community, lying between Queenstown and Fort Beaufort, in the Eastern Cape, is one community which fits the criteria to be a beneficiary community for a community rehabilitation

programme. Whittlesea is a community constituted by several settlements and villages, which were moved from areas including Lady Grey and Sterkstroom by the former government, on the promise that this would safeguard their continuing inclusion in the Republic of South Africa, rather than in a self-governing homeland.

Once the people had resettled, the former government redrew the boundaries of the area and the entire area was arbitrarily included in the Ciskei homeland without their consent. When the people of the area registered their disapproval of the betrayal of the promise made to them, the Ciskei Security Police unleashed a reign of terror on the area – including the widespread use of torture. The people and the community as a whole were severely damaged and the area remains depressed and despairing, apart from the efforts and the hope that the people in the Khulumani branch continue to provide.

A further betrayal of the community was the use of misleading information at the time that statement-takers from the TRC were scheduled to visit the area. While the community was instructed to meet at the Shiloh Irrigation Project premises in SADA, where they waited, the statement-takers went to the Masibulele College of Education. For this reason, the people of the area have missed out on being identified as beneficiaries of the TRC process. As Professor Gutto recommends, “Ways must be found to assist such victims and survivors. Leaving them out will cause further disillusionment, division and possibly even conflict in society in the future”.

A comprehensive community rehabilitation programme for Whittlesea would require the organisation of a Community Development Association for the area, comprising adults, both men and women, with members of the Khulumani branch forming a core membership of the CDA. The community is deeply committed to being assisted in this process. They have completed detailed needs assessment forms and are keen to be provided with opportunities to take control of their future development. The number of active Khulumani members, meeting each week in SADA village, in Whittlesea is presently between 168 and 200 individuals. This represents a core group for facilitating the consolidation of a Community Development Association for the area.

Khulumani is thus advocating for organised business and government to support the creation of a national Community Investment Programme that begins within flagship communities, which were extensively damaged through apartheid-era violence. The rehabilitation of such communities would enable residents of these areas to become actors within their local economy, able to accept responsibility and even liabilities as partners of the state. Khulumani as a member-driven body, would use the agreed rehabilitation programmes for damaged communities to play a leading role in moving South Africa from state ‘delivered’, but largely failing, socio-economic rights to a country in which citizens are enabled by right to take the lead in local economic development. For this to

happen, local economic development must be driven by resourced residents operating within programme rights, in particular the rights of constituent investor communities in the form of Community Development Associations to restore working local economies to such areas. Such a programme would herald, *"in the name of apartheid's victims, a golden age in which economic and service rights are added to political and human rights."* (Dr N Reynolds)

## **BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY POST TRANSITION**

When violence has been as institutionally entrenched as it was in South Africa through the apartheid system, the challenge to heal the divisions of the past and to establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights, as the preamble of our 1996 Constitution, so eloquently states, is enormously challenging.

In South Africa, the everyday practices of the oppressed tended to be profoundly participatory and democratic. Oppressed South Africans organised themselves at the most local level into street committees. The majority of South Africans practised democracy in their everyday lives. How has this translated into building institutions of democracy on a national scale. South Africa is faring relatively well if the following are accepted as the requirements in terms of institutions of democratic governance,

- A system of representation, with well-functioning political parties and interest associations.
- An electoral system that guarantees free and fair elections as well as universal suffrage.
- A system of checks and balances based on the separation of powers, with independent judicial and legislative branches.
- A vibrant civil society, able to monitor government and private business—and provide alternative forms of political participation.
- A free, independent media.
- Effective civilian control over the military and other security forces;]

Where South Africa is failing, however, is in providing its citizens on a large scale with economic rights, with the ability to control resources and to participate effectively in the economy of the country.

In a world, characterised by growing levels of exclusion, poverty remains, in the words of President Mbeki, "the most challenging structural fault in the contemporary world economy and global human society." "It is impossible", he said, "to solve the problem of global poverty solely through reliance on 'the market'.

Townships and rural areas in South Africa, despite many important advances since 1994, remain the epicentres of unemployment, poverty, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. These areas survive, at least partially, beyond (or perhaps below) the profit maximisation circuits of capital. The challenge is to create the conditions for these communities and their member households to build their own capacity, through innovative economic rights programmes which would concretely deepen the levels of practice of democracy in South Africa. In this way, we can end the fruitless debates that go round in circles from the necessity of "solidarity" as a means of survival for the disempowered to arguments against the commercial non-viability of solidarity from the newly empowered.

Khulumani's proposals to pilot approaches to provide for community investment programmes is an important and innovative approach to ending the stagnation and frustration of the 11 million unemployed in the country. Many of these remain unemployed as a result of the policies that disempowered them.

For Khulumani, this is the crucial step forward – one which acknowledges the ways in which entire communities were victimised and one which provides such communities with access to resources to enable their capacities and potentials to be unlocked for the building of a future in which increasing numbers of people participate. It is an approach which reclaims the level of organisation which created the largest and most successful social movement the world has ever witnessed.

## **CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL IDENTITY POST TRANSITION**

The final challenge to a society that has been deeply divided and deeply traumatised is for an ongoing process of re-humanising the society without letting accountability slip through the net.

This requires that citizens rework their identities in ways that avoid the former oppressed becoming the oppressors, finding ways for all members of the society to acknowledge the past, to take responsibility for what happened and to dialogue with what happened in order to re-humanise the present. This is done through taking responsibility for actions without casting the 'other' out.

The work requires that each person constructs themselves in relation to other people and that people construct together meanings around their lived experience so that the sense of individual autonomy gives way to a reality of an immersed interdependence, in which it is relationship that constructs the self. (Hess, 2004) This is a process that Khulumani is exploring and setting out to promote through its provincial branches.

It is, however, work that cannot happen before there is some kind of reparation. Apology and acknowledgement need to be a part of this work, which needs to create communities of acknowledgement which do not boomerang identities back into historical constructs of blame and silence? Khulumani recognises that it is extremely difficult to move on from the roles that have defined us in the past and to move forward when our identity seems so fragile, when our victimhood has given us our identity.

For us as individuals and as communities, *“the best way of predicting the future is to invent it.”* Our survival depends upon incorporating the ‘us’ into the equation. As Gergen (1995:9) says ‘There is no means of winning, if winning means loss for the other. To condemn, excoriate, or wage war against a constructed other in our society is inherently self-destructive; for we are the other. This is a discursive practice and requires that we work continuously on creating space for dialogue, space for listening to the other.

A Zimbabwean regrets what is going on in his country in the following words and reminds us that we need to do this work now – we need to embrace it in all its challenges if we are to create the future of our dreams.

*Our tears at your expense.  
Your tears for what gain?  
A better way. A respectful way.  
A way of ‘relationship’.  
Standing even above truth.  
Shame one for another to gain?  
Not the way of Shona culture.  
It is not the way of Christ.*

*Pain returns. Respect me.  
Your tears for my hurt,  
Wipe away my pain.  
This is to be a Christian.  
To care in pain.  
Not to cash in political gain.*

*Let us learn not to exclude.  
Some in the church are excluded.  
They are powerful, but excluded.  
They feel the pain.*

*Let us work in relationship.  
 Let us not make enemies.  
 It does not make what they do right.  
 Let us care and learn about 'relationship'.  
 That way we can bind their wounds  
 And talk.*

Another Zimbabwean laments,

*Return to the beginning.  
 Where the pain began.  
 Forgiveness can happen.  
 Africans are not vindictive.  
 But who will believe us?  
 Who will listen?  
 Violence.  
 Expression, unfulfilled objectives.  
 Born from helplessness.*

## **CONCLUSION: BUILDING HOPE IN A COMMUNITY OF 'OTHERS'**

As survivors of trauma and oppression which affects both oppressor and oppressed, we have two major challenges – addressing the economic consequences of deliberate disempowerment and exploitation of a people and creating a new story that enables coexistence in which the dream of vengeance is extinguished.

To this end, it is crucial that we understand the importance of truth, so that we can become a part of its re-interpretation. In order to do this we need to be able to hold onto something 'accurate' and something that becomes 'accountable'. We need to reconstruct the past with ongoing conversations about the creation and re-creation of meaning and the interpretation of history.

This needs to involve a bringing to consciousness, or languaging of the rage, rather than being trapped in a 'colonised position' of silence. We can create new identities – new options such as those who 'cared' and those who 'plundered', those who 'came and went', and those who 'settled', and those who 'led by example', and those who 'demanded submission'. We can find multiple new descriptions that go beyond the external identifiers of race for example. This enables people from all perspectives to re-negotiate relationships that are not based on a paternalistic idea of responsibility and obedience.

The construction of new identities of relationship – of belonging to and with each other, remains the deeper challenge in all post-transitional societies – this is work that Khulumani is contributing also to building a future for our children and grandchildren.