



ANC PARLIAMENTARY Caucus

MALIBONGWE

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AUG





GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING -BUILDING EQUALITY THROUGH EVERY RAND



CDE H NEALE-MAY

August is Women's Month – a time to honour the courage of those women who came before us in champion woman's rights and who still confront the challenges before us. Although the Freedom Charter was written in 1955, a time when gender roles were highly traditional it was radically inclusive for its era on gender equality. Stats South Africa in its recent mid-year population estimates reveals that Females constitute 51% (32.2 mil) of the total population of 63,1million in 2025. This implies that males make up roughly 49% (30.9 mil) of the total population.

Taking the mid- years statistics into consideration, that calls us to a new front in the struggle of how our nation's money should be spent. Gender -responsive budgeting is more than a technical exercise, it's a political commitment for the ANC. It means applying a gender lens to every stage of the budget process, from planning to implementation and evaluation, ensuring that public resources actively address gender inequalities instead of unintentionally reinforcing them.

This is not about creating a separate budget for women, it is about

ensuring that the national budget works for all, that a young girl in a rural village, a woman living with a disability or a mother running a small business in a township all see tangible benefits in their daily lives. South Africa's Constitution enshrines equality and non-discrimination. As a signatory to the Convention on Elimination of ALL Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the SADC Gender Protocol, we are bound morally and legally to integrate gender priorities into our fiscal decisions. The National Development Plan echoes this, recognizing that economic inclusion of women is essential for national prosperity.

Why does Gender Responsive Budgeting matter, taking into account the demographic profile of our nation where women are in the majority? It's because budgets are not neutral, they are political tools that shape who benefit from our democracy. Without deliberate attention to gender, we risk allocating funds for infrastructure without considering women's safety in public spaces. We also risk financing agricultural programmes without supporting women farmers and expanding education without addressing the care responsibilities

that keep many girls out of school. A gender responsive budget ensures investments in Early Childhood Development, freeing women to enter the labour force as well as safe affordable public transport thereby protecting women's mobility. GRB must also support women entrepreneurs and informal workers, expanding economic freedom. Budgets must be geared to protected women against gender-based violence prevention and survivor support thus protecting lives and dignity. True GRB also requires intersectionality, recognizing that women are not a single uniform group. Rural women, young women, older women, LGBTQ+ women and women with disabilities all face different barriers that demand tailored solutions.

This vision will not be realized without political will. The Freedom Charter laid the ideological foundation for a free, equal and just South Africa. Today tools like a Gender Responsive Budget are essential to fulfilling that promise, especially for women, girls and gender diverse people who continue to face systemic inequalities.

A budget that works for women is a budget that works for the nation •



RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVING MEN AND BOYS IN CHALLENGING PATRIARCHAL NORMS AND PROMOTING RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

As Women's Month 2025 draws to a close, it is important to reflect on the progress that our society has achieved in enforcing the necessary gender equality as one of the most important revolutionary goals that we have as a country and world. In August, we routinely take stock of the extent to which the struggle to improve conditions faced by women of our nation has been deepened and eternalized by society at large. Many amongst us have spoken quite extensively about how state systems ought to be improved in an endeavor to safeguard the interest of women. As a nation, we have made notable great strides in that regard, and we continue to better our legislations as well as the response of all the state apparatus to be razor sharp in their quest to make South Africa a better place for our women than it was and as it is currently.

As our struggle against the systematic oppression of women evolve, its impact will be felt better if it can also evolve in form. This includes



CDE T TSHOTETSI

re-imagining the orientation of a boy child and structuring it in such a way that it produces a future champion against the commanding heights of patriarchy, which has been entrenched in our society for a very long time. A boy child should not be raised with an undertone of preparing a future culprit for women oppression as he often is a victim of a system that educates him about his fictitious superiority in gender relations, which he ultimately accepts as the norm, and uses this masculinity to protect that fictitious gender superiority whenever it is challenged.

The superiority of a male over a female is a phenomenon that has been practiced over time and continues to find expression in all the institutions which make up our society. It is found at our homes, it is found in our religion whether it is churches or mosques, with women culturally restricted from having views on important matters. It can be seen in national sporting codes where women are paid far less than men. They even have to protest to get their payments (as in the case of Banyana Banyana versus their male counter parts Bafana Bafana). This patriarchy finds itself in learning institutions as well as in workplaces around the world. Efforts to reverse this phenomenon require us to identify the high impact breeding bases amongst all these institutions in order to change the process of unlearning and learning. For some older generation of men, this means unlearning habits of embracing the norms that have been specifically crafted as their privileges just because they are males. These cohort of men must learn the new



and other destinations away from their homesteads. This practice meant that the home chores had to be demarcated according to gender, with males assigned more physically demanding roles and females assigned the chores that were to prepare them to be effective caregivers as well as looking after the basic daily needs of the household.

With male figures spending much of their time away from their families, patriarchy was so strong that it re-produces itself within family structures that are predominantly led by women, despite evidence of its detrimental effect to the future of their daughters and society.

The unintended consequence of these pseudo family values, became one of reducing the importance of a girl child, gradually breeding a culture of tolerance for sexism and the demotion of a girl child to an inferior status.

This is just but one of the elements that have contributed to the inferiority and the dehumanizing of a girl child. Other factors include religion, as well as the traditional aspect. All of these find expression within a family structure in a South African society.

A healthy society in a democratic developmental state should strive for meaningful gender equality. This means that all sectors that make up such a society must be mobilized to realize the importance of cultivating gender equality for the benefit of our development and in recognizing the backwardness of ill-treating individuals because of variables that they cannot change. "Gender equality as a

practices in which mutual respect and gender equality find expression in their daily routine and interaction with the female gender.

Dealing with a phenomenon as widespread as patriarchy requires us to identify areas in which we can start the re-orientation of the mind. It is for this reason that I put an argument that a family structure, the school/workplace and recreational places are areas where most men mainly interact with women. As such they provide the most important starting point in mobilizing men to be part of the struggle to fight for gender equality and the promotion of healthy relationships.

A family is arguably a basic unit for any society, it is this institution that mainly plays a role in molding the

beliefs, behavior patterns, attitudes, perceptions and consciousness of most individuals. Sadly, it is also this institution, that has played a role in entrenching the values of patriarchy over time and it continues to do so. In a South African context, a consequence of an apartheid migrant labour system has resulted in the absence of male figures from the daily life of many black families. The targeting of males for migrant labour on its own communicated a message that the role of females within a family structure was to look after a family and attend to the domestic responsibilities while waiting for their male counterparts to return home with money to support the family. This meant that the orientation of boy children had to be in such a way that it prepared him for a future of hard labour in the industries, mines



concept refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men as well as of girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women and men's right, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality means that the interest, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of men and women. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a pre-condition for, and an indicator of a sustainable people-centered development" (UN-Women | OSAGI Gender mainstreaming)

Variis studies reveal that there are qualitative benefits that can be enjoyed by both parties in relationships that are free of patriarchy. In its content, patriarchy thrives by suppressing freedom of expression and discourages the ability to think or exercise human

capabilities. This results in self-deprivation and condemnation against growth, more worryingly, it results in depression for men as they are expected to possess solutions for every situation encountered in life. Studies believe that there is an indirect link between the suicide statistics of men and the burdens imposed onto them by the norms of patriarchy. Therefore, it should suggest that the fight for gender equality must equally be championed by men.

Whereas the state can impose all the laws and regulations supporting the enabling environment for gender equality, we must all realize that the more effective battleground for gender equality struggle remains our homes. This requires the re-engineering of family values to explicitly encompass an element of mutual respect and equal recognition for the importance, human dignity and potential of both boys and girls as well as women and men.

The struggle against the negative impact of patriarchy cannot be won outside of the participation

or the buy in of men and boys. The development of relationships characterized by mutual respect requires men and boys to realize the harm endured by society because of gender superiority. A link between the gender superiority of males and GBV-femicide is unavoidable and requires that we all foster different and more respectful forms of relations with each other as males and females.

Individuals and NPOs promoting positive masculinity such as (prince wako pitori) must be supported and encouraged to spread their work across the country. A huge national campaign by men targeting other men must be embarked upon with a central message communicated by this campaign to assure other men that positive masculinity is not a sign of weakness, Patriarchal norms are outdated and have no space in our developmental agenda as a nation and humanity at large, That it is acceptable to "Do Good, to be Good and to live Good" peacefully with another gender with whom we co-exist•


CDE M NDLANGISA

WOMEN IN SPORT-THOUGH THE NUMBER OF WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS INCREASED OVER YEARS, SPORTSWOMEN STILL FACE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES

The Commission for Gender Equality and the South African Women and Sports Foundation are actively advocating for gender equality in sports. Looking back through the apartheid era, sports opportunities were only male focused, with less or none for women. With the dawn of democracy, women started to show up in athletics and we had a greater participation of women in sports, even produced international athletes like Caster Semenya, who became the pride of our country.

Despite this though, women oppression in sports reared its ugly head and there were contestations about her sexuality and so forth, which hindered her participation for some years. She has recently been cleared, though her future has been shattered. We also saw the emergence of women soccer team, Banyana Banyana, women's rugby team and more women participating in sports as athletes-

in gymnastics, swimming etc. Women's participation in sports in South Africa still faces a number of challenges. There is still a significant gender gap, with unequal opportunities, funding and lesser recognition of women compared to their male counterparts.

It took a public outcry to fight for Banyana Banyana's payment to be recognised and raised to the level of professionals even when they proved they were worthy by winning the World Cup, unlike their male counterparts. The Banyana Banyana and Proteas teams have

become the beacon of hope by increasing interest and highlighted the need for equitable policies and investments for women's sports from development to elite levels.

There are still challenges facing women in sports like unequal funding and resources. Women sports teams still receive less funding unlike men's teams and they have limited access to facilities and development programmes. They also do not get quality infrastructure compared to their male counterparts. Women still face a lack of professional leagues



as there is no robust professional women's league in sports like football which limits career opportunities and the ability for women to focus solely on sports. Women are also underrepresented in sport leadership structures and are therefore not able to participate in decision making and leadership roles within sports administration. There is a lot of disparities, like the limited media coverage, when it comes to women's sports. There is less media coverage and these hampers female athletes gaining recognition and support. There

are still deep- rooted gender disparities with women often facing discrimination and balancing sports with other income- generating activities which hinders their economic empowerment.

Though there are challenges which are highlighted above, we have inspiring athletes and teams like Banyana Banyana and the Proteas which have generated national pride and serve as powerful role models for inspirational young females. Women in sports should continue with their efforts to

develop and implement policies, such as the Women in Sport Policy Framework to promote gender equality and fair distribution of resources. We are looking ahead to comprehensive policies that will address and close the gender gaps in sports. We further look at continued investment for grassroot development, facilities and professional leagues which we know is essential to foster the next generation of female athletes and sports in general•



INVESTING IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SOUTH AFRICA



Introduction

Education is a powerful tool for transformation. Nowhere is this more evident than in South Africa, where investing in the education and training of women and girls offers a direct path to economic growth, social progress, and gender equality. Despite constitutional protections and progressive policies, many women and girls continue to face barriers to accessing quality education and skills training. Addressing these barriers is not just a moral imperative—it is essential for sustainable development.



CDE MF MOKWELE

The Current Landscape

Over the past few decades, South Africa has made significant strides in improving access to education. Girls' enrolment rates in primary

and secondary education have increased, and gender parity in basic education has largely been achieved. However, challenges persist:

- **Dropout Rates:** Many girls drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy, poverty, and gender-based violence.
- **Access to Higher Education and Training:** Women are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, and access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) remains limited.
- **Unemployment:** Young women face higher unemployment rates than their male counterparts, even with equivalent levels of education.



Why Investing in Women and Girls Matters

1. **Economic Growth**
 Educated women are more likely to enter the workforce, earn higher incomes, and contribute to the economy. According to the World Bank, closing gender gaps in earnings and productivity could increase South Africa's GDP by over 10%. Investment in training also builds a more diverse and skilled labor force, particularly in emerging sectors like green energy and digital technology.
2. **Breaking the Cycle of Poverty**
 Education empowers women with knowledge and skills that improve livelihoods and break inter-generational cycles of poverty. Girls who complete secondary education are less likely to marry young and more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children.
3. **Social and Health Benefits**
 Educated women are more likely to access healthcare, participate in civic life, and stand up for their rights. They are also better equipped to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, which remains a critical issue in South Africa.

Barriers to Overcome

Despite the benefits, several systemic barriers hinder progress:

- **Socio-economic Inequality:** Many families cannot afford school fees, uniforms, or transportation.
- **Cultural Norms and Gender Stereotypes:** These often discourage girls from pursuing careers in non-traditional fields or continuing education beyond a certain point.
- **Violence in and Around Schools:** Harassment and unsafe learning environments contribute to high absenteeism and dropouts.
- **Digital Divide:** Limited access to digital tools and the internet excludes girls from online learning opportunities, especially in rural areas.

Strategic Investments That Can Make a Difference

1. **Expand Access to TVET and STEM Education**
 Government and private sectors should collaborate to create accessible training programs tailored to women, particularly in high-demand fields.
2. **Scholarships and Financial Support**
3. **Targeted bursaries and grants for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds** can alleviate financial barriers.
4. **Safe Learning Environments**
5. **Implementing policies and infrastructure to protect girls from violence in schools** is essential for retention and success.
6. **Mentor-ship and Role Models**
7. **Creating platforms for successful women in business, science, and politics** to mentor younger generations can inspire girls to dream bigger.
8. **Community Engagement**
9. **Partnering with communities to shift harmful cultural norms and support girls' education** can build long-term societal change.

Conclusion

Investing in the education and training of women and girls in South Africa is not just an investment in individuals—it's an investment in the nation's future. By breaking down barriers and creating inclusive, supportive pathways for learning and growth, South Africa can harness the full potential of half its population. The benefits will be felt not only by the women and girls themselves, but by families, communities, and the economy as a whole. Empowered women build empowered societies. The time to invest is now •



THE WOMEN'S CHARTER FOR ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EQUALITY

Introduction

The Women's Charter for Accelerated Development in South Africa represents a landmark commitment to dismantling systemic barriers that hinder women's full participation in society. Rooted in the principles of equality and justice, the Charter seeks to eliminate discrimination, prejudice, and marginalization that women continue to endure. As Nelson Mandela once said, "Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression." The Charter provides a roadmap for ensuring that women—across urban and rural landscapes—are empowered socially, politically, and economically.

Economic Empowerment

Economic exclusion remains one of the most persistent challenges facing women in South Africa. Despite constitutional protections, women are often sidelined in the labor market, earn less than men, and face barriers to accessing capital and land. The Women's Charter underscores the need for equal economic opportunities and advocates for women's access to credit, skills training, and ownership of productive resources. As former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized, "There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women." By fostering entrepreneurship and supporting women in small businesses, especially in rural communities, the Charter aims to create a sustainable pathway to economic justice.



CDE DINA PULE

Addressing Gender-Based Violence

South Africa faces a crisis of gender-based violence (GBV), with women disproportionately affected by physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. The Women's Charter



recognizes GBV as not only a human rights violation but also a profound barrier to women's empowerment and equality. It calls for stronger legal protections, responsive policing, and survivor-centered support systems. Beyond punitive measures, the Charter advocates for cultural change—challenging patriarchal norms and toxic masculinities that perpetuate violence. As President Cyril Ramaphosa once stated, “The struggle to end gender-based violence is not a fight by women alone, it is a fight by all of us as a nation.” Ending GBV is central to achieving the Charter's vision of a safe, equitable society.

The Struggles of Rural Women

Rural women remain among the most marginalized groups in South Africa, often bearing the brunt of poverty, lack of infrastructure, and limited access to healthcare and education. The Women's Charter highlights the urgent need to uplift rural women through targeted interventions such as land reform, agricultural support, and social protection programs. Their voices must be amplified in policymaking, as their lived realities often reflect the sharpest inequalities. Investing in rural women is not only an act of justice but also a driver of national development, as they are the backbone of food security and community resilience.

Conclusion

The Women's Charter for Accelerated Development in South Africa is more than a policy framework—it is a moral and social imperative. It calls upon government, civil society, and every citizen to commit to the principles of equality, dignity, and justice for women. By addressing economic empowerment, confronting gender-based violence, and uplifting rural



women, the Charter envisions a society where every woman has the opportunity to thrive. As former UN Women Executive Director Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka declared, “When women rise, we all rise.” The realization of this Charter is not just about advancing women's rights; it is about accelerating the progress

of the nation as a whole.

As Dr. Naledi Pandor would say, “Women are key drivers of development” and it is only fair that they are recognized for who they are•



PROMOTING WOMEN IN THE FORMAL ECONOMY AND ENSURING EQUAL ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

We know that the backbone of our economy is centered on agriculture. Food security is at the centre of every successful state. State institutions like the Department of Agriculture does offer valuable training on both farming and agriculture.

It is true that information-sharing as women can bring economic emancipation in our lifetime. We should therefore do away with dependency syndrome by being innovative and create our own ideas that are business oriented towards the betterment of the society where we live.

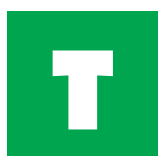
I urge everyone to look beyond self-pitying and concentrate on how best as women can get into community programmes that are mining related, particularly in those areas where there are mines.

Our legislative mandate is to make laws that allow women to be given concessions for business opportunities as part of those who were previously disadvantaged and lesser privileged.

Once we embrace the state's efforts to fight the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality through participating in the different sectors of economy such as mining, agriculture, tourism and construction, we will be crowning ourselves as cornerstones of our country.

I must reiterate that inclusivity becomes one aspect, which majority of our transformative policies are based on and derive from.

We shall continue to echo what is in the best interest of women of our country•



It is of a great pleasure as a woman participating in the building of our nation through

inclusive participation as a Member of Parliament of South Africa. I raise to stand in the women's month where issues of development aimed at ensuring that young aspiring women are able to access the various ways of participating in the mainstream of economy through entrepreneurial business activities such as mining, agriculture, construction, transport, tourism and playing crucial role in the political landscape of our country.

I would like to call on the young women of South Africa to greatly develop in themselves the desire of being farmers by making use of the opportunities the Land Bank



CDE R MOLOKOMME

is offering in a form of grants and loans. Let them continue to use the state institution's funding to improve and better their lives through state funds, which are readily available, all they need is to get proper information on how to access it.



WHAT HAVE WE DONE AS A COUNTRY TO DRIVE SOCIAL CHANGE AND PROTECT OUR WOMEN BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER WOMEN'S MONTH?



certainly, and perhaps undoubtedly, 9 August 1956 is a critical and epoch-making historical event, not only because it offers us tell-tale signs that women constitute a distinct source of power and influence beyond their subordinated biology-based roles as “mothers” and “wives”, but also because it is, in fact, a better laboratory to gauge how and why issues of “gender equality” and “women empowerment” came to dominate the ANC’s policy agenda. As we celebrate this historical event, a moment or effort must be shed in reflecting critically on the extent to which the ANC-led GNU champions the total liberation of women in such a way that the most basic aspirations of gender equality and women empowerment assume the status of hegemony.

There is a conjecture that gender equality and women empowerment are evoked rhetorically in an omnipresent manner in the ANC-led GNU. Put differently, gender equality and women empowerment



CDE N GCALEKA-MAZIBUKO

ring increasingly hollow as patterns of violent-abuse, poverty, inequality, and unemployment continue to be skewed glaringly by gender, mirroring colonial and Apartheid patterns of women oppression and exploitation. As I will show below, while this conjecture has become so commonplace and uncritically accepted despite its flimsy foundation and substance, its intellectual case collapses immediately in the face of evidence. The point is that the role of the ANC-led GNU in creatively confronting

different dimensions of violence (i.e., ‘violence as acts of physical force’ and ‘violence as violation of human/socio-economic rights’) inflicted on women and children, is readily and extraordinarily overlooked. This distinction between different dimensions of violence is primarily important regarding how the ANC-led GNU’s efforts in curbing violence inflicted on women and children must be understood and studied.

In case of violence as violation of human/socio-economic rights, the ANC-led GNU is adamantly clear that the exacerbation of the feminisation of poverty, inequality, and unemployment undermines many of the rudiments of gender equality and women empowerment. For a simple exposition, each time women are trapped in poverty, inequality, and unemployment, it is legitimate to consider those women as the victims of violence as violation of human/socio-economic rights. Even more worrying is that these handicaps, bedeviling women, are due not mainly to poor choices/decisions made by women,



sexual violence inflicted on women and children are without historical parallel. These cycles of violence are by-products of dominant constructions of masculinity, which place high value on sexual consent and the control of women by men. Even more disturbing is that physical and sexual violence become a destructive cocktail amid a raging HIV epidemic. For all these reasons, the May 2025 Budget reprioritised funds towards addressing violence as acts of physical force. For instance, the May 2025 Budget allocated funds to strengthen the partnership between the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), aimed at harnessing the competences of these institutions in processing forensic evidence associated with GBV and femicide cases.

This allocation is particularly important as GBV cases are seldom reported because protection and punishment are a rare consequence. Further, the ANC-led GNU is committed to expanding the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant into a Basic Income Grant, and this can ameliorate violence as acts of physical force since most of the physical violence inflicted on women can be traced to the mismatch between the perceived duties of men as “breadwinners” and the limited available means for living up to this masculine norm.

To sum up, the cited examples (whilst not exhaustive) of the ANC-led GNU’s efforts to ameliorate the two dimensions of violence indicate that the government is not divorced from accelerating gender equality and women empowerment, and therefore the above-mentioned conjecture remains entirely baseless as there is no tangible evidence that gives it a degree of credence •

but mainly to the centuries-long dominance of patriarchy, which is extremely difficult, but not impossible, to change.

Nevertheless, the ANC-led GNU has expended enormous effort in providing useful and sophisticated measures to alleviate the feminisation of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. These include, among other things, above-inflation increases in social grants in the May 2025 Budget, intended to benefit more women than men, predominantly through the child support and foster care grants and above-inflation increases in the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) which not only improves nutrition levels for learners, but also increases school attendance for children, especially for girls. Moreover, allocation to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was increased in the May 2025 Budget. Recall that,

gender disaggregated data reveals that approximately 60-70 per cent of NSFAS beneficiaries are women and the allowances thereof provide the much-needed financial relief to women. Additionally, allocations to municipalities for the provisioning of free basic services (e.g., water, electricity, and sanitation) were increased in the May 2025 Budget, thereby benefiting indigent households that are mostly women-headed.

Equally important, the May 2025 Budget published a Gender Budget Statement (GBS), geared towards ensuring that government budget is in concordance with the lofty goals of gender equality and women empowerment. This GBS is an attempt to calibrate the impact of fiscal policy and budget decisions on gender equality initiatives.

In case of violence as acts of physical force, cycles of physical and



BOOK REVIEW

Cde Saul Pelle

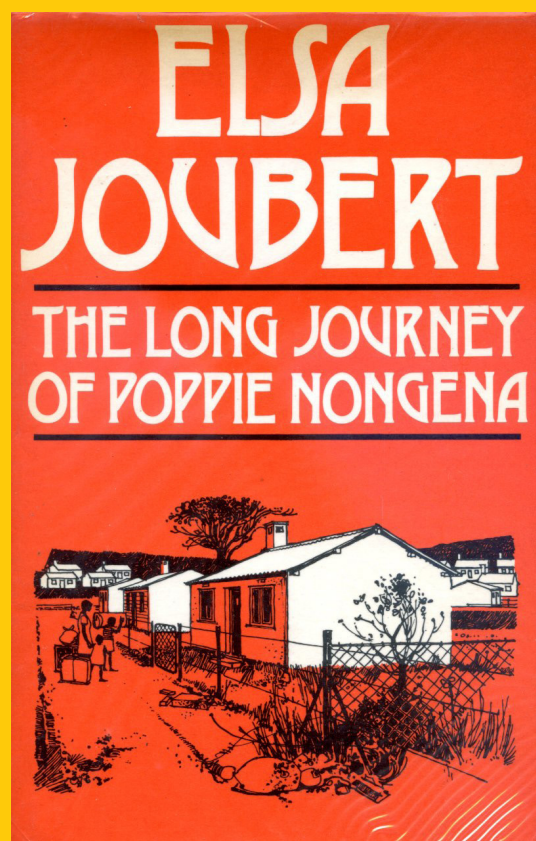
THE LONG JOURNEY OF POPPIE NONGENA

By Elsa Joubert

Poppie is the story of a family over three generation, and one woman's struggle to keep it together in the teeth of a system which makes life a sequence of uprooting and separation. For Poppie and her family are black and live in present day South Africa.

Though her story spans Sharpeville and SOWETO, it is never strident, never a political tract. Elsa Joubert concerns are less with politics than with breaking down barriers of ignorance. Her novel makes its points simply, dispassionately, and in doing so becomes the totally unsentimentalised celebration of the human capacity to survive and of the tenacious spirit that is Poppie.

The novel is based on the actual life story of a black woman living in South Africa. Only her name, Poppie Rachel Nongena, born Matati is invented. Elsa Joubert, author of this and other books, explains: "The facts were related to me not only by Poppie herself, but by members of her immediate family and her extended family or clan, and they cover one family's experience over the past forty years."





Poppie's contented Cape Province childhood ends when she marries a migrant worker, and is forced to move with him and his family to the alarming world of Cape Town. But no sooner has she established her roots in the new township than the authorities which had brought the family to the city want to move Poppie right away to the Ciskei, her husband's Bantustan or homeland as it was also called. He, as a migrant labourer, may stay in the Cape.

On a brief bridal visit to his people in "the countryside" Poppie had seen enough of the very different world of the tribal Xhosas to recognise it as a way of life her own forebears left behind them three generations ago. To her and to them, the Ciskei is the past.

So, for ten years Poppie fights the pass laws, winning limited extensions to the permit which will allow her to stay and work in Cape Town, in her struggle to hold her family together, and get her children an education, even if paying for this means working "sleep in" and seeing them fleetingly herself. But the day comes when there are no more extensions. Poppie and her children are "resettled" in a raw new township near East London.

Set against this continuing struggle with white bureaucracy are the equally inescapable demands of the 'tribal' way of life with its traditional healers, its ancestor worship, and the imperatives of the male initiation rituals. Though her education makes her resist this part of her heritage, she has to come to terms with it too, before the unrest that began at Sharpeville in the early sixties comes to SOWETO and, in Cape Town once more, its aftermath engulfs Poppie and her children.

Poppie's story could be the story of thousands of black families in South Africa today. It is universal, and at the same time it is precisely individual. For the woman who is here called Poppie went to Elsa Joubert for help and advice after the Cape Town uprisings had broken into the heart of her family. From listening to Poppie, the idea of the novel was born. But it took two further years of careful conversation and questioning to get the full story of Poppie's 40 years into a consecutive narrative, mapped and pinned down with the scrupulously authentic small details that make the result such a remarkable novel.

Elsa Joubert was a journalist before her marriage and has been writing all her life. Poppie is Elsa's fourth novel. She has also written six travel books, including an account of a journey from the source of the Nile in Uganda, through the Sudan and Egypt to the Nile delta, as well as travels in Madagascar, Mozambique and Angola. Her book on Angola, *Die nuwe Afrikaan*, was the last detailed account of the Portuguese stand in Africa before the coup in Portugal.

Andre Brink, prominent South African writer, academic, and cultural activist who wrote the foreword to this book remarks: "Its remarkable understatement conveys the story of a black pilgrim journey through a temporal dimension with epic breadth and dramatic intensity and turns it into an unforgettable experience for the reader... A vision of human bondage: perhaps that is where the eventual grandeur of this gripping book lies."

The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena was published by John Ball Publishers in association with Hodder and Stoughton in 1980. It was first published in Afrikaans as *'Die Swerfjare va Poppie Nongena* in 1978.