

My Journey

Asoze saphela 'mandla
(we will never give up)

Sifuna Zindlu
(we are fighting for houses)



I am Nonsikileko I was born in Cape Town in 1958. My parents were forced by the Apartheid laws to move from our home in Parow, a white area, to an informal settlement named Jakkalsvlei, for Xhosa speaking people.



Johnny and I were married in the nighties. We had two children and moved to New Crossroads. We both worked in clothing factories and we both were shop steward. I even went to meetings with my little children.





Johnny and I built our first home with our own hands because we did not have money for builders. We were so proud of our wood and iron shack.



shutterstock.com • 662189392

My husband and I started the Gugulethu Backyarders Campaign, in the late 1990s. We started it because there was no one looking out for people who don't have houses and staying in shacks.



Living a shack is very hard, people look down on you. My daughter was chosen to tour Norway with the choir.

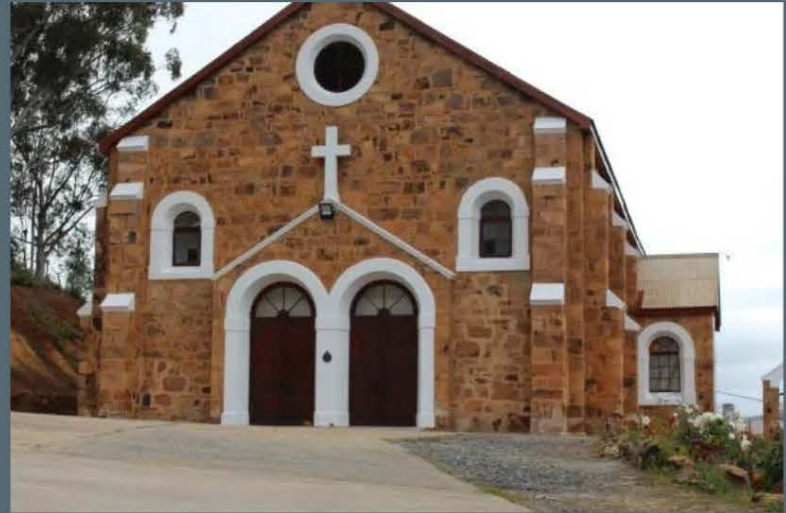
The people living in brick houses did not believe it, because her home was a shack

.



One day I was in the taxi going to Bellville. It was raining and I said to the lady sitting next to me "I am so worried now, my shack is leaking and I didn't put buckets down." The lady said to me "oh you don't look like someone that lives in a shack."

One day our church invited us to move into the church house to look after the property. We lived there for 3 years. That pastor passed away and his children came to take back the house.



They just moved in while we were still there. I called the police for help but they said "we don't have a van to send out". We were forced to leave.



My husband was working in the Free State. So I went to the local police station for help. I was going to sleep at the police station because I had no where to go. My friend came to help me.



shutterstock.com · 662189392

Life in a shack is hard. It is mostly a 1 room place. There's no running water, no electricity and no toilet. You cook, wash your self and sleep, all in the same room. My friend was so kind to help us. She invited us to come and live with her and her 2 children. We were 2 families living in a one roomed house.



I have travelled the whole of Gugulethu for a place to stay. That was my struggling life for a house. I even thought I would die in a shack, does like the lady from Kraaifontein, she was a fighter too. They finally gave her a house but after she passed away.



Finally in 2022
Johnny and I and
my 2 girl moved
into our own home,
made of brick, free
standing. I even
have a garden
now.

