

Name: Enia

Surname: Mutasa

Grade: 12

School: Northview High School

Cell no: 074 807 9001

Parents: 0610302527 / 071 851 0180

Email: mutasaenia999@gmail.com

Essay Writing

Theme: Liberation and hope

Topic: Hillbrow my home

## What liberation means to me: Hillbrow my Home

None of us have a single definition of what liberation means as we are different people with so many different stories, histories, genealogies and geographic origins. In this essay I aim to highlight what liberation and hope means to me and my family and the challenges we face as well as our hope in achieving this.

In my eighteen years of life, I have struggled to relate to what liberation means to other people around me, more specifically the older generation. In school we are taught that liberation is a social movement for territorial independence, which could cause bloodshed and oppression, like that seen during the apartheid time. I can only guess, from all we have been taught, that if we asked our grandparents back then what liberation meant to them, they would say 'to live freely and be able to go to places without fear of being hated or killed'. A lot of things have changed since then, and liberation has a different meaning now and my definition of liberation is for my family and I to fulfil our dreams here in South Africa and hopefully be able to go back home to a better Zimbabwe one day.

### Challenges faced

After years of struggling to find work in the ever deteriorating Zimbabwe's economy my family decided to move to South Africa for greener pastures. This move changed our lives drastically. There was a language barrier, my parents struggled to find jobs and settled for less and most importantly they risked their lives by being in a foreign land. Many of these things overlooked by many, because at least they are able to put food and a roof over their heads and my head as well.

We live in a flat, in the over populated Hillbrow well known for drug dealing, prostitutions, xenophobic attacks, senseless killings and many other terrible things. We have heard many gun shots and we have lost many relatives. We walk around holding our belongings to dear life, we are told after 5pm make sure you are indoors. Rosted with high unemployment rates and many foreign nationals calling Hillbrow their home, making a living for basic needs seems to be difficult for many. Many have turned to stealing and tend to go to extra lengths to get what they feel they are deprived of, thus the use of guns.

I look at my younger brother who is fifteen, and I feel saddened by the thought that he might not reach his potential. There are no role models in my community that we can really look up to, because we are taught to be careful of everyone around us. As a girl in my community you finish school and look for work in a restaurant, that's if you are not a pregnant teenager. To us, to me, those are the people that surround us and they managed to make it in life. Life as a child has not been enjoyable for me because of being raised in such a community and I can only imagine what life would be if I lived in a safer, different community with all the endless opportunities that come with them. Liberation means being free from all this and being able to see myself and my family living in a better Hillbrow one day, this has become home after all.

### Hope and change

Great strides have been made sure that immigrants like my family are safe and of these have been shortcomings. We have organisations such as Afrika Tikkan giving hope for the youth in underserved

communities by providing the opportunity to discover themselves as well as develop, through after school activities. Three2Six program (under the school called Holy Family college), where my siblings attend, have offered people like me to go to schools despite your nationality for free. Some of these organisations have given hope to us Hillbrow Radio, has given me hope that I can achieve my dream of being a radio presenter and a part time journalist and to share stories of hope with my community. I am also so lucky to have a mother who believes that things will eventually change and this has kept me positive and looking forward for the future.

However it is also very important that we as humans learn and aim to leave a mark in other people's lives. It is important to realise all the positive things we can do if we come together. Hillbrow is in such a state because it has over time been ignored by some political leaders because the vast majority of residents are foreigners. A xenophobic and unequal mentality has been instilled in a lot of us without us realising. Together we should serve a lost society, especially because of our growing youth. I once read an article by Gabriel Marcel, although I could not understand all the big words used, but I <sup>what</sup> understood was the importance of communion and hope. He said "Freedom is a conquest, always partial, always precarious, always challenged. The freest person is the one with the most hope." I have come to believe that in the community I live in, people have lost hope. We need help in educating people that we are the ones responsible of making the world a better place and create a sense of belonging.

### Conclusion

Liberation to me and my family means being able to believe and achieve my dreams in this foreign land without feeling like we do not belong here. Liberation means seeing Hillbrow become a safer

place for everyone, for my family, friends and the community. Thanks to all the organisations that have reached out to us, because they have provided hope to us. Like Desmond Tutu said "Do your little bit of good where you are, it is those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." These people have showed us that we are not alone. And most importantly I believe through education we can achieve this.

---