

# Beyond Apartheid: Effects of Racism and Oppression on Ethnic Black South Africans

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## Location: Durban South Africa



Most of the agencies I worked with were located in Durban, a coastal city in eastern South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province, it is known for its African, Indian and colonial influences. Durban is the third most populous city in South Africa—after Johannesburg and Cape Town—and the largest city in the South African province of KwaZulu Natal, with a population of 595,061.



## Ethnic Black Population in South Africa

- The Black African population of South Africa is 80.2%.
- Black African population is at 46,682,900 (80.9%), of which 22,786,200 are male, and 23,896,700 are female.
- The largest ethnic group in South Africa is the Zulu and the majority of them live in KwaZulu Natal Province and Gauteng Province. The second largest is the Xhosa group; they are located in the Eastern Cape Province and Western Cape Province. South African ethnic groups are also found across South Africa's boundaries in neighboring countries.

## Global Field Agencies

### Meyrick Bennet Guidance Centre

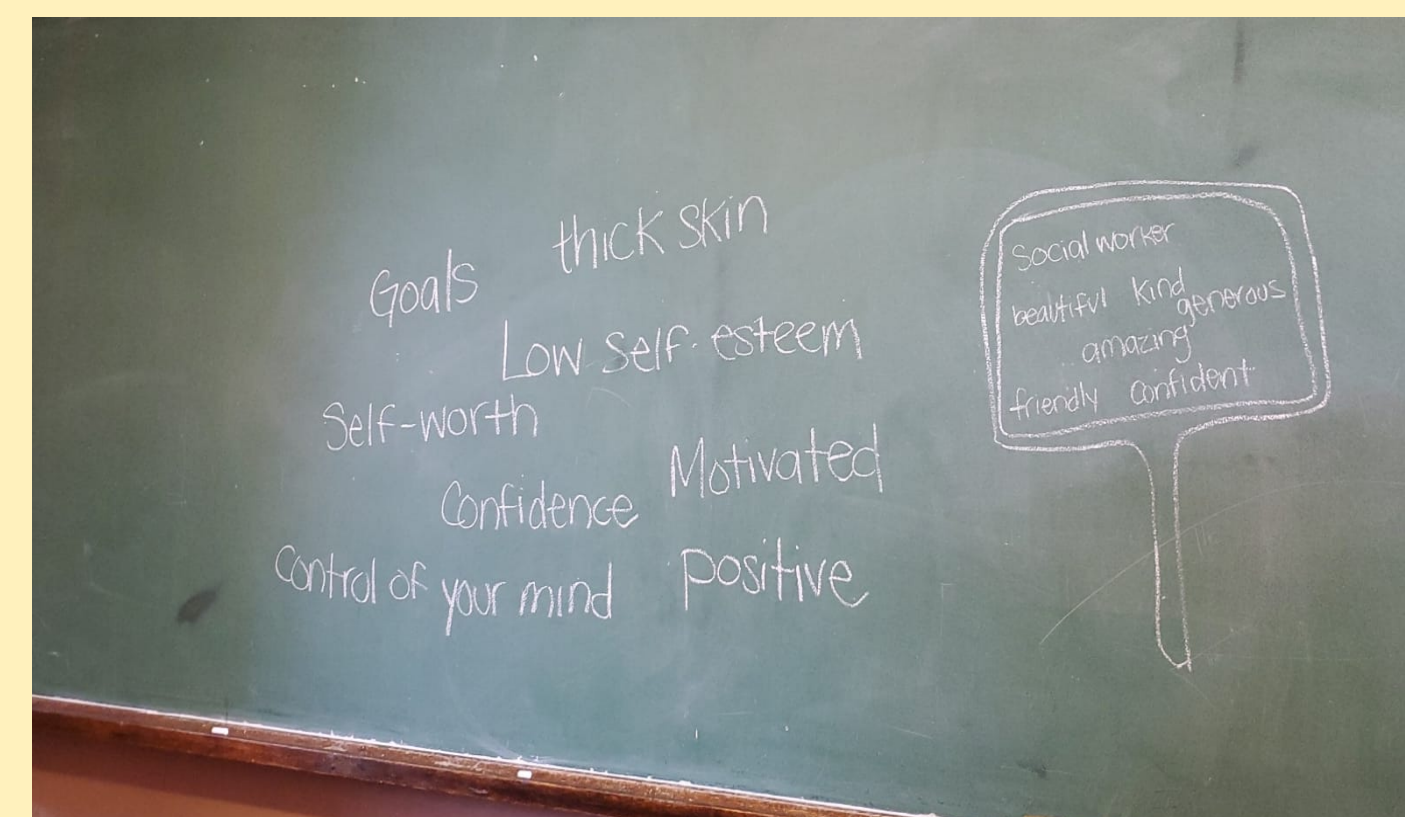
Individual cases are assessed with a pre-interview to determine the type of assessment the child requires, whether it is psychology, educational psychology, speech and hearing therapy or occupational therapy. Their findings show that many children's difficulties are related to parents having challenges with balancing family and home. Meyrick Bennet supports parents to support their child struggle with mental health concerns. Intellectual challenges and developmental delays, behavioral problems, ADD, ADHD and social challenges where an element of bullying is noted and prevalent in classrooms.

### University of KwaZulu Natal Social Work Discipline

Worked with Masters of Social Work around research topics concerning improving the quality of life of people and the promotion of peace, human rights, equality and social justice at local, regional, national and international levels. By using theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments.

## Accomplishments

- Delivered a complete lesson on bullying and confidence to classes of six and seventh graders. (See activity example below)
- During this lesson there were deep conversations among the students and teachers. Something critical that emerged from this lesson was students dealing with bullying who were in critical need for mental health services. Completed mental health assessments and screenings for elementary and middle school students.
- Reviewed research with master students of social work at the University of KwaZulu Natal.
- Networked with many social work students, faculty, and professionals.
- Attended a South African Parliament hearing.



## Connection

### Classroom:

- 521 and 511: helped to prepare me in understanding different intervention and treatment modalities that I was able to practice during my time screening and assessing children and youth in South Africa.
- 790: helped prepare me in gaining practical knowledge on strength-based strategies for positive youth development and service retention.

### Career:

This opportunity helped me solidify that I want to do global racial justice work. During my time there I was able to connect with several people that work for the United Nations and helped understand the process in attaining a job with the UN.

## Outcome

During my time primarily working with Meyrick Bennet Center and secondarily working with University of KwaZulu Natal, I had the opportunity to engage in dialogue and field work surrounding mental health practices in South Africa more specifically practices tailored for native Zulu people. Using both western modalities and interventions as well as cultural and spiritual practices to bring culturally appropriate interventions to children and youth in need of mental health services.



## Lessons Learned

- Social work practice clinical and macro is different in other countries but I came to find that it is all rooted in the love for humanity.
- Each person is the expert on their self and each community is the expert on their needs. Social work practices in the US is not necessarily effective in another country
- Racism and oppression is one of the biggest contributors to mental health in South Africa.



## Advice

- Get to know the people around you, make connections- sometimes it becomes lifelong friendships.
- Ask permission when you want to take a photo of someone or something that belongs to someone.
- Be proactive to learn most common used phrases.
- Time flies! Plan your days!
- Research the organization you will be placed at.
- Document your journey! Journaling, blogging, vlogging, etc., anything to help you remember cherished moments.
- Create a list of places you want to see and things you want to do- and do it!

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