

Dedication to Aphiwe Tomose



It is very difficult remembering Aphiwe without a wave of sadness. It has been six months, but many still feel disbelief that he is not a phone call away or just around the corner. Aphiwe Tomose was killed in the early hours of 2 December 2018. Due to a lack of faith in the police service a case was not opened, while this means that a perpetrator will not be brought to justice, broader issues of history, structural violence and poverty are as much a cause of his death as the person who pulled the trigger ending his life. In the community in which he lived, and

his family still lives, the nature of his death is all too familiar. Too many young men are impacted upon by crime and violence some as victims, some as perpetrators, it is difficult to navigate a path without this touching your life in some way.

The violence of Aphiwe's death, however, does not overshadow his vibrance, creativity, intelligence and warmth, the largeness of his 20 years of life. Aphiwe was a committed activist, friend and student of life. His creativity was expressed through film making – as a [student](#) his flim [Bom'Bam Ndifundise](#) (isiXhosa for My life educate me!), captured the complexities of a young man growing up and trying to access an education in Khayelitsha – through music as a DJ as well as through fine art, he was recently accepted into a WITS Fine Arts degree.

Aphiwe's activist identity and vision of society grew out of study, one of his favourite books was *I write what I like* by Steve Biko, as well as participation in struggle. He believed in the power of young people to bring about change in our unjust society and once wrote that through learning from peers he came to realise that there is so much you can do in your community. To him community didn't only mean the geographic areas we live in, but also collective spaces and individuals coming together across their differences. This belief grew further through his work at Equal Education and later his involvement in the TIKKUN project and was also expressed in his involvement in [Kino Kadre](#) and the [Popular Education Project](#). He once wrote: If I could change one thing in the world it would be oppressive consciousness. Working with his fellow youth and a desire to bring about social change were close to his heart.

In sharing her thoughts about Aphiwe's life his sister, Zintle, reflected that he had so many ideas and unfinished work. He felt passionate about the dire state of public transport in Cape Town (in particular the disarray of the state-owned rail service Metrorail), how the continued geographic segregation of Cape Town impacts on people's lives, how unsafe it is to walk in Khayelitsha at night, violence against women and the lack of hope experienced by so many youth.

Aphiwe demonstrated leadership, passion for social change, courage to strive for social justice and a contagious zest for life. His life will continue to inspire, connect and remind us that we all have a part to play in bringing about a just and loving world.

Hamba Kahle Aphiwe!