

# WHAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT...

## MOIRA

## MUDZIMWA

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER &  
AFRICAN GIRLS ACTIVIST



INTERVIEW BY DR TINASHE DUNE  
AFRICAN WOMEN AUSTRALIA INC. (AWAU)

*Moira is a Zimbabwean-born Australian who has lived in Western Australia for the past 13 years. She is a high school teacher in the Goldfields, where she lives with her husband and two children. She works with young African girls, guiding them to find their voices, confidence and self-worth, building their identities and reconciling them with their African heritage. Her community organisation, Black and CUTE, works on projects that link African girls to products and experiences from their home countries (e.g., pads, stationary and food).*

### WHEN INTRODUCED AT A PARTY, HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY DESCRIBE YOURSELF?

I always start with my name. It does not take long for people to figure out the rest about me...I am very opinionated and always want my views to be heard.

### WHAT DO YOU GET UP TO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

I don't always have spare time, but when I do I get overwhelmed by the abundance of choices in both books and films. I use Audible and there is plenty of options and Netflix is the same! After going through all the options I end up with little time to read or watch a movie. I do love crime fiction novels and watch the same genre of films too.

### WHO DO YOU LOOK UP TO AND WHY?

Michelle Obama, she is cool and smart, yet composed and humble. Her work to empower girls resonates with me. Her work with Girl Opportunity Alliance and Let Girls Learn is remarkable.

### WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU WERE A KID?

A teacher because my maternal grandmother was one of the first few Black women to be teachers in Zimbabwe. I never actually met her, but she set up the school in our village teaching women basic reading skills and her husband (my grandpa) was teaching men some carpentry skills. Their love to educate in restricted-Rhodesia inspired me. She then took on proper training and became a trained school teacher in the 1930s.



*My grand-  
parents' love to  
educate in  
1920s-Rhodesia  
inspired me!*

*"Embrace yourself! Nothing is by mistake. Be proud of who you are! Life is too short to spend it wishing you were different."*

#### **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR TEENAGE SELF?**

Embrace yourself! Nothing is by mistake. Be proud of who you are! Life is too short to spend it wishing you were different.

#### **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE BLACK GIRLS AND WOMEN LIVING IN AUSTRALIA?**

Do not ignore that inner voice you hear. Constantly develop it. Your voice matters.

#### **WHAT WAS YOUR MOST CHALLENGING CAREER SETBACK? HOW DID YOU OVERCOME IT?**

When I arrived to Australia, 13 years ago, I felt as if I was starting university all over again. I had to adapt to a different curriculum, which was also changing at that time. Very stressful. I eventually changed specialisations altogether (I had to study English and Literacy and now I teach English) but I am now enjoying what I do.

#### **WHAT WILL YOUR NEXT BIG PURCHASE BE? WHY?**

A plot of land where I can live the rural lifestyle I grew up in. Growing crops and domestic animals.

#### **WHO HAS BEEN THE MOST INFLUENTIAL IN HELPING YOU GET TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?**

Too many to list but my aunt Dorothy Mutambara inspires me a lot. She believed in me and gave me the opportunity to chase my dreams. A strong woman who worked very hard to upgrade herself. She says she was not as intelligent as my mum and her siblings, but she ended up the most educated. She is a retired nurse, well-travelled and is a missionary who works with orphaned children.

#### **WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE IN THE NEXT DECADE?**

Closing the literacy gap in developing countries is one of my goals. I have already done some work with a school in my village and hopefully with technological advancements we can reach out to other African countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi for example. I hope to make a difference where I can. Offering intensive literacy classes and mentoring teachers to upgrade their skills. Many of my friends from Australia are interested in volunteering their time to make this dream happen.

#### **HOW CAN AFRICAN WOMEN LEARN MORE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR WORK?**

Check out Moira Mudzimwa and Black and CUTE on:

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AELx2oFA8ds>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2734019326831969>

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African Women Australia Inc. (AWAU) is a women-led, community-based and non-profit organisation that aims to strengthen national intellectual capacity on African Women in Australia. We are doing so by being the hub for the most comprehensive, up-to-date and Afrocentric information about African women in Australia. We do this by employing an approach that incorporates African feminist, human rights centred and intersectional understandings to our work with African communities.

AWAUs Mission is to Raise the Voices and Profile of African Women in Australia. Visit our website: [www.awau.org.au](http://www.awau.org.au)

If you know an African woman living in Australia who we should celebrate please contact Dr Tinashe Dune: [secretariat@awau.org.au](mailto:secretariat@awau.org.au)