



HAPPY YOUTH WEEK 2022 - Sprinkled with Desmond TUTU's teachings on Community with Mutual Caring.

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I met Archbishop Desmond Tutu for the first time in June 2001. It was during my UN Sabbatical Leave at the University of Western Cape. I was placed in the Division for LIFE LONG LEARNING, under the supervision of Prof Shirley Walters. My focus was on "Civic Competence". My program was made up of courses on campus as well as interactions with local communities in different regions of South Africa. While extremely committed to the official program, one of my internal priorities was also to be directly exposed to the teachings of Archbishop TUTU on "UBUNTU". Only after his valuable teachings, was I really prepared to meet local communities. After his "Leçon Magistrale", It was clear how urgent it was for me to meet him in order to hit the ground running.

I went several times to secure a meeting with him, but for 2 weeks I couldn't get a date and time was of the essence ...I therefore decided to write him a note that was respectful and straight to the point. It went like something like this: " Dear Respected and Beloved Archbishop, my name is RBE. As an African woman from Cameroon over 50 years, my life expectancy according to official figures may not allow me to meet you again. I would therefore be grateful to have an opening in your calendar as soon as possible before I leave Cape Town...

Incredibly that evening, I received a call with a kind voice on the other end that said: Allo, May I speak to Miss 50? He used this moment as the perfect occasion for humor to settle both sides. OK Ms 50, I will be waiting for you the whole day tomorrow from 9AM...(see pic)

During the positive, fatherly meeting, he reminded me that UBUNTU comes from a Zulu proverb that says: "I am a person through other people...When you have a child, it's not just your child. It's the child of the community...he concluded: So I exist because you also exist. The community must therefore act to reinforce that understanding. " (Speaking to me) "Your research on CIVIC COMPETENCE must strengthen Ubuntu. My blessings."

After this memorable meeting, I remained Ms 50. When ever he saw me again, he would say:" Come here Ms 50!

He will remain alive in my heart, a perpetual Role Model! **Happy Youth Week in the understanding that: I exist because you Exist and vice versa.**



Archbishop Desmond Tutu receiving Ruth Bamela Engo at his office - Cape Town, South Africa, 2001.

Ruth Bamela Engo, *President AAA*

Contacts: www.africanactiononaids.org

HONG - KONG	USA	Europe	Cameroon
Vivek Aranha <i>AAA Representative in Asia</i> Unit 103, 7 May Road, May Towers one, Mid-levels HONG-KONG v_aranha2000@yahoo.com	Laraine Lippe <i>Chairman AAA Board of Directors</i> P.O. Box 1680 New York, NY 10163- 1680 E-Mail: laraine.lippe@gmail.com	Herta P. Kaschitz- Wuestenhagen <i>AAA Representative in Vienna</i> Schottenfeldgasse 20/9 - 1070 Vienna, Austria E-Mail: hpkaschitz@aol.com	Ruth Bamela Engo <i>President AAA</i> B.P. 4340, Yaoundé Cameroon ruthengoaaa@gmail.com / francoisebaaaaa@gmail.com Whatsapp & O.M : 237 699 236 169