

Born in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, as the son of school teachers Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza , was exposed in his own words, “at an early age to reading newspapers and getting a sense of what was happening in the world”.

Given that he was born in the heyday of *apartheid*, it is not surprising that his understanding of the world around him was one moulded by legalised cradle to grave racial discrimination, land dispossession, forced removals, deportations and a whole host of other injustices.

Throughout his life Professor Ntsebeza has struggled against these injustices as a scholar activist with far reaching consequences for himself, his family, friends and acquaintances.

At an early age he joined self-study groups where, more often than not, their research material was deemed to be illegal. As a first year student at Fort Hare University, Professor Ntsebeza was arrested and imprisoned for five and a half years as a political prisoner in 1976. In prison he completed a degree at the University of South Africa with a double major in Politics and Philosophy.

Upon release, he was formally banished to Cala, in the Eastern Cape, where he demonstrated his continued commitment to learning by establishing a bookshop.

Following an Honours degree at the University of Cape Town, Professor Ntsebeza taught at Khanya college, an educational institution that actively sought to prepare disadvantaged students, who had undergone Bantu Education, for university education.

From the late 1990s Prof. Ntsebeza became directly involved in a number of research projects funded in the context of the South Africa-Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development.

Within this context he co-supervised South African and Dutch doctoral students, including Nkululeko Mabandla winner of the Africa Studies Centre Thesis Award 2012.

Not surprisingly Prof. Ntsebeza's research and that of his students has tended to focus on land reform in South Africa, specifically on four main themes.

- The first concern has been to concentrate on the meaning of democracy for people living in the rural areas of South Africa, many of whom fall under the jurisdiction of traditional leaders who have not been elected.
- The second concern has been the post 1994 land reform programme, particularly with regard to what the beneficiaries of land do with it.
- The third concern has been to look at food sovereignty and struggles against the use of environmentally harmful products in food production.
- And finally Ntsebeza and his students have examined social movements in the land sector with a specific focus on the struggle of farm workers and farm dwellers.

Throughout his active and distinguished career Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza has consistently sought to carry forward the true values of a

scholar, the fundamental rights to free thought, freedom of association, and free speech, and an undying commitment to academic endeavour.

With what in South Africa are termed impeccable “struggle credentials”, Ntsebeza could easily have entered into government or business, instead he has consciously chosen to stay true to his vocation as an educator, a scholar, and thus a liberator for all people, irrespective of race or creed. It is with respect for this uncompromising commitment to education and humanity that the University of Leiden will today confer upon Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza an honorary doctorate.