**Name of Project: R.O.O.T.S of Sunflower County**

**Date of Interview: June 22, 2016**

**Location of Interview: Indianola, Ms**

**Name of Interviewer(s): Jawaski Gardner**

**Name of Interviewee(s): Lolita Gladney**

**Name of file used for transcription** (audio and/or video file): Video File (Lolita Gladney)

[0:08] JG: Are you from here?

[0:10] LG: No I’m not.

[0:11] JG: If you don’t mind, where did you reside before you moved to Sunflower County?

[0:15] LG: I don’t live in Sunflower County. I live in Washington County.

[0:19] JG: What brought you to sunflower county?

[0:21] LG: I work here.

[0:27] JG: What do you like about being in sunflower county since you work here?

[0:29] LG: I do like all of thedifferent resources and programs that they do have here for young people. So, that’s one thing that I like about Sunflower County in working here.

[0:44] JG: What problems do you feel are in the community here in Sunflower County?

[0:50] LG: Lack of jobs. Uhm, I think crime is one thing that is-- I think that it’s hurting the community and uhm I know those two things for sure. I think a lack or jobs—more employment opportunities will make a big difference for the community.

[1:11] JG: When you say crime rate, do you feel that more black men are going to the state pen rather than Pen state?

[1:22] LG: Yes.

[1:25] JG: How do you feel that us as young men can change that for young men?

[1:27] LG: Well, I think uhm—you talking about people like yourselves?

[1:36] JG: Yes ma’am.

[1:37] LG: Well I think it’s some reaching out, you know? Not being afraid to kind of walk up to that young man that you see on the street doing something on the street that he shouldn’t be doing and taking them under young wing and showing them a better way. I think it’ll take some time on your part and I think it’ll some I guess boldness. Because you don’t really know how to approach people and say ‘hey you know you shouldn’t be doing this you should be doing this’. So, you know I think it’s just the people who are doing right stepping out and not being silent-- You know, when things are going wrong.

[2:08] JG: Do you feel that are education system here in Sunflower County is on a downfall?

[2:15] LG: Umh, I think that education as a whole in the Delta could be better. And I’m not necessarily faulting the people that are in the system because I’ve been an educator before. So, I know there are so many things that are working against the system. So, on a downfall? I wouldn’t say on a downfall. I know it could be better but I think there are things that are hindering it too. So, you can’t just pinpoint one thing?

[2:51] JG: As a young person isthere things that I should know about sunflower county, that I don’t already know?

[2:53] LG: I think you should know what’s available for you. What could benefit you as a young person. And I also think you should be aware of your role and what you could do to better your community. When you go out and you go to college and rather you go back or not, you don’t have to live here to make a difference. But kind of take inventory of the community and identify what’s missing. Where are the gaps so you can know how you can feel them.

[3:23] JG: This is the last question. Uhm, How do you feel about young black mens really reaching out to help young black mens having a program that young men can lead and they’re teaching young other black men that are doing wrong like ‘ this is not the way that you should go but follow this and follow that,’ you know? How do you feel about that?

[3:47] LG: It’s necessary. A culture developed where young black men kind of reach out to younger kids. Because honestly when they go home you don’t know what they see. So you can teach them but I think there needs to be some constantly going on – constantly being imbedded in them. Because they need to see that you don’t have to go down this road. Yeah your uncle went down that route. Your daddy may have gone down that route. Your cousin maybe doing it but you don’t have to. There’s life outside of what you see. You know because some of them do not understand that it’s a world outside of your neighborhood or your front door. You know there’s a whole big world out there but if they don’t ever see, they don’t ever know it, and they think well I can’t have it. So, they need to understand that you can have more than what you see. It’s more to life than just your surroundings and your environment and they shouldn’t inform who you are. Even though they can, but you shouldn’t allow them to be like your final destination or what you think of yourself because it’s just more to life than that. So, I think it’s going to take your men like you all to develop that culture.