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THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN ZIMBABWE: THE CASE OF HEAL ZIMBABWE TRUST

BY

INNOCENT MANGWIRO

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Dedication

To all communities that are emerging from violent conflicts and those that long for peaceful coexistence and development.

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The lord God has made the success of this project possible, many thanks to His protection, provision and wisdom during the entire four years at Midlands State University.

I'm grateful to my Supervisor, Dr Munemo for his wise guidance and commitment to the fruition of this project. This project would not have been successful without the wise counsel of Heal Zimbabwe Research and Advocacy Officer, Edknowledge Mandikwaza. He was helpful in data collection, and he granted me permission to work with the organisation's community structures.

ACRONYMS

CCJP   Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

CCMT   Centre for Conflict Management and
Transformation

CCSF   Church and Civil Society Forum

HZT   Heal Zimbabwe Trust

MDC   Movement for Democratic Change

RAU   Research and Advocacy Unit

ZANU PF   Zimbabwe African National Unity People's
Front

ZIMCET   Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust

ZPP   Zimbabwe Peace Project

Abstract

This study seeks to analyse the role of civil society in Conflict Transformation in Zimbabwe using the case study of Heal Zimbabwe Trust. The study takes a look into the nature of conflicts in Zimbabwe that date back to the period of the liberation struggle, the Gukurahundi massacres, land invasions, operation Murambatsvina and the 2008 political violence. A critique is given to the work of the civil society organisations on conflict resolution, management, settlement and mitigation. The study goes on to look into conflict transformation initiatives by Heal Zimbabwe that seek to promote peaceful relations out of animosity, including collaborative platforms, women safe spaces for reconciliation and sports for peace tournaments.. The successes and challenges that Heal Zimbabwe face in transforming conflicts are given, with reduced violence in the 2013 elections, tolerance and social cohesion in some communities as successes. The challenges include the denial of operating space by the state through bureaucratic means to acquire a memorandum of understanding, the organisation's financial challenges and its inability to find sustainable ways to peace building. A conclusion was drawn and some recommendations were made out by the researcher basing on the research findings of the study.

Contents

INTRODUCTION

This study gives an analysis on the role of civil society in conflict transformation in Zimbabwe. Conflict has been a dominant feature in Zimbabwean social, economic and political aspects. The causes of conflicts are both internal and external but the study looks into the ways in which civil society has contributed to the resolution, management, mitigation and settlement. However, despite efforts to resolve, mitigate, manage or settle conflicts by civil society organisations and the state, there has been a leitmotif of conflicts in Zimbabwe that has retarded development. To this end, Heal Zimbabwe came up with conflict transformation mechanisms to ensure that there is sustainable peace and development in Zimbabwe. The organisation's conflict transformation approach is informed by John Paul Lederach, a well-known peace theorist.

In Zimbabwe, achieving sustainable peace through conflict resolution has remained an elusive goal despite the efforts by both the state and the civil society. Advocacy strategies, early warning mechanisms, conflict settlement and conflict management have been implemented in Zimbabwe but there remains a gap in terms of transforming relationships that are key in promoting tolerance and sustainable peace. This research paper analyses the role that civil society played in resolving conflicts and exploring gaps, the weaknesses of their strategies as well as Heal Zimbabwe's conflict transformation model.

Background of the Study

Conflict transformation continues to be the major underpinning of sustainable peace building by civil society groups the world over. In Zimbabwe, civil society championed the process of conflict transformation immediately after the Unity Accord. The growth of peace building organisations corresponded well with the continued instigation of politically motivated violence during the first ten years of the new millennium. This research paper therefore seeks to investigate Heal Zimbabwe's work towards conflict transformation in its bid to promote sustainable peace, a key component of community and national development.

 Peace building, globally, was viewed as a holistic process with the state, civil society and communities playing concerted roles in preventing the development of conflicts into violence. This notion is mainly supported by scholars who subscribe to the notion that state sponsored violence is at the centre of all community problems, which means that the state itself cannot bring about social cohesion, (Ncube 2014). The Research and Advocacy

Unity(RAU), (2016) documents that violence has been used as the weapon of choice by the governments in power since the declaration of UDI in 1965 through to post independent Zimbabwe as a measure to ensure retention of power at all costs. This therefore justifies the emergence of peace building civic groups to ensure a holistic approach to the transformation of violent conflicts into peaceful ones.

Zimbabwe has a continuous history of violent conflict, dating back to the original occupation in the 1890s. Violent problem solving has been a feature of all governments, and persists today (Sachikonye.2011). States that emerged out of violent struggle through liberation movements seem to have developed differently to those that emerged through peaceful handovers (Clapham, 2012), and this is very evident in contemporary political dynamics in Zimbabwe (Bratton, 2014; Reeler, 2004). This historical epoch points to the fact that Zimbabwe's liberation war history would make it difficult for the state to mainstream peacebuilding initiatives in local communities. Civil Society Organisations that deal with conflict transformation came into existence in response to the failure of the state to bring social cohesion.

The Liberation War, while beginning in the aftermath of UDI, reached a peak in the 1970s, with over 30 000 killed, thousands maimed or injured, tens of thousands tortured or abused, and tens of thousands displaced — either to neighbouring countries, or forced into protected villages (Reeler, 2004). Following a very brief period of peace, the country was once again wracked by extreme violence between 1982 and 1987, the so-called Gukurahundi, ending with the Unity Accord in 1987. It is estimated that about 20 000 civilians were killed during this time, and once again torture became an epidemic (CCJP & LRF, 1997; Amani Trust, 1998). These historical events are a clear indication that Zimbabwe has been deeply entangled in state sponsored violent conflicts thus compelling civil society to play a significant role in peacebuilding.

The coming in of a new democratically elected regime in 1980 brought hopes for a free, peaceful, united and prosperous Zimbabwe. The then Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe launched the Prime Minister's decree which stipulated that Zimbabweans should now bury the hatchet and move forward as a united nation, recognising the existence of both blacks and whites. However, the nation plunged into another conflict three years into the new dispensation, this time blacks were up against blacks. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), (1997) estimated that the Matabeleland massacres claimed the lives of

more than 20 000 people from the southern part of the country. The two opposing fronts, Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (PF ZAPU) came to a memorandum of understanding dubbed the Unity accord to stop the instigation of violence. This development did not yield results when it comes to transforming violent conflicts into peaceful ones. Political leaders, due to their solo attempts failed to deal with the root causes of violence and this explains why Zimbabwe was at it again during the times of Structural Adjustment Programs and the subsequent Labour conflicts which gave birth to a political party that represents the interests of workers, (Movement for Democratic Change).

Makumbe, (2000) added that there was an increase in violence in Zimbabwean communities due to sharp differences between the ruling ZANU PF and the newly formed MDC that resulted in the destruction of the social fabric. The 2002 Presidential elections, 2005 Parliamentary elections and the 2008 harmonised elections were all marred with violence that manifested through arson, maiming and intimidations. The unfortunate part is that these electoral conflicts would spill more suffering to local people even way after elections. The leitmotif of violent conflicts accentuated the growth of civil society aimed at peacebuilding through transformation of conflicts and upholding Human Rights. According to Mudzingwa, (2010) Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation (CCMT) and Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET) are some of the civic groups that followed the footsteps of Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and ZimRights in advocating for the respect of Human Rights and the transformation of conflicts.

The fact that Zimbabwe continued to experience violent conflicts despite the commitment of political leaders to stop violence gives credence to the influx of peace building civil society organisations. The early years of the new millennium did not yield results in terms of conflict transformation mainly because of the limited space that civil society organisations were given by the state, (Mudzingwa, 2010). Moyo, Makumbe and Raftopoulos (2000) assert that violent clashes continued unabated largely due to the promulgation of draconian laws such as AIPPA, POSA and Private Voluntary Act which somehow limited the capacity of civil society to play a significant role in conflict transformation and sustainable peace initiatives. It is against this backdrop that Zimbabwean communities needed the intervention of civil society to stop the abhorrent trend of cyclic violence, a major impediment of community and national development.

The hypothesis of this research is that the state alone cannot successfully transform conflicts and ultimately build peace in local communities because of political differences, meaning the state is run by politicians who perceive other politicians with a different ideology from theirs as antagonists. To this end, civil society becomes a neutral platform for diversified groups of people in one community, hence they play a critical role in preventing the insurgence of violent conflicts before, during and after elections. Furthermore, it is imperative to note that there are existing gaps in literature regarding the role that civil society play in conflict transformation. This study will attempt to add information to the knowledge board and close these gaps for sustainable peace and sustainable development at community and national levels.

Despite early efforts by civil society to promote conflict transformation, there remained a huge gap with regards to their impact. This is probably due to the confrontational approach they used when they tried to engage the state.

Problem Statement

Zimbabwean communities suffered the most gruesome and atrocious episodes of politically motivated violence between 2000 and 2009. This development meant that the state became incapacitated to deal with state sponsored violence, thus giving rise to the emergence of civil society organisations that deal with peace building and development. The political contestations have often resulted in arson, abductions, maiming of activists affiliated to Zimbabwe's two biggest political parties in ZANU PF and MDCT and sexual harassment of disadvantages groups in society. During times where political temperatures are at an all-time low, the yesteryear vendetta would manifest in unfair distribution of food aid and agricultural inputs based on political affiliations and labelling. Several CSOs have responded to violence and conflict affecting Zimbabwe, however little has been done to assess their role and impact in conflict transformation. It is therefore the object of this study to assess the impact of civil society in conflict transformation as a way of building sustainable peace in local communities using the case study of Heal Zimbabwe Trust.

Justification of the Study
Although there is a lot of literature related to the works of civil society in peace building, there remains a huge gap in terms of civil society that specifically deal with conflict transformation in Zimbabwe. Despite the documentation of Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET), (2004) and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)'s violent conflict

prevention mechanisms, (CCJP, 2009) little has been done by academics to fill this gap or complement initial studies. This study will attempt to fill the knowledge gap that exists in conflict transformation as a way of building sustainable peace in Zimbabwe.

Recent studies on peace building focused on the church as a conduit of transforming conflicts. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, (CCJP) and the Ecumenical Services of Zimbabwe together with the Church and Civil Society Forum (CCSF) were researched, albeit leaving gaps to the works of organisations that do not subscribe to the aforementioned, yet they played a role in conflict transformation, (Ncube 2014). This research gives a detailed analysis on the role that was played by civil society other than the church on conflict transformation, giving Heal Zimbabwe a biased focus as it is the gist of this research. The study will therefore help in informing CSOs that do peace building with what works and what does not with regards to practical conflict transformation.

Referring to the influence exerted by civil society in conflict torn areas like Uganda, Kenya, DRC and Central African Republic to Zimbabwe, this study will also help other countries, regions or communities living in authoritarian regimes or under state engineered conflicts to engage the state and other key stakeholders for sustainable peacebuilding through the transformation of conflicts. It is apparent that civil society plays a significant role in empowering communities to challenge undemocratic state tendencies that breed a culture of violence and intolerance. To this end, documenting peace building work that is being done by other civil society organisations will add to the existing literature and improve the availability of knowledge with regards to the same.

Finally, peaceful coexistence is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Peaceful countries like Botswana and Ghana have proven to be conducive environments for investment and development in Africa. This research paper therefore seeks to contribute to building a peaceful society through documenting the role of civil society to conflict and transformation. It also offers recommendations that can actually help in peace building, thus contributing to community and national development.

Research Goal and Objectives

The central goal of this research is to analyse the role Zimbabwean CSOs play in conflict transformation using the case study of Heal Zimbabwe Trust.

Objectives

1. To examine the contribution of civil society organisations in conflict transformation.

2. To assess the challenges experienced by civil society organisations in promoting peacebuilding in Zimbabwe.

3. To recommend best practices in conflict transformation in Zimbabwean communities.

Research Questions

a. What are the root causes of violence and conflicts in Zimbabwe?

b. How is Heal Zimbabwe transforming conflicts in Zimbabwean local communities?

c. What challenges is HZT experiencing in transforming conflicts in local communities?

d. What opportunities can HZT explore to effectively address conflicts in local communities?

e. How can HZT contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding in Zimbabwe?

Study Delimitation

The research was confined to areas that Heal Zimbabwe operates because the researcher had a relatively easier access to these areas. The good relations that exist between the researcher and Heal Zimbabwe meant that the organisation's resources would be used for the fruition of this study. Considering the polarisation of Zimbabwean communities, working with a certain community for the very first time is a mammoth task. To this end, it was more viable to work with already established working rapport between Heal Zimbabwe and its operating areas.

Conceptual Framework

Civil Society

Civil society is a concept with a long history dating to the era of Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and others such as John Locke (1632–1704) and Jürgen Habermas (1929) and in the late 1990s Merkel and Lauth (1998). According to Merkel and Lauth (1998)cited in World Bank (2006) and Ho-Won Jeong (2005), civil society has recently gained prominence as a tool to check the excess use of power by the state and to reduce its potential to oppress its

citizens and interfere in the exercise of individual freedoms. Kidombo, (2013) civil society is composed of a diversity of actors made up of all types of alliances independent from the state. They all tend to have differing objectives, interests and even ideology and although they make explicit political demands on the state, they also interact closely and operate within set laws of the land.

Peace building

Life and Peace Institution, (2009) gives a simple definition of peace building. To them, peace building entails the process of achieving peace or promoting a peaceful society. Well known peace activists, Lederach and Pafenholz concur that peace building is a long process with quite a number of variables. The tenets of peace building include conflict resolution, reconciliation, transitional justice, conflict transformation and violence prevention. Conflict transformation forms the basis of this research paper and its practice in Zimbabwe.

Pafenholz, (2005) gives the contribution of conflict management to peace building in conflict torn areas. He asserts that the school of thought calls for the settlement of conflicts by opposing political elites. While negotiations may resolve the misunderstanding, albeit in short term, the causes of conflicts are overlooked which compromise the prospects of achieving sustainable peace in local communities. Zimbabwe is one country that experienced deep political clashes immediately after independence and the first decade of the new millennium. The clashes culminated in the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU), a platform that helped political leaders in Zimbabwe to cease the conflicts that have been bedevilling the country. However, the weakness of this school of thought, according to Lederach , (1997), is that it largely concentrates on the top leadership of conflicting parties, often ignoring the grassroots actors, who are most affected by the conflict. Other civil society organisations, Heal Zimbabwe included, therefore adopted the conflict transformation approach to have all stakeholders on board for the attainment of sustainable peace in Zimbabwe.

Conflict transformation is critical in peace building as it ensures the transformation of both violent and nonviolent conflicts into peaceful ones. This is in line with the works of John Paul Lederach and Johan Galtung, popular figures to the study of peace.

Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation involves the process of transforming deep rooted armed/ethnic conflicts into peaceful ones, based on a different understanding of peacebuilding. It suggests replacing the term "conflict resolution" with the term "conflict transformation" (Rupesinghe 1995). Lederach, (1997), cited in Pafenholz, (2009), sees the need to resolve the dilemma between short-term conflict management and long-term relationship building, as well as the resolution of the underlying causes of conflict. Lederach proposes the need to have a peace infrastructure anchored on reconciliation and the community's desire to rebuild broken relationship. This conceptualisation makes lederach's approach the basis of this paper instead of the Galtung approach.

However, scholars like Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse (1999), see conflict transformation as a development of conflict resolution. They argue that the aim of conflict resolution is to transform conflicts. Johannes Botes, (2003) adds a bit of flesh to what the aforementioned scholars alluded as he suggests that the transformation concept provides some utility regarding our understanding of peace processes in the sense that transformation denotes a sequence of necessary transitional steps. Such a transformation represents not only removing the sources and causes of the situation that brought about the conflict, but also necessitates a psychic transformation in the attitudes and relationship between the parties.

The conflict transformation approach is divided by lederach into three levels, with the first involving the mediation at state levels. In Zimbabwe, this approach has been facilitated by Southern African Development Committee (SADC) and South Africa's former President Thabo Mbeki. It is fair to say that mediation brought some level of stability through the Government of National Unity (GNU), (Ncube 2014). The second one is the Mid-level leadership which comprises of resolution strategies like peace commissions and problem solving workshops. Pafenholz concurs with these approaches as he also termed these levels track one, two and track three diplomacy. He also asserted that prominent individuals fill the gap in the mid table discussions. The third level in the packing order involves the grassroots level, which has the larger part of the population. This group is termed the track three by Pafenholz and can be reached through community dialogues and peace commissions. One of the largest contributions of the transformation school of thought is its insistence on the role

that civil society play in peace building, under which HZT falls. Interestingly, civil society organisations in Zimbabwe have been using dialogues to bring conflicting parties together, sports concerts, mediation to foster peaceful coexistence in local communities, albeit their success remains a subject for discussion.

Theoretical Framework

This studied is guided by one famous theory in the study of peace, the conflict transformation approach. According to one renowned peace activist, John Lederach, (1996), a transformational approach begins with two pro-active foundations: 1) a positive orientation toward conflict, and 2) a willingness to engage in the conflict in an effort to produce constructive change or growth. While conflict often produces long-standing cycles of hurt and destruction, the key to transformation is the capacity to envision conflict as having the potential for constructive change. He goes on to say that conflict transformation begins with a central goal: to build constructive change out of the energy created by conflict. By focusing this energy on the underlying relationships and social structures, constructive changes can be brought about. The key here is to move conflict away from destructive processes and toward constructive ones. The primary task of conflict transformation is not to find quick solutions to immediate problems, but rather to generate creative platforms that can simultaneously address surface issues and change underlying social structures and relationship patterns.

Lederach (1997) added that transformation must be able to respond to life's on-the-ground challenges, needs, and realities. How do we address conflict in ways that reduce violence and increase justice in human relationships? To reduce violence, we must address both the obvious issues and content of any given dispute and also their underlying patterns and causes. To increase justice we must ensure that people have access to political procedures and voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

The theory further recognises that conflict transformation views peace as centred and rooted in the quality of relationships. This includes both face-to-face interactions and the ways in which we structure our social, political, economic, and cultural relationships. In this sense, peace is a "process-structure," a phenomenon that is simultaneously dynamic, adaptive, and changing. In essence, rather than seeing peace as a static "end-state," conflict transformation views peace as a continuously evolving and developing quality of relationship, (Lederach

1996). It is defined by intentional efforts to address the natural rise of human conflict through nonviolent approaches that address issues and increase understanding, equality, and respect in relationships.

Literature Review

Civil Society in Zimbabwe gained prominence in the late 1990s after the release of the report on the Gukurahundi Massacres in the Western parts of the country that took part in the 1980s. The report was documented by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) citing that for sustainable peace to ensue in Zimbabwe there has to be truth telling and addressing the previous experiences of injustice and violations of human rights, (Ncube 2014). Since that ground-breaking report, Zimbabwe has seen an influx of peace building organisations advocating for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Civil society organisations that were advocating for peaceful coexistence developed an early warning mechanism to report early signs of violence before it gets nasty. Rupesinghe, (1993) defines early warning as an instrument of conflict preventive strategies that should help ascertain whether and when violent conflicts can be expected to occur, with the objective of preventing this from happening through early response. These responses could involve military and non-military interventions by third parties such as international organisations or local civil society organisations, (Doom 1994, Kuroda 1992 cited in Brauch, Selim and Liotta 2003). The notion of early warning system is premised upon the thinking that violent conflicts are preventable, (Ateya and Wisler, 2007, cited in Chikuni 2013). The duo further recognizes that there are signals that foretell the upsurge of violence, hence the need to act and make sure that armed conflicts are prevented, CCSF, 2012). Cilliers (2005), Ateya and Wisler (2007) have argued that through the study of some specific events, behaviour of certain individuals, incidents or public declarations, and their sedimentation in specific patterns, state and non-state actors are able to announce the imminence of a major political seism or violent conflict.

As observed by Masunungure and Badza, (2010) and Sachikonye, (2011) violence in Zimbabwe is embedded in political parties and their leaders. It is against this backdrop that civil society in Zimbabwe have come up with early warning mechanisms that target the community, political actors and the church for sustainable peace and development in local communities. The CCSF, a platform for church and civil society on peace building acknowledged the early warning system that is being used by organisations such as Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), CCSF 2012). ZPP has 420 human rights monitors

nationwide with the sole mandate of identifying early signals for violent conflicts, report them to the head office where the information is processed and disseminated. This enables actors to implement preventive measures as well dialoguing with the parties involved.

A number of Civil society organisations including the CCJP, CCSF, CCMT, Crisis in Zimbabwe as well as Heal Zimbabwe Trust, the major thrust of this study, have adopted the early warning response and mechanism in a bid to address conflicts, (Ncube 2014). As part of its early warning mechanism, Zimbabwe election Support network, observes and monitors electoral violence before, during and after elections, (CCSF 2012). The organisation reports cases of violence or signs of looming political catastrophe so as to table preventive measures. Whilst the idea is good and practical, Mpande et al, (2013) note with concern the financial constraints bedevilling these organisations which compels them to implement conflict resolution strategies during election times only. He however, applauds the early warning for having successfully reduced politically motivated violence during the 2013 harmonised elections. Ncube, (2014) also attributed the massive reduction of politically motivated violence in 2013 to the GNU which gave birth to a number of these civil society organisations. Despite the weaknesses that civil societies may have, Pafenholz, (2005), Bond (2006) and Whitefield, (2010) maintain that they have a huge role to play in developing early warning mechanisms as well as preventing violence in general.

The concept of Peace Committees was adopted in Africa years back in countries like the Central African Republic, alluding to a group of selected respected individuals who are trained to champion conflict transformation endeavours, (ZIMCET, 2004). Odindaal and Olivier, (2008) define local peace committee as the group that is formed at the level of a district, municipality, town or village with the aim to encourage and facilitate joint, inclusive peace-making and peacebuilding processes. Neyroud and Beckley, (2001) added that a LPC is by its nature inclusive of the different sections of the community that are in conflict and has the task to promote peace within its own context.

In Zimbabwe, ZIMCET is one of the organisations to have championed the concept of taskforces in response to the violence that occurred in the year 2000, (ZIMCET 2004). The organisation further alludes that they have worked in areas such as Buhera, Masvingo and Zaka with these local peace committees in a bid to transform conflicts in local areas. The peace committee is made up of traditional leaders, church leaders and supporters of different political parties. The CCJP also trained members of the peace committees in Masvingo, Zaka,

Hurungwe and Buhera in response to the 2008 political violence, (Prosper 2014). The motive behind the committees is to encourage tolerance, peaceful coexistence within local communities. Heal Zimbabwe Trust also adopted the peace committee concept in its bid to transform conflicts and prevent the scourge of politically motivated violence. The organisation has termed its committee peace clubs, (Ncube 2014).

While the concept is good in its inclusive nature, ZIMCET (2004) noted with deep concern the prevalence of violence in areas where peace committees were established. According to ZIMCET, targeting some parts of the areas that are believed to have experienced gross violations of human rights, leaving a gap in urban areas results in violent conflicts. This was evidenced by the bussing of people from areas such as Harare and Bindura to instil violence in rural areas because of the reluctance of local leaders to push for violence prevention.

Community dialogues have often been used as a platform for bringing together diverging groups of people in the society to find some common ground. According to Boot, (1996) a community dialogue is a process of joint problem identification and analysis leading to the modification and redirection of community and stakeholders' actions towards preferred future for all. Jong, (2003) added that a dialogue is an interactive participatory communication of sharing information between people or groups of people aimed at reaching a common understanding and workable solution.

From the above definitions, Lund, (2009) consummated that dialogue is a critical tool in transforming conflicts as they compel conflicting parties to talk, build trust and transform relationships. It is against this backdrop that civil society organisations in Zimbabwe, focusing on sustainable peacebuilding, have adopted community dialogues as a key transforming component. At a national level, the church under the auspices of Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), Catholic Bishops Conference and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches in 2002 collaborated to dialogue with national Leaders where the President acknowledged the importance of dialogue to end civil strife and economic hardships that bedevilled the country, (Zimbabwe on the brink, 2004). Ncube, (2014) added that after the conception of the GNU civil society organisations embarked on a roll out plan to engage stakeholders in constructive dialogue so as to transform conflicts in local communities. The likes of CCMT, ZIMCET, CSU, CCSF and Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum built on what CCJP had been doing in Masvingo, Zaka and the Midlands. These organisations tried to engage the country's main political parties that were believed to have stemmed violence

conflicts, traditional leaders and the community to discuss issues threatening peace and security in a given society, (CCSF, 2012).

From the above paragraph, it can be noted that albeit civil society had done considerably well in engaging these stakeholders, the result is not what had initially been hoped for given the current levels of intolerance within communities and some areas that are still facing violent conflicts. The coming of Heal Zimbabwe into the fore might not have done justice but it did use the different modus operandi through the use of collaborative platform as will be explained in in the succeeding chapters.

 Research and documentation also define civil society when it comes to conflict management in Zimbabwe. This is one area that most of the organisations that were incapacitated to venture into communities to carry out peace building work contributed much to the subject. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO and the Research and Advocacy Unity are among leading organisations in research and documenting articles to do with conflict resolution and mitigation in Zimbabwe, (ZNGO Forum, 2015). The research helps policy makers and stakeholders in peace building with toolkits for effective conflict prevention. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum has documented cases of the 2000, 2002 and 2008 violent conflicts in Zimbabwe. This was to inform violent preventive mechanisms for the 2008 ZANU PF and MDC showdown in the presidential runoff but the result was dismal as the country probably recorded the bloodiest electoral violence since the attainment of independence. While the concept is good on paper, there remains a gap in application and holistic approach to peace building despite the availability of literature on toolkits. This explains why Lund, (2009) continues to advocate for commitment by stakeholders to successfully transform conflicts for sustainable development.

It is imperative to note that civil society in Zimbabwe embraced peace concerts and sports for peace in a bid to transform conflicts through enhancing the celebration of diversity whilst overcoming adversity. In 2012, Lupane Agenda, a chapter of Bulawayo Agenda, held a historic peace concert in Gomaza Stadium under the CCSF where it drew the audience from political party leaders, victims of political violence and the community to preach the message of peace and tolerance in communities, (CCSF, 2012). This concert was graced by musicians to preach peace. A similar peace art concert was held in Nkulumane by the National Youth Development Trust (NYDT) in 2011 to engage youths on peace endeavours. These efforts are a clear indication that civil society is committed to a peaceful Zimbabwe,

albeit the organisations failed to effectively transform conflicts in their areas of operation as evidenced by a leitmotif of violence.

CCJP and Heal Zimbabwe conducted these concerts and sports with the involvement of key actors in conflicts to ensure that violence is prevented, the case in point is Masvingo where the province voted peacefully in 2013, (Ncube 2014). All these activities that civil society undertake make them a space of tolerance, dialogue, compromise and participation, which facilitate the rebuilding of new communities, (Barns, 2009, Pafenholz and Spurk, 2006, cited in Höglund, K. and Orjuela, 2011).

Gaps in Conflict Transformation

Despite the role that civil society has been playing in peacebuilding through conflict resolution in Zimbabwe, there is a huge gap that could potentially threaten the success of the same as observed by Ncube, (2014). Ncube noted with concern the elitist nature of civil society where they are based in metropolitan cities and their personnel is comprised of people who reside in these cities even though some of them are deployed in rural areas, where conflicts and violence are rampant. The coming in of Heal Zimbabwe to the fore has meant that this status quo was to be changed as it empowered its peace clubs and CBOs to spearhead conflict transformation strategies.

From ZIMCET's peace committees, the organisation discovered that during election times, political parties would bus people from Harare and Bindura to instil violence in Masvingo, (ZIMCET 2004). This was due to the reluctance of Traditional Leaders and local youths who became part of the key peace committees to effectively address underlying issues. The glaring gap could be attributable to the organisation's modus operandi which undermines the attitude of urban youths in conflicts. It is therefore important for progressive civil society organisations that are committed to the transformation of conflicts to look into this shortcoming, thus ensuring a holistic approach to peace building.

Another impediment to effective conflict resolution by civil society in Zimbabwe is geographical limitations, (Barns, 2009). A number of peace building organisations failed to penetrate the remotest of areas where conflicts are rampant because these areas are inaccessible. This means that all the research and documentation efforts will not come to fruition. When training peace committees, civil society organisations would conduct these training workshops at growth points, leaving out the concerned citizens. For peace committees to actually transform conflicts becomes a mammoth task. As a way of bridging

this gap, Heal Zimbabwe Trust equipped and empowered peace clubs and community Based Organisations (CBOs) to deal with issues that threaten peace and security at a local level even without the involvement of the organisation. This will be explained in detail in chapter three.

The aspect of supply driven at the expense of demand driven also hinders the management of conflicts as alluded to by Pafenholz and Spurk, (2006), Lund (2009) and Boot, (2006). This implies that the organisations that are advocating for peace do so in a way that is compatible with the donor expectations rather than practical and ethical ways that are more favoured by communities it is intended to benefit. In civil Zimbabwe, most civic groups are funded by Western donors, thus they implement what could have been done in the West but does not apply to the Zimbabwean culture and ethos. The Organisation under study overcame this challenge by incorporating traditional ways of building social cohesion.

According to Ncube, (2014) Civil Society Organisations have failed to come up with sustainable ways of engaging rural communities in peace building. This is the reason why, despite their efforts, rural areas continue to experience violent conflicts during election times. Most of these organisations have had a tendency of downing their tools after elections before picking them up two years to the next elections. This often breaks the social cohesion between people from diverging parties, whom they purport to bring together. Although this trend is evident in most of the organisations that are plying in rural Zimbabwe, Heal Zimbabwe tried to close this gap by funding gardens of peace that comprises of all local stakeholders for them to continuously engage on conflict transformation. The impact of Heal Zimbabwe in this particular regard will be examined in subsequent chapters.

Research Methodology

The researcher largely used the qualitative research technique. This was particularly useful as the field requires person to person interactions to get the feelings of participants. Qualitative research, broadly defined, means "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17) and instead, the kind of research that produces findings arrived from real-world settings where the "phenomenon of interest unfold naturally" (Patton, 2001, p. 39). The researcher employed qualitative research technique mainly because it seeks to illumination,

understanding and extrapolation to similar situations rather that quantitative technique that predicts and generalizes findings alluded to by Hoepfl, (1997).

To make the research process fruitful, Winter, (2000) suggests that qualitative researchers try as much as possible to be part of the process whilst quantitative researchers do not want to involve themselves in the process. This research was particularly successful because of the active involvement of the researcher, where sometimes he had to use pilot approach in questionnaires largely because of low levels of illiteracy displayed by the participants. Patton (2001) supports the notion of researcher's involvement and immersion into the research by discussing that the real world are subject to change and therefore, a qualitative researcher should be present during the changes to record an event after and before the change occurs. This notion resonates well with the likely changes brought by civil society in Zimbabwe in their bid to promote social cohesion that manifest itself in the transformation of conflicts. The fact that the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research makes the findings credible as supported by Patton.

Research Design

Kothari, (2004) defines research design as the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. For the purposes of this research study, questionnaires, interviews and secondary sources of data were used to collect data.

Research Areas

The researcher confined the study to the following areas: Gokwe North and South, Buhera, Muzarabani, Makoni West, Headlands and Mutasa where Heal Zimbabwe operates. In short, the researcher focused on 15 districts where HZT is currently working. Below is the map that shows the research areas that also happen to be Heal Zimbabwe's strongholds when it comes to operating areas.

HEAL ZIMBABWE OPERATING AREAS (2016)
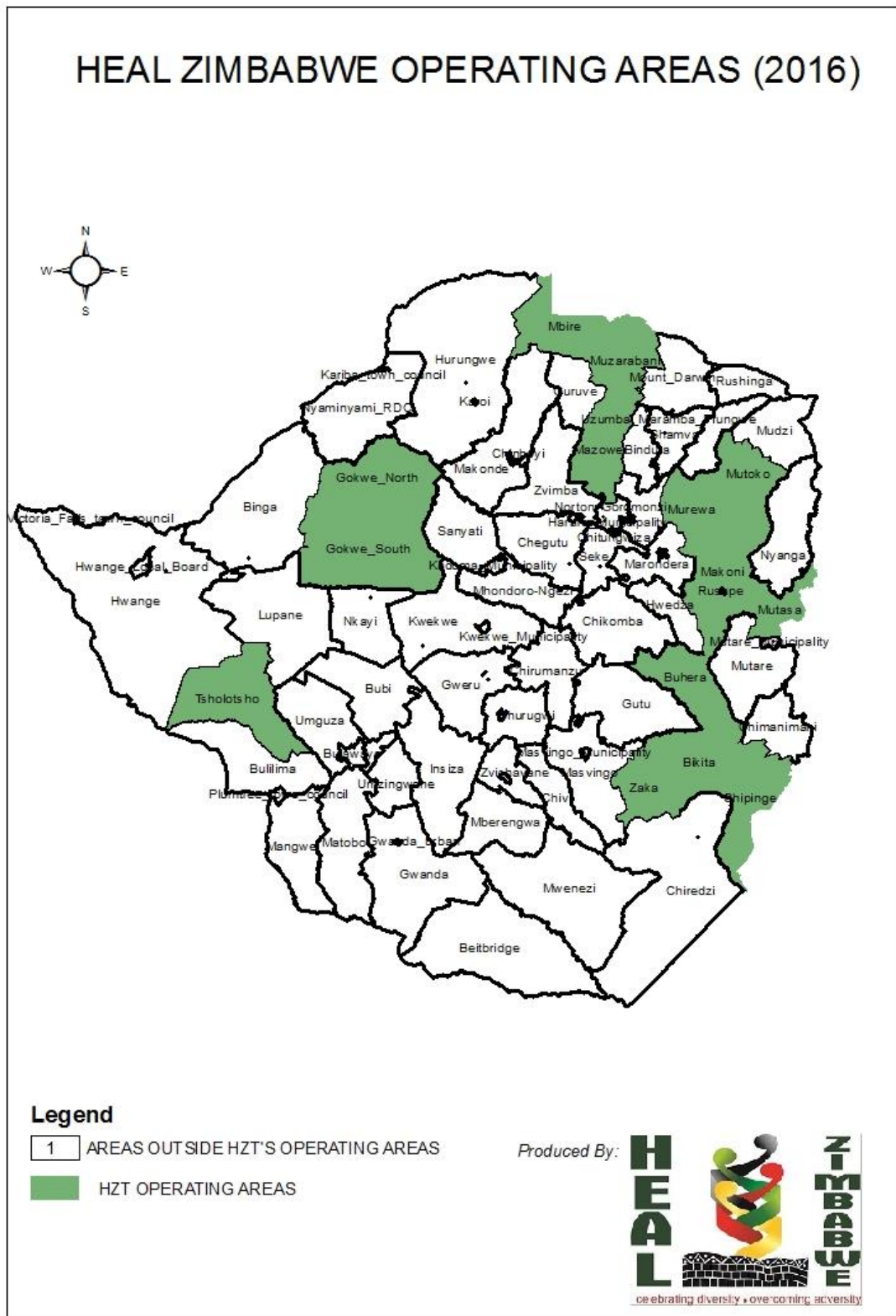
Source: HZT Research and Advocacy

Sampling population and Sample size

The researcher targeted 100 participants from Heal Zimbabwe peace clubs, CBOs and human rights monitors stationed in Gokwe North and South, Muzarabani, Buhera, Headlands, Mazowe and Mutoko, Mbire, Makoni West, Tsholotsho, Bikita, Murehwa and Mazowe. 60 participants were drawn from peace clubs will the remaining 40 came from CBOs in the form of Gardens of peace and women safe space for reconciliation. The researcher targeted 100 people because of the limited resources he had. Resource constraints meant that each peace club was represented by two people. These structures are conduits through which Heal Zimbabwe spreads the message of peace to communities as well as tracking violations of Human rights which breeds violence. It is imperative to note that the aforementioned structures that Heal Zimbabwe work with reflect what is happening in communities with regards to strengths and weaknesses of the organisation in spreading the gospel of peace as they are at the grassroots level.

Data Collection Tools

Questionnaires

The researcher used structured and non-structured questionnaires to gather information from participants. McColl et all (1998) define a questionnaire as a set of printed or written questions with a choice of answers, devised for the purposes of a survey or statistical study .Kirklees Council, (2008) argues that questionnaires are helpful in that the researcher can conduct a large number of people at a relatively low cost (postal and telephone), considering that this is purely an academic research, the researcher had to minimize costs so questionnaires were of great deal in this particular regard. They also make it easier to reach people who are spread across a wide geographical area or who live in remote locations (postal and phone). The researcher had to give out questionnaires to respondents the same day they were supposed to fill in the details and submit them because of limited time. Although this method was time effective, it did not give respondents time to meditate upon the questions.

The researcher designed the questionnaire in consultation with Heal Zimbabwe department of Research and Advocacy to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. This also gave the organisation the platform to examine its impact on conflict transformation in local communities. In some areas where the respondents were largely illiterate, the researcher

employed the pilot study to reduce the wastage of resources to curb the challenge of having respondents giving irrelevant answers to the questions.

Interviews

The researcher also used structured and unstructured interviews to complement questionnaires during the process of data gathering. Kvale (1983, p.174) defines the qualitative research interview as "an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena". Collecting these descriptions can be done in several ways, of which face-to-face interviews are the most common. The researcher selected individuals in local communities who are better able to articulate issues, albeit there were fears of political victimisation after the interview as it has become a norm that every interview is associated with politics in local communities. All Heal Zimbabwe programs staff were interviewed to get their views on peace building.

Although Opdenakker, (2006) alludes that telephonic interviews have gained prominence of late, this research was confined to face to face interviews and sometimes WhatsApp conversations. Face to face conversations gives respondents the chance to express their feelings towards the issues of conflicts and violence that they may have witnessed and/experienced.

Secondary sources of Data

To ensure an all-encompassing research gathering strategy, the researcher added secondary sources to interviews and questionnaires. According to Lopez, (2013) secondary research involves the summary, collation and/or synthesis of existing research rather than primary research, in which data are collected from, for example, research subjects or experiments. Ghauri, (2005) argues that secondary research helps in that it saves time for the researcher. Heal Zimbabwe Research and Advocacy documents helped a lot in collecting important information on peace building. The researcher also referred to other civil society organisations' publications and this helped to validate the information obtained.

Analytical Approach

Research findings were presented and analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data" (Braun and Clarke,

2006:6). Data is encoded into themes (Boyatzis, 1998) and the emerging themes become categories for analysis" (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2008:82, cited in Joffe 2012). In this context, theories of violence prevention and conflict transformation were used to analyse data from interviews and secondary techniques.

Thematic analysis was chosen because it can provide a rich and detailed account of data sets, which is important when researching under-researched areas (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This method is flexible and it can allow the researcher to return to the initial propositions establishing the conceptual framework, to ensure that the "analysis is reasonable in scope" (Baxter and Jack, 2008:553).

However, it is important to note that although thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative case study researches, there is no agreement of what it is and how it should be done (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998). The "absence of clear and concise guidelines around thematic analysis" puts thematic analysis open to criticism as a reliable analytical approach. (Braun and Clarke, 2006:4). Furthermore, thematic analysis is time consuming and taxing due to lack of standard categories (Marks and Yardley, 2003). The researcher has to find themes within huge volumes of data. Notwithstanding these weaknesses, thematic analysis remained a preferred analytical approach to this study because of its ability to reflect real-life contexts.

Data validity

The concept of validity is described by a wide range of terms in qualitative studies. This concept is not a single, fixed or universal concept, but "rather a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects" (Winter, 2000, p.1). Many researchers have developed their own concepts of validity and have often generated or adopted what they consider to be more appropriate terms, such as, quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mishler, 2000; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001).

It is in within this thinking that the researcher chose people who are generally known to be trustworthy and have the ability to articulate issues to ensure data validity. Having done this, the researcher then employed a variety of analytical tools in a bid to bridge any likelihood of data misrepresentation.

Data Reliability

Although data reliability is more salient in quantitative research, Golafshani, (2003) asserts that its prominence in qualitative research cannot be undermined. Joppe (2000 p. 1) defines reliability as: …The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. This relates to the concept of a good quality research when reliability is a concept to evaluate quality in quantitative study with a "purpose of explaining" while quality concept in qualitative study has the purpose of "generating understanding" (Stenbacka, 2001, p. 551).

Given this variance, the researcher applied key data gathering techniques to counter loopholes that may have been experienced during the process. Having questionnaires, interviews and secondary data collection helped to ensure the reliability of data. As though this is not enough, the researcher went on to interview independent people in the society who neither Heal Zimbabwe members nor any other peace building organisation. Their testimonies regarding the prevention of violence and conflict transformation means that there was a massive input by civil society organisations in that particular area.

Limitations

Although the researcher succeeded in gathering information, the road has not always been encouraging. At one point, the researcher had to grapple with financial constraints which were needed to travel to the remotest parts of Zimbabwe that had experienced cyclic violent conflicts in recent years. Heal Zimbabwe Trust had established its peace clubs in these areas so the researcher had to use the Monitoring and Evaluation information to extract data from these areas. This means that phone numbers were obtained to have telephonic interviews by way of WhatsApp to talk to them. Heal Zimbabwe also included the researcher in the team that would travel to some of these areas so as to conduct interviews and administer questionnaires whilst the organisation's work is being undertaken. This greatly helped counter cash constraints.

Language barriers also limited the researcher's ability to carry out his research in areas such as Tsholotsholo, an area that has predominantly Ndebele speaking people. This meant that the researcher had to deploy one Heal Zimbabwe staff member who is very conversant with the area and can speak Ndebele. Albeit information was obtained, some shortcomings could have

taken place as the researcher would work with what he was given. The researcher also used Heal Zimbabwe publications that pertain to non-Shona and English speaking areas to bridge this gap.

Furthermore, some areas that were researched on, the people are hostile and unfriendly. A number of them would label the researcher an agent of regime change, making it difficult to obtain information from them. To deal with this challenge, the researcher would then go to the targeted communities with a well-known person in that community, the person could either be a member of Heal Zimbabwe staff who has been there before or the village authority like the village head.

Research Ethics

The researcher was conversant with research ethics that more often than not determine the verisimilitude of the research project. Given the sensitivity of issues that relate to politics, community inhabitants do not want to identify with political parties or they do not want to be known for having communication lines with organisations that are perceived to be pro west. It is against this backdrop that the researcher observed the fundamental ethic which alludes to the confidentiality of respondents. Names of the respondents were not, in any way, published or recorded in either interviews or questionnaires. This guaranteed their security in the aftermath of the research propose.

Issues of plagiarism were also avoided in this research. The researcher recognises that taking or using someone's work without acknowledging is a serious academic offense. In this regard, the researcher acknowledged all the work that he got from other sources other than his own in coming up with this research product.

It is generally a crime to administer a questionnaire or an interview to a person without that person's consent. Interestingly, the researcher observed this rule and would first introduce himself to the respondents and seek consent thereafter.

Dissertation Outline

This research paper consists of five chapters that are mutually reinforcing. The first chapter gives an overview of conflicts in Zimbabwe, giving an analysis of the nature of conflicts the country has been subjected to. Chapter two deals with Civil Society and conflict transformation in Zimbabwe, thus giving what hitherto civic organisations have been doing with regards to peace building before the Heal Zimbabwe model. In chapter three, the researcher looks into the work of Heal Zimbabwe in relation to conflict issues around its

operating areas, how it transforms those conflicts and the success stories of its initiatives. Chapter four presents the challenges that Heal Zimbabwe faces in transforming conflicts and peacebuilding before closing the study with the recommendations towards peacebuilding in Zimbabwe as chapter five.

CHAPTER ONE: CONFLICTS IN ZIMBABWE: AN OVERVIEW

This chapter gives an in-depth analysis of the nature of conflicts in Zimbabwe that date back to the early years of the Independent Zimbabwe. These conflicts range from political contestations, Land reform or land boundaries in the rural areas, food aid distribution, tribal conflicts, and resource based particularly mineral resources and others. These conflicts are discussed in greater detail below.

1.1 The liberation Struggle

The liberation struggle was fought between three separate fronts in the Rhodesian government under Ian Smith and later Abel Muzorewa, the Zimbabwe African Liberation Army (ZANLA) of Robert Mugabe and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) of Joshua Nkomo between 1964 and 1979, (Norman 2004). The latter two were determined to end the white minority that dominated Zimbabwean politics since the occupation of Zimbabwe in the late 1890s, which is why they ended collaborating against one common enemy. Evans, (1992) records that the cold war played a part in the liberation war as the Soviet Union was supplying weapons to the ZIPRA while the ZANLA forces would get their military assistance from China and North Korea. The British were also supporting Mugabe and his party after they broke ranks with the Smith regime when he declared an Independent Zimbabwe in 1975.

ZANLA and ZIPRA forces successfully fought the war and pushed Smith and his regime for the Lancaster house conference which brought independence to Zimbabwe in 1980. The first black Prime Minister Robert Mugabe launched the Prime Minister's decree in 1980 after winning the elections that set the torn for national healing and reconciliation. However, this decree was violated two years into the new Zimbabwe when ZIPRA and ZANLA clashed in the infamous Gukurahundi period. The two phases of violence became the foundations of protracted quest for peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Today, the failure by the leaders to facilitate national healing is blamed for having bred a culture of violence, conflicts and impunity.

1.2 Political contestation

Political contestation is the source of Zimbabwe's unending conflicts. Jung, (2014) defines political contestation as the struggle for power or superiority between rivals. In Zimbabwe,

this contestation for power started two years after the country ended the protracted struggle that brought political independence to the black majority, (Makumbe 2000). The ruling ZANU PF, under the leadership of President Robert Mugabe, purportedly went into a killing spree with the objective of exterminating the Joshua Nkomo led PF ZAPU. This was aimed at dealing with any possible rivalry between the Ndebeles and Shona over the control of Zimbabwe, and independent observers believe that the ruling party had achieved its objective as it weakened Joshua Nkomo's chances of unseating Mugabe and his regime. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (1997) estimates that at least 20 000 innocent civilians were killed in Matebeleland and some parts of Midlands where some victims had their limps cut off. These massacres (cord named Gukurahundi) left the social fabric broken within communities and the government had not made efforts to facilitate peace and reconciliation.

Internal conflicts within the ruling party over the idea of having a one party state escalated conflicts during the late 1980s to the early 1990s, (Amani Trust 1998). This rebellion was spearheaded by the late Edgar Tekere who famously defied Mugabe and went on to form Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) which contested the 1992 elections. Makumbe (2000) chastises the ZANU PF government for having caused violent conflicts through its tyrannical rule as it showed against the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in the early years of 21st century.

In 1999, a political party that had a majority of supporters in urban areas was born, courtesy of its pro workers origins, (Runyowa 2013). The MDC is the first opposition political party to have posed a serious threat to the ruling ZANU PF as it shocked a majority in the incumbent by successfully campaigning against the new constitution in the 2000 referendum. Melber, (2004) noted that this first defeat on the party of ZANU PF inspired the party to unleash terror against opposition supporters. The subsequent 2000 parliamentary elections, 2002 presidential election, 2005 elections and the infamous harmonised elections of 2008 were all marred by violence, intimidations, abductions and arson (Moore, 2013). Political contestation has generated much conflict in the entire Zimbabwe but it was hard to mitigate in rural areas probably because of the easier manipulation of rural citizens by political figures. This destroyed peace and harmony in local communities that continue to manifest in various forms today, chiefly during distribution of food aid, land boundary conflicts and community leadership.

1.3 Land Reform

Between the years 2000 and 2003, land became the most indispensable asset a politician or his/her supporters had ever dreamed of owning. Though land was always important to the economic wellbeing of Zimbabwe, the 21st century made it the most sought after treasure following the unexpected electoral defeat of ZANU PF in the 2000 referendum for the proposed new constitution, (Schweitzer 2008). He goes on to say that ZANU PF unleashed the violent seizure of white owned commercial farms as a punishment to the defeat hence plunging the nation into an unprecedented transfer of property from the owner to the rightful owners of the land who happen to be black people. The land reform was necessary but the way it was carried perpetuated the cycle of violent conflicts in the country.

According to (Schweitzer 2008) theories of relative deprivation help to explain the reason behind the violent land seizure that was instigated by the state. The theory was propounded by Davies, (1962) and it assumes that actors become aggressive if they perceive a gap between the level of need satisfaction that they have achieved and the level they perceive as justified. The perception of relative deprivation is not determined by objective circumstances but by the degree of which these objective circumstances deviate from actors' expectations. Thus, actors can experience relative deprivation even if their objective level of needs satisfaction improves but that of other does so to a higher degree, (Davies 1962: pp. 5; Gurr 1970: pp. 36; Hirshleifer 2001: pp. 15). In the case of Zimbabwe, it can be consummated that the black majority felt that they were being deprived by the whites of their God given land and they embarked on a violent war of retaking the land. The seizures did not only harm the white commercial farmers but it did destroy the mutual relations between the blacks who were against the policy and those that unleashed it. This meant that the culture of violence was entangled within communities and the state has not done anything to either compensate the victims or facilitate reconciliation through the transformation of these conflicts.

1.4 Operation Murambatsvina

With the memories of the ruthless land reform programme still fresh in the minds of ordinary Zimbabweans, the government of Zimbabwe launched another controversial policy codenamed Operation Murambabtsvina in May 2005. It was a clean-up campaign targeting big cities such as Harare, Bulawayo, Masvingo and Kwekwe where there was an influx of illegal urban dwellers. Although the idea of restoring sanity was ideal, considering the obtaining situation that posed a serious threat to health, the convoy of the United Nations Fact finding Mission, (2005) concluded that the fast track program was largely political and it

accused the ZANU PF government of trying to crack the growing influence of the opposition MDC supporters by chasing these dwellers. Because of this move, more than 5000 people were left homeless according to this very report compiled by the UN. Again, the policy became a source of conflict and it left many Zimbabweans divided along political lines.

To ease the growing pressure from homeless citizens, the government unleashed operation Garikayi that was aimed at compensating the people who had lost their homes and sources of livelihoods. This was being championed by the then Minister of Local Governance Dr Ignatius Chombo. However, Masunungure, et al (2006) accuses the government of having taken a political mantra in allocating land to the landless people, thus getting rid of the MDC support base in the urban areas. He argues that instead of stimulating ZANU PF support base, the operation crippled the ruling party's influence in urban areas. We see the aggravation of tensions and conflicts in Zimbabwe happening in a linear sequence without an effort to restore peace through conflict transformation and reconciliation as evidenced by the 2008 electoral violence.

1.5 Mineral Resources
There has been an outcry over the use of mineral proceeds in Zimbabwe that continues to come from the members of the public. The outcry reached its peak during the inclusive government when the then minister of finance, Tendai Biti was complaining about the misuse of diamond money from the Chiadzwa mines (Nyamangodo 2012). International analysts argue that the diamond money was being used to mastermind human rights violations that culminated in the alleged rigging of the 2013 harmonised elections. Although there are no serious casualties on this one, the conflict around this resource in the area where it was extracted cannot go unnoticed. The army was also accused of having beaten and tortured innocent civilians in 2009 over the scramble for the precious mineral and this has triggered conflicts in the area and the entire nation.

A considerable number of rural citizens around the diamond fields had to be relocated and the conflict escalated when the government and the diamond firms took long to compensate the affected population. In this regard, it can be note that conflict has been a mainstay in enforcing controversial policies in Zimbabwe.

1.6 Food Aid Distribution
For a country with at least two million people facing starvation and malnutrition since 2002, the distribution of food aid by giant humanitarian organisations and the social welfare

department was always welcomed with aplomb. However, the shenanigans during the distribution process have created sharp divisions and conflicts especially in the rural areas. The process was being handled in a partisan manner since the country plunged into a cyclic food shortage. In its monthly conflict report of March 2016, the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP) observed that food aid distribution shifted from the needs of the family to the partisan politics where only ZANU PF card carrying members were targeted at the expense of the starving population. Nehanda Radio (2016) also broadcasted that food aid distribution was fuelling conflicts in areas such as Buhera North ward 33, Chipinge South and Gokwe North. In the former district, MDCT supporters who, without success, attempted to unearth the shenanigans were left wanting after they failed to get the much needed food. This has had a negative impact on social relationships between the beneficiaries.

Heal Zimbabwe Trust, (2015) also observed that unfair distribution of food aid was indeed the major source of conflicts in 27 districts across six provinces that the survey was carried. The unfortunate part is this abhorrent trend is exacerbated by political differences and ideologies which leads to the marginalisation of the needy people thereby pushing themselves to confront those that would be favoured resulting in conflicts or violence in the worst case scenario. To augment this research, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), (2016) recently published a similar trend highlighting that ZANU PF has overtaken the distribution process in a bid to target its supporters. This has been the trends for the past decade and it is the same period that Zimbabwean communities were deeply grappling with sharp divisions.

1.7 Operation Chimumumu

In early 2009, the three main political parties, ZANU PF, MDCT and MDC formed Government of National Unity (GNU) which would come up with the new people driven constitution among other things. Representatives of these parties in Douglas Mwonzora, Paul Mangwana and Edward Nkosi spearheaded the outreach programmes to gather the views of the people regarding the new constitution. However, another conflict in remote areas particularly Gokwe and Buhera broke out as the ZANU PF government reportedly launched operation chimumumu to silence the rural people to speak their minds that would be incorporated in the draft constitution. Violence obtained in worst case scenarios in these areas as the youths aligned to ZANU PF beat up people who dared to speak during the outreach programme. Thus, a cycle of violence perpetuated and the further destruction of the social

fabric. This led to the suspected compromises that were reached during the constitution making process.

1.8 Demonstrations

Unemployment, poverty and bad governance exacerbated the recent wave of demonstrations against the government in most urban areas. The most affected areas are Harare, Bulawayo, Beitbridge, Masvingo and other towns. Although demonstrations and protests are constitutional, what was witnessed in the recent months is an unwanted record of violence, looting and destruction of property. Zirwa (2016) had this to say in his article in the Zimbabwe Daily after the Beitbridge skirmishes:

"When demonstrations erupt as was the case in the riots of 1998 and recently in the border town of Beitbridge and other parts of the country, many innocent souls lost their property and limbs even? Protests are known more for their destructive nature than their purpose."

Zvirwa is vindicated in his thinking as the nation witnessed the destruction of property in Harare during the demonstrations including the burning of Zimbabwe Broadcasting Authority (ZBC) motor van, two police trucks and the looting of the Choppies Supermarket. This prompted the Home Affairs Minister Dr Chombo threatening civil society and protesters with police heavy-handedness and the banning of these demos. Conflicts and violence are thus perpetuating unabated, further compromising Zimbabwe's prospects of peace and sustainable development.

1.9 Ethnic Conflicts

Zimbabwe may have more than seven tribes and more than 14 languages but it is sharply divided along two main ethnic groups in Shona and Ndebele. Zinyama, (1986) alludes that Shona is the largest and most dominant group in Zimbabwe with a population of around 9 million whilst the Ndebeles are the second largest with a population of less than 10% of Zimbabwe's population. That being said, political power bickering has been revolving around these two and it has created unwanted violent conflicts dating back to the early years of independence. The tension still persists and it manifests in the form of uneven development between the Matabeleland and Mashonaland, (Cowen 2002). As argued by Melber, (2004) in the earlier stages of this chapter, Robert Mugabe and ZANU PF had always wanted to exterminate the Ndebele to deal with any possibility of them being overthrown by a small ethnic group. This was unleashed to the province in 1983 under the banner of Gukurahundi.

To date, these conflicts were not resolved and there exist a high walled border between Mashonaland and Matabeleland which leaves the marginalised Ndebele tribe wanting to fight for their freedom politically, socially and economically.

In overall, political contestation remains a major source of conflicts in Zimbabwean communities and it acts as a stumbling block to conflict transformation and sustainable development. It degenerates into ethnic, land and food aid distribution facets that are inordinate enemies of peaceful coexistence within communities. To ameliorate this albatross, some civil society organisations came into being to address conflicts through transforming violent conflicts into peaceful ones as way of fostering development.

CHAPTER TWO: CIVIL SOCIETY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN ZIMBABWE

This chapter analyses the concept of conflict resolution vis-a-vis civil society in Zimbabwe. It will also scrutinize the practice of peace building in Zimbabwe with a particular focus on efforts that a number of civil society organisations have been making to address conflicts in local communities. The close scrutiny will therefore lead to the consummation of the successes recorded and the existing gaps that Heal Zimbabwe is striving to fill.

2.1 The Practice of Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe

Since the Gukurahundi massacres in the early 1980s, civic organisations initiated conflict resolution strategies to foster peace, prevent the recurrence of violence and to stimulate national development. The organisations were focusing on conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict settlement, mitigation and transformation.

Deng and Zartman, (2011) define conflict resolution as a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. The disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional. When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement. In this instance, it can be said that Zimbabwe's crisis was failed by the two conflicting parties as the wounds of the Matebeleland massacres that are still present despite the Unity Accord of 1987 (Mashingaidze 2011). Civic groups gained prominence in the late 1990s to champion conflict resolution and reconciliation through various activities that will be discussed below.

Monitoring human rights violations and early warning systems is one of the roles that civil society paly in resolving conflicts, (Kidombo, 2013). In Zimbabwe, Crisis Coalition in Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation and Counselling Services Unit (CSU) have been confronting the state on human rights violations, providing legal and medical aid to the victims, which often provoked the state to descend on them heavily on accusations of furthering the western regime agenda in Zimbabwe.

Early Warning

Civil society organisations that were advocating for peaceful coexistence developed an early warning mechanism to prevent the outbreak of violent conflicts. Rupesinghe, (1993) defines early warning as an instrument of conflict preventive strategies that should help ascertain whether and when violent conflicts can be expected to occur, with the objective of preventing

this from happening through early response. These responses could involve military and non-military interventions by third parties such as international organisations or local civil society organisations, (Doom 1994, Kuroda 1992). The notion of early warning system is premised upon the thinking that violent conflicts are preventable, (Ateya and Wisler, 2007). The duo further recognizes that there are signals that foretell the upsurge of violence, hence the need to act and make sure that these conflicts are prevented, CCSF, 2012). Cilliers (2005), Ateya and Wisler (2007) have argued that through the study of some specific events, behaviour of certain individuals, incidents or public declarations, and their sedimentation in specific patterns, state and non-state actors are able to announce the imminence of a major political seism or violent conflict.

As observed by Masunungure, (2010) and Sachikonye, (2011) violence in Zimbabwe is embedded in political parties and their leaders. It is against this backdrop that civil society in Zimbabwe have come up with early warning mechanisms that target the community, political actors and the church for sustainable peace and development in local communities. The CCSF, a platform for church and civil society on peace building acknowledged the early warning system that is being used by organisations such as Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), CCSF 2012). ZPP has 420 human rights monitors nationwide with the sole mandate of identifying early signals for violent conflicts, report them to the head office where the information is processed and disseminated. This enables actors to implement preventive measures as well dialoguing with the parties involved. But the question will these organisations manage to engage the state in addressing emerging conflicts.

A number of civil society organisations including the CCJP, CCSF, CCMT and Crisis in Zimbabwe have adopted the early warning response and mechanism in a bid to address conflicts, (Ncube 2014). As part of its early warning mechanism, Zimbabwe election Support network, observes and monitors electoral violence before, during and after elections, (CCSF 2012). The organisation reports cases of violence or signs of looming political catastrophe so as to table preventive measures. Whilst the idea is good and practical, Ngwenya, (2011) notes with concern the financial constraints bedevilling these organisations which compels them to implement violence and conflict transformation measures during election times only. He however, applauds the early warning for having successfully reduced politically motivated violence during the 2013 harmonised elections. Ncube, (2014) also attributed the massive reduction of politically motivated violence in 2013 to the GNU which gave birth to a number of these civil society organisations. Despite the weaknesses that civil societies may have,

Pafenholz, (2005), Bond (2006) and Whitefield, (2010) maintain that they have a huge role to play in developing early warning mechanisms as well as preventing violence in general.

2.3.2 Peace committees

The concept of Peace Committees was adopted in Africa years back in counties like the Central African Republic, (ZIMCET, 2004), alluding to a group of selected respected individuals who are trained to champion conflict transformation endeavours. Odindaal and Olivier, (2000) define local peace committee as the group that is formed at the level of a district, municipality, town or village with the aim to encourage and facilitate joint, inclusive peace-making and peacebuilding processes. Neyroud and Beckley, (2001) added that a LPC is by its nature inclusive of the different sections of the community that are in conflict and has the task to promote peace within its own context.

In Zimbabwe, ZIMCET is one of the organisations to have championed the concept of taskforces in response to the violence that occurred in the year 2000, (ZIMCET 2004). The organisation further alludes that they have worked in areas such as Buhera, Masvingo and Zaka with these local peace committees in a bid to transform conflicts in local areas. The peace committee is made up of traditional leaders, church leaders and supporters of different political parties. The CCJP also trained members of the peace committees in Masvingo, Zaka, Hurungwe and Buhera in response to the 2008 political violence, (Prosper 2014). The motive behind the committees is to encourage tolerance, peaceful coexistence within local communities. Heal Zimbabwe Trust also adopted the peace committee concept in its bid to transform conflicts and prevent the scourge of politically motivated violence. The organisation has term its committee peace clubs, (Ncube 2014).

While the concept is good in its inclusive nature, ZIMCET (2004) noted with deep concern the prevalence of violence in areas where peace committees were established. According them, targeting some parts of the areas that are believed to have experienced gross violations of human rights, leaving a gap in urban areas. This was evidenced by the bussing of people from areas such as Harare and Bindura to instil violence in these areas because of the reluctance of local leaders to push for violence.

2.3.3 Community Dialogue

Community dialogues have often been used as a platform of bringing together diverging groups of people in the society to find some common ground. According to Boot, (1996) a community dialogue is a process of joint problem identification and analysis leading to the modification and redirection of community and stakeholders' actions towards preferred future

for all. Jong, (2003) added that a dialogue is an interactive participatory communication of sharing information between people or groups of people aimed at reaching a common understanding and workable solution.

From the above definitions, Lund, (2009) consummated that dialogue is a critical tool in transforming conflicts as they compel conflicting parties to talk, build trust and transform relationships. It is against this backdrop that civil society organisations in Zimbabwe, focusing on sustainable peacebuilding, have adopted community dialogues as a key transforming component. At a national level, the church under the auspices of Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), Catholic Bishops Conference and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches in 2002 collaborated to dialogue with national Leaders where the President acknowledged the importance of dialogue to end civil strife and economic hardships that bedevilled the country, (Zimbabwe on the brink, 2004). Ncube, (2014) added that after the conception of the GNU civil society organisations embarked on a roll out plan engaging stakeholders in constructive dialogue so as to transform conflicts in local communities. The likes of CCMT, ZIMCET, CSU, CCSF and Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum built on what CCJP had been doing in Masvingo, Zaka and the Midlands. These organisations tried to engage the country's main political parties that were believed to have stemmed violence conflicts, traditional leaders and the community to discuss issues threatening peace and security in a given society, (CCSF, 2012).

From the above paragraph, it can be noted that albeit civil society had done quite well in engaging these stakeholders, the result is not what had initially been hoped for given the current levels of intolerance within communities and some areas that are still facing violent conflicts. The coming of Heal Zimbabwe into the fore might not have done justice but it did use the different modus operandi through the use of collaborative platform as will be explained in detail in chapter four.

2.3.4 Research and Documentation.

This is one area that most of the organisations that were incapacitated to venture into communities to carry out peace building work contributed much to the subject. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO and the Research and Advocacy Unity are among leading organisations in research and documenting articles to do with violence prevention in Zimbabwe, (ZNGO Forum, 2015). The research helps policy makers and stakeholders in peace building with tool kits for effective conflict prevention. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum has documented cases of the 2000, 2002 and 2008 violent conflicts in

Zimbabwe. This was to inform violent preventive mechanisms for the 2008 ZANU PF and MDC showdown but the result was dismal as the country probably recorded the bloodiest electoral violence since the attainment of independence. While the concept is good on paper, there remains a gap in application and holistic approach to peace building despite the availability of literature on toolkits. This explains why Lund, (2009) continues to advocate for commitment by stakeholders to successfully prevent violent conflicts as well as transforming conflicts for sustainable development.

2.3.5 Peace Concerts and Sports

It is imperative to note that civil society in Zimbabwe embraced peace concerts and sports for peace in a bid to transform conflicts through enhancing the celebration of diversity whilst overcoming adversity. In 2012, Lupane Agenda a chapter of Bulawayo Agenda held a historic peace concert in Gomaza Stadium under the CCSF where it drew the audience from political party leaders, victims of political violence and the community to preach the message of peace and tolerance in communities, (CCSF, 2012). This concert was graced by musicians to preach peace. A similar peace art concert was held in Nkulumane by the National Youth Development Trust (NYDT) in 2011 to engage youths on peace endeavours. These efforts are a clear indication that civil society is committed to a peaceful Zimbabwe, albeit the organisations failed to effectively transform conflicts in their areas of operation as evidenced by a leitmotif of violence.

CCJP and Heal Zimbabwe conducted these concerts and sports with the involvement of key actors in conflicts to ensure that violence is prevented, there case in point is Masvingo where the province voted peacefully in 2013, (Ncube 2014). All these activities that civil society undertake make them a space of tolerance, dialogue, compromise and participation, which facilitates the rebuilding of new communities, (Barns, 2009, Pafenholz and Spurk, 2006).

How is Civil Society affected by conflict in Zimbabwe?

The state and civil society relations have not been mutually complementing and they were made sour by unending conflicts obtaining within the country's borders. Due to the undemocratic tendencies that the state displayed during times of dissent and civil resistance, it unleashed terror against civic groups, torture and harassment of leaders, abductions, closure and a limited operating space, thus affecting the sector's conflict resolution initiatives as will be shown by the subsequent paragraphs.

The Zimbabwean government promulgated restrictive legislation meant to reduce the influence of civil society in 2002. These laws are the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). CIVICUS (2011) reports that these draconian pieces of legislation stifle the fundamental Human Rights such as the freedom of expression, freedom to peaceful assembly and the COSs ability to disseminate information on key governance issues. In meetings organised by these organisations to educate the citizens on their rights, and violence prevention mechanisms, the state machinery would climb on them or at least security informers becoming part and parcel of the audience thereby instilling fear to citizens. In recent years, organisations like the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition and Human Rights watch have cried foul over the conduct of the state, where in 2007 church leaders under the banner of Christian Alliance were arrested in Kadoma while Crisis meetings would be disrupted by the police. Thus undermining the sector's ability to contribute to the democratic processes of Zimbabwe through conflict resolution initiatives.

According to Lee, (2011) the government's unexpected announcement to have all civil society organisations operating in Zimbabwe reregistered in 2004 under the Private Voluntary Act (PVA) was another way to fetter the operations of CSOs. This was in response to the growing influence of CSOs on opposition politics as the MDC has originated from the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU) with support from ZINASU, NCA and Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union (ZFU) in the late 1990s. This background meant that the civil society had a strong bias towards opposition, thus provoking the state in their operations. From this setting, it can be said that the state's stance against civil society that they are agents of regime change agenda is vindicated albeit limited space and arrests and torture of CSO employees is not justified.

During the last decade harassment, intimidations, office raids, detention, torture and even murder of civic employees became common in Zimbabwe, (Lee 2011). CIVICUS (2011) added that in Zimbabwe, there is a common perception that CSOs meeting are attended by security personnel instilling fear to citizens thus making it difficult for CSOs to mainstream conflict resolutions. The presence of these security details would result in the abductions and torture of civic activists in the aftermath of the meeting. This cyclic trend followed the closure of Amani Trust, a once vibrant civic organisation that was championing respect for Human Rights and Peaceful coexistence within communities. Ncube (2014) alludes that between 2007 and 2012, more than five civil society organisations had their offices raided or their employees detained for being pro MDC and puppets of the Western machinations.

The confrontational approach by the civic groups when they are engaging the state on conflict resolution strategies often creates an environment of mistrust and mudslinging between the two role players, (Ruhanya 2011). In a report compiled by CIVICUS (2011) one civic activist was quoted as saying in the aftermath of the 2008 politically motivated violence:

"In Zimbabwe, the government has continuously failed to investigate and prosecute killings, torture and politically motivated violence as many of those who committed serious crimes during the elections continue to live in the same communities, some next door to their victims"

Although what the sector was calling for is genuine and key to conflict resolution, treating the state as enemies compromises the ability of civil society and state to work together in addressing conflicts. As a result, when the civil society activist lambast the state in the private media, the state responds with heavy-handedness and office raids to such organisations. As a result, the two sectors become sources of conflicts instead of being peace builders.

Is civil Society a source of conflict in Zimbabwe?

Civil society organisations in Zimbabwe have joined with opposition political parties in lobbying against the ruling government on key government issues. In so doing, the government of Zimbabwe treated them as an extension of the MDC or agents of regime change agenda. The Zimbabwean (2008) reported an outcry by the MDC over the arrests, detention and torture of civic groups, after Women of Zimbabwe (WOZA) staged a demonstration in Bulawayo to put pressure of the negotiators to the Global Political Agreement to launch the Inclusive Government. This paints a solidarity picture to the state. In this regard the civil society can be said to be part of the conflict in Zimbabwe.

Civil society organisations have been at the forefront in staging demonstrations and protests against the ruling government, thus provoking the state machinery. In 2007, the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition organised a prayer rally that was graced by MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai. This resulted in the torture and arrests of Morgan Tsvangirai and the organisers of this rally. In the same year, more than 100 pastors were arrested and detained in Kadoma for staging a prayer rally that was denouncing the ruling government. These events show that civil society organisations in Zimbabwe are part of the conflict that has bedevilled the nation, they can also be blamed for having caused violence between the state, particularly the police and citizens of Zimbabwe.

Recently, civil society organisations have been sponsoring and advocating for protests against the government. There are allegations that the pressure group known as Tajamuka/Sesijikile has civic background and is funded by influential organisations and western donors. To this end, violence has been witnessed particularly in Harare, where violence and looting are rampant because of the protests that were targeted at unseating a constitutionally elected government.

CHAPTER THREE: HEAL ZIMBABWE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

This chapter presents research findings and analysis regarding Heal Zimbabwe's contributions to conflict transformation in Zimbabwe. The findings are not in isolation of what the researcher came through in literature review, therefore a series of cross references will be used to draw some interpretations and meanings of themes. The researcher conducted 20 interviews and administered 77 questionnaires, totalling to 97 out of the targeted 100 participants. The outstanding research participants turned down their participation out of fear. The research participants were drawn from 26 wards in 15 districts across six provinces which are; Midlands, Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Masvingo and Matebeleland North. These areas happened to be hotspots of politically motivated violence which is why Heal Zimbabwe Trust incessantly works with the areas.

4.1 Response rate and Demographic Data

Out of the targeted population, 66 people were women and a majority of these women are aged between 35 and 60 years. 31 of the participants were men and a majority of them are aged between 18 and 35 years. Table 1 below illustrates the demographic data of the respondents.

Table 1

Respondents Sex	Frequency	Respondents Age groups	
		18-35	**36-60**
Female	66	25	41
Male	31	19	12
Turned down responses	3	1	2
Total	100	45	55

Table 1 above shows that women safe spaces for reconciliation, gardens of peace and peace clubs attracted middle aged women who are interested in the practice of clubs that are generally believed to be conduits for income generating projects, group savings and a way to fight women impoverishment.

The researcher also came across an interesting observation in the frequency of men who were interviewed during data collection phase. Of the 31 men that answered the questionnaire, 19 of them were youths who are aged between 18 and 35 years. In the literature review, it was reviewed that Heal Zimbabwe Trust uses Sports for Peace tournaments and peace concerts to spread the message of tolerance and peace to youths. These youths take sport as a hobby which can consume the time that could be used to perpetrate violence. The GIZ, (2014) postulates that sport is a critical youth empowerment tool as it ensures sustainable development. This therefore vindicates the buy in that youths in local communities give to sport, a long-term relationship building tool.

4.2 Knowledge about the Organisation

The researcher observed that a majority of the respondents know the operations of Heal Zimbabwe in their communities. They came to know the organisation through its activities that it implements in their communities as way of transforming conflicts. Table two below indicates the knowledge displayed by respondents based on the gender dynamics.

Table 2: Knowledge about Heal Zimbabwe

Participants	Total respondents.	YES	% of people who know HZT	NO	% of those without the knowledge
Female	66	64	97%	2	3%
Male	31	30	97%	1	3%
Total	97	94	96%	3	4%

Question: Do you know Heal Zimbabwe Trust?

From the readings above, it can be noted that most of the respondents have been working with Heal Zimbabwe since its conception, albeit a few of them displayed the knowledge of

the organisation but were unable to articulate what it does. This can be attributed to the level of education acquired by local people. Some reached Secondary level but they did not complete their ordinary level studies.

It is safe to consummate that the information from community structures is validated because of the knowledge of people about Heal Zimbabwe. Their input is therefore taken as a true record of what is happening in local communities with regards to the causes of conflicts and conflict transformation mechanisms being implemented in their respective areas.

4.3 Causes of conflicts in local communities

The research participants were asked about the nature of conflicts affecting their communities. The responses confirmed that conflicts affecting communities are mainly political contestations, land boundary, family issues, food aid distribution and chieftainship. Figure 2 below demonstrates the conflict trends within the researched areas.

Figure 2: conflicts trends
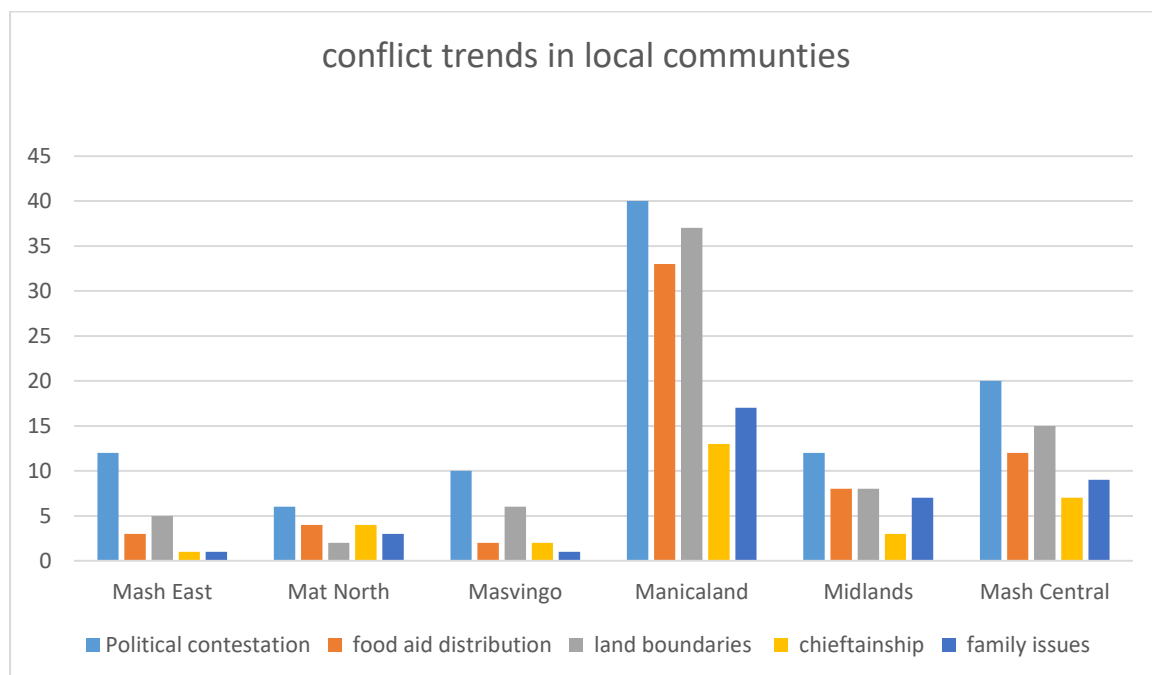
Question: What are the causes of conflicts and violence in local communities?

The above graph (figure 2) shows the knowledge of respondents with regards to causes of conflicts and violence in their respective areas. In Mashonaland East province, 12 people were interviewed from the peace clubs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) that are based in Mutoko and Murehwa. All of them acknowledged that political contestations have

often resulted in tense conflicts and, at the most gruesome show, in violence. Four of these 12 also indicated that food aid distribution fuelled conflicts. They believe that food aid distribution would take place in a partisan manner, making political conflicts the most dominant in local communities. This resonates well with the findings of literature review which identified Buhera and Chipinge as areas to have had peace committees established by CCJP in response to the political violence witnessed in 2008.

In Tsholotsho, representative of Matebeleland North in this study, six respondents out of six indicated the occurrence of political violence in their areas dating back to the period of Gukurahundi between 1983 and 1987 to the 2008 political unrest. The region is believed to be a long rival of the ruling ZANU PF, a factor which could have fuelled political party conflicts inflicted on the basis by punishment on the part of the ruling party. The wards that had representatives are ward one, two, three, four and five, apparently Heal Zimbabwe Trust has operations in these areas. In the literature review, it was reviewed that the ZANU PF and MDC rivalry has exacerbated political violence, this abhorrent trend therefore validates the findings from community responses. Food aid distribution has also played a critical role in fuelling conflicts and violence, and this can be attributed to the perennial drought challenges facing the region.

Bikita and Zaka in Masvingo also have a long history of political conflicts which often degenerated into violence. The CCJP initiated peace concerts and sports for peace in these areas as a direct response to the growing levels of intolerance and the breakdown of relationships as a result of diverging political views, as was analysed in the literature review. Due to incessant droughts in the province, the distribution of food aid was taken as a campaigning tool, a reason that places it second to politics on the causes if conflicts in Masvingo.

In addition, respondents from Mashonaland East and Mashonaland central also reviewed that political contestations have had a huge impact on community relations. Mbire, Muzarabani and Mazowe had the highest occurrences of political violence which could have been exacerbated by resource based tensions. This is also salient in Mutoko in Mashonaland East, where it was found out that land grabbing and land boundaries have been responsible for fuelling conflicts and violence which ended up taking a political dimension.

To sum up the causes of conflicts in local communities, the Midlands had a fairly even share of political contestations, chieftainship, distribution of food aid, family disputes and land boundaries as major causes of conflicts and violence in the researched areas. The issue of chieftainship is a result of resettlement programmes initiated in Gokwe and the quest for

arable land for people who migrated from other provinces. Threats and intimidations were more salient during election times particularly the 2008 political runoff. Gokwe North recorded gruesome cases of violence, arson, abductions after the area had voted for the opposition MDC during the March 29 harmonised elections. This has not happened before in Gokwe North, a former stronghold of the ruling ZANU PF prior to the 2008 elections. The peace club near Chief Nembudziya's homestead in Gokwe North also indicated the fighting of the royal family and their descendants to the chieftainship post.

4.4 Heal Zimbabwe's contribution towards conflict transformation

Since its conception, Heal Zimbabwe has been implementing activities in the areas under research in a bid to address existing conflicts and prevent the occurrence of further conflicts, in collaboration with CBOs and peace clubs, the structures that happen to be at the ground. The respondents demonstrated that Heal Zimbabwe transforms conflicts through sports for peace tournaments and peace concerts, gardens of peace, collaborative platforms, traditionally known as Nhimbes, women safe spaces for reconciliation, community dialogues, income generating projects, awareness campaigns and advocacy trainings. Figure 3 below shows the familiarity of the aforementioned activities by the respondents in their respective communities.

Fig 4: HZT activities
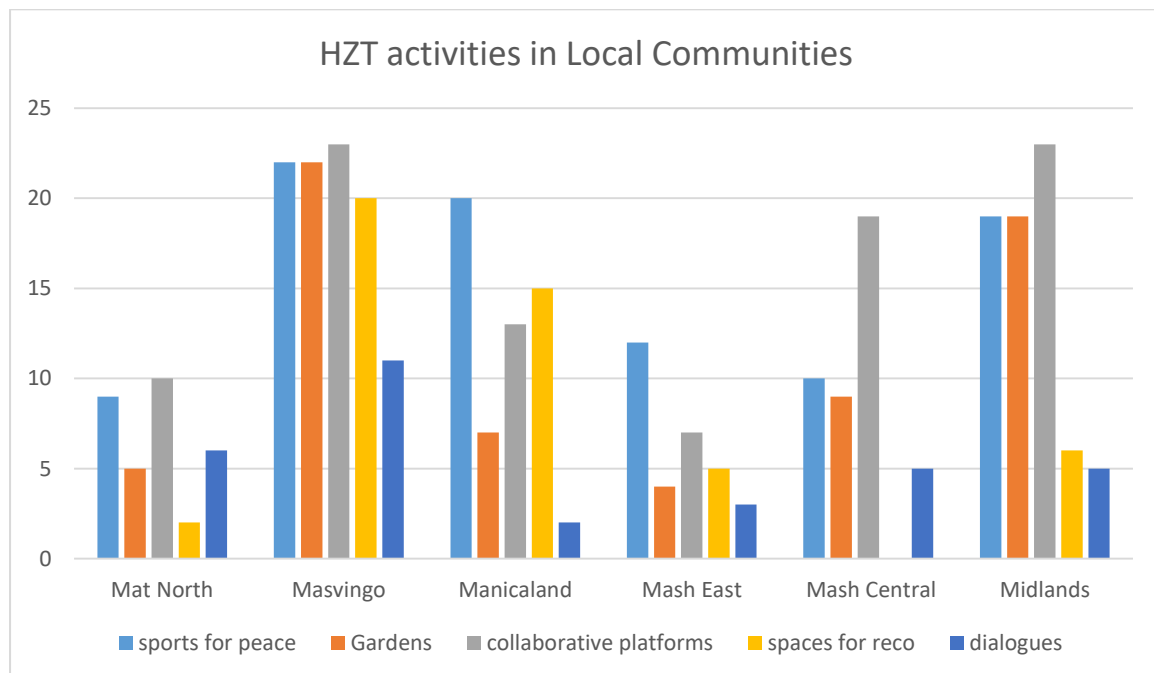
Question: How does Heal Zimbabwe transform conflicts in your area?

From Fig 3 above, it can be noted that Matebeleland North, Tsholotsho in particular, is more conversant with collaborative platforms, traditionally known as Nhimbes in Shona or Ilima in Ndebele as well as sports for peace. This is because of the Tsholotsho natives who value traditional mechanisms of resolving conflicts or preventing violence through working together. This explains why Community Dialogues are second in Tsholotsho as the people are entangled in a tradition that allows conflict transformation spearheaded by the chief or headman. In the introduction it was reviewed that peacebuilding involves traditional mechanisms together with modern methods, thus Heal Zimbabwe's work in Matebeleland North becomes critical for conflict transformation.

In Peace Clubs and CBOs that operate in Zaka, Bikita and Gutu (Masvingo province) many respondents demonstrated that collaborative platforms and gardens of peace are more popular in their vicinity than women safe spaces for reconciliation and dialogues. This is because of the Great Zimbabwe traits that these people possess. They see nhimbes/collaborative platforms as effective ways of uniting people and encouraging them to work together thereby creating an unbreakable bond. The prominence of gardens of peace also points to the reproductive role burden of women to provide relish. By spending time together, they will produce more food while encouraging each other to be tolerant. Women safe Spaces for reconciliation had fairly been adopted in this province and they are anchored in gardens of peace. This close relationship between these two activities allowed women to continuously work together, safe spaces gives a platform for them to purely work as women without men. On youths, sports for peace have been particularly appealing and respondents who are aged 18 to 35 years were quick to point sports for peace as the major followed by gardens and nhimbes.

In Manicaland Sports for peace tournaments dominated with Mutasa Youth Forum, a CBO based in Mutasa DC, having all of its respondents pointing that the activity is popular in their area. Women safe space for reconciliation has also been mentioned several times than dialogues and gardens of peace. Collaborative platforms are minimal largely due to the absence of a great deal in subsistence farming. In 2008, Mutasa district was adversely affected by political violence which was largely dominated by youths. This explains why Heal Zimbabwe implements this activity in this area than any other area to try and harness the youths, encouraging them to celebrate diversity whilst overcoming adversity. The popularity

of safe spaces for reconciliation is justified by the fact that women in Mutasa are into clubs and HZT identified these clubs to preach conflict transformation.

The researcher also found out that Mashonaland East province is highly volatile and this affected Heal Zimbabwe's operations in Mutoko and Murehwa. As such, sports for peace has had a significant reception in these areas as they were largely treated as non-political. Gardens of peace were also better appreciated compared to dialogues, women safe spaces for reconciliation and collaborative platforms. It is the women and men who subscribe to gardens of peace who acknowledged that gardens are largely seen as a medium for guaranteeing food security rather than a political movement.

In Mashonaland Central, collaborative platforms and sports for peace had the highest and second highest frequency respectively. This is because of the works of one CBO named Dambo Rovers which has been working relentlessly with communities in addressing conflicts through sports, education and food security programs. Dambo Rovers football club is a popular team in Mazowe central and this has made it easier for the rest of the communities to accept its messages and activities, thus giving Heal Zimbabwe a conducive working environment. This is in spite of the volatility of Mashonaland Central. In Muzarabani, women safe spaces for reconciliation, dialogues and gardens of peace were not as impressive as the organisation has initially envisaged. The place is impenetrable because political structures within the district, vindicating an argument in literature review that the ruling party has made it difficult for non ZANU PF aligned organisations to work freely.

Figure 3 in the previous page indicates that Midlands province has been dominated by collaborative platforms, sports for peace and gardens of peace in that order largely due to the farming of cotton in Gokwe North and Gokwe South. Cotton farming is a laborious task and it requires working together (collaboration), this opportunity granted HZT to mainstream conflict transformation. The spirit of working together can also be the reason why gardens of peace have been working to Heal Zimbabwe's advantage as the respondents acknowledged the impact nhimbes and gardens have had in bringing people together and encouraging tolerance within local communities.

In summing up the contribution of Heal Zimbabwe in conflict transformation in local communities, the researcher combined the activities that are being implemented by the

organisation in all of its operational areas and came up with the following observation in figure 4.

Figure 4 overall frequency of HZT activities in local communities

HZT's nationwide activities

- sports for peace
- collaborative platforms
- women safe spaces for reconciliation
- dialogues
- gardens of peace
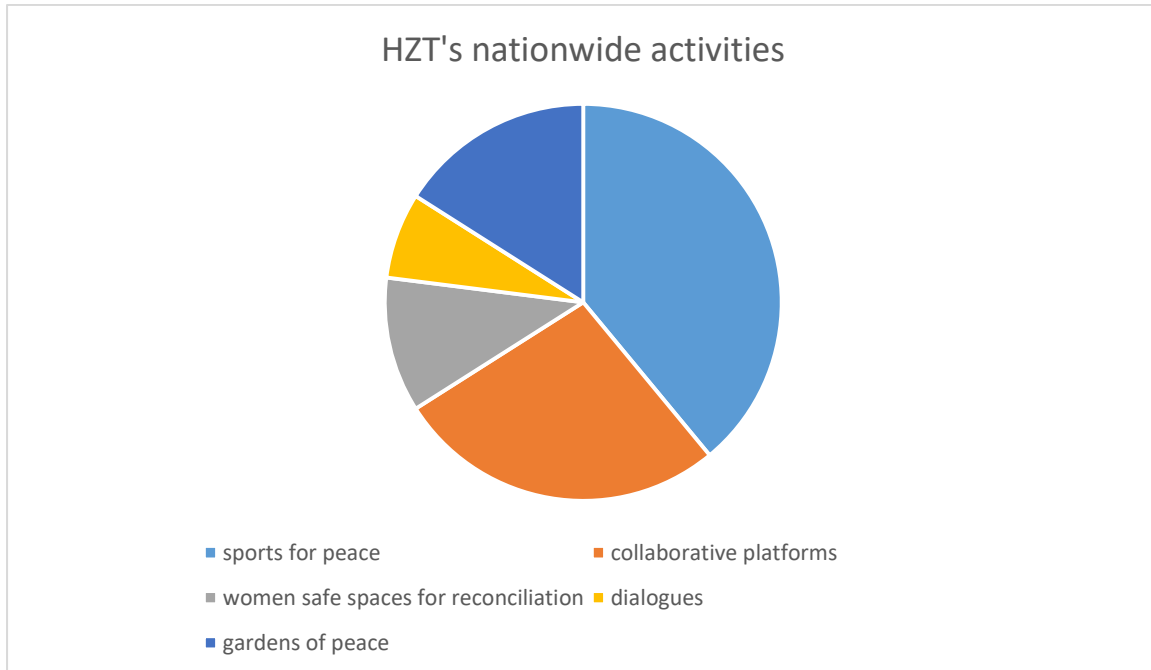
Figure 5 above shows that sports for peace tournaments have been dominant in areas of study followed by collaborative platforms, gardens of peace women safe spaces for reconciliation and lastly community dialogues. The respondents highlighted that sports for peace are more appealing to youths who are still able to run. Conversely, these youths are the ones who were used as tools to unleash political violence during elections. It is important to note that the researcher discovered that political violence was the major source of conflicts in local communities and political leaders had targeted youths.

It was also reviewed that community dialogues were not as appealing as what was initially hoped for largely due to the fact that the dialogue requires stakeholders in the development of the community are largely political leaders who may have labelled peace clubs and CBOs as aligned to the opposition MDC. Dialogues entail that a community together with its leaders, traditional and local governance, meet to discuss the problems that are threatening peace and security in their locality and find lasting solutions, be it water problems or food shortages but these duty bearers would treat peace clubs and CBOs with suspicion. Thus making dialogues infamous in local communities.

4.5 Heal Zimbabwe's Success stories in addressing conflicts

Heal Zimbabwe recorded some successes in addressing existing conflicts in local communities over the years. The researcher conducted five conversations with five HZT staff members who are responsible for implementing activities in local communities and it is interesting to report that they indicated that the organisation has been successful in resolving conflicts. Respondents in local communities also echoed the sentiments of the organisation's programs team as they agreed to the successes of HZT initiatives. Table 3 illustrates some of the success stories from HZT staff members and community members.

Table 3 success stories

Area	Success story	Year	Source
Bikita West ward 32	Held a dialogue with prominent youth leaders from ZANU PF and MDCT and the rest of peace clubs in 2012. The two were arch nemesis in 2008 and they were hunting each other but HZT's interventions made them peace club members and they now hold the captaincy and vice of Bikita United football club which triumphed in the 2016 edition of sports for peace tournaments in the ward.	2012 2016	HZT programs officer, HZT peace club member in Bikita.
Buhera South ward 33	There was a land boundary dispute between one Mashame and Gwangwadza but HZT peace club members notified the headman and the District Administrator (DA). The headman convened a meeting to resolve the issue and they have since prevented the looming violence	2015	HZT peace club chair, who doubles as the councillor for ward 33.
Gokwe South ward 12	Sports for peace tournaments brought all political parties together, a development that was never previously seen or experienced. ZANU PF and MDC	2014	ZANU PF councillor who doubles as

	supporters were not playing soccer together but the coming in of a peace club saw them join hands and they are now working together on and off the pitch.		the peace club vice chair, HZT programs officer.
Mbire ward 9	Mbire Kubatana CBO testified that the 2008 political violence created two sharp groups in the community who attacked each other in the run up to the June 27 runoff but they also indicated that HZT's interventions allowed them to work together in the garden of peace and the area did not record politically motivated violence in 2013 harmonised elections	2011, 2013, 2014	CBO secretary, HZT programs officer.
Mutasa ward 31	Collaborative platforms created an unbreakable bond in the village lying a few miles away from Mozambique and the people are now working together with cohesion contrary to what was previously witnessed when they would often fight for land boundaries.	2016	Peace club chair and vice, HZT human rights monitor.

The above table is a highlight of Heal Zimbabwe's successes that the organisation achieved through a conflict transformation mechanisms. It must be borne in mind that these are not all of the organisation's success stories but the researcher decided to select what he sees as the best five from the participants and HZT staff members. The organisation also faced both external and internal challenges in its bid to transform conflicts in local communities that are going to be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: CHALLENGES FACED BY HEAL ZIMBABWE IN TRANSFORMING CONFLICTS

This chapter presents challenges that Heal Zimbabwe experiences or experienced in its bid to successfully address conflicts. The challenges are both external and internal but the respondents pointed external challenges as more debilitating than internal because they are beyond the organisation's control. They include political labelling, failure to get operating clearance (Memorandum of Understanding) from the District Administrator (DA) or Provincial Administrator (PA), disruptions by police, limited funding to sustain projects and failure to come up with sustainable ways of engaging the communities. These challenges are explained below.

4.1 Political Labelling

Heal Zimbabwe was not spared by the usual lash by both the state and local duty bearers as agents of regime change agenda or aligned to the opposition MDC, (Ncube 2014). This problem was also experienced by other peacebuilding organisations that work in local communities such as ZIMCET, ZimRights, and CCJP. The unfortunate part of it is that political labelling breeds many operational challenges like being denied the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and police disruptions. One DA in the Manicaland province once labelled Heal Zimbabwe an MDC outreach wing and up to now the organisation is yet to get clearance in Makoni District (HZT 2015).

4. 2 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Getting a memorandum of understanding has proven to be the major undoing of HZT's initiatives as they are finding it difficult to penetrate the most politically volatile areas. The Director of HZT admitted that this impediment is affecting the organisation's capacity to deal with existing conflicts and prevent the occurrence of violence. In areas that they are already operating, often times officials from the President's office interrupt Heal Zimbabwe meetings by requesting to see the police clearance and the MOU. One respondent in Gokwe North ward 13 bemoaned the biased questioning they receive from the office of the President which ultimately affects the success of their activities as many people have exited the peace club fearing to be labelled as MDC supporters.

4. 3 Resistance by duty bearers and local people

Despite the lot that HZT programs attract, they face resistance by duty bearers such as councillors, DA, chiefs, headmen and village heads and local people in some areas. The most

affected areas are Mutoko and Murehwa in Mashonaland East and Muzarabani, Mbire and Mazowe in Mashonaland central. In Gokwe South HZT faced the same resistance according to the peace club chair in ward nine. The discussion has already indicated, the reason why Heal Zimbabwe and other likeminded organisations are facing resistance is political labelling which also deny them clearance by the DA and/or PA.

4. 4 Lack of sustainable ways to engage communities

Although Heal Zimbabwe is facing external challenges to transform conflicts, it could have done better in terms of coming up with sustainable ways of engaging communities in peace building. The fact that some people have exited the peace clubs and CBOs on allegations of MDC allegiance by the organisation might mean something could be wrong and subsequently made people and duty bearers to think that it's an MDC movement. The organisation should also have sought the much needed MOUs from the DA or PA to work freely in local communities.

4. 5 Limited funding

Heal Zimbabwe's interventions are somewhat adversely affected by limited funding which hinders sustainability. Gardens of peace, sports for peace and Income generating projects do not cover a wider geographical area in its operating areas and the reason is limited funding. This means that areas that experienced less violence or conflicts in the past risk being left out during the transformation of emerging conflicts and the potential outbreak of violence. Furthermore, in areas that the organisation is operating in, periodic visits are often hindered by financial constraints. The challenge with this is that it hampers motivation of local actors in conflict transformation.

CHAPTER FIVE: TOWARDS ACHIEVING PEACE THROUGH CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN ZIMBABWE

This chapter proffers recommendations for effective conflict transformation and summary of research findings. These recommendations were largely drawn from the participants who aired their views on what the package of peacebuilding should have. Other actors in peacebuilding such as other civic organisations proffered their recommendations based on what they have experienced when implementing activities in local communities. The chapter ends by giving a conclusion of the study.

5.1 Summary of Research findings

The study has presented research findings undertaken by the researcher in his quest for looking into the activities that Heal Zimbabwe is implementing to transform conflicts in local communities. From the findings, it was observed that Heal Zimbabwe implements sports for peace tournaments, gardens of peace, women safe spaces for reconciliation, collaborative platforms and community dialogues. These activities build onto the advocacy and human rights awareness campaigns that the organisation implements in urban areas. Some of the peace building activities have been used as conduits of peace by other civil society organisations while some are exclusive to HZT. The organisation popularised sports for peace tournaments from the works of CCJP, CCSF while it introduced traditional mechanisms of preaching peace like collaborative platforms.

The researcher also observed that HZT has been successful in some areas of their interventions while weaknesses and strengthens were scrutinised. These challenges are countered by the recommendations below.

5.2 Recommendations
5.2.1 Recommendations to Heal Zimbabwe
5.2.1.1 Seeking Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
The research demonstrated that one of the devastating challenges facing civil society in their bid to successfully address conflicts is political labelling. To curtail this operational challenge, the respondents indicated that it is necessary for Heal Zimbabwe and other non-humanitarian organisations to seek the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the state or target community through the District Administrator (DA) or Provincial Administrator (PA). Kujinga, (2004) bemoaned the political labels given to the first civic organisations like Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition and Amani Trust as agents of regime change agenda. The

programs officers of Heal Zimbabwe also highlighted that once you are suspected to be pushing for a regime change, the operating space is narrowed by the police, the President's office and youths affiliated to the ruling party. To this end, Heal Zimbabwe and other likeminded organisations must therefore search for common ground with key stakeholders in local communities including the DA if conflict transformation is ever going to be a reality.

Having a memorandum of understanding also opens doors for targeted perpetrators of violence and their victims for them to work together in violence prevention and dealing with existing conflicts. One respondent in Gokwe North ward 13 stressed that most of the perpetrators of politically motivated violence are members of the ruling ZANU PF and a number of them would shun them when they attempted to invite them to be part of the peace club labelling the peace club an MDC project. However, producing an MOU with the signatures of the organisation and the DA, as the DA is believed to be sympathetic to the ruling party, will dismiss the allegations thereby attracting members from the political divide.

5.2.1.2 Regular field visits
Regular field visits were singled as critical in bolstering Heal Zimbabwe's peacebuilding activities in local communities. Cheryl et al, (2006) stresses that field visits are part and parcel of formative evaluation, a type of evaluation that works during the implementation of a project. They are helpful in that they enable Heal Zimbabwe to closely monitor the way its peace clubs are implementing various conflict transformation mechanisms. Sports for peace tournaments, women safe spaces for reconciliation, gardens of peace and dialogues require close monitoring and regular visits by the programs officers. This enables the organisation to see where it is doing wrong and strategize on corrective measures forthwith to minimize chances of project failure or the recurrence of violence in local communities. One participant in Mutasa DC, Manicaland and the other one in Tsholotsho highlighted that when they implement collaborative platforms without the presence of Heal Zimbabwe they often struggle to have a revered community leader who gives a key note address on behalf the the organisation. It is against this backdrop that Heal Zimbabwe Trust and other civic groups are recommended to periodically visit their areas of operation.

5.2.1.3 Funding of Gardens and other IGPs
There is need for Heal Zimbabwe to interminably fund income generating projects and gardens of peace so as to keep people occupied with something to do. This reduces the chances of local people, youths in particular, to engage in drugs that augments violence. When they get drunk they are more likely to revisit past vendettas be they political, religious

or resource based conflicts. Respondents from the Kubatana Garden of Peace in Gokwe North stressed that they often times face financial constraints to sustainably manage their garden. This can be attributed to incessant poverty in the area which compels members of the garden to consume all the profits from the garden. Heal Zimbabwe is then called to assist clubs like this with funds to revitalise the projects. It encourages more women to engage in nonviolent activities thereby significantly reducing chances of recurrence or occurrence of violence whilst they are addressing existing conflicts.

5.2.1.4 Increase the Number of Operating Areas

Although Heal Zimbabwe is appreciated by the inhabitants of communities it is currently working in, more can be done to enlarge the operating space. Initially, the organisation targeted the 2008 violence hotspots but developments during the 2013 harmonised elections and the areas that had previously been entangled in sharp conflicts need attention. Drought has also made areas like Tsholotsho, Muzarabani and Masvingo breeding grounds for conflicts and violence. One peace club chair in Mbire ward nine retorted that there is need to target Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) to reduce the burden of conflict transformation on peace clubs and community based organisations. These structures are pivotal in community development, but without peaceful coexistence the development aspirations of any community are compromised. It is therefore critical for the organisation to enlarge its geographical areas to deal with any likely conflicts thus adopting an all-encompassing approach to peacebuilding.

5.2.2 Recommendations to the government

For conflict transformation to be a reality in Zimbabwean communities there is need for concerted efforts particularly the hand of the state is much needed in this cause. The state must not treat civil society as enemies but a sector that plays a complimentary role in peacebuilding. To this end, it has to make the environment conducive for the civil society to work freely, this involves cutting the bureaucracy involved in acquiring MOUs for civil society to start operating in the area. The state should also listen to public voices that are calling for the operationalisation of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission so that it works with civil society in preaching the gospel of peace as well making issues of reconciliation a reality.

Conclusion

The research was undertaken to analyse the role of civil society in conflict transformation in local communities. Conflict transformation is a part that can be joined with other pieces of

peacebuilding like conflict resolution, management, mitigation and settlement to form a peacebuilding toolkit. The researcher used the case study of Heal Zimbabwe Trust to analyse how civil society mainstream peacebuilding activities in their bid to prevent the recurrence or occurrence violent conflict in local communities.

Civil society's role in conflict transformation is not only conspicuous in the communities that Heal Zimbabwe operates in, but through various lobbying that the sector often does including the operationalisation of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) and accountability and transparency on the part of the state. This is believed to be key in sustainable peace and development of Zimbabwe. The sector plays a pivotal role in both confronting and complementing the state in peacebuilding and development at large. The confrontational approach has resulted in them being labelled agents of regime change agenda. Being labelled agents of regime change agenda has resulted in stiff resistance by local duty bearers particularly the District Administrator (DA), Provincial Administrator (PA) and councillor and Members of Parliament (MPs) who are aligned to the ruling party. The research demonstrated that this challenge compromised the organisation's chances of getting Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) to work in local communities freely.

The study also pointed out that conflict transformation mechanisms are mainstreamed through various activities, chief among them sports for peace tournaments, collaborative platforms, community dialogues, gardens of peace, women safe spaces for reconciliation and Income generating projects. These activities were not initiated by Heal Zimbabwe but it built on what was done by other organisations like Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET), Amani Trust, Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation (CCMT) and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP). Among the stated activities are more acceptable than others in other communities depending on the socioeconomic beliefs and the level of political polarisation in other areas

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE
ACADEMIC RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INNOCENT MANGWIRO
MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

Introduction

My name is Innocent Mangwiro, a student at Midlands State University studying towards a Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies (in the Faculty of Arts). I am conducting a research on the role of civic society organisations in conflict transformation in Zimbabwe using the case of Heal Zimbabwe Trust. The purpose of this study is to fulfil my academic requirements. Therefore, your contributions, views and opinions will **NOT** be used for non-academic purposes. In addition, I wish to make it clear that confidentiality will be highly observed and your identity will be anonymous to prevent any insecurity. If you want to know more about the researcher and the work he is doing, you may contact the Chairperson of Development Studies Department, Dr Matunhu.

A. Demographic Data

1. Date of interview				
2. District/Ward number				
3. Province				
4. Sex of respondent.	1=male		2=female	
5. Age of Respondent	1= 18- 35yrs	2= 36-60 yrs		3= 60+yrs
6. Marital status of Respondent	1= Single	2= Married	3= Widowed	4= Divorced
7. Education Level of Respondent	1=Nil	2=Primary	3=Secondary	4=Tertiary

B. Knowledge about the organisation and its activities

1. Do you Know Heal Zimbabwe Trust?   Yes ☐   No ☐

2. If Yes in 1, list three activities that Heal Zimbabwe implement

   a. …………………………………………………………………………………

   b. …………………………………………………………………………………

   c. …………………………………………………………………………………

3. Do you find the organisation helpful in your community? Yes ☐   No ☐

C. Role of Heal Zimbabwe in Transforming Conflicts
1. Have you experienced violence or conflicts in your area? Yes ☐ No. ☐
2. If Yes, list all the types or nature of violence and conflicts

	Type/nature of violence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

3. How has Heal Zimbabwe helped you to prevent, or address the stated forms of violence or conflicts in your area? Explain below.

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4. List specific methods that Heal Zimbabwe used to address conflicts in your area.
   a. ………………………………………………………………………………

   b. ………………………………………………………………………………

   c. ………………………………………………………………………………

5. Is Heal Zimbabwe succeeding in transforming conflicts in your view? Yes. ☐   No. ☐

6. Explain your answer in (5)

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D. Challenges experienced by Heal Zimbabwe to Transform Conflicts
1. Are there specific challenges affecting Heal Zimbabwe's work in preventing and transforming conflicts in your area? Yes. ☐ No. ☐
2. If Yes, in (1) what are these challenges? List each challenge and explain briefly.

d. ………………………………………………………………………………………

e. ………………………………………………………………………………………

f. ………………………………………………………………………………………

g. ………………………………………………………………………………………

h. ………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Which one is the major challenge in your view and why?

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E. Recommendations

1. In your view, how can Heal Zimbabwe improve its activities to transform conflicts?

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2. What can other civil society organisations do to successfully contribute to conflict transformation?

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3. List three major actions or recommendations that can be adopted to assist Heal Zimbabwe to successfully transform conflicts in your community?

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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Have you faced conflicts in your area?

2. What were the causes of those conflicts?

3. What has Heal Zimbabwe done towards restoration of relationships, and conflict transformation?

4. Have you participated in any peace building activities organized by Heal Zimbabwe?

5. What has been your role in peace building initiatives by Heal Zimbabwe?

6. Have you faced challenges in implementing Heal Zimbabwe peace building work?

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