



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

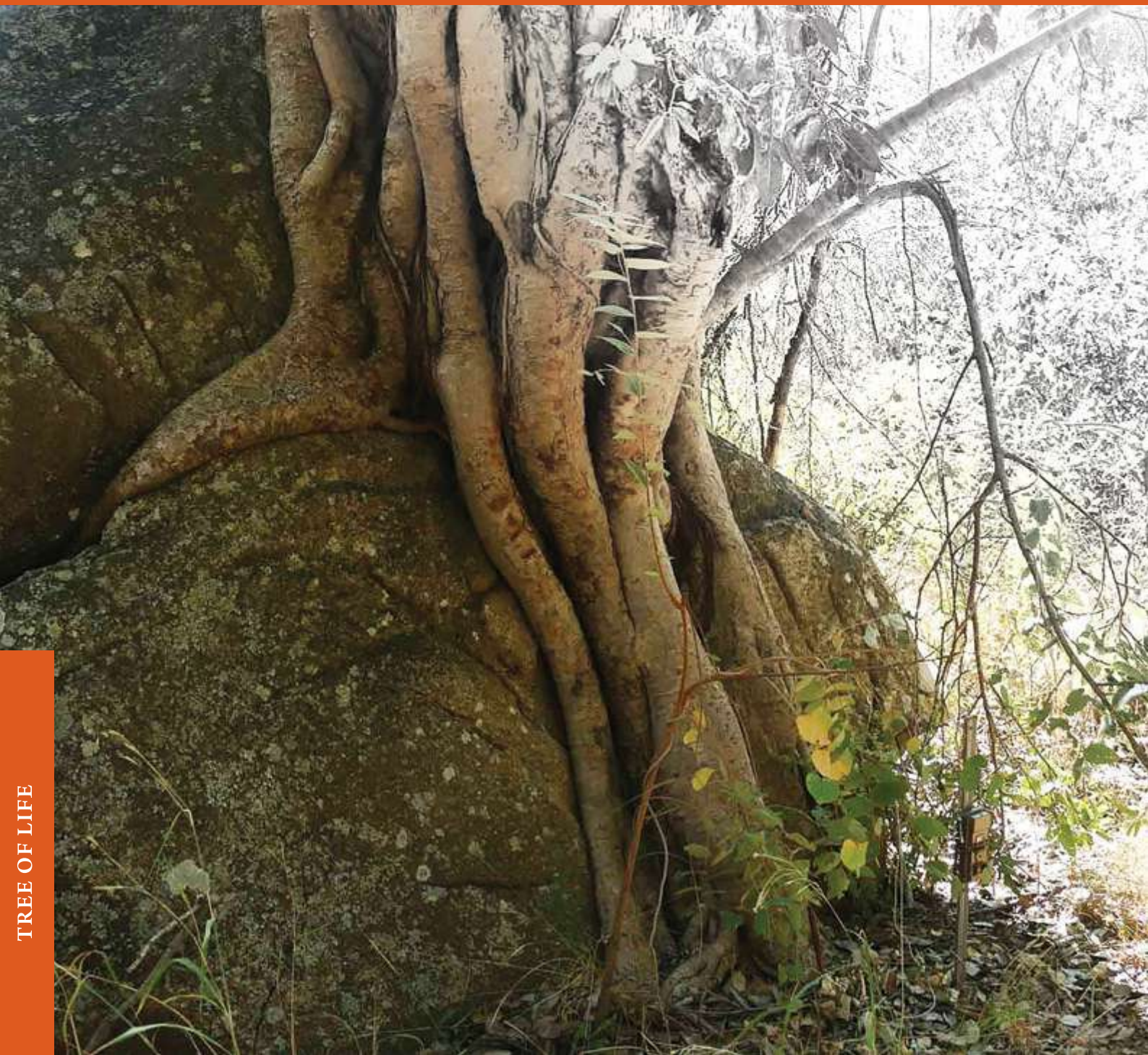




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WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Registered in 2010, the Tree of Life is a non-governmental organisation based in Zimbabwe. We provide community-based mental health and well-being approaches that build resilience and foster social cohesion. Working with a network of over 200 Community-based Facilitators, across 8 provinces in Zimbabwe, ToL directly partnered with 12 non-governmental organisations in 2022, to deliver an array of Healing and Social Cohesion services. In the past Tree of Life only worked through locally-based community individuals at grassroots level. Since 2017, our strategy has evolved to intentionally work with government structures, in order to feed into national processes as they emerge. Over recent years, Tree of Life has trained many government cadres such as Village Health Workers, Community Care Workers, Health Professionals, Agritex officers and more. In 2022, the Tree of Life community reached 9,574 people (3,243 men and 6,331 women) with our various services.

What We Do

- Trauma Healing and Empowerment (TH&E) Workshops
- Psychological Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS) Workshops
- Psychological First Aid (PFA) Workshops
- Mind set and behavioural change interventions for Young People
- Capacity building and Training - regionally and internationally
- Trauma Informed Care (TIC) training
- Self-Care and Burnout Management workshops
- Collaborations with like-minded Civil Society Organisations
- Evidence-based Research and Evaluations
- Supporting National Healing and Reconciliation processes

Our Values

Respect	We treat others as equals and embrace our differences.
Responsibility	We accept our duty of mutual care and to make constructive contributions.
Integrity	We are honest and transparent in all that we do. We listen intently and speak with honesty.
Connection	We believe in the power of community and seek to build collaborations and partnerships.



“

Between January 2003 and December 2022, we have reached over 200,000 people



Facilitated over 1,950 Trauma Healing & Empowerment workshops for over 17,000 survivors

Trained 15 Regional Facilitators from Sub-Saharan Africa in Trauma Healing

Trained over 500 Community-based Facilitators across 8 Provinces

Had direct collaborations with over 40 Civil Society Organisations

Reached over 10,000 young people with effective youth programming

Provided psychoeducation workshops for over 15,500 people, including community leaders, youth, women, communities and NGO staff

Facilitated thousands of referrals for further psychological support

Developed Training modules in the following:

Reached 157,938 people with Covid-19 Psychosocial support and awareness

Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS)

Self-Care (SC)

Psychosocial First Aid (PFA)

Trauma Informed Care (TIC) Practices

Training in Mentorship Skills for Mental Health

Covid-19, and Bereavement and Loss support

”

TREE OF LIFE 2022 OVERVIEW



CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER



It is with great pleasure that I share a brief overview of Tree of Life's (ToL's) activities in 2022.

Like most organisations, 2022 was a year to normalise programming. The easing of the Covid-19 restrictions very early in 2022 meant that the ToL team could revert to traditional 'face to face' ways of working, much to the delight of the large groups of communities that we serve.

The continued confidence in our team, coupled with the growing demand for ToL's work, saw us entering into five new funding agreements, in addition to the seven donor-funded grants we already had. The twelve concurrent projects helped us reach a total of 9,574 people with in-depth trauma healing and social cohesion services, being 3,242 (34%) men and 6,331 (66%) women. These figures reflect ToL's commitment to the continued empowerment of women, acknowledging that they are often the biggest demographic who bear the brunt of social

inequalities. Through new partnerships we entered into three new communities - Matobo, Tsholotsho and Lupane.

Our evidence-based footprint expanded in 2022, with Q-Partnership conducting an end of project Performance Evaluation on ToL's role in the World Food Programme (WFP) Zambuko Livelihood Initiative. Furthermore, trauma specialist, Susan Wyatt, conducted an in-depth scientific research on Collective Healing. The results of these studies were astounding, proving that both ToL's Social Cohesion, and Trauma Healing processes, are extremely relevant and impactful in the lives of Zimbabwean individuals, families and communities. Our association with the Tata Social Institute for Social Sciences, and a new partnership developed with Washington State University (WSU) is also a great achievement. One of our many proud moments was in the endorsement of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), who provided funding for us to train 15 Trauma Healing Facilitators from trauma-affected countries across Sub-Saharan Africa – all of whom are keen to roll out our intervention in their respective countries.

In 2022 our work with young people grew, and we received a third Youth Engagement for Peace Project (YEPP) 3-year grant, in addition to our existing Youth-Led community project (YCP) grant. The synergy of the two projects provides Zimbabwean youth with the requisite skills to be active educators in their communities, as well as to conceive, birth and manage sustainable livelihood development projects.

ToL also grew during the year, wherein our staff complement increased from 32 to 33. The year did not come without its losses. Lynn Walker, our longstanding and outstanding Director, retired. We were fortunate to appoint an equally capable Director, Stella Motsi, the former Country Director of Childline Zimbabwe. We are proud to say that the individual management styles of both women have undoubtedly resulted in our continued standards of excellence!

There were a few changes to our Board of Trustees. My term of office as board Chairperson ends in December 2022, and Duduzile Ndawana will be appointed the new Board Chairperson; a seasoned legal practitioner who will take ToL to new heights. RoseMarie Depp resigned from the Board, and 3 new Board members –

Sikathele Matambo, Farai Samhungu, and Ross Parsons - were appointed. The wide variety of experience and skill sets of new board members rejuvenates the Board and strengthens Board oversight!

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I wish to extend our gratitude and appreciation for the work of our Tree of Life core team, the extended community of the Big Tree Community Facilitators, and all our wonderful donor society who have worked so tirelessly this last year with us, to enable our branches extend their reach, and help so many in the country. May we continue in a similar vein in the coming year, to further our vision for a strengthened and cohesive Zimbabwe.



Jess Pwiti



DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

2022 was a progressive and stimulating year for Tree of Life (ToL), filled with growth and exciting teamwork. I was happy to join the organisation, taking over from a knowledgeable and experienced former director. I particularly appreciate how the leadership change process was managed in a seamless and professional manner. My timing for joining Tree of Life was perfect, as I lead the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan development. The document speaks to the shared vision for the organisation among all our stakeholders that include Board members, donors, partners, “Small Tree” and the “Big Tree”.

I would like to express my gratitude to all who exhibited great teamwork, and showed maximum commitment to the development of the Strategic Plan document. The process required commitment, expertise and foresight from all stakeholders, and this was achieved through discussions, constructive criticism and reflections. The strategy has been designed to ensure that it plays a critical role in complementing the Government of Zimbabwe's efforts in addressing social ills. This is also in line with the organisation's vision of increasing impact, and becoming a leading concern in the provision of trauma healing and social cohesion nationally, regionally and internationally.

Tree of Life has been on a growth trajectory since its inception. Successes recorded in the last 19 years lead to the organisation appreciating and introducing the advocacy and research component to its work. This led to two major research activities, thus an External Evaluation of our Social Cohesion model and the Collective Wellbeing Research on the Trauma Healing and Empowerment model. This also saw ToL grow in its human resources aspect, which was supported by a number of training and capacity development sessions. Tree of Life made a strategic and deliberate decision to extend its services to children in various communities. This is an exciting venture for the organisation, as over the years it has been observed that some of the issues that adults present with are a result of childhood trauma. 2022 saw ToL venturing into partnership and consortium work with like-minded partners, leading to an increased resource base, as new funding partners came on board.



As the Director, I am confident that the strategic document speaks to our vision as an organisation, and to the expectations of our stakeholders who made meaningful contributions to the strategy. The achievement of this document will depend on the holistic support and input from staff members, Board members, donors and partners who have always supported the vision of Tree of Life.

I would like to thank ToL Board members for the guidance and promotion of the organisation's vision, and the leadership team for leading by example and encouraging the team. Both the Big and Small Trees for their dedication and commitment to our work. I also have to mention our stakeholders, partners and donors for their support through 2022.

Now that we have set the roadmap for the next five years, I look forward to working with you all in the implementation and the provision of services that are community lead, group-based and survivor lead.



Stella Motsi

TRAUMA HEALING AND EMPOWERMENT (TH&E) WORKSHOPS

Developed in 2002, Tree of Life's evidence-based Trauma Healing and Empowerment (TH&E) workshop continues to be our core intervention, supporting people struggling with trauma. In 2022, Tree of Life conducted 46 TH&E workshops (184 groups), for 1,540 people, being 560 men (36%) and 980 women (64%). The workshops were held in 20 communities across 7 Provinces.

Adapted from the Narrative Therapy approach, the TH&E workshop involves 8 people per group, witnessing each other as they go through a structured healing process, over three full consecutive days. To support the healing journey, participants are guided to share their stories by using the tree as an analogy for life. The soil (culture), roots (family), trunk (early development), branches (later development), leaves (significant people), fruits (high points), and scars (hardships), provide the frame for sharing of experiences, leading to a process of reclaiming personal power and sense of body, and reconnecting with nature, self, family and community.

Impact is measured using the World Health Organisation (WHO) twenty question SRQ-20 psychiatric screening tools which measures levels of anxiety, depression and PTSD. Our analysis compares pre and post SRQ-20 scores of 733 clients followed up. Prior to the workshops 98% of the clients were clinical cases, of which 68% were severe. The average SRQ-20 score was a very high 11, whilst fifty-one people harboured suicidal ideations. At follow up just 2% remained clinical cases, with 98% of people below the cut-off, the average SRQ-20 was a healthy 3, and no cases of suicidal ideations were reported. 2022 results are consistent with previous statistics which have recorded similar results, attesting to the high positive impact of the intervention.

46 Trauma
Healing
Workshops

1,540
people

560 males
980 females



TH&E SUCCESS STORY

“ I am so full of anger because of this man-made suffering. I cannot stand to see my son suffering, I lost my mother’s love at a tender age. I feel like killing this woman.”

A female ranger participant for Phundundu in Makuti, Mekanaka (not her real name) grew up in a polygamous family. She shared that her mother was ill treated by her father’s younger wife. She grew up with bitterness as she saw all this happening. Mekanaka even lost her mother at a tender age. She believes that her mother’s death was caused by her father’s younger wife. Mekanaka has a son and her son has developed a difficult condition which she believes is a result of witchcraft by her step mother.

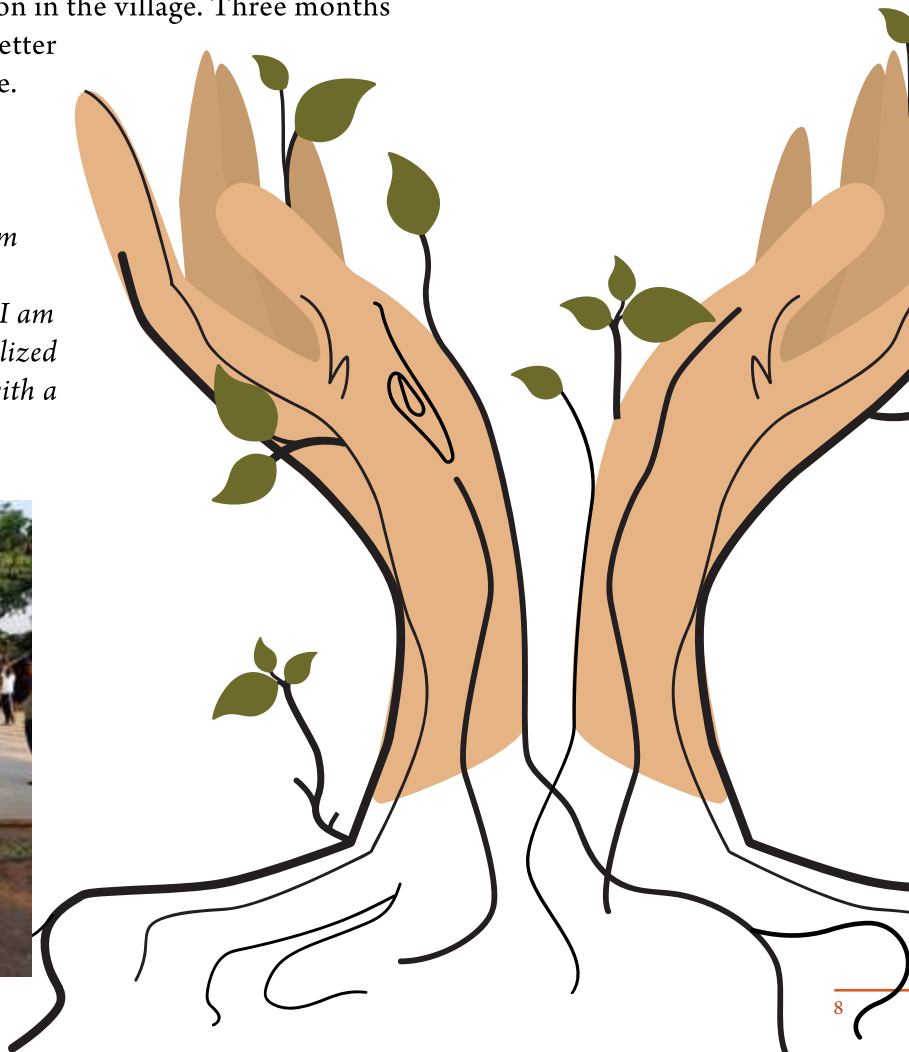
In November 2021 she attended a Trauma Healing and Empowerment (TH&E) Workshop in Makuti that was conducted by ToL and was followed up in 2022. She was still bitter at the end of the 3-day workshop. There was no doubt she meant to kill. Even after the closing circle she was still expressing the same feelings and the desire to murder her enemy.

She said, *“I am likely not to come back after my off days. I strongly feel I should axe her. I know I am going to end up in prison but I don’t mind. I am sorry my friends you are probably seeing me for the last time.”*

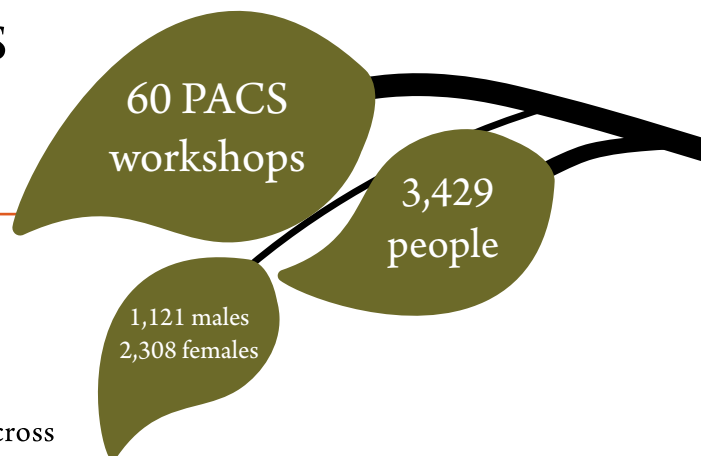
There was no doubt she meant to kill. Even after the closing circle she was still expressing the same feelings and the desire to murder her enemy.

In 2022, the ToL Facilitator and the Community Facilitator continued engaging her after the original workshop, checking on how she was and her son in the village. Three months after the workshop the participant now feels better and she had decided to forgive her father’s wife.

Mekanaka says, *“Thank you ToL. I never thought I would forgive my father’s wife. I am now engaging her and checking on how she is. I am also supporting her and her children. I continued reflecting about the lessons we got from the trees. I am now happy and the bitterness has gone. I also realized I was harming myself. If I murder her, my child with a difficult condition will suffer more.”*



PSYCHOSOCIAL AWARENESS AND COPING SKILLS (PACS) WORKSHOPS



Developed in 2012 as part of a scientific study on ToL's interventions, the Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS) workshop aims to improve inter and intra personal well-being, whilst fostering resilience and social cohesion in communities. In 2022, ToL conducted 60 PACS workshops, across five Provinces, for 3,429 people, being 1,121 men (33%) and 2,308 women (67%).

The two-day PACS workshop facilitates constructive dialogue between large groups of community members and their leaders. Together they identify factors that cause stress, trauma and hardship in their lives, families and communities. They then map out practical ways in which to cope with past, present and future stressors, as well as plans to improve their lives and livelihoods. At the end of most PACS workshops, the community establishes a detailed Community Action Plan (CAP) along with leaders and teams to move their well-being and developmental activities forward.

The PACS intervention reached its pinnacle of success in 2022, after the Zambuko phase 1 project led by World Food Programme (WFP) came to an end. An External Evaluation done by Q-Partnership on ToL's components outlined beyond impressive results of the process.

The Q Partnership evaluation cited: "Stakeholders including multi-sectorial partners, Government officials, community leaders and members wished ToL had begun their work within their communities over 10-20 years ago. It was argued that this would have aided an appreciation of the rich resources within the community and the need for the community to own their own community development, rather than relegate it to development players.... All groups interviewed reported a marked increase in their collaborative efforts. The willingness to correct oneself, resolve differences, work things out, go and work with community members towards shared goals significantly increased across all participating wards. The PACS training was unanimously applauded for facilitating the setup of various committees that were tasked to resolve community issues. Examples included dam, garden and VSL committees comprised of individuals from within the same communities. Several wards reported month-end ("PfigaMwedzi") meetings where all community members and leadership engaged on progress on their Community Action Plans and the way forward. Cross ward collaboration was also evident. Illustratively, Wards 17 & 18 are participating in an ongoing road and bridge construction project."



PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID (PFA) WORKSHOPS

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is built on the premise that if people are supported immediately after a traumatic exposure then this will build resilience. The one-day PFA workshop accommodates one hundred participants or more, and equips them with the skills to help themselves, their families and communities in the face of sudden disasters. In 2022, Tree of Life conducted 18 PFA training workshops for 1021 people, being 249 men (24%) and 772 women (76%).

18 PFA
workshops

1,021
people

249 males
772 females

Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) training includes:

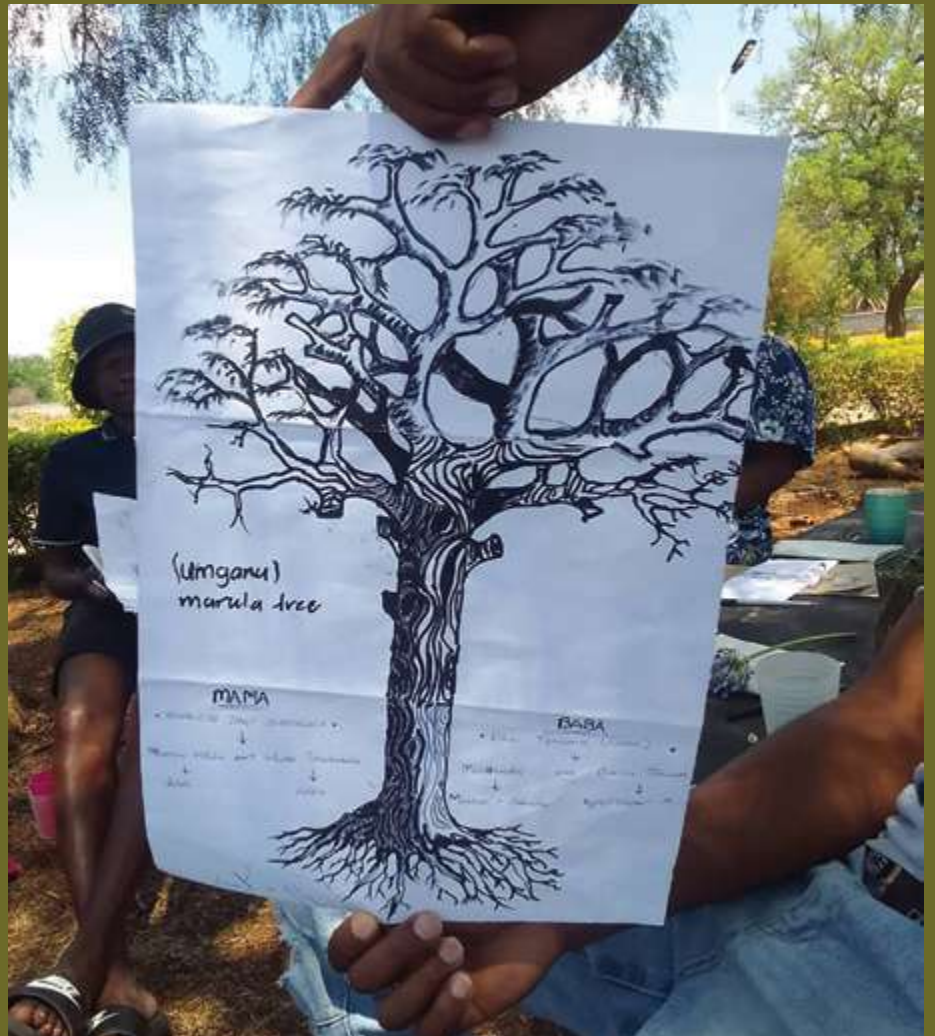
- Defining PFA in the Zimbabwe context and how to support families and communities
- Qualities, skills and characteristics of a good Psychosocial First Aid Facilitator
- Common reactions to traumatic events, and how those affected can be supported
- The role of PFA in addressing basic needs and reducing psychological distress
- Coping skills and connections for support after sudden shocks and traumas
- Creating and sustaining an environment of safety, calm and comfort, connectedness, self-empowerment and hope - for affected individuals and communities
- 8 objectives of PFA including:
 1. Human connection
 2. Ongoing Safety
 3. Calming overwhelmed human beings
 4. Supporting people to tell their immediate needs and concerns
 5. Offering practical assistance
 6. Connecting survivors
 7. Support adaptive coping and
 8. Providing clarity on one's availability as a helper

The PFA workshops have taken communities by storm, given the practical and easy to follow modules. Many participants who have been followed up have shared that not only have they helped others in distress, but they have also been able to teach other community peers the basic skills of how they too can conduct Psychological First Aid as and when needed.









PACS AND PFA TESTIMONIES AND PHOTOS

It is in Svinurai Mutoko area where we had a challenge of having bad roads in our community. We could walk for a long distance to find transport to ferry us to other place because of bad roads. We mobilized people to come to Tree of Life workshops. Through TH&E and PACS workshops we have learned a number of good things that we can do on our own for the community. We could call each other for help and we have managed to construct a good road in our community. In this rainy season we now have roads that are functioning well that we have constructed ourselves. For example, when we wanted to travel to Marondera, the car that transported us had to come fetch us on the kitchen community doorstep something that could not happen in the past because of bad roads.



Epworth Youth participant

"I was always depressed and I always seated idle at home. I heard about ToL through a senior facilitator and he invited me to a PACS Workshop. I attended the PACS in 2022 and I learnt a lot about stress and trauma. After attending the workshop, I realise that I was always stressed of how I could get money or where I could get money. I started saving money that I would get from my husband as little as I could. I had to starve my kids at times. When I had enough, I decided to start an open kitchen cooking sadza, rice, beef stew and chicken at Rueben shopping centre. Now I no longer stress of where to get money because I now have a source of income, though the money will never be enough. I now have somewhere I can spend time at and keep myself occupied. I have also encouraged other youths in our community to do a livelihood project."

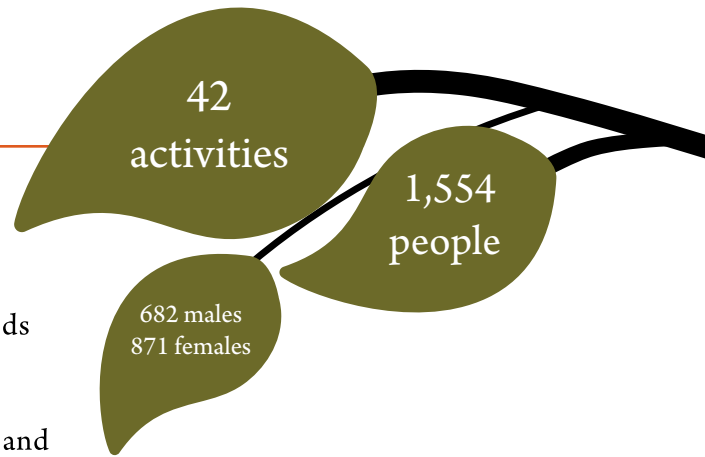
The young lady, who has opened the kitchen, has helped a young mother of one who had shared that she had a chip fryer seated at home. She helped with a 2-litre bottle of cooking oil and a pocket of potatoes for her fellow to start

a business for fresh chips at the local business centre and the young woman now has a livelihood project to depend on.

"I learnt that a problem shared is a problem solved."

YOUTH-LED COMMUNITY PROJECTS (YCP)

Running from January 2021 to June 2023, Youth-Led Community Projects (YCP) seek to build the capacity of young people as they design and manage community projects contributing to community cohesion and sustainable livelihoods development. YCP builds on the gains of ToL's longstanding Youth Engagement for Peace Project (YEPP), which largely focuses on providing young people with psychosocial support and peacebuilding skills, both of which are essential foundations for the building of sustainable communities.



YCP uses a holistic model that incrementally builds the skills and capacities of young people to manage small grant funding for projects, as well as to form effective groups that work toward becoming independent. Once trained, youth groups may apply for 3 sets of scaled-up small-grant funding from ToL. An initial grant of US\$200 is offered. Teams that prove to be effective and accountable with the funds are eligible to move onto the next grant phases, being US\$500 and US\$1,300 respectively. The latter has to be a large-scale project which will benefit their community. All project activities and funds are approved and continuously monitored by Tree of Life.

Group Dynamics Training

Project Design & Management Training

Entrepreneurial Mindset Training

Proposal Development & Approval

Community-Led Project Implementation

Progression to next small grant level after assessment

Capable Youth Groups able to operate independently

2022 Results

In 2022, 18 Youth groups across 6 communities in Zimbabwe (Epworth, Chitungwiza, Mabvuku, Nketa, Entumbane and Chinhoyi) participated in the YCP project, reaching 1,553 people, being 201 Youth trainees (86 men, 115 women), and 1,353 community participants (596 men, 756 women).

The trainees participated in 4 Project Design Refresher workshops, 5 Livelihoods Training workshops and 2 Livelihoods refresher trainings. As their first community-led project, the trainees hosted 31 Human Rights Awareness dialogues. These were handpicked issues which they felt needed urgent attention within their respective communities, prior to them embarking on Income Generating Projects (IGPs). The topics included Drug and Substance Abuse (18 dialogues); Early Child Marriages (7 dialogues); Gender Based Violence (GBV) (4 dialogues); Prostitution (1 dialogue) and Teenage Pregnancies (1 dialogue).

Towards the end of 2022, all 18 youth groups put together IGP project proposals to be conducted in 2023. Proposals were reviewed by ToL's in-house panel of experts, as well as at 2 peer review workshops, where youth presented their ideas to other youth teams for their contributions. Monitoring and Evaluation visits were made to all 18 youth groups with many successes being reported – a few of which are shared:



Individual incomes increased

- Several youth began their own IGPs post training (poultry projects, photoshoot booths, online digital marketing initiatives, a pre-school, etc.)
- A female youth facilitator found employment overseas
- Several youth dropped out of the project to pursue careers

Collaborations with local Government

- An Epworth Youth was selected by a Councillor to participate in a 1 month GBV training in Sweden, due to her initiative in spreading Gender Based Violence awareness
- The Environmental Management Agency (EMA) in Chinoyi have partnered with the Youth to spread environmental awareness, due to their oratory skills and confidence
- Several youth groups collaborate with the police in spreading Anti Drug Abuse messaging
- A young lady registered an Arts organisation, and partnered with Zimbabwe Youth Council

ToL Youth becoming a Recruitment Ground

- Several NGOs and companies have recognised the skills of the YEPP and YCP youth and now use them as a recruiting ground when employment opportunities arise
- ToL promoted 7 female YCP trainees to Community Facilitators
- ToL formally employed an active female youth as a full time employee in a new project

Female Empowerment

- 70% of the YCP youth groups are led by women
- YCP groups addressed issues about inclusion of women, gender equality and equity, access of girls to education, despite being abused or being married off.
- “Chitungwiza Advocates” and the “Shining Stars” have been amplifying women’s issues such as the “Girls are not brides” campaign, through the leadership of the young women

Reduction in social ills

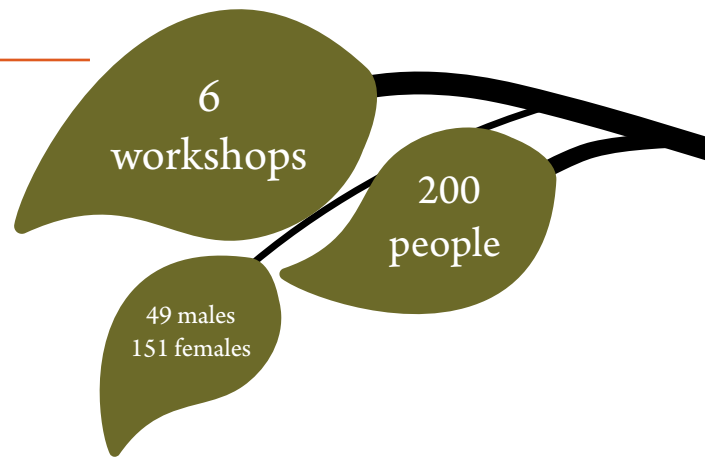
- Since the Substance Awareness campaigns, many youth have declared their commitment to stopping drug use
- Several youth have been empowered to report sexual abuse cases. One perpetrator was arrested and tried as a result

Youth and the Arts

- Youth members are part of arts groups that use edutainment to spotlight and amplify gender empowerment issues. <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMNnAqw9G/>
- One female youth presented on a radio station to speak about youth involvement in peace and ToL trauma healing processes. <https://fb.watch/aXohfaiMQi/>
- One youth - a musician - raises awareness on women empowerment and substance abuse through his talent and resources.
- Mabvuku youth have been partnering with churches, schools and other community-based organisations in raising awareness campaigns against substance abuse and gender-based violence

SCREEN ONLINE (SOL)

In 2022, Tree of Life joined as a consortium partner to the Childline-led Screen Online (SOL) project. Given that abuse against children also happens in cyber spaces, SOL is designed to positively influence children, families and communities, to adopt strategies increasing the prevention of child abuse in online spaces. Furthermore, the project seeks to increase access to justice and social care in instances where children have fallen victim to Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA). In 2022, ToL hosted six Psychosocial Awareness and Psychosocial First Aid (PAPFA) training workshops for 200 people, (49 men, 151 women). Of these, 79 Trainees were from the Department of Social Development, 38 were Childline Helpline agents, and 83 were parents and guardians of children living with disabilities.



ToL's role in the project is to develop capacity amongst communities, families and individuals through Psychosocial Awareness and Psychosocial First Aid (PAPFA) training. ToL's Screen Online PAPFA modules seek to address basic child protection needs, and reduce psychological distress for children, families and communities affected by OCSEA. Participants are trained to use existing and effective ways of coping with their stress, utilising support networks by linking to services provided by Childline, local police, civil society and community peers.



Key OCSEA findings emanating from PAPFA workshops

Most common types of online abuse

- Sexting by adults with children
- Cyberbullying; revenge porn, with disgruntled youth exposing others
- Pornography exposure on social media platforms
- online grooming where an adult trains a child in sexual matter
- Exposure to drug and substance use on social media
- Money scams where children are conned into pyramid schemes

How to identify OCSEA

- Children suddenly withdrawing from their phones and social media
- Children unusually not wanting to go anywhere or socialise
- Children receiving unaccounted for gifts
- Too many passwords on your child's phone
- Children getting bad grades at school or dropping out

How to prevent or mitigate OCSEA

- Pay attention to early warning signs (noted above)
- Switching off the internet or holding of phones
- Non tech savy parents learn social media to monitor activity; use avatars (by others) to 'spy' on the children's activity
- Forming of support groups
- Developing healthy relationships with one's children

"I learnt that I am a capable person, I can bring change within my sphere of influence."

CAPACITATING OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Capacitating other organisations to do what we do, is a key strategy in ensuring the longevity and sustainability of our processes, so that they may live longer than Tree of Life itself! To this end, ToL trains like-minded civil society organisations in our various trauma healing and psychoeducation interventions. In 2022, ToL conducted 16 Training of Trainer workshops for 8 organisations. Altogether 353 people were trained (78 men and 275 women).



Organisation	Civil Society Training of Trainers	Total	Male	Female	Trainee Locations
Childline	2 x PAPFA Facilitator Training for Helpline Agents	38	7	31	Bulawayo and Harare
Childline	2 x PAPFA Facilitator Training for Community Cadres	79	23	56	Bulawayo and Harare
CSO#1	2 x PAPFA Facilitator Training Workshops	37	7	30	Bulawayo and Harare
CSO#2	2 x PAPFA Facilitator Training Workshops	47	7	40	Tsholotsho and Matobo
CSO#3	Psychosocial Support Facilitator Training for Women	36	0	36	Harare
CSO#4	PACS Facilitator Training Workshop	24	9	15	Lupane
IRCT	Training of Healing Facilitators from Africa	15	8	7	Sub-Saharan Africa
SRT Project	Training of Healing Facilitators	50	14	36	Bulawayo and Harare
TISS	Psychological First Aid Training of Community Cadres	27	3	24	Chitungwiza
ToL	3 x PACS Facilitator Training Workshop for Youth	79	34	45	YEPP3 Communitites
TOTAL	16 Training of Trainer Workshops held for 8 CSO's	432	112	320	

IRCT Regional Capacity Building workshop

In September 2022 ToL trained 15 people (8m, 7f), these being staff from International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) member organisations and relatable organisations from Sub-Saharan Africa. Participants came from Chad (*Association Jeunesse pour la paix et la Non-violence*), Cameroon (*Trauma Centre*), Senegal (*Centre Africa pour la Prevention et la Resolution des Conflicts*), Uganda (*Grassroots Reconciliation Group*), Rwanda (*Uyisenga Ni Manzi*), Somalia (*Soyden*), Kenya (*Green String Network & Samba sports Youth Agenda*), South Africa (*Healing Memories & Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation*) and Zimbabwe (*Healing of Memories*). The Training aimed to capacitate the trainees to conduct Trauma Healing and Empowerment workshops in their respective countries, given that they all work with a vast array of torture victims who are in desperate need of healing.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATIONS

Research Project

What are the elements and impacts of a survivor-led group-based trauma healing program?

Tree of Life contracted a research consultant, in 2022, to look more deeply into our healing workshops. Through a grounded-theory methodological approach, the consultant reviewed current literature on trauma healing, which is mostly done on western psychiatric models of care, and found it to have limited use, or appropriateness, in the context and culture of Zimbabwe. The research findings went on to unpack the definitions of trauma and healing from our worldviews in Zimbabwe, and highlighted that survivors described the need for social healing more so than individual bodied treatments. Secondly, the findings highlighted how women are targeted and most significantly impacted by Conflict Related Sexual Violence, and require women-only group processes with other survivors. The findings were inconclusive in terms of working with perpetrators and survivors together; the responses were mixed, with no clear indication that putting these groups together had lasting helpful outcomes. Lastly, the findings revealed how culture was described as playing both a positive role in healing, for mechanisms such as those related to grief or burials; but cultural was also described as being negative, or a barrier at times to healing when dealing with sexual violence and women's rights. In conclusion, the findings showcase best practice in trauma healing as being a survivor-led, group processes at community level, especially for contexts and cultures such as that in Zimbabwe.

Susan Wyatt, Tana Consulting

WFP's Zambuko Project Partnership with Tree of Life

In 2022, Tree of Life invited consultants' Q Partnership to conduct an independent performance evaluation on the work with Zambuko Livelihoods Initiative Project operational from March 2020 to May 2022, across 10 wards of the Masvingo and Mwenezi districts.

Tree of Life, with the directive of implementing social cohesion and resilience building, conducted above target programmes to assist these districts sustain strengthened long-lasting cohesive processes through the ToL's Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS) workshops, and training of Community Cohesion Facilitators (CCFs), to work in the communities.

The ToL model showcased its strong capacity to support development players enhance the fundamental resilience capacities within communities. It proficiently demonstrated – through its facilitation of PACS workshops and conflict management training – that recipient communities' different livelihood resilience initiatives were supported. The interventions were successful in assisting communities manage conflicts and better cope with challenging situations. In addition, through the PACS training with the CCFs, valuable mental health and stress management therapy was provided; both fundamental building blocks for a resilient mind-set. Trackable roadmaps, such as Community Vision and Community Action Plans (CAP), helped monitor, strengthen and support the processes, and which as a result impacted the overall success of the project.

As a result of the work and key outputs by Tree of Life, the selected communities benefitted with more managed conflicts by being pre-empted, rationalised and significantly reduced; community cohesion was enhanced, enabling individuals connect and integrate for common welfare; and, if the momentum ToL generated is maintained, there is a strong likelihood that these communities may become truly resilient with developing internal capacity for:

- Strengthening coping mechanisms at individual, family and community level;
- Community collaboration

- Adhere to constitutions and operational guidelines
- Be aware of, and manage their own barriers and enablers
- Construct shared community visions and relevant action plans
- Actively reduce conflict through seeking mutual interest.

The final observations of the Q Partnership evaluation revealed the strength of the Tree of Life community cohesion programme as an important contributor to developing community resilience. Through its tried and tested set of tools it certainly facilitated positive mind-set shifts with participants, and the communities at large, but it comes with a caveat that anchoring sustainability, strengthening habits and actions by different community players, implementation partners, stakeholders etc. will be fundamental to capacity build and support for long-term success of a project of this nature.

Partnership with Washington State University

Tree of Life (ToL) and Accountability Lab Zimbabwe (ALZ) are collaborating with Washington State University (WSU) in a research project entitled “Evaluating Social Cohesion and Community Values in Southern Africa.” The research assesses whether community-based interventions can build social trust and community cohesion using two community interventions in a number of communities in Zimbabwe. The evaluation will be undertaken in 8 randomly selected communities as follows:-

- 2 Communities ToL interventions
- 2 Communities ALZ interventions
- 2 Communities both ToL and ALZ interventions
- 2 Communities – control

The evaluation will start as soon the ethical review process, being done with support from Africa University, has been finalised. The research will offer great opportunities for ToL and ALZ to have our work evaluated by an external University. ToL and ALZ will learn from learn from each and explore innovative ways of further collaboration, tapping into their areas of expertise. Recommendations will be used to review and strengthen the intervention. One of the deliverables will be a Practitioner Handbook with information about how to replicate the model.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD



“Fortifying resilience through social cohesion”

In early September 2022, consortium members of the World Food Programme Zambuko Livelihood Initiative, participated in a ‘Lessons Learned Workshop’ held in Masvingo. During a field visit, community members shared feedback on the powerful impact of the project, including the Tree of Life (ToL) Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS) social cohesion workshops, and the training of Community Cohesion Facilitators (CCFs). Many community members insisted that in future, the ToL processes should happen before other development initiatives are rolled out, in order to bolster resilience.

Julius Siwadi, a Masvingo Ward 17 Zambuko Beneficiary, shared: *“In 2017 a big donor sponsored our Chebvute Cooperative garden. Unfortunately, things fell apart due to constant conflicts including cultural, gender and leadership wrangles. The garden eventually stopped functioning as the community kept saying this is not our garden - it belongs to the Donors! After the Tree of Life PACS workshop in 2020, the community realized the garden was for themselves and they learnt how to work inclusively. We put up a new fence, resuscitated our garden and have built a small livestock shelter in preparation for expanding into small livestock projects – this has all been possible with thanks to social cohesion!”*

– Julius Siwadi, Chebvute Cooperative Chairperson since 2017 and Community Cohesion Facilitator trained by Tree of Life.

“These types of workshops are near my heart. I suffered depression for a long time and I could not speak out. I have attempted suicide 3 times and I woke up in hospital on all those three occasions. I am happy because workshops like these are coming into the communities. I am happy that my mother was there at the workshop so she also now understands that depression issues are real. At first my relatives thought that I wanted to seek attention and sometimes I was joking. I am glad that many people will now get help through workshops like these. I also have a friend whom I have helped recently because she had a boyfriend who recently got married to someone else but I have managed to help her by talking to her. Through talking to my friend, I also realize that it is also helping me in my healing journey because after talking to my friend I reflect on the advice that I have given to someone. Now I have just finished my tertiary education and I am usually seated at home. However, I have started to write some short stories to keep me busy.”

– Chegutu Participant

“I was so stressed about my children because they were highly involved in drug abuse. I now can communicate with them and encourage them to do some sort of working so that they do not have time of using drugs. I am glad that this workshop has made me realize that I should help my children to do some things so that they are not sitting idle every time. As a result of this workshop, I have managed to help a number of youth in the community do some art wiring and it has since reduced boredom to the youth and has given them some sense of occupation.”

– Chitungwiza Participant

A social worker who attended Psychological First Aid Workshop (PFA) in Entumbane acknowledged that she thought she knew everything since she is a graduate. She admitted the PFA workshop has given her a great skill in life that she appreciates. *“This PFA workshop has equipped me with unprecedented skills, the greatest one being the understanding that sometimes people behave the way they do because of what they experience in life as well*

as their background. This has helped me to be tolerant and not to judge other people. "I realised that some people that I have been failing to work with, thinking that they are actual misfits, are actual people whom I could work with in a more meaningful way only if had had this knowledge earlier. "I work with children and also community people in other circles and understanding of stress and its effects has made me process and be reflexive before I take it to the people I try to support in the communities".

This success story emanated from an adapted PACS workshop held at Kufunda Learning Village in October 2022.

Participants discussed how drugs negatively affect our well-being. People discussed without judging or blaming. It was a hot topic for all age groups.

One 23-year-old female participant was moved by the discussion. She approached one of the participants disclosing she was a drug addict taking cocaine, crystal meth, and an advanced one she named Molly. She was asked whether she was comfortable sharing her story with the Field Officer, which she did.



The Field Officer had a session with her. She shared her sad story why she got into drugs. She is also head of the family looking after her two siblings. She expressed she no longer wants to continue as she realised her health is being seriously affected. She can neither eat nor sleep well. Socially she is mal-functioning.

A positive story started happening. Through the support of one of the participants she is now going through a rehabilitation process. She has been admitted at Annex hospital for a detoxification process. Her siblings whom she shared were going through serious abuse and one of them presenting with serious anger issues have moved to a safe place. Social Welfare has been involved.

Thanks to the workshop for creating connections which have helped to save lives of these young people.

The YCP training was a bit confusing when it started. To me, I saw it as irrelevant because I did not understand anything but after the training I went home and re read the notes we were given. I started applying the skills I learnt at my workplace. Skills such as communication, gender sensitivity. I now understand the importance of equal inclusion of both male and female in all opportunities. I have also started educating my workmates on gender sensitivity and compliance. This was very useful to me and I am passing on the skills to others. – Chinhoyi youth

