

## STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE CULTURE SECTOR



**CULTURE FUND**  
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In Partnership with:



**SWEDEN**

The research was commissioned by Culture Fund in partnership with the Embassy of Sweden in Harare to articulate the role, situation and institutional framework for women in the culture sector

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## FOREWORD:

The Embassy of Sweden is delighted to be associated with the Culture Fund's work to challenge and influence attitudes around gender equality. This book is one such foray.

Two thirds of all work in the world is carried out by women and girls. Half of all food is produced by women and girls. But women earn only 10 percent of the world's incomes and own 1 percent of the world's assets. Denying rights for women is not only a loss to themselves; it also means missed opportunities for economic development. Gender equality is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Governments may promulgate gender related laws and policies but, ultimately, it is a question of attitudes and the will. Culture has a very important role in changing and shaping these attitudes and mindsets. A society that accords equal status to women and men is possible. But in order to make this a reality, everyone has to contribute; government, business, education, civil society – and me and you.

In the next pages you will be taken on an expository journey that highlights some of the significant achievements made by women in the arts and culture sectors; for themselves, other women and the society at large. There are also great insights on the gender based challenges that women in the arts sector face and recommendations, at operational and policy level, that can be considered. We hope this book will be an asset, an inspiration and a trigger for more work in this critical area.

**Mr Lars Ronnås**

**Sweden's Ambassador to Zimbabwe**



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>AWPAZ</b>	Association of Women Performing Arts of Zimbabwe
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CFoZT</b>	Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust
<b>CHIPAWO</b>	Children Performing Arts Workshop
<b>ESAP</b>	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>HIFA</b>	Harare International Festival of the Arts
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IYASA</b>	Inkululeko Yabatsha School of Art
<b>MoSMEs</b>	Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>MoWGCD</b>	Ministry of Women, Gender and Community Development
<b>NACZ</b>	National Arts Council of Zimbabwe
<b>NAMA</b>	National Arts Merit Awards
<b>NCDPZ</b>	National Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe
<b>PR</b>	Public Relations
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Agency
<b>TV</b>	Television
<b>UBH</b>	United Bulawayo Hospital
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNWTO</b>	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
<b>VAAB</b>	Visual Arts Association in Bulawayo
<b>WFOZ</b>	Women Film Makers of Zimbabwe
<b>ZAACA</b>	Zimbabwe Applied Arts and Crafts Association
<b>ZBC</b>	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Cooperation
<b>ZIFFT</b>	Zimbabwe International Film Festival Trust
<b>ZIMURA</b>	Zimbabwe Music Rights Association
<b>ZOU</b>	Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU)



## POEM - A CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT IT

A chance to talk about it  
 A chance to express oneself  
 A chance to show our capabilities  
 A chance to show determination  
 Yes this is the chance.

Women give birth to all human beings  
 Women build a nation despite all the agony  
 Women protect the world in their own special ways, as a hen protects its chicks  
 Yet this is the chance to talk about it.

Our fingers are not the same  
 But they all make a hand  
 So as women with our various capabilities  
 When we come together as artists  
 We will make a better cultured nation.

Women constitute the highest number in the nation  
 So let's not pull each other down  
 For united we stand and divided we fall  
 Appreciate each other's effort  
 Let's encourage each other a step further.

I am proud to be a Zimbabwean woman  
 No land is called fatherland but MOTHERLAND  
 I am proud to stand tall and be counted among many  
 My position and recognition is of merit not of pity  
 Empowerment was given to all  
 So let us use this chance.

By Shumirai Nhanhanga



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the participation, and contribution of producers of different works of art throughout the country. The works done in previous studies especially the Culture Fund Baseline Study<sup>1</sup> on the Culture Sector in Zimbabwe, 2009 made the validation of this study easier, without which this study would have been extremely difficult.

The Culture Fund and Consultants are grateful to the immense support received from various arts associations, arts practitioners from the various sub-sectors. Much gratitude is extended to the female artists without who freely articulated their issues. This report would not have been possible without their contributions. Special mention goes to our key informants: The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Visual Arts Association of Bulawayo, Manicaland Visual Arts and Crafts Association and AmaBooks, Zimbabwe Applied Arts and Crafters Association, Nhimbe Trust, Biriwiri Crafts Centre, Amagugu Heritage Centre and Women in Theatre Lab and Zimbabwe Women Writers.

The initial aspects of this research were undertaken by Gerude consultants represented by Shingaidzo Mupindu, Audrey Charamba and Stephen Matinanga. The report was edited by Linda Chaya - Dawanyi. The following Culture Fund staff contributed towards this production including further research: Farai Mpfunya, Chipso Muvezwa, Chido Mushaya and Simon Wu. The views contained in the report are entirely of consultants and contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust.

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<sup>1</sup>Culture Fund Baseline Study on the Culture Sector in Zimbabwe, 2009



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study on the Status of Women in the Culture Sector was undertaken with a view to inform sector policies and strategies and improve gender sensitivity and inclusivity in the arts and culture sector of Zimbabwe. The study sought to articulate issues on the role and situation of women and suggest programming areas that could help to improve the plight of women, based on what the artists themselves revealed.

The research used both quantitative and qualitative methods. Document reviews were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data while observations and case studies, in-depth interviews, surveys, workshops and focus group discussions to collect qualitative data. Key informants were selected randomly based on active involvement in the arts as practitioners, administrators or in varied management capacities. The study covered the whole country as surveys were administered nationally but most of the data was gathered from Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare.

The defining issues for women lean towards the plight of womanhood and the journey they must travel in ever evolving patterns of civilisation where balance between womanhood, work and life has to be maintained. Personal empowerment, collaboration, effective organisation and a clear strategy to improve status are key. These factors, whilst drawing from the overarching national gender frameworks, must be embraced and spearheaded by women in the culture sector.

The arts and culture sector in Zimbabwe is a space that is traditionally male dominated both at management and at individual artist levels. This imbalance is largely a result of the social-cultural construct. That women artists are as capable as their male counterparts is confirmed by the considerable number of women artists who have made their mark on the local, regional and international arena across all disciplines. Yet the discourse is not so much comparative against the achievements of men, as it is to appreciate the performance, contribution and challenges of women in the culture sector within the context of gender equality.

Findings pointed to the fact that a large majority of women artists have had to place their artistic and professional careers on the back burner, due to social pressures, cultural expectations and the realities of making meaningful livelihoods. Incredible talent and potential talent have had to be sacrificed because of negative cultural values. A corresponding lack of mentorship from the art fraternity to enable balance between life demands and the profession is apparent. Given the necessary support, there is no doubt that the sector will be all the richer through the creation of a conducive environment that enables women artists to fully develop their talents and careers without social prejudice and stigma.

Key recommendations from this study point to the fact that female friendly spaces, funding targeted towards women projects, adoption of sector specific gender equality policies amongst other initiatives that support gender equality will improve the plight of women in the sector.



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Several studies have been done in the arts and culture sector of Zimbabwe. These studies include the Culture Fund Baseline Study on the Culture Sector in Zimbabwe, 2009 and Cultural Statistics Survey, 2012. However, there has not been research focusing on the gender dynamics at play and status of women in the arts and culture sector in Zimbabwe. It is against this background that this study was undertaken.

## 1.1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Wide gender disparities exist in the arts sector as revealed by the baseline study, 2009. The study further states that the proportion of women in the sector is low but growing, likewise their contribution to the fiscus. While this trend is pervasive all over the world, the situation in Zimbabwe is made worse by the entrenched traditional, cultural values and norms that characterise the society.

This study seeks to ascertain the challenges that impede the meaningful participation of women with a view to ensure that culture sector policies and strategies are gender sensitive and gender inclusive as well as to strengthen Culture Fund's programming as an enabler of the development of women in the arts.

## 1.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The study seeks to fulfill the following objectives;

1. Collect information on the role and situation of women in the culture sector.
2. Identify the main challenges that women in the culture sector encounter and come up with strategies that could be engaged to overcome these challenges.
3. Identify key gender issues in the culture sector and document how these have positively or negatively affected women's participation in the sector.
4. Collect information and document success stories on women artists and identify lessons learnt from these.
5. Review the institutional framework for addressing gender issues in the culture sector and their role/ possible role in meeting the needs of women in the sector.

## 1.3 METHODOLOGY

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative research methods were utilised at the initial stages of the study and quantitative research methods were used to explore findings further, quantify data and generalize results from a sample of women in the arts sector. Research tools were developed in the context of the study's objectives.

Key informants were drawn randomly from leading art institutions at both national and provincial levels. An equal number of women from each sub-sector, would have been useful in an effort to obtain some level of representedness, but this was not feasible. In order to maintain clear gender perspectives, researchers were matched to informants along gender lines.



### 1.3.1 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

#### ❖ PAPER QUESTIONNAIRES

Paper survey was conducted with arts and culture institutions in Harare. A total of 12 questionnaires were distributed to strategic arts institutions in Harare. 11 of these questionnaires were completed. See Annex 1 for the questionnaire.

#### ❖ DOCUMENTS REVIEW

A desk study of several documents provided baseline statistical and other related information regarding gender issues. The latter information was necessary as it corroborates the narratives that the women artists and the cultural institutions articulated. Initial insights into what is already known on women based activities, gender gaps, opportunities, challenges encountered by female artists and the context in which they operate were obtained through reviewing and analysing selected documents and reports. The process also provided statistical and background information.

Information obtained was validated by artists during discussions and observations.

Some of the documents reviewed include:

- ❖ International and regional gender equality instruments as well as declarations,
- ❖ Zimbabwean gender policy and legislations protecting the rights of women, the Zimbabwe constitution,
- ❖ The Barometer – SADC Gender Protocol 2009, Barometer- SADC Gender Protocol Baseline 2011,
- ❖ Culture Fund Baseline study in the culture sector in Zimbabwe, 2009,
- ❖ Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust gender policy and the Culture Policy of Zimbabwe.

#### ❖ ONLINE SURVEYS

Two targeted online surveys were conducted.

The first one was administered on women working in the arts sector from 23 July 2014 to 12 August 2014. Responses were received from Harare (72 %), Bulawayo (9%) and Manicaland Provinces (6%).

93% of respondents live in urban areas. 51% of participants of the survey were main income generators for their families. Responses were received from all sub sectors with performing arts dominating (60%) while cultural heritage had the least number of respondents (7%). The largest percentage of respondents were artists at (76%) followed by producers-(33%) Media (26%), Arts Managers (24%) and Cultural Tourism at (12%)

The second online survey targeted men working in the sector and was conducted from 30 July 2014 to 12 August 2014. All sub-sectors of arts and culture were represented in the male respondents, with the largest component being associated with the performing arts (56.5%), and the smallest from the Fashion and Design Industry (6.25%). Male respondents were also primarily artists in the sector (44%), followed by Arts Managers (38%) and Producers (19%).

#### ❖ EMAIL SURVEY

Information was also gleaned through an email survey conducted with 200 people working in the arts and culture sector. The survey was aimed at gathering data on the challenges faced by women working in the arts and culture sector in Zimbabwe.



### ❖ OBSERVATIONS AND CASE STUDIES

Observations and case studies were used to facilitate understanding and appreciation of the issues at hand.

The researchers took time to ensure detailed observation of the women's activities, particularly those in visual arts, basketry and other crafts work. This included listening to negotiations with customers, watching the women at work and observing their operative environments.

For the case studies fourteen life stories were documented in order to bring to light diverse life experiences in the sector. Sectors represented were film, literary arts, visual arts, dance, music and performing arts. Due to the multi- sectorial representation of the women on board, the culture and heritage sub-sector was closely linked to music and dance. The stories served as a reservoir of insights into the status of women. Independent perspectives shared, helped to paint shapes and patterns of professional dynamics, in hues tinted with different shades of exposure local, regional, transcontinental and international. The documentation exercise was designed as an experiential expose in an effort to extract unencumbered views that could conceal certain threads of realities that can easily be lost in the traditional tapestry of non-experiential study.

### ❖ IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Face to face discussions with 50 women artists were used to extract women's perceptions and experiences about their status.

### ❖ WORKSHOPS

Workshops were structured to collect data. Workshops were conducted in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare. The duration of each workshop was 1 day.

The participants profile was designed to address intergenerational diversities. The age profile was from 25 to 65 years.

The workshop process included consultations, information collection, plenary sessions and group discussions. A small training component designed to familiarise participants with gender issues and frameworks was incorporated. Where possible, group discussions were constituted according to sub-sectors.

## 1.3.3 STUDY LIMITATIONS

The study was constrained in the following areas:

1. While respondents made an effort to consciously share experiences relating to equal participation in the different space the availability of respondents could not guarantee a balanced distribution of representatives from each sub-sector.
2. The broad categories of some of the sub-sectors made it difficult to analyse the data in terms of specific genres which is important in assessing levels of sub-sector maturity and gender equity and equality per specific genre.



## 1.4 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Several key terms underpin this study. It is therefore important to clarify their meaning.

**1.3.3.1 The status of women** in this study refers to the current state of women in the arts and culture sector as regards gender equity and equality in the professional arena as artists.

**1.3.3.2 Gender gaps** were defined as the absence of women in influential, decision-making positions, the inaccessibility of information, spaces and resources available to women compared to their male counterparts.

**1.3.3.3 Gender discrimination** was defined as prejudices suffered by women on the basis of their biological predisposition. Discrimination on the basis of gender takes many forms; including sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination and unequal pay for women who do the same jobs as men.

**1.3.3.4 Gender equality** refers to the measurable equal representation of women and men. Gender equality does not imply that women and men are the same, but that they have equal value and should be accorded equal treatment.

**1.3.3.5 Gender oppression** refers to oppression associated with the gender norms, relations and stratification of a given society.



## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC WORLD OF ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN

This chapter seeks to unpack the general situation of women in Zimbabwe. Approximately 52% of the population in Zimbabwe is female but the country is still grappling with gender equality. There have been some positive developments in the area of gender equality in the country but there is room for improvement. For instance, the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides strong legal platform for the country to make gains and there are at least 17 pieces of legislation in place that enhance the status of women. The government has made significant progress in narrowing gender disparities in both primary and secondary education with both by boys and girls reaching parity at 91 percent in 2009. Female university enrolment increased from 23 percent in 2006 to 37 percent in 2007 but still below the target of 50 percent by 2015.

Despite this, the policies fall short on implementation. Some government policies have omitted gender targets, for instance the ZimAsset does not set a gender target for women's participation in the economy. Gender violence is still prevalent in the country. Zimbabwe's first ever Violence against Women baseline study (2012) found that over two thirds of all women interviewed had experienced some form of violence at least once in their lifetime while about a quarter (26%) of women interviewed experienced some form of violence (psychological, emotional, economic, physical or sexual) perpetrated by an intimate partner in the period 2011-2012.

This research is a ground breaking baseline study focusing specifically on the status and participation of women in the arts. It is meant to complement other sector specific studies focusing on women. For instance in the 2012 National Gender Based Violence Study by Musasa Project and the 2013 study on Gender, Media, Ethics and Professionalism in Zimbabwe published by the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe.

Women are disproportionately represented in politics and in other decision-making positions. The female participation in labour markets is lower than that of men. In 2012 the participation rate for females was 83.5% as juxtaposed to 89.5% among males (UNDP, 2013).

Statistics show the limited access to decent jobs by women. For instance -

- ❖ According to the 2011 Labour Force Survey (LFS), the total employment to population ratio is lower for females (72.3%) compared to males (83.9%).
- ❖ 70% of agriculture labour, characterised by lowest wages, is provided by women. The share of women in wage or paid employment in the non-agricultural sector in relation to total wage employment in the non-agricultural sector was 24% (Labour Force Survey Ibid)
- ❖ Real income of women is three times less than that of men, and women have a higher structural unemployment rate of 70% compared to 56% for men (Labour Force Survey Ibid).
- ❖ The Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey 2010-11 shows that 37 percent of women, as compared to 62 percent of men, are formally employed.

Some of the theories put forward for these disparities are long standing cultural values. Muganiwa, Msonza and Ndlovu (2013) observe that the Zimbabwean society has been informed by patriarchal values, driven by belief in supremacy of men at the expense of women.



## 2.2 BACKGROUND TO THE INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FRAMEWORKS FOR WOMEN IN ZIMBABWE

The journey towards addressing disparities with regards women in the Arts sector is better understood against the backdrop of institutional support frameworks.

At international and regional levels, Zimbabwe has in place a number of instruments supporting fair participation and recognition of women in all spheres of life. These instruments, though not sector specific, have influenced the crafting of local policy and institutional frameworks with regards to gender equality and women's empowerment. These instruments include:

- ❖ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979;
- ❖ the 1993 UN Second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna which recognized women's rights as human rights in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;
- ❖ ILO conventions that commit Governments to ensure the elimination of discrimination against women on grounds of sex, age, marital or family status;
- ❖ Beijing declaration (1995) and platform of action where Governments re-affirmed their commitments for equal rights and human dignity of women in all spheres of life;
- ❖ United Nations Millennium Development Goal 3, which seeks to promote gender equality and women empowerment;
- ❖ Protocol to the African Charter on the rights of Women in Africa (2003) which underscores the principles of equality and non-discrimination;
- ❖ Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development. The Protocol states that by 2015, all countries shall endeavour to enshrine gender equality and equity in their Constitutions and ensure that these are not compromised by any provisions, laws and practices. The Zimbabwe Government subscribes to the rights of women as evidenced by ratifying these continental and international instruments.

These instruments serve as the foundation for gender equity development initiatives for women across the board.

### LOCALISING FRAMEWORKS

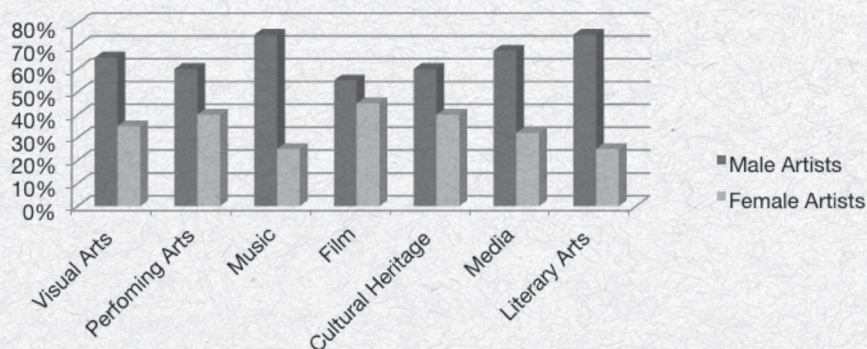
A number of legislations have been passed in Zimbabwe in support of gender equity and gender equality in order to address issues of oppression and discrimination. Such laws include the Legal Age of Majority Act, the Sexual Offences Act, Domestic Violence Act and the Administration of Estates Amendment Act. The Zimbabwe Government Constitution recognises non-discrimination on the basis of sex or gender among other issues. The National Gender Policy of 2004, which is currently being revised, provides guidance on issues regarding gender equality and empowerment. Zimbabwe has national gender institutional machinery, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development which is responsible for the overall national guidance and co-ordination on gender and women's issues. While all these instruments pave the way for gender equality and observance of women's rights, as well as offer a framework from which all other gender policies can be crafted, in reality, the culture sector has evidence of several gaps between policy and practice.



## GENDER PARITY AND ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN IN THE CULTURE SECTOR

The Baseline Study on the Culture Sector in Zimbabwe (2009) revealed that women in the sector in comparison to men; play less influential roles in various establishments. 10-15 % of the art and culture establishments are led by women. Women's participation in the sector compared to that of men is low as reflected below.

**Figure 2: Comparative Picture of Women and Men's Participation**



## GENERAL FINDINGS

This section brings to the fore the issues that emerged from the study. The findings are a slight departure from an academic study because they are experiential. They seek to show the current state of women in the arts, areas of concern, and their successes from the perspectives of the artists themselves.

Status of women in the Arts and Culture Sector

### MEN VERSUS WOMEN IN THE ARTS

While the research did confirm that men dominate the arts and culture sector, there was overwhelming evidence that men are not the greatest challenge that women in the sector face.

47 women responded to the statement, 'I believe that men are crucial colleagues in the sector.' Of these respondents 14 strongly agreed while 26 agreed. The total percentage of women who agreed with the statement was 83, 28% of which strongly agreed with the statement.

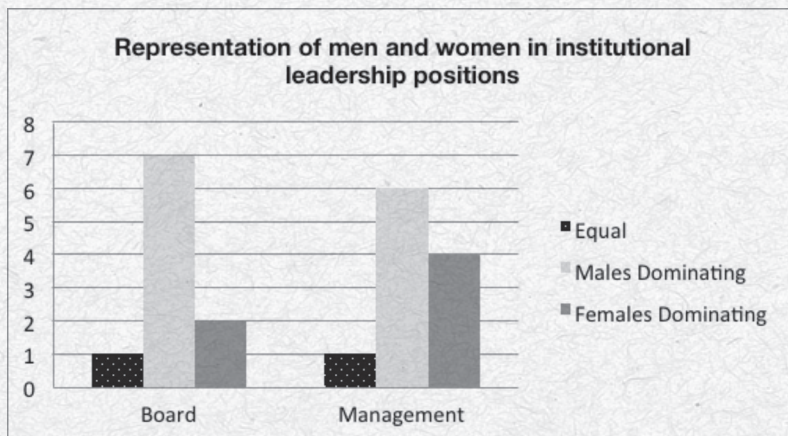
Of the 49 respondents to the question: 'What is the biggest impediment to the operation of your business?', only three selected male colleagues as the biggest impediment to their work.

From the survey for men, 94% strongly agreed with the statement, 'I believe that women are crucial colleagues in the sector.'

These responses affirmed the notion that men working in the arts are not the number one enemy of women in the arts.

On the other hand, the research established that men tended to dominate leadership positions in most institutions which participated in the paper survey. The graph below shows the distribution of leadership positions between men and women in 11 institutions that participated in the paper survey in Harare.

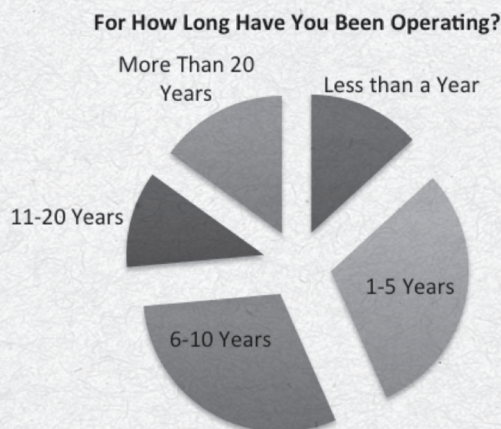




### LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE

In terms of experience in the arts the survey administered on women working in the arts and culture sector revealed that most of the women have 10 or fewer years of experience working in the arts and culture sector.

72% of respondents have been working in the arts for between 1 and 10 years while, 20% have been in the arts for more than 11 years. 8 % have been in the arts for less than 1 year. The chart below shows the levels of experience of women who participated in the survey.



### DIVISION OF LABOUR

The workshop discussion forums revealed that the status of women with regards to division of labour was seen to be largely a result of the socialisation processes which have resulted in stereotypical prejudices from society. Except in few cases where women are the directors/owners of the cultural institution, most of the roles played by women are subordinate roles. Most agencies and promoters are men. In music, the trend was that even where the band is female owned; a male manager is in place. The women spoken to indicated that having a male manager protects the female band owner. They asserted that male managers receive a lot of respect from fellow artists and from clients.

Most of the women who participated in the women's survey were also artists but there were some women who are involved in work that is normally done by men for instance, arts management and production. The graph below shows division of labour in the arts from the perspective of women who participated in the survey.





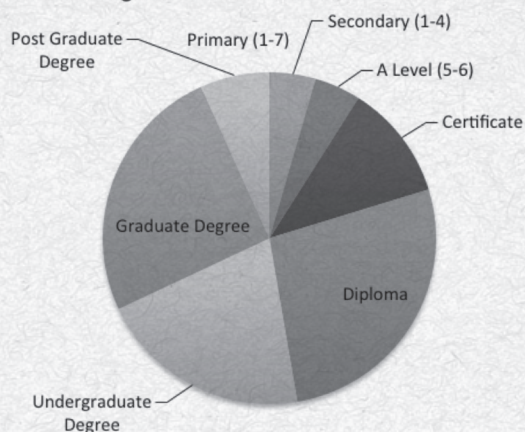
### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The survey revealed that the majority of female artists' are informally trained in their work. 63% of women who participated in the females survey were self-taught while 60% of female respondents were formally educated at a university or polytechnic/college.



91% of female respondents hold at least a certificate in the work they are currently involved in.

### What is the Highest Level of Education You Have Received?





### EDUCATION AND TRAINING (continued)

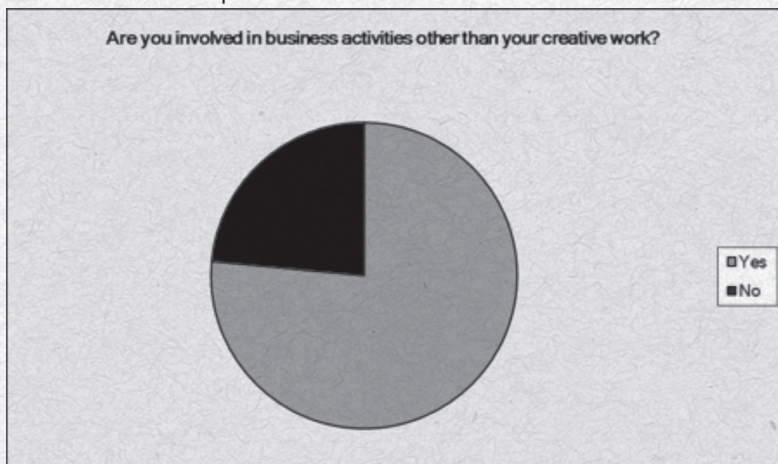
68% of female respondents disagreed that there are sufficient training programmes for women in the sector, of which 16% strongly disagreed.

41% of male respondents to the survey cited training as what needs to be done in order to improve the status of women in the sector; 49% of female respondents also cited training as the greatest need for improvement of their status in the sector.

Of the 11 institutions that participated in a paper survey conducted in Harare, 9 out of 11 institutions cited training as one of the special needs for women working in the arts and culture sector.

### FULLTIME OR PART-TIME

76 % of female respondents to the female survey were involved in other business activities other than their creative work as per chart below:



69 % of respondents cited financial supplement as the main reason they engage in other business activities. This means that the arts are not a sustainable source of income for women in the arts. However creative work is the main source of income for 64% of respondents.

Interviews revealed that in most cases, women's priority in the arts is income. This was evidenced particularly in the crafts sub-sector. The need to make something to sell and bring food on the table, rather than a real passion for the art was a major driver for participation. Their first concern is the welfare of the family on a day-to-day basis.

Often, the women found themselves having to augment their livelihoods with other entrepreneurial activities. In many interviews and group discussions, the view was that socio-economic needs are a priority and as such women, took less aggressive positions in their careers as artists because incomes in the arts were generally quite low, between US\$10 and US\$100 for over 40% of the artists per month according to the Baseline Study (2009).

### LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

More than 50% of the female survey respondents indicated that they have received training on gender equity, gender based violence and HIV/AIDS besides professional training on their work.

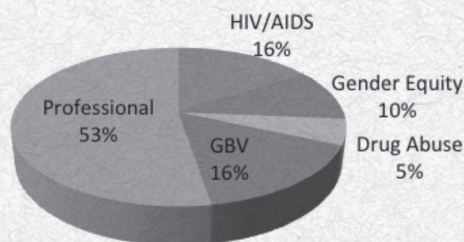
There was a major awareness gap around gender and women's rights. The women cited that often, this lack of appreciation of gender equality issues, policy provisions on gender and women empowerment strategies, created optimum conditions for exploitation.



### LIFE SKILLS TRAINING (continued)

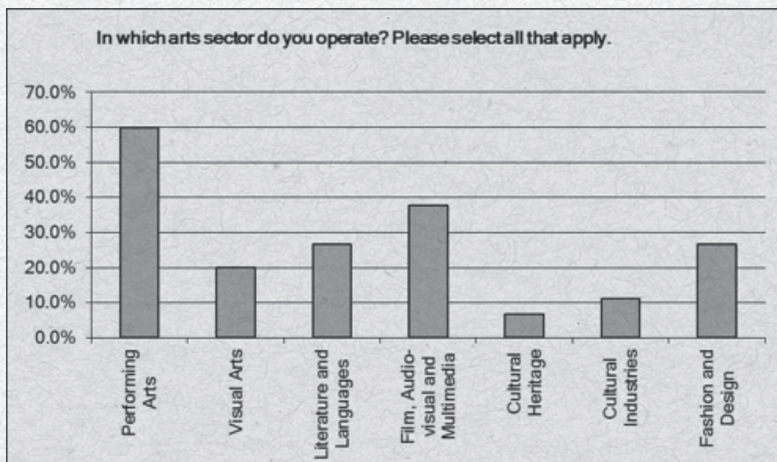
This view was also supported by evidence from paper survey for institutions. The survey established that most of the institutions working in the arts provide professional training more than GBV, HIV/AIDS, Gender Equity and Drug Abuse even though the sector is prone to these issues. The chart below shows how institutions that participated in the paper survey responded to the question on the nature of training which they provide to the creative sector.

**Nature of training provided by institutions**



### STRENGTHS OF WOMEN

Zimbabwean women have a long history of achievements and contributions to the arts. Women are involved in all subsectors of the arts. Some are involved in more than one subsector. They are mostly involved in performing arts, fashion and design, film, literature and visual arts. The graph below shows how women who participated in the females working in the arts survey responded to the question on which sub sectors they work in.



Although sub sectors such as performing arts tend to be dominated by men, it is a different story with film. Film practitioner Nakai Matema notes, 'When I look at the industry in Zimbabwe, I think that women have enjoyed fair space. At the turn of the century, women in Zimbabwe dominated the industry – the likes of Rumbi Katedza, Tsitsi Dangarembwa, Dorothy Meck, Charity Maruta etc, and the men were the workers. Only a few men were worth mentioning then and these were the likes of Steven Chigorimbo, the late Olley Maruma and Godwin Mawuru.'

- ❖ Women are determined to work in the arts and culture sector. 78 % of female respondents to the survey indicated that they are self-funded. 63% of women who responded to the survey were self-taught.
- ❖ It is not always the case that women are employed by men. In some cases women are the owners of their businesses and even employ other people in these businesses. 63% of female survey



respondents operate their own businesses. Most of the business operators/owners (57 %) are currently employing other creative workers in their businesses. Also, 57% of these businesses are formally registered under registrar of companies, Deeds' Office, National Arts Council and Zimura.

- ❖ Women also have a positive spirit about their work. 86 % of female survey respondents agreed that their work will be sustainable in the future.
- ❖ Some women in the sector have the capacity to train other people working in the sector. 55% of female survey respondents were teaching or instructing an intern while undertaking their work.

## 2.3 CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN THE ARTS SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE

The research also exposed some of the common challenges faced by women working in the arts and culture sector in Zimbabwe.

### ❖ HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION

The issue of sexual favours surfaced in all the interviews and workshops conducted. Female artists spoken to said that men in decision-making positions declined to take financial bribes from women, claiming that there are a lot of other men who can provide that. Instead, they demanded sexual favours. Taurai Mufakose, a male artist observed, “women in creative sector are particularly prone to intimidation and harassment. They are more prone to intimidation and harassment due to the nature of their work as compared to their male counterparts. They also face challenges of culture, tradition and way of life and lastly poverty.” (Email, 19 August 2014).

### ❖ GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY

Women often found themselves straddled with triple roles at different stages in their lives. Their reproductive, productive and community roles placed them under considerable pressure in light of pursuing career and opportunities. According to the women artists, comparatively men are the power ‘holders’ and oppression and discrimination of women usually takes place in the work terrain. This took the form of sexual harassment and exploitation, sexual violence, engagement into employment without contracts and under payment of women for work done or even contractual abuse in the form of long working hours and women-unfriendly work spaces.

Kuda Makurumure shared his experience that the inevitable long and late hours have proved to be a challenge for some women; especially those still living at home with their parents and for the married (Email, 18 August 2014).

### ❖ SOCIALIZATION

Norms, values and attitudes play a significant role in the development of women’s artistic careers. At family unit levels most parents do not want their children to be involved in the art disciplines such as drama and music because of what happens in the aftermath of performance or tours.

A historic review revealed that African tradition has never recognized women as artists in the sense that people understand the concept of art today. Women were confined to utility arts such as basket weavings, pottery, or artistic services such as singing and dancing at funerals or at beer-drinking ceremonies. These areas of art were inextricably intertwined with the role of women in society thus they were perceived as skills or roles that women naturally fulfil in their normal pace of life, but not as a profession.



To date, art as a profession for women has evolved and new dynamics have begun to emerge especially in the performing arts sub-sector.

There is a clear demarcation of performance boundaries with the older generation of actresses or musicians expressing their talent with decorum and guarded civility and the younger generation being more experimental and explicit in their acts, lyrics and genres.

The socialization process and the passing on of socially constructed and accepted values, norms and behaviour for women and men from one generation to the other has constricted the opportunities and spaces for women in the sector.

Women were generally socialised not to demand money as that reflected “loose” morals, these norms when carried into the business arena militate against women. The result has been poor negotiation skills for contracts and payments.

Olga Kunonga, a female artist was of the view that that women working in the arts sector are affected by stigmatisation/discriminating perception that women involved in the industry eg performing arts are in it for sexual gain/payment (Email, 17 August 2014).

#### ❖ FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Financial constraints were also cited as one of the greatest challenges faced by women working in the creative sector. Costs were cited most frequently by female respondents to the women survey as the greatest challenge which they face in their operations 82% of respondents spoke to this issue.

Rosemary Cumanzala of Zubo Trust observed, “Financial hardship is the biggest challenge faced by women in the creative sector. It is difficult to upscale their creativity sector to greater heights especially those in the rural areas. Secondly, the rural women are talented but lack space to showcase their talents making it difficult to network with high profile people in the same sector.”<sup>2</sup>

There were mixed responses by men who participated in the males’ survey on this issue. 41% of male respondents felt that there were sufficient sources of funding for women in the arts and culture sector while 35% felt that there were insufficient sources of funding for women in the sector.

Of the 11 institutions that participated in a paper survey conducted in Harare, 9 felt that there was need to improve funding channelled towards women in the sector.

#### ❖ THE EXISTENCE OF FEW FEMALE ARTISTS FRIENDLY SPACES

During the discussions women indicated that the majority of showcasing spaces were male dominated and ill-suited for rehearsal due to inadequate separate facilities such as dressing rooms. In extreme cases, with the pressure to deliver on stage, women undressed in the presence of their male counterparts, which deprived them of their privacy and dignity. This has occasionally triggered abuse and in worst cases early pregnancies and unmitigated infections.

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<sup>2</sup>Zubo Trust empowers women and girls in the Zambezi Valley



## 2.4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR

### ❖ INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTING WOMEN ARTIST

The existence of numerous institutions supporting women in the arts and culture sector is one opportunity enjoyed by women in the sector. Support for women artists is not limited to the provision of support for professional development alone; it also encompasses human development and all facets of personal welfare. For instance Pamberi Trust's Book Café was cited as a women friendly space for rehearsals and visibility.

FLAME (Female Literary Arts & Music Enterprise) project by Pamberi is a space where budding female artists can show their talent with the support of the more established women artists. Such were noted as valuable for professional grooming, problem solving and networking.

The paper survey revealed that most arts institutions are moving towards promoting gender equity and equality at the work place. 8 out of 11 institutions that participated in the survey indicated that they had gender policies in place.

### ❖ FUNDING

In Zimbabwe there is a general funding bias towards awarding female led projects more funding than male led projects. Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust's funding policy has a bias towards dedicating at least 30% of their resources towards female artists. Hivos does not have a written policy on funding women in the arts sector but they have mainstreamed gender in all their work such that all their programming has a bias towards empowerment of women.



## 3.0 JOURNEYS OF ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN ARTISTS

### A COLLECTION OF REAL LIFE STORIES

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This chapter is a compilation of stories from women operating in the following 5 sub –sectors: film, literary arts, dance, visual arts and performing arts. The experiences were compiled per sub-sector, with recommended strategies from the respective artists captured. There was a deliberate attempt to order the stories on an experience scale starting with the youngest artists where possible. The experiences were documented verbatim, except for a few changes consistent with sound practise in any study exploit.



# HOPE RANGANAYI



*I don't belong to an institution but I work with various production houses including Ibhayisikopo and other freelancers. I am a sound technician, having been trained by Ibhayisikopo Film Project.*

*I joined the arts sector after I was involved in an accident. I had noted a gap in the media on stories of people living with disability. I had initially wanted to (go and) be a nurse and had even secured a place at United Bulawayo Hospital (UBH). After the accident, I felt very depressed. Somehow I thought very lowly of myself and never imagined myself going anywhere. I was in great denial of my new condition. I learnt that I had a spinal cord injury and would never walk again. This was in 2008.*

*I see the role of film as a growing niche. I think it is the best way of storytelling especially for women. It is believed there are more men, but as women we are taking the industry by storm. In terms of numbers, we are growing. Now people in the industry are taking us seriously, despite the stereotyping. Now women can operate gadgets such as cameras.*

*I doubt any of the institutions you will talk to, in the arts and culture, have a gender policy. This is because I have never heard anyone talk about it. I think we just have women who are determined, but men dominate the industry. There is a general perception that men are the best directors, or better photographers than women. For example, even at ZBC (the national broadcaster) we know there are able women in the technical department, yet when it comes to covering major events, women are sidelined.*

*I think there are many opportunities for women in the arts and culture sector. There are many projects taking place. **Few institutions exist in Bulawayo and in those, women are not given opportunities.** There is therefore no space for women in the sector...women are perceived as models or mothers and confined to spaces outside the arts, media needs a paradigm shift. Few institutions exist. I hear there is a film school in Harare but that's not enough because it is not accessible to most of us.*

*Negative media coverage is also a major drawback for women in the arts. We never see women who are doing well, profiled as a source of inspiration to others. There is also social stigma. It is easier for young and single women. When you are married, often husbands will discourage you from a profession in the arts.*

*The media is not helping matters. **Women are hyper-sexualised.** Adverts tend to show women as sex objects and therefore there is no respect for women. To move us forward, I think media needs a paradigm shift. We need to begin idolising the women who have done exceedingly well in the arts. There is also need for a deliberate creation of a quota system to promote gender in the sector. The women are there working in the arts; they just don't have the opportunities to strategically uplift themselves.*

*As Ibhayisikopo we have tried to reach out, to teach photography as a profession. However, we need serious lobbying and advocacy. We need women to lead, we must be the directors, we must participate in strategic roles of decision-making not just in film but also in other arts genres.*

*As a woman living with disability, I experience a double tragedy. There are three of us here in Bulawayo who are active in film and photography and we share our experiences. We note amongst ourselves that we have lots of untold stories but if media is biased against us, we cannot make headway. For example, a recent headline in one of the tabloids screamed: 'Chirema chiya chekubhinywa chazofa', (The raped crippled woman has died) which is derogatory to women with disability. **We also feel that whenever there is advocacy for us, it must never be without us – we tell our stories better because we live them.***

*I love my camera and I want to shine as a photojournalist. Some of the challenges I experience are that disability is directly linked to poverty. The stigma is so much broader - even at schools. Finances should be made available so that we can tell different stories through the camera lens.*



# JESESI MUNGOSHI

Photography by Colin Meda



*I started acting in 1985 in a drama production for ZBC/TV in a script written by my husband, Charles. I was not paid for this. I became part of the cast mainly to support his play. I had always been inspired by renowned actor Spike Lee, who made his first film using limited resources. He worked with friends and family to make a name for himself and that stood out for me.*

*I have a unique background in that I was born in a family of devout Zionists, where **my father forbade any sort of creative art, including listening to the radio.** For some reason, I had a passion for the arts. My brothers and I often sang and played the flute behind father's back. As I grew more mature and began to understand my environment, I moved from merely acting plays for entertainment, but became more conscious and **did it as a way of defining my cultural identity.** When I acted for example, in the drama based on the Shona novel "MakununuMaodzamoyo", I simply wanted to portray the theme of a mother who unknowingly abused her daughter in the sincere belief that she was following African cultural values. I must say I learnt a lot. My desire to grow in the arts led into learning the nuanced details of what it means to be a film producer.*

*I am so glad I pursued that path as **I am now able to enhance my husband's writings into film.** For instance, I am currently working on turning the same novel into a feature film depicting the plight of the girl child. In 1995, I founded the production house JM Productions, which operated till 2002.*

*As challenges come into our lives, I had to deal with illness that befell my husband. Naturally, tending to him took precedence over all else, hence the suspension of my active role in the sector, both as a producer and actress. I am glad and give thanks to God that his health is improving. Knowing God has made me stronger and more enduring. I am proud to say, I am back on my feet, and yes, film production is my life. God has a way of uplifting us. I have also established a publishing house and published **Branching Streams Flow in the Dark** - my husband's latest book.*

*I think film is powerful media. I distinctly remember that **the film in which I starred; "Neria" contributed to the introduction of the Inheritance Law by the Parliament of Zimbabwe.** It is my intention now to use film to spread the word of God, especially in the arts sector and among young people. It is important for young women in particular to see the business opportunities presented by the arts. Only a serious approach will enable people to appreciate the viability of the sector.*

*I just want to encourage young women to be strong, assertive, self-respecting and professional. They also need to distinguish their varied social roles from their work. When I got married, I realized that the new roles of being a wife, a mother and a daughter-in-law required different aspects of me and I had to begin some kind of self-censorship on stage. Sometimes it meant refusing certain scenes which I was not comfortable with in view of my new social and marital position. It is important to preserve one's dignity and personal respect at all times. I must say there is barely support for film from the government, which views it as "masketch" (jokes). In some countries, government pays 10% upfront once a concept is developed. The business sector is also not supportive since it still does not appreciate film as a viable investment. In Nigeria, "Nollywood" is heavily bank-rolled by major banks.*

*I believe film is a very educative and a powerful tool for lobby and advocacy - as in the case of "Neria". I think it can also create employment and contribute to the national budget. Young women can earn decent livelihoods from acting, as they will be showcasing their talent. However, it is important for women to be very aggressive and assertive to make in-roads in the sector.*

*I am a woman first, and then an actress. Knowing this helps me ensure that my values of femininity are maintained. It is a good thing that we have the women's rights movement, which is helping instil confidence in actresses and female producers.*



# PRISCILLA SITHOLE



Priscilla Sithole-Ncube popularly known as MaSithole was born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in 1969 to a Shangaani family. Her father came from the Dwandwe clan in Chipinge, Manicaland Province, while her mother was a Swazi woman from the Mswati clan. The two shaped Priscilla's interest in the African culture and art from an early age. Her father formed the Shangani cultural dance group called Gazaland when he arrived in Bulawayo.

Priscilla grew up in the Makokoba suburb, Stanley Hall was popular with youth who went there to watch ibhayisikopo (bioscope). Her eldest brother Nyumai was the biggest fan of ibhayisikopo. On his return from watching he would relate and perform some of what he had watched, and as a reward for great storytelling he would get pieces of meat from Priscilla.

Priscilla's first Amakohosi production, Sthitsha introduced her to international travel this enhanced her desire to be a highly recognized

female in the male dominated film industry. She took film production as her chosen career. Priscilla coordinated the Happy Valley film workshop, a three-year film program funded by Culture Fund and Sida.

After graduating from the Sida film program, she concentrated on filming social events. She was being appointed to head the Amakhosi visual arts section as a director thus becoming the first woman to take the position. This created an opportunity for Priscilla to form the first all-female band, Amakhosikazi. Today some of them have gone solo and are doing well in the music industry.

Priscilla's formed Ibhayisikopo Film Project. This training project in the film production was biased towards young women and the girl child especially the physically challenged ones and those from the disadvantaged families and communities. Currently Priscilla carries on with consultancy work for the Rural Libraries Resources, documenting rural women story through the film and video. This rural film and video project was done working on donkey driven carts. The carts were equipped with television sets which were solar powered.. She is also producing documentaries for non-profits, particularly in areas of gender activism, peace-building and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. She carries on training film production, at a smaller scale though.

**The creative film industry is currently like a jungle in Zimbabwe. It's a survival of the fittest game; as a result many women have shied away from this lucrative industry.** Women are normally victims in the film production business. The industry continues to be dominated by men, because most men have developed ways of discouraging female competition in this arts sector. The negative perception of women in this sector continues to be protracted.

**Film production is cash intensive, and this poses challenges for most women since many Zimbabwean women are not financially independent.** Availability of facilities and resources such as offices and equipment has proven a hindrance to many women. Lack of significant funding in the sector with bias towards women and the girls have yielded low returns in capacity building.

Donors are therefore urged to focus more on women art projects as they lag far behind their male counterparts. Priscilla Sithole-Ncube is very grateful to the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust which funded her in the procurement of the film equipment. Another area that requires to be noted is the documentation of women projects. Many women have done well and indeed some are doing well in the arts industry but little is known about them. Some of the arts projects by some of these hard working women never see the light of the day. **Despite the gender developmental policies from the government to the lowest level, women have suffered for equality.** These policies are gathering dust in office cabinets and which respective offices are run by men.



## NAKAI MATEMA



*I prefer to be referred to as a film practitioner. From as tender an age as nine, I was very clear that I wanted to pursue film as my career. I love film because it combines all the genres of the arts and is pivotal to the development of the sector. As a film practitioner I have a fair understanding of music, I have to be a writer, I understand performance arts such as dance and theatre, including casting and directing. However, good films need good budgets. I think in Zimbabwe we need to take the bull by the horns and place the sector on its rightful place – look at the Nollywood and Bollywood revolution. They have contributed significantly to building vibrancy for the industry in their countries.*

*Whenever I am asked about gender, **I am fascinated because either I do not understand this notion or truly I have never experienced it.** Maybe it is to do with personalities.*

*When I look at the industry in Zimbabwe, I think that women have enjoyed fair space. At the turn of the century, women in Zimbabwe dominated the industry – the likes of Rumbi Katedza, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Dorothy Meck, Charity Maruta and the men were the workers. Only a few men were worth mentioning then and these were the likes of Steven Chigorimbo, the late Olley Maruma and Godwin Mawuru. **What I just realised and learnt was, in the industry you need to be forceful to survive.** In Zimbabwe the film community is really very small,*

*such that the ratio of male to female participation could be almost at par. There are few female directors, which is the situation really the world over; such that I could say the ratio is 20:80 in favour of male directors. Women tend to like to produce, edit and take on roles that pay particular attention to detail. In my opinion, a good production team is made up of women, because they do not leave detail unattended. While opportunities exist in the industry, there is need to be bull-headed to make it. Maybe it is a personality trait that enhances this success.*

*True, men are more active in the sector, because the spaces are not exactly 'woman friendly'; one needs to be very outgoing, and desire to interact with the outside world. One needs arts education which is inclusive of administration and management. However, very few people make a living from the arts because the administration and management is very weak. I survive because I have been in the industry for over 20 years. I am also broad-based. Having studied mass communication and majored in broadcasting, I cut my teeth in the industry in 1993 at the Southern Africa Film Festival, where I met incredible African producers. I then joined Zimbabwe Film and Television Workers Union prior to joining ZimMedia, which produced Flame. There was a lot of activity in the industry then, I can say there was a boom in the film industry. We produced many documentaries. I worked with various other production houses until I eventually set out on my own. While I am not for labelling things by saying women this, women that, I think we need to begin to see a fair distribution of roles in the industry. We have women who can do very well without necessarily getting affirmative action; it is the access to required resources that continue to be a hindrance.*

*I also believe that because everyone in society enjoys the arts and culture, there is a general perception of the sector being on the lowest rung of the ladder. As key sector players, we need to contribute meaningfully to the shift in attitude, to begin to take ourselves seriously and move out of our little cliques and conduct our affairs with a business attitude. **We need to look internationally and see if there is anything to learn, say from Beyonce, Jay Z and Oprah, who have demonstrated success in the industry both financial and fame wise.***



# TSITSI DANGAREMBGA



Zimbabwe can boast of having among its women, one of the finest authors and filmmakers, in the person of Tsitsi Dangarembga. With a career spanning over three decades, Tsitsi has proven her worth locally and beyond the country's borders in the arts. The renowned writer is the brains behind Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe (WFOZ) which annually hosts the International Images Film Festival for Women (IIFF).

**Tsitsi has often defied odds to ensure women's voices are articulated, amplified and issues of concern highlighted through the arts.** Even in instances where the budgets have been almost nil, such has been her willpower to share with the public the phenomenal works by women, especially in the genre of film. It is bringing to the fore the women's voices that spurs her on, despite challenges she may face at any given time.

Born in 1959 in Zimbabwe's Mutoko District, Tsitsi spent her early childhood in Britain, where she began her education. She then proceeded with the rest of her early education in Manicaland. Having chosen to pursue medicine as a career, she enrolled at Cambridge University in 1977, but was overwhelmed by homesickness three years later. The sense of adventure saw her begin studies at the University of Zimbabwe in 1980 in psychology. It was while at UZ that she became involved with the Drama Club and wrote and staged three plays: *She No Longer Weeps* (1987), *The Lost of the Soil* and *The Third One*.

"The writers in Zimbabwe were basically men at the time. I really didn't see that the situation would be remedied unless some woman sat down and wrote something, so that's what I did!" she said in an interview.

As was the norm then, after graduation she worked as a teacher. However, she found it difficult to combine to an academic career and literature, so she devoted herself entirely to writing. Her short story, *The Letter* won a prize in a writing competition run by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), and was published in the anthology *Whispering Land* in 1985.

Tsitsi then became an active member of a theatre group directed by Robert McLaren called *Zambuko*. She participated in the production of two plays *Katshaa!* and *Mavambo*.

Her debut novel, *Nervous Conditions* was the first novel in English ever written by a black Zimbabwean woman. The partially autobiographical work was published in Great Britain in 1988 and the following year in the United States. She explains that for her, writing had begun in her childhood, having been influenced by mostly English classics, yet post-Zimbabwean independence inspired her in the direction of contemporary African literature and writings by Afro-American women.

"I personally do not have a fund of our cultural tradition or oral history to draw from, but I really did feel that if I am able to put down the little I know, then it's a start," she once confessed.

The sequel to her first novel, *The Book of Not*, was published in 2006, years after she had turned her major focus to film. She studied at the *Deutsche Film Und FernsehAkademie* and wrote *Neria*, which became the highest grossing film in Zimbabwean history.

Other films Tsitsi has written or produced include:

-*The Great Beauty Conspiracy* (1994), *Passport to Kill* (1994), *Schwarzmarkt* (1995), *Everyone's Child* (1995), the *Puppeteer* (1996), *Zimbabwe Birds* (1998), *MinenbiszumHorizont* (2000), *On the Border* (2000), *Hard Earth – Land rights in Zimbabwe* (2001), *Ivory* (2001), *Elephant People* (2002), *Mother's Day – Kare Kare Zvako* (2004), *High Hopes* (2004), *At the Water -Pamvura* (2005), *Growing Stronger* (2005), *The Sharing Day* (2008), *I want a Wedding Dress* (2010), *Ungochani* (2010) and *NyaminyamiAmajiAbulozi* (2011).



## FINDINGS: FILM SUB SECTOR

### CHALLENGES FROM THE FILM SUB-SECTOR

- ❖ Few institutions exist in Bulawayo and in those; women are not given equal opportunities.
- ❖ There are few female with specialised skills in the film sub sector.
- ❖ Media portrayal of women in the arts is generally negative as it focuses on her sexuality.
- ❖ Lack of budgetary support for film from the government makes it more challenging for women to be successful in film considering that film is a capital intensive venture.
- ❖ Lack of funding targeting women in the sector has stunted growth of the sector.

### REFLECTIONS FOR PROGRAMMING FROM WOMEN IN FILM

An analysis of the experiences indicates that the focus of women in the sector is for technical skills, professional advancement and availability of resources. The voices of women from an age profile analysis emphasise the need for balance between professional role and the social roles as critical for sustainable development.

There are apparent opportunity access gaps and the absence of a dissemination facility that reaches out to women. The information gaps may add to misconstrued gender interpretations for issues that may clearly be strategic and administrative in nature.

There is need for professional mentoring gleaned lessons from local, regional and international success stories.

Study of global trends into the nature of industry as a will help put the gender inequalities into the local perspective as there are fundamental world-wide patterns.

Professional competence and administrative prowess and broad based skills were seen as key to strategy that leads to fair distribution of roles.

Women Film Makers of Zimbabwe (WFOZ) is the current association to drive the film agenda for women. An analysis in the future of women in the sector and their affiliation to this body may present further insights in strengthening the voice of women in this sector.



## STRATEGIES FROM THE FILM SUB-SECTORS

Perspectives shared that would contribute towards an even playing field for women in the sector are highlighted below:

- ❖ Opportunities are not always created by men, women directors need to also create opportunities for women. Formulating strategies that are driven by women in the position of leadership could yield better results than solely relying on outcomes of lobbying in spaces where men dominate
- ❖ Affiliation to existing associations such as WFoZ can strengthen lobbying by women in film.
- ❖ There seems to be a combination of lack of information dissemination on opportunities and deliberate leveraging on those opportunities for the development of women in film. An improvement on collaborative strategies should help to address the gap between available opportunities and access to the same.
- ❖ A deliberate creation of a quota system so that women's access to opportunities could be increased.
- ❖ Active lobbying platforms for women to enable collective deliberation and problem solving.
- ❖ There exist a considerable number of highly recognized females in the film industry, their steps to success should be harnessed in mentorship programmes to reduce the learning curve and enhance practical career development and business management amongst peers.
- ❖ The experiences of leading professionals show that the situation of women is easily remedied by producing outstanding work. Focus on quality professional works of art needs to be pursued aggressively.
- ❖ In light of the gender discourse women need to distinguish their varied social roles from their work as that is key to balanced development. Concepts in the gender discourse need to therefore be contextualized and harnessed effectively for women development.
- ❖ The desired shift in attitude by society towards women in the arts can improve if media reports positively on women in the arts.
- ❖ Successful track records have been built on the international arena. There is need to draw from international expertise, to understand the industry development strategies that led to the creation of female industry legends.
- ❖ Arts education which is inclusive of administration and management is mandatory for professional success.
- ❖ Women are encouraged to be assertive to make in-roads in the sector.
- ❖ The history of film in the country has demonstrated that women can do extremely well simply on the basis of professional aptitude and business acumen and strategic positioning. These local successes need to be shared to improve the capabilities of women in the industry.
- ❖ Capacity building initiatives should be matched to funding to enable a meaningful return on the skills development investment.



# VIRGINIA PHIRI



Photography by  
Barbara Niggl Radloff

My name is Virginia Phiri. I am a creative writer. I am also a founder member of the Zimbabwe Women Writers association (ZWW), which was formed in 1990. The reason why we decided to form ZWW was the realization that as women writers, we were not taken seriously by our male counterparts, both in the publishing sphere and as writers. I remember getting together with other like-minded people who included Monica Skeete, Chiedza Musengezi, Flora Veit-Wild, Barbara Nkala, Colette Mutangadura and Norma Kitson. All we wanted was our own space and platform to advance the interests of women as writers, given that the publishing sector was dominated by men and established male writers.

It was through holding writing skills workshops that we enabled women to speak in their own voices on issues affecting them. We encouraged each other to write in any language we were comfortable with, including English, Shona, and Ndebele. At that time, we

focused mainly on anthologies, because there were very few women who could write full length novels. The idea of anthologies was to encourage and support each other.

As a writer, I dared venture into areas that were deemed social taboos, especially coming from a woman. I was mainly driven by curiosity, and also by mischief. I had the courage to break the silence around issues like prostitution and what drove women into this practice. At the same time, I took my writing quite seriously. As women, we refused to be marginalized, and even if it meant to push and shove, so that was to be. We were ready to take the bull by the horns. We realized that instead of complaining and mourning, it was time to act. Even now, we still have to fight for our space and resources, but we are more than ready.

I believe that fellow women will always support each other, as long as we continue to stand strong. My last novel, "Highway Queen", is a typical example of what it takes to articulate social issues like commercial sexual work. I also realize that **because of the patriarchal system in Zimbabwe, women are always marginalized as a result of the socio-cultural construct, which eventually translates into policy. Culture and tradition have been abused to subdue women.**

My expectation from the donors and other well wishers is for women to be supported to create their own spaces where they can meet by themselves, but also with male artists and arts administrators to discuss gender issues and women in the arts. I encourage other women artists to be brave and not to allow themselves to be used by their male counterparts, either in management or in the creation and delivery of artistic products. We are aware that most cultural institutions are male dominated, but as women, we should refuse to be suppressed. We need to be with men and interface on issues around the creative sector.

I believe that as women, we need to realize that it is mostly the "small fish" at lower levels of management who exploit women, not those who wield the real power at managerial level. Usually, the managers are not even aware of these abuses. Men have to be spoken to not only by the women, but by other male artists and arts administrators. Organizations like Padare (a gender focused organization from the male perspective) would be ideal partners to engage in this discourse. **I thank funders like the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe, among others for supporting the creative sector to the vibrancy it has.**



## ERICA GWETAI



*I am a writer of three different books. My first book was a biography of my late daughter Dr Yvonne Vera called Petal Thoughts. The biography book recorded the life of this award winning author Yvonne, from birth to death.*

*I am a writer of short stories. My degree dissertation was an interesting recount of women in the Zimbabwe's pre-colonial, colonial and post- independence era. The post- independence era ushered in empowerment of women with laws being passed to protect women's rights. One of the positive developments is that women now have rights to property and inheritance when their spouses pass on. Laws have been put in place to eliminate discrimination against women. What we have achieved as women is our sovereignty.*

*The second book that I published was titled 'Realities'. The book is a short stories one which depicts modern and contemporary times. Through the short stories the book highlights realities of historical significance, economic significance and social imbalances. My writings depict Zimbabwean cultural identities in a constantly moving cultural set up. My third book is a novel titled*

*'Embracing the Cactus' the novel tackles a range of issues including age, love and feminism. It journeys a reader through challenges faced by women and children when men decide to think only about themselves.*

*I never thought I could write, but my daughter Yvonne encouraged me. I am a story teller and Yvonne would listen to my stories and write books based on the stories. I could tell a story and Yvonne would write a book about it. When I went to the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) to do my degree in English and Communication and Yvonne's books were announced as set books, people would ask me how Yvonne started writing and I became inspired. That is one of the reasons why I wrote her biography so that her life could be open to the world, to people who wanted to know about her life.*

*I did not write when Yvonne was still alive because I did not want to compete with her. I was glad to see her succeeding as a writer. I also underestimated myself but when I wrote the biography I gained confidence that I could write. I do not make a living from my writings; people from our country do not have a culture of reading books. They don't enjoy reading books.*

*Marketing books to Government institutions is a challenge since; these institutions are not allowed to buy from individuals directly. We are required to produce tax clearance certificate yet we are not making any money. A disadvantage that we have as women is that we don't have platforms to share on the challenges we encounter and have solutions.*

*I would have liked to treat writing as a business if I had support. Currently, I lose more than what I get in writing books. Comparatively male writers seem to get support for creative space. Perhaps it is because most of the cultural organizations which could provide support and space to artists are run by men.*

*I just want to encourage more women not to be afraid to write, be original and write simply. It is important to believe in what you value and above all, be creative.*



## FINDINGS: LITERARY ARTS

Literary Arts is one of the sub-sectors where women have made marked professional progress and gained local, regional and international recognition. The use of educational set books from works produced by local women is a major breakthrough for women.

The business and marketing skills are limited. There is need to facilitate problem solving spaces to enable growth in terms of business and marketing through associations.

Zimbabwe women writers have in themselves a wealth of internationally celebrated authors. The journey to international and financial progress needs to be shared through mentorship programmes that enable writing to change the quality of lives of the artist.

Facilitating a deliberate growth strategy for the literary market; is a key programming issue if the status of women in this sector is to improve socially and economically.

### CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN LITERARY ARTS

- ❖ Piracy of published works compromises the ability of artists to make a living from their works.
- ❖ Limited knowledge on Intellectual Property (IP) rights.
- ❖ Writing is a business but it is difficult to pursue it without support. The cost of putting a book on the market often overrides sales.
- ❖ Limited financial support towards female writers has impeded on the development of women writers.
- ❖ Most women writers still lack business and marketing skills.
- ❖ There is a lack of platforms for women to share on challenges and generate solutions.

### STRATEGIES FROM THE LITERARY ARTS

- ❖ The formation of Zimbabwe Women Writers continues to offer women their own space and platform to advance their interests as writers. The association needs to be fully engaged to move the development agenda for women in this sub-sector.
- ❖ The practicality of positioning women writers historically required a strong mindset against accepting marginalization. The same assertiveness must be maintained to move women writers forward.
- ❖ Women need to sustain existing collaborations.
- ❖ Personal leadership is key to the progress of women in the arts as this enables effective management of abuse by male counterparts.
- ❖ There is need to help the women to appreciate the business implication of writing for passion vis a vis writing for profit.



# ELLEN MLANGENI



We have been in the arts for a very long time. As such, **we have built a reputation around our work**, such that we are called to a lot of the activities that happen in the province and sometimes in the region. Recently, we participated at the official opening of Joshua Mqabuko International Airport.

I started dancing in the early 80s, though I cannot say I was actively in the arts. I was an active member of the Vulindlela women's club here in Mpopoma. I remember that far back, the filmmakers, Warner Brothers, came here to produce a film called "World Apart". We were an organised group of women and we were asked to participate. We were quite a number – from Njube, Mpopoma, Emakhandeni and other townships. We were asked to participate for no fee at all; our reward would be the fame that would come with the film. Many fell by the wayside as there was no money. At that time, a lot of married women decided to pull out, because of the social stigma. I remember the numbers dwindling at one time to four. Just imagine – from a good 30, to 15 to eventually four!

We used to meet at Stanley Square – koKhabo and we had to find our own bus fares. Rehearsals were in the evenings, so women were prejudiced. But our group was very promising especially after 1990. We went to Swaziland on a cultural exchange programme. We recorded with Johnny Clegg and had to compose a song for rainmaking. It was used in a film, but we were not paid meaningfully. I remember us going to record at Rept in Matopos, working long hours to perfect the songs for the movie "The Power of One". It was a big production.

It was then that we named our group Thandanani, because our intention was to foster love, unity and harmony. When Amakhosi was founded, we were there with the very first group of artists, providing catering as well as performances. This was around 1990. There were 15 of us by then, with no real consistent income. A number of the women who had been with us left due to social and economic pressures. Remember this was also the time of ESAP.

**Our role is to promote cultural heritage through dance and music. Being women we want children to understand the importance and role of women in society and to encourage good behaviour.** We want to urge them to focus on the business of the arts and not pursue other side line activities which border on immorality. As Thandanani, our motto is to never mix business with pleasure. We do not party when we are working.

**We do not have an articulated gender policy, but we articulate the values and norms of utmost respect for women as professionals.** We teach young girls in the community basic human values of ubuntu – we go into schools and teach cultural heritage especially on dressing and behaviour. We have engaged Okhulu (grandfathers) from other groups to assist by mentoring the boys alongside our work, so that we have a holistic approach among our youths. We get these elderly men, okhulu, from the local imbube groups and usually work in the townships surrounding us here in Bulawayo.

Our group comprises 100percent women. We deliberately decided not to have men because of morality issues as we have seen in other groups – always, in instances where men are involved, the issues of sex and relationships seem inevitable. When we need male ensembles, we invite the grandfathers from the Mbube groups such as Phephindaba, Crown Figure and Izinsizwa Zomdabu and of course, it is all purely work.

When women in the arts learn different things such as looking after themselves – they are very creative, confident. I see the difference when dealing with women in burial societies and other clubs. Women in the arts tend to be hungry for success and they carry themselves well, they are on top of the situations and are able to pursue their talents in music, preaching speaking etc. However, there is need for young people and the media to give positive coverage and education so that we can be more professional; we currently advise each other but are learning in an ongoing manner as is the changing world. We have learnt to copy from the youths.

Generally society looks down upon women; it's even worse in the arts. Society makes you feel worthless. Even



## ELLEN MLANGENI (CONTINUED)

my husband, at one time had a problem with the social stigma brought by my involvement in the arts, but I had to stand my ground and convince him that I believed in what I was doing and I still had high social and moral values. I explained to him that it was important for me as a woman to tell the women's story. I said to myself first and then to him, "if white women (for instance Dolly Parton) and black women like Rihanna) just go out and show off their talent and make a living out of art, what is it that should hold us back?" Closer home, I could see Miriam Makeba going places, Dorothy Masuka among others and that inspired me.

Sometimes we go into spaces such as the bank wanting money, but the attitudes are very discouraging. Also, as women we do not support each other, but men are at the forefront of pushing deals for each other and ensuring they are always on top of their game. However, attitudes are changing – we are having more positive reception across the world. Even when we travel to foreign countries, we are often well received.

As women, we need gender awareness workshops and capacity building even among our communities to amass support for women. We also need prominent artists to sing about the importance of uplifting women and authors highlighting the negative aspects of gendered discrimination. In some instances you hear there are prominent community/national events yet no women's groups are represented. We need serious campaigns on promoting women even amongst ourselves.

As Thandanani, we continue imploring them to emulate us. If we had resources, we would have an arts centre that specifically seeks to promote natural artistic talent; we want society to appreciate the value of arts as a means of confidence building. We are now celebrities because of the arts; adverts help catapult artists – **we encourage the youth to make themselves relevant through employing varied artistic skills and as such, attitudes have begun to change.** We have more youths that are now in the arts through our encouragement.

**As women, we feel economically stable; we can plan, budget and run our affairs without stress.** We need to lobby those in government to appreciate through our artworks, issues of concern and support the women at the top so they can take up our issues and encourage them through praise and just being a pillar of support for them.

In five years time, I would love to see women in leadership in the sector and to see diversity among women. I would love to see more women pursuing their dreams the way Rihanna did during the world cup in South Africa. I would love to see the strategic positioning of women.

I want to encourage you to continue lobbying Culture Fund to facilitate that we teach children that the arts are very important for us, for confidence building, for educating around issues of HIV. Only art can explore these issues in literature, song and dance; issues such as domestic violence and nation building. It is important to have spaces for nurturing children outside the roles of their parents.



# LOVENESS MAMBAKWA



My name is Loveness Mambakwa, I am a traditional dancer who is currently based in Mutare. I am part of the group that performs several traditional dances including Maize, Muchongoyo, Jerusarema, Jikinya, Mbende, Majukwa, Mbira, Tswana and Indlano. The group has 32 dancers, 12 of these are senior members whilst the others are school children who temporarily join us when they are not attending school such as during school holidays or weekends.

I have been performing traditional dance since my primary school years. I used to be in the dance club when I was doing my primary school, but when I went for secondary education, there was no traditional dance so I joined the theatre club. In form 4, **I dropped from school because I did not have money for school fees.** I formed a traditional dance group in 2006, hoping to raise money for fees. I however realized that the money I was getting from the dance performance was not enough to cater for my school fees. I very much enjoy traditional dance. In 2009 I got married to an artist. My husband trains dancers and does instrument repair. Sometimes we go together but at times he is busy so I leave him behind.

Initially, my parents were not supportive; they did not want me to be involved in traditional dance. People associate traditional dance with 'urombe' (poverty). In addition, society associates performances in beer halls and other places in the evening with prostitution.

I am proud to be a traditional dancer. I contribute towards preserving our cultural heritage. Historically, traditional dancers were very significant, to ask for rain, people would go to Njelele (A place for traditional worship for rain) traditional dance would be performed and rain would fall. Traditionally, certain dances would be performed after a husband comes back from hunting.

The fact that women are looked down upon in this society has consequences for woman's participation in leadership positions in the dance sector. Women are not in top decision-making positions in most cultural institutions and they tend not to be given priority when it comes to getting support. Significant cultural networks are dominated by males and some important decisions are made during these informal networks. Society has developed negative stereotypes on women leadership in dance. Society perceives women as unable to lead. Often times women do not get funding for their activities such as starting capital for drums and training.

As traditional dancers we do few shows and workshops, because there is limited demand for traditional dance. At schools the head teachers are mostly males and the chances for a female dance trainer getting dance contracts to train school children in dance are very limited. Contracts are usually given to male dance trainers. A woman really has to manoeuvre to get a contract especially at schools. The same disadvantage is experienced by female led dance groups when sourcing for jobs in the corporate sector where most business owners who would require our services are men. **There is no association of women dancers which can act as a combined voice for representing women's interest in areas such as capacity development, contract sourcing, and stigma reduction and to encourage participation of women in traditional dance.**

The environment where traditional dancers operate such as in bars, subjects women to abuse. **The perception of the society including the neighbourhood on dancers is not positive, they consider us as marombe (loafer) people who wear half naked attire. People say dancing is not for married people, for girls they say it takes away their value as a girl. Husbands of married dancers do not want them to dance.** There is stigma and there is perception that artists are dying because of HIV and AIDS due to their nature of work.

I am both self employed and formally employed. I consider traditional dance as a business because it's a service that we sell to our clients. Demand for traditional dance shows is very limited. With traditional dance you cannot make big amounts of money. There are times where a month can pass by without a getting any show, however, I am making a livelihood from dance.



## LOVENESS MAMBAKWA (CONTINUED)

*As a dancer I consider myself successful. I was nominated as best outstanding female dancer at NAMA awards for 2013. I want to use the NAMA award winning certificate to source for jobs to teach in schools. Winning NAMA award is indeed a sign that I am a successful dancer. I attribute my success to my hard work as I continue to push and pursue for recognition with institutions such as schools. I want to teach them Jikinya and I will continue pursuing this with schools. I don't give up. I don't allow my womanhood to restrict me in my career.*

*There is need for institutional changes in appreciation of traditional dance from primary to university education. There is need for national education process for people to appreciate traditional dance. There is need for women empowerment and capacity development in traditional dancing skills and business development skills. Women should have their self respect and refuse sex in return of getting contracts from men. If women refuse men's sex for money approaches, men will respect us. There is need for establishing women in arts association in all provinces that will take care of the interests of women.*

## CHIPO BASOPO



*My name is Chipo Basopo. I am currently the Manager at CHIPAWO, which is; the Children in Arts Performance Association. My parents discovered the talent in me when I was very young. At school I participated in ballet, traditional dance and music. When I was in grade three, one of the mentors from CHIPAWO came to our school and encouraged us to join the association. A whole bunch of us were fascinated by the combination of modern dance, mbira, marimba, theatre and a lot of other things we did not do at school. Because I was asthmatic, my doctor had recommended that I do a lot of exercises to wear out the condition at a tender age. I have been a member of CHIPAWO since then.*

*I think the role of the arts is to give a true identity to Zimbabwean children and encourage socialisation across ages. It helps us discover and become what and who we truly are and builds character and confidence. In CHIPAWO, gender awareness is more of a practice than a document. I remember that way back, we believed that boys play drums while girls dance, but when the Girl Power programme was started; it was aimed at shifting our mindsets. Uncle Robert (McClaren) and Uncle Steve (Chifunyise) assisted us in conceptualising the programme as far back as 2001, with the aim of building and enhancing confidence among girls including the creation of spaces where we could focus on issues to do with girls. We even set up the Kwaanatete club where we not only discussed issues affecting us as girls, but also sought strategies on penetrating male-dominated spaces in the arts.*

*When I eventually joined the staff at CHIPAWO, I learnt that this was a space that deliberately sought the empowerment of women, even among its administrative staff. We work in seven different units focusing on various programmes. For example, currently the Administration, Youth Programmes, Costumes and Academy units are all headed by young women while the Media and Programmes department are headed by young men. The Marimba Manufacturing project currently is being led by two people, a young man and woman.*

*We have a programme called Bringing Chipawo to the children where we train teachers to encourage them to promote gender balance in their programming. We have many centres dotted throughout the country where the same principles are applied. In our Christmas Shows, we always encourage the participation of girls. Just last year, we had a total of 360 children, 250 of them being girls and 110 boys.*

*I think the major challenge is among us as women already in the sector. Some venture into the arts for money, and are excitable as young artists. While there may be a lot of potential and opportunities, young artists tend to get carried away by the use of drugs, and involvement in illicit activities which result in pregnancies, cutting short the possibility of pursuing careers in the arts. Sometimes as young people, we do not know what to take from role models in the sector,*



## CHIPO BASOPO (CONTINUED)

*especially in music. Also, sometimes young artists are exposed to spaces which have age restrictions, and that is not good because the exposure especially to young girls makes them vulnerable to old men, who can be very abusive.*

*I have witnessed a number of good young artists taking bad advice and ending up as drug users or with bad health (sick). I just think we do not have enough role models for the young artists to emulate.*

*Looking at the sector broadly, I think there are very few women in leadership in the arts, and it's a men's world. Though I cannot say why, I have noticed that when we get to gatherings of artists, sometimes the women expose themselves negatively, that is in the way they behave, the way they dress and even the language they use can be extremely crude. It is important for us as women to be focused if we want to make it. We need to do everything in moderation – how we dress, drink and get drunk in public places, and the way we relate to men as business partners and in personal relationships. We also lack togetherness as women in the arts, maybe it's because there is no real mentorship.*

*I look at Tuku and see him nurturing and mentoring young men, but I do not know of any women who are keen to mentor us as young women in the arts, to hold our hands and show us the pitfalls. I am not sure if it's insecurity or lack of love or interest in others. There is also a lot of despising of young women in the arts; the sector seems not ready to accommodate us. I see this in attitudes when I attend workshops or high level meetings.*

*Other barriers to women's participation in the sector might be from home. Most parents believe art is directly linked with "poverty" "art ndeyechirombe", so if at home they do not understand and appreciate art, you are discouraged.*

*Culturally I am aware that most husbands will not want their wives to participate in the arts and have outlined roles for them. While we are pushing for women empowerment in the arts sector, I think we need to remember that gender based violence is one key issue in the women's private lives that needs to be addressed. How then can we address this through the arts, when we ourselves are not clear on the need to mitigate it in? The media has a role to play in nurturing and promoting women in the arts and identifying role models to encourage others. I would really love to see a powerful network of women who represent skill, professionalism and a lot of collaborations and mentorship in the sector. We should be the change we wish to see in the sector and it is my hope that this survey contributes significantly to this.*

## FINDINGS: DANCE

### REFLECTIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

Observations show that comparatively speaking the dance sub-sector is the most difficult terrain for women to operate in. On a scale of level of social acceptability of the arts, dance would occupy the lowest scale. Reasons mainly are socio-cultural and the liberal expressions that are imbued within arts are at tangent to the preferred socially constructed role of woman in quiet and subdued demeanour.

Incomes for professional dancers range between US\$50 –US\$200 per month and performance groups charge an average US\$100 to US\$300 per event, which translates to minimal amounts as defined by group size.

This sub-sector's development is seriously impaired by socio-cultural norms. The absence of an association for female dancers, also constraints a development strategy for this sector. Thus the formation of a female centric association will assist in the empowerment of female dancers.

### CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN DANCE

- ❖ Society looks down upon women in general, it is even worse in the arts and more so in dance where women are made to feel worthless. There seems to be greater acceptance of white women and women of other races making a living out of dance.
- ❖ Dance forms are usually sensual and leave dancers vulnerable to sexual and verbal abuse.



- ❖ There is no association for women dancers to effectively represent women's interests
- ❖ Money from the dance performance alone is often inadequate; to sustain a living, an artist must be willing to find alternative means to bridge the income gap.
- ❖ Contracts to perform at schools and in the corporate sector are tainted by gender discrimination.
- ❖ Young and older women need to be able to work together. At present there is an unwillingness to accommodate them especially in leadership

## STRATEGIES FROM WOMEN IN DANCE

- ❖ The formation of Zimbabwe Women Writers continues to offer women their own space and platform to advance their interests as writers. The association needs to be fully engaged to move the development agenda for women in this sub-sector.
- ❖ The practicality of positioning women writers historically required a strong mindset against accepting marginalization. The same assertiveness must be maintained to move women writers forward.
- ❖ Women need to sustain existing collaborations.
- ❖ Personal leadership is key to the progress of women in the arts as this enables effective management of abuse by male counterparts.
- ❖ There is need to help the women to appreciate the business implication of writing for passion vis a vis writing for profit.
- ❖ Women must concentrate on building a reputation around their work as that is the key that will open doors for them.
- ❖ It is imperative for groups to be well organised in order to access opportunities.
- ❖ Artists must be educated in career and brand management.
- ❖ Dancers need to be equipped with the latest knowledge, technology, social media and skills in dance so that they remain relevant and competitive.
- ❖ Learning needs to be understood as reciprocal across the age spread with the older ones being open to learning from the younger ones and vice versa.
- ❖ Institutional and national appreciation of dance from primary to university education and society at large is critical for the viability of the sector. Programmes to achieve this objective are imperative.
- ❖ Capacity development in dance, business development and women empowerment needs to be increased in the sub-sector.
- ❖ Sexual exploitation can be combated by the women themselves. Women should have personal self respect and refuse sex in return for contracts. Refusal will build professional and personal respect for women.
- ❖ There is need to promote women affiliation to arts association in all provinces. This is critical for organised networking and lobbying.
- ❖ Prominent dancers need to be engaged as part of the strategy that shows the importance of uplifting women.
- ❖ Attitudes towards dance as a profession are negative and initiatives to change these perceptions are required.
- ❖ Artists need to be encouraged to make themselves relevant through employing varied artistic skills that lead them to achieve financially dignified lives. Complimentary sources of income are an imperative.
- ❖ Dance has to be treated as a business for it to gain professional respect and be paid reasonable value by the market.



# SANDRA NDEBELE-SIBINDI



*I am known as Sandy on stage. I am happily married to my lawyer husband, Mr. Sibindi, and we have two boys aged 2 and 4 years. My husband continues to support me in various ways as a professional singer. Outside my singing, but also because of it, I have been recognized as an ambassador of the Traffic Safety Council of Zimbabwe, the National Blood Transfusion Services of Zimbabwe, and I am involved in the preparations of the UNWTO Conference which will be taking place this month (August 2013) at the Victoria Falls, among other things. I am also the founding Director of Intombi Zomqangala, which is an all-female ensemble which plays a variety of instruments. The Ensemble is a platform and space where young aspiring women artists are mentored and groomed so that they can attain proficiency and professionalism.*

***I want to tell the world, especially young women artists, that music is a respectable and paying profession, as long as you differentiate between who you are as an actor on stage, and who you are in real life and in society. That difference is critical for success and good reputation.***

*The road to success and fame was not easy though. I started my career at Inkululeko Yabatsha School of Art (IYASA) as a dancer in 2003. I also studied Public Relations (PR), which helped a lot in my career. My biggest challenge was when I decided to go solo as a singer in that same year. Just to get contracts with recording studios was a struggle because I was a woman, and secondly I was a nonentity in the music industry.*

*However, through perseverance and my PR skills, I was able to get sponsorship from Coca-Cola and from Lobels Bread in form of soft drinks and biscuits, which I then sold door – to – door to raise money for recording. My mother, who is a very proud and religious woman, would have died had she known what I was doing. Mighty Movies also helped by producing a video, which I used to record my first album, “Tshaya – tshaya”. That was my first taste of how difficult it was to enter into this male dominated industry of music, and I could have easily given up, but I did not. Because of my hard work and thorough training at IYASA, I was prepared for the stage, and when the Miss Malaika platform presented itself, I was well prepared. It’s a long story, but the long and short of it is, I ended up performing at the finals of this beauty pageant in Harare, having started from Kwekwe. That was my introduction to the public stage, and the rest is history.*

*For all that, I had to persuade and convince my family that music and dance is a respectable profession, just like any other. When I got married, my husband had no problems because he found me when I was already into my profession, and he respected that and he supports and encourages me. At one time when the media went to town with all sorts of rumours about my health and my “raunchy dances” as they put it, he simply quipped, “Sandra’s doings are better because they are in the public limelight, mine are not known and who knows, they could be even worse than hers”. Of course, he had not even believed any of those rumours, and I simply loved him for the way he rubbished the whole thing.*

***The media is not only killing some artists, it actually buries them. This is not to defend the wayward behavior of some artists, but just to say the media should take time to establish facts and not just to build on rumours in order to sell their papers. We also need protection and respect, just like any other sections of society.***

*Societal perceptions and attitudes, and ignorance of cultural values are another set of “killers” to performing artists like musicians and dancers. The public will applaud Kofi Olomide when he does his gyrating dances and they love it too, but when it’s Sandy doing her cultural/traditional dances they are labelled as “raunchy and explicit”, but what is the difference? Just because Sandy is a woman? Okay, let me also put it this way. When I was still young and unmarried, I used to go on stage in a skimpy traditional skirt and with bare legs. That is perfectly accepted in my culture and tradition. But now, that I am a married woman, you will notice that I go on stage with my legs covered in long socks – that is in deference to my husband, my family, my society, and my culture. I am still the same Sandra Ndebele, but I know who I am at this point of my life, and I know how to behave in conformity to my status without losing respect.*



## SANDRA NDEBELE-SIBINDI (CONTINUED)

*I believe women who want to make it need to take heed to:*

- ❖ *Make a distinction of your life on and off the stage.*
- ❖ *Build the family unit. Spend time with them, and take them on performing tours whenever possible.*
- ❖ *Be strong and self-confident. Do not be overwhelmed by producers, directors, promoters, agents, and managers etc. who are mostly male. Stand your ground and prove yourself – and they will respect you for that.*
- ❖ *Build good rapport with the media fraternity. It's not about persuading them or begging them, but simply to let them know about who you are "off" stage. It is better that they know beforehand, rather than you trying to make them retract their stories about you and apologize in public when the damage has already been done.*
- ❖ *Sometimes just close your ears to what people are saying, as long as you believe in yourself and that what you are doing is right.*
- ❖ *Those who have made it should help those who are still up-coming. That is why I came up with the Intombi Zomqangala platform – to train and mentor aspiring women artists.*

## EDITH WE UTONGA



*My name is Edith WeUtonga. I got into the arts in the year 2000 and immediately found myself being a lead singer in a jazz outfit Siyeza Afro jazz band for two years before being incorporated in an all-female project Amakhosikazi in 2003. What I did realise as soon as I started doing performances was all the attention that came with being a female in a band and standing in front of hundreds of fans. It was fun but became an eye opener to what the general audience wants and expects from me. It also came as such a sad realisation that for me to make it as a female musician I was either going to have to compromise myself a lot or not make it at all. And thus my long journey began.*

*I moved to the capital city in 2006, doing back up singing for Tanga wekwaSando and found out on my first performance with him that life in the capital city was on a fast lane, the men offering life on a silver platter that sounded too good to be true, and seeing them take turns trying to conquer this girl from Bulawayo for months on end made me realise it was not going to be an easy road. These offers came at a time when there was a need in my life for all they offered yet I could not sell my soul and dignity for the material things on offer. Then the name calling came, she's frigid, ice queen, she thinks she's special....she will bend one day and so it never stopped with some.*

*Going solo in 2008, recording my debut album and launching it in 2010 not only put me on a bigger spotlight but brought with it bigger problems in trying to grow my brand. So many doors wouldn't open easily unless there was a prior recommendation. It did not help that I did not easily fall for the drinks and lunches on offer....I was not 'nice' to people I needed help from and so I found myself, and my great product, with not much of the recognition I expected the debut album would bring. Festivals came and went, venues working with other artists but me, and yet that did not stop me and my trade. Through our own research, a great team on my side, we produced two great albums, toured, of our own arrangement yet there are people around us who could have easily shared that information. It's a good thing though I went through all this for its made me a stronger person, I lead a band of six males and they have learnt to appreciate my administrative and leadership qualities. These are men who have my back, respect the woman in me and what I can achieve for my team....they share my vision.*

*I must thank my husband for the support he has given me because without him I would have struggled even more in this tough industry. Life for a female musician is not a walk in the park, especially if you are a kind of female musician that does not fall prey to the 'dinners, lunches and drinks' on offer. And all this stems from the fact that besides our voices, our instruments, we mostly come from backgrounds not supportive of what we are trying to achieve, backgrounds that are not financially stable to support us in all we try to do. And for that reason, those in the know,*



## EDITH WE UTONGA (CONTINUED)

*with money to splash, target the female musician. By the time one has had five years in the industry, they are ready to give up or they have given up already because they realise they have been used by the men preying on them because of the desperate situations. This in the long run means there's very few of us female musicians making it in the industry, there's an increase in animosity towards one another as girls find out they are fooling around with the same men, and in this day of HIV/AIDS, no parent wants to let their daughter do music.*

*More workshops, information circulation, funds assisting sisters doing their first project might just be thing needed to alleviate the problems being faced. A partnership between organisations and promoters to uplift the female musician will do us good. If the press could focus on the work the Zimbabwean female artist has done and let the world know about that, It'd do us great good. When promoters throw their big shows, if female musicians could get support from orgs for their performance fees, then there will not be any compromising for girls to get on that high profile poster.*

*The name calling has not stopped....I remain 'arrogant, cheeky....'but my music plays on and I am glad I believed in my talent and so never comprised. Many thanks to those who have supported from the onset. Rise on and shine my fellow sister in song....because you CAN!*

## FINDINGS: MUSIC

### REFLECTIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

Mentoring and career path management are critical aspects that need to be implemented for the development of women in the sector. Female musicians should be trained to manage their on stage lives with their lives off the stage to strike a balance. Women in music need to be taught to professionally present themselves to the media for instance through press kits. Programmes that influence positive perceptions for women should be implemented.

### CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN MUSIC

- ❖ The negative perception and reporting from media is common.
- ❖ Sexism and gender stereotyping is widespread.
- ❖ Negative societal perceptions and attitudes limit women's careers in music and dance.
- ❖ Compromise of sexual integrity due to external pressures has cost the lives of several women who have succumbed to AIDS.
- ❖ Lack of written contracts and ambiguous agreements has prejudiced women musicians.

### STRATEGIES FROM WOMEN IN MUSIC

- ❖ Musicians must cultivate themselves as professionals. Conduct after stage is a prime personal management tool.
- ❖ Sponsorship will not always be in monetary terms female musicians should negotiate for in-kind support.
- ❖ Self confidence is a non –negotiable quality that enables women to deal with sexual advances. Women's development programmes must include this component.
- ❖ It is critical that women maintain professional interactions with the media fraternity.
- ❖ Women should be capacitated in public relations and communications to manage their publicity and coverage.
- ❖ Training and mentorship of upcoming artists by successful artists is needed. This should encompass skill, grooming and personal leadership.
- ❖ Complimentary qualifications enable artists to manoeuvre their career paths more successfully. Artists must acquire or employ multiple sets of skills that make it easier for them to navigate the trade terrain.
- ❖ Women must take on work after signing a written contract with clauses they understand and agree to.



# RATIDZO UNICE TAVA



*I grew up in Bulawayo, but came to Harare with the intention of furthering my studies. My mother was a single parent, and she passed on when I was only 19 years. This left me with the responsibility of caring for my siblings and other members of the extended family squarely on my shoulders. I was compelled to become the family's breadwinner at that tender age. I started working for a chemical company, but the pay was very low, and we could hardly cope.*

*A friend of mine influenced me to try the arts, and I joined a certain theatre company. That is when I had a rude awakening about this industry. Firstly, I was shocked by the behaviour of the male managers and some of the actresses while on tour – it was just atrocious, if not outright filthy. I was also targeted, but together with my other friend who had a boyfriend outside the group, **we refused the male directors' advances and offers. As we speak and as far as I know, my friend and I are the only living members of the girls in that group – others succumbed to AIDS.** My second shocker was at the end of that tour when I was paid only enough to buy three loaves of bread at that time, and the reason I was given was that I was still an untrained amateur, and I was not entitled to any payment. But I guess by now you and I know the REAL reason I was not paid.*

*I could have left theatre then, but producers like Sebastian Maramba, and later on Daves Guzha and the late Walter Mparutsa noticed my talent and groomed me professionally. Up to now, I do a lot of work with Rooftop Promotions as a freelancer. I was also trained as an editor and in the use of a camera by Zimbabwe International Film Festival Trust. Nakai Matema was particularly supportive in this regard. I now use these varied skills to supplement my income from theatre. I also do stage management, and I have worked with HIFA over the years as stage manager.*

*Although theatre is my first love, I also dabble in film. My main ambition is to help other women artists whenever I can; because I feel they are not getting enough support within this sector. I also feel it is my obligation because I got support from other artists, both male and female. Women artists need to build each other's confidence and to stop this so called PhD (pull-her-down) syndrome. Outsiders (donors, well-wishers etc.) can help in this regard by providing financial resources for all-women capacity and skills development workshops. The latter is very important because if we look at our culture, there are moments when it takes "vanatete" (the aunts) for a girl or a woman to open up on certain intimate issues. Similarly in the arts, women sometimes need spaces which are exclusively female for various discourses. Without being a "cry-baby", I honestly feel that there is a lot of harassment, manipulation, and corruption against women in the arts, especially at production level.*

*Society itself should also stop stereotyping women and stigmatizing women artists using the excuse of cultural values and traditional norms – culture is dynamic and our society should move with the times. The media is doing very little to support women artists, with the male artists dominating the papers and the screen, if not for the wrong reasons.*



# SANDRA CHIDAWANYIKA GOLIATH



*I am an outgoing woman passionate about my role as a mother, daughter and performing artist. Born in Harare, a first child in a family of six children, I had always been self-expressive from toddler years in the mid 70's, always seeking new ways to express myself to those around me. I guess you could say this need is what brought me to the theatre, from the early age of 6, when our class was putting up plays, and I found myself often volunteering or being chosen to take roles. I did not stop there as I went on to join music lessons with the Ethnomusicology Programme, and speech and drama sessions with Beryl Pollard Institute, so **the question was never 'Do I?', but 'How do I?'** I do not recall when I actually made the choice to continue with arts as a career after school, as **my father wanted me to study towards a more 'profitable' white collar career.** I was already deep in it, taking part in variety shows and competitions, attending workshops and auditions at Reps Theatre long before I completed my high school. This and the 'hands on' training I received while working with established professionals in the country led me to what has now become the start of my dream coming true, earning me two NAMA nominations for acting work in theatre plays, and contributing to the two NAMA Best Actress Awards I was honoured to receive for films I featured in lead roles. With this to motivate me, I still have room to dream.*

*My passion for the arts affected most of the choices I have made concerning the other 'profitable' careers. I went on to study towards as executive secretarial qualification, Journalism, and later Public Relations and Marketing. I managed to get work (stage productions in those days were limited to community theatre or non-paying shows at Reps theatre) and earn from the age of 18 while in the evenings, and every extra time I got was spent investing in my passion – writing poetry, drama groups. When I became a mother the drama group meeting venue or the theatre was my baby girl's playground, as that was the first place we would head to after I collected her from crèche.*

*While there has been fulfilling moments, I have faced numerous challenges faced in theatre. Personally due to the huge responsibilities I have had as a first born and mother and the need to supplement my income - I had to make use of my other qualifications and skills and balance two professions. So every time I have had outside other jobs has had to be invested into the arts, be it for rehearsals, performance or networking with others in my industry. As a result I do not remember when I last took proper rest leave for purposes of rest or holiday. I also went through a phase where I was not taken seriously as a working artist because I was working in another sector, as some players had the perception that I lacked the courage to go into it fulltime, or that I did not need the income, or that I would not find time to balance between the other jobs.*

*After taking a two year 'sabbatical' from the office in the mid 90's, and those were the most taxing and 'broke' years of my life, I was forced to go back into formal employment when my first daughter was born, **having carried the pregnancy for eight months without a single visit to the doctor due to lack work and funds** (either no one was hiring in some instances and those who were, were **definitely not casting a pregnant woman**). **'Formal' employment offers such benefits as medical aid assistance and funeral policies, which the arts sector does not yet – and a lot changes when one becomes a mother.** Whilst at work the hardest has been the 'extraordinary' hours you sometimes work, getting home late and putting in some more work when I get home – while my daughter waited on a mother who did not have enough time to help with homework, and most recently going on tour and leaving a four month old baby (my second daughter) with my mother nursing on formula. I have been blessed with the most patient and supportive structure for my children and not only has that driven me to strive for excellence so that they see the rewards, but it makes the awards received 18 years later worth my while.*

*I can safely say I am not alone in my struggles as a woman in this industry, as I have witnessed my colleagues go through their share of challenges. I would like it recognised that women are the strongest creatures I have met, as they face more challenges that their males counterparts do not go through, and sometimes may fail to sympathise*



## SANDRA CHIDAWANYIKA GOLIATH (CONTINUED)

with. I feel my peers would strongly agree, **that the rehearsal room and theatre for a woman is very painful place to be when pregnant, or on a heavy menstrual cycle.** I have personally experienced having to perform very demanding roles during these times. But that's nature and cannot be helped. We learn not to make excuses and we find ways to manage as that is our biological make up and has to take place to complete us as women. In the same vein, and probably easier to put on paper – would be the fact that we women suffer the effect of marriage and motherhood in theatre, as it is the biggest 'impediment' to our work. There is little or no support for women trying to juggle family demands and career. Also a lot of partners of women in theatre have a hard time accepting the long hours and some of the content their 'women' have to take up.

Another challenge is there is not enough work to go round for females in the sector. Men predominate in the theatre industry as actor hirers. Because of the **lack of female playwrights in the sector, I feel that strong roles for women, which represent females well, are sorely lacking from the stage (as well as the screen).** And it is not because the talent is not there, but I have experienced a sector run by mostly men, in such a manner that a women is good 'eye candy' and that is about all. This now leaves women not supporting and edifying each other fully and rather, competing with each other.

It also seems that we have few role professionals emerging from the training institutions – as a lot of women after completing their training and unable to find work that is sufficiently challenging and financially secure, move into other areas of employment and take their talent and vision with them, creating more gaps in the sector.

I have been fortunate to have role models from as early as primary school days up to now. Early on I can single out the support of Miss Roxy Mathazia (Xapa the poetess), my drama teacher in primary school and mother of my fellow actor Eyahra, who demonstrated such a passion and individuality you couldn't help but admire what she represented – and want to be like her one day. The partnership of Patience Tawengwa and Danai Gurira, co-founders of Almasi Collaborative Arts was highly instrumental for my development as an all-round theatre professional, as I was given an opportunity to merge my organisational skills with the artistic experience to take on an active role behind the scenes as co-producer. It is through these experiences that I am now confidently working towards a clear goal where I see a future in the industry where I am living my dream working in the arts sector only to earn a living and to using my experience to help others, in and outside the sector.

My recommendations for those in leading roles in our sector - I see things looking up if more opportunities are being created for women by stakeholders in and outside the theatre industry. Women in the producing role are players in a male dominated industry, renting rehearsal and performance venues run by men, thus it is the men making the profits.

Involvement of corporates in Cultural activities as a whole, would create more funding. This would also create a system where some benefits could be made accessible to artists, such as funeral policies, medical aid, and maternity leave benefits for out-of-work women.

I would also like to see more support for female playwrights by creating platforms where they bring in their work to be workshopped (sic) and developed for the stage. More likely this would need support though in the way of government funding, as while funding by well-wishers outside Zimbabwe creates programmes where we learn best practices from developed regions, but our stories may tend to come out diluted with someone else's voice and not our true Zimbabwean voice.



## FINDINGS: THEATRE

### REFLECTIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

There is a lack of female friendly spaces; for instance most venues lack dressing rooms and in certain situations women are forced to share dressing rooms with male colleagues. Women are vulnerable to abuse and sexual exploitation especially during tours. The sector is male dominated; however there are positive male role models. Women working in theatre often lack professional skills and leadership training hence there are very few theatre groups led by women. There is no association or organised collective voice for women working in theatre hence they are unable to convene and share ideas to collectively lobby for issues that affect them.

### CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN THEATRE

- ❖ Whilst women have no challenges working together there is no existing platforms in theatre to encourage such cooperation and collaborative creation.
- ❖ Harassment and manipulation of women remains rampant in the sector, especially at production level.
- ❖ Negative societal perceptions and attitudes limit women's careers in theatre.
- ❖ The negative perception and reporting from media is common; a deliberate media strategy to promote women in the arts is lacking.

### STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN IN THEATRE

- ❖ Professionalism is required in general from both performers and producers. Work without written contracts should not be accepted. Work that is of an internship nature should be clearly defined as such.
- ❖ Professional grooming under well established and professional thespians is important for well-rounded skills. The gender of the mentor is not relevant but their skills, experience and professionalism is key.
- ❖ Thespians must cultivate themselves as professionals.
- ❖ Theatre practitioners should acquire a breadth of skills to complement their income earning ability.
- ❖ Female artists need to be capacitated to develop specialist skills set to enable them to take up more technical and leadership roles.
- ❖ Financial resources for all encompassing-women capacity and skills development workshops are needed.



## SIKHULILE SIBANDA



*She is a rare species, involved in a commonly male dominated art form - sculpture. S'khu specializes in metal, stone and wood sculpture. S'khu started sculpting at the age of 12. Seeing a piece of stone which she admired, she believed she could create something from it and began shaping it with another piece of stone.*

*The more she did it, the more the passion grew, pushing her to venture into sculpture from a more professional perspective. In 1993 she started producing and selling her products. She then began formalising her self-taught skills by attending training in stone sculpting at Mzilikazi Arts and Craft Centre. In 1999 she ventured into yet another zone; welding.*

*S'khu has touched places in the world because of her sculpting and wood carving talents. In 2003 she was recommended by the National Arts Council to represent Zimbabwe in Japan at the Inami International Wood Sculptors' Camp. The camp boosted her confidence and she became fully convinced that she could make it. In 2006 she won the NAMA award as the best three dimensional award and won a merit; something not common for women in the field. She also went to Tanzania in early 2013 where she participated in*

*the international wood day which hosted a wooden sculptors' competition. **In this competition; S'khu was the only woman involved in sculpture among the 41 people who participated.***

*The 40 men who participated appreciated S'khu's breakthrough in a male dominated sphere. She has been to Algeria for the African festival and to Nigeria for the Summit for Visual Arts. Her mother, whom she describes as a feminist, is very proud and supportive, while her father is quite helpful.*

*She believes female sculptors are intimidated by men who tackle a lot of unsettling issues and intimidate women. While some men will claim intent to assist a female artist, they want to do so to get sexual favours. She says she has often had to assert herself and stand her ground; not tolerating the abuse of her rights while also negotiating space with the male sculptures.*

*S'khu says, active women artists usually become less active and at times quit from producing and selling art products when they get married or have children. This is because when they get married some of their spouses don't allow them to be mobile. When women artists have children they have to take care of the children and they don't concentrate on their art works. When a female artist markets her products, the first thing that comes to mind on use of the money relates to meeting the basic needs of her family such as food whereas for men the priority is different, as a result they end up having more savings and investments in their business. Men have more opportunities for workshops and marketing because they hold positions of power especially at most institutions which matter in the sector.*

*While her source of livelihood was her sculpting, marketing of the products had since become a challenge. Her local tourist market and South African market were no longer viable. She has since resorted to doing other things such as teaching rather than producing and selling. In addition, she paints and coordinates workshops on digital storytelling and creative space. She urges women who want to be involved in sculpture as a business to be strong and to work twice as hard as men because the playfield is not levelled.*



# GEORGINA MAXIM



Photography by Colin Meda

*It requires a lot of discipline if you want to be anywhere. You have to be aware of your strengths, and surely your weaknesses. And best of all you have to hone in those weaknesses every day.*

*Being in the arts and cultural sector is very technical. Obviously **it's not about winning, but in a way it's about understanding the calling, the passion** and hardships to follow. I shall try to define them in tranches. Passion, according to my dictionary is best known to me as the driving force that continues to make me sane each day. I keep my sanity by a few hours of the ritual of self. Self in the woman world is allowing oneself to do what we enjoy, that one thing that if criticized openly makes you feel alive and or different. Some say we are used to criticism, born with it therefore it hardly becomes a thorn when said openly. I say we manage it well. During passion topics, I am often driven to make my own kind understand that passion is always translated simply to baking after a long day, after a full day job. Sewing and burning the midnight candle when the day job is done. So when all else is done, this is the time when you are alone but not lonely.*

*I am trained as a creative and applied artist. I border between art for art sake and craft. I am sure receiving the certificate gave me mandate*

*to practice more openly without fear. But my calling came earlier, much earlier at the age of 9, making Christmas decorations, paper costumes for my drama class, drawing unending objects in my university classes, marrying an artist, spending 14 years working in a splendid gallery, teaching for 7 years and eventually opening a studio and residency space as a collective. All these fall under calling.*

*Now having all these under my wings, surely I am destined to be successful - passion and calling. But no one had trained me for the following various issues and to top it all as a woman in the arts:*

**Criticism of your own art work.** *I remember very well my art work and being criticized openly in front of other fellow artists and mostly male and being told it was not good enough. Ever since then I have learnt that anyone's work should speak for itself and not be categorized as female or male, but rather as good art. I continue to perfect that every day.*

**Sourcing materials.** *Having no support from family members, an issue standing on its, getting the best and correct material to produce the works was equally difficult. I met other female artists who expressed the same sentiments and reminded me of important issues. The best of them was to remember how I used to do the Christmas decorations and which materials I used. I am forever grateful to their advice. I continue to use recycled material today and hovering upon the grannies crochet, knitting, weaving and so on.*

**Funding.** *The issues of funding continue to dampen progress and projects. Having not enough of it will always compromise the success of an artist. I am grateful to the other 3 artists who encouraged me to be part of an organic space. I am sure they are tapping into the years of experience of being an arts administrator. Little do they know that it was tough convincing the traffic of artists that I am not only about paper, telephone and of pretty face, but an artist too. To comment on their work was unwelcome. To wrap their work ready for shipping was a surprise and eventually a joke that I too could do it. I am happy now to say they (the male artist) gloat to the young female artist that they too should emulate and learn.*

*I have learnt deeply that one must persist, softly and kindly. **We are the vulnerable group married or unmarried, with children or not.** In my case married and with children. I have stopped to exist for myself but with others. I even derive inspiration from them. I sometimes allow them to be in my world to understand who I am and so that they too can defend me, my passion, my hardships and my calling. Other women approach it differently and their wishes are thwarted, or destroyed. The guilt trip is placed upon them, to be a good mother and a good wife. Exhaustion, distance, anger, self-esteem, resentment and doubt begin to creep in and story of self is now only told and nothing to show. It is hard but it is worth it.*



## GEORGINA MAXIM (CONTINUED)

I studied Creative Art and Design and Applied Art and Design with Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe. Currently I am practicing as an artist. I worked at Gallery Delta Foundation for Art and the Humanities as a Gallery Manager and Assistant in curating 12 to 15 exhibitions a year for 14 years. **I am proud to be the Co-Founder of Village Unhu an open art studio**, an artist initiative that provides working space and engagement to artists in residency programs, workshops and exhibitions. In collaboration, Village Unhu and Alliance Francaise curate 4 exhibitions a year for the benefit of young and upcoming artists from 2013 to 2016. I am a voluntary art teacher at a local government school as part of the art education and culture development program commenced and designed by Village Unhu. I have had several exhibitions at Gallery Delta from the year 2000 to date and other exhibitions at National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Village Unhu, and permanent collections of my works are in Australia and Holland. I won an award for first prize in an art exhibition 'Women at the Top' at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. I am 34 years old, married to an artist and a mother of two boys. My name is Georgina Maxim, but most are happy to call me Gina."

## NOMPILO NKOMO



Seeing her tweaks awakens the desire to reach out, share a smile and to invoke her to say more. It is her determination that aptly tells the story of her life. She is neither articulate in speech, nor brisk in walking. Her hands lack the physical strength reminiscent of skill and the ability to touch, feel and move things. Today, she breathes, moves, motivated and motivates through her art.

This is Nompilo Nkomo, a 31 year old woman, living with disability and defying all odds. When asked to share her story, Nompilo often shies away and prefers to turn her head sideways to signal disapproval. She says she hates the manner in which the world has sought her story, ridiculed her and not seen beyond the facade of disability. **Her determination to be an independent, working and productive artist means much more to her than granting interviews to strangers.**

She is a brilliant artist and an amazing woman with an elephant size memory. For the four days that the research team is in her area, she remembers them well by name, and warms up to them, asking each day to what extent they have accomplished their mission. All this, in blurred yet audible speech.

**Her physical disability is not a deterrent, her works ranks high among some of the best fine art in the country.** Having lost her mother as a toddler, Nompilo was looked after by her grandmother, after the passing on of her father in 2005. She benefitted from the support of the National Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe (NCDPZ) which saw her through secondary school at Danhiko in Harare. She received training in art and craft at Mzilikazi Art and Craft Centre, where she says she discovered her love for the paint brush.

Through its Outreach Programme, the National Gallery of Bulawayo provided Nompilo with materials and the opportunity to exhibit her works in the gallery. She has successfully marketed her works locally and regionally and in the process made many friends.

Nompilo believes for as long as one is alive and has an active mind, nothing should deter them from pursuing success. She says despite limited resources, the urge to make something of oneself can help in building the requisite focus to utilise seemingly insignificant resources for success.

Nompilo uses her mobile phone to record the names of all whom she considers 'friends' and texts skilfully with her feet. Her paintings and textiles capture the diverse realities of Zimbabweans and Zimbabwe's story, the people's experiences and encounters with religion, politics and other broad subjects on the economy, food, love and gender issues. Her passion is depicted through her brush, and issues of the environment, community and the transience of life seem to be a thread among her themes. Now, can anyone better defy disability?



## FINDINGS: VISUAL ART

### REFLECTIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

Professional development is a major concern for women in visual arts. There exist some outstanding women visual artists; these cases of success in a male dominated area by sheer professional prowess illustrate potential mentorship possibilities. Talent, quality of works and excellent exhibitions open doors for women.

### CHALLENGES OF WOMEN IN VISUAL ARTS

- ❖ Work life balance is a major challenge. Most women find that balance is very difficult to handle and lose sight of developing their careers in the arts.
- ❖ Depressed local markets have severely impacted the earnings of female visual artists.
- ❖ Most female artists lack the international networks, exposure and entrepreneurship skills to market their products to more clients.
- ❖ The majority of women have no savings or business investments. Their earnings go towards living expenses.
- ❖ Limited financial resources are a hindrance to many women to produce new work

### STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN IN VISUAL ARTS

- ❖ Self-taught skills and raw talent though a good beginning need to be enhanced to enable skills to be refined.
- ❖ Opportunities for international exposure are beneficial for women; nominating bodies need to deliberately promote talented women.
- ❖ Sexual favours in exchange for opportunity are common place bait in the arts and women must simply be professional.
- ❖ Livelihoods based solely on art are a challenge. Developing a diverse range of skills that are marketable is key to achieving financial dignity.

A deliberate strategy to train and mentor physically challenged visual artists will enable more previously disadvantaged women to be successful in the profession.



# MBUYA MUHERA (LUTA SHABA)

Photography by Colin Meda



*As an indigenous African person I am supposed to feel right at home in this beautiful country that is the Land of Dzimbahwe, The Houses of Stone....aren't I? This is supposed to be the one place where I am accepted, understood, accommodated, supported, because well, it IS home. But that is not the case. Not at all.*

*I am sneered at openly by strangers in public when they glance at my anklets (homo) or my bracelets (ndarira). My necklace often goes unnoticed by the truly ignorant because I designed it to look fashionable. Only the sharp eyed will remark on the rarity of the actual Ndoro patterned sea- shell, and get a sharp rebuke from me when they try to touch it. Those in the know will try and be as subtle as they can as they ask "Saka munotosvikirwa chaizvo chaizvo/ So you actually really get possessed?" I do not get offended. At least it is an opening for explanations, and I answer "Hongu ndinopoterwa. Ndiri Svikiro/ Yes I am a medium. I am a Svikiro."*

*When a Christian person says they have received the call of spirit to be a priest, pastor or nun, there is joyous celebration. When I announced my own call of spirit to my colleagues, I received a mixture of scorn, "You cannot be serious", and outright scepticism,*

*"Munhu akadzidza sewe unoda kuita zvechibhoi bhoi/ How can an educated person like you be doing the things of the black ignorant people". Only a few said that they were not really surprised, "You are someone who has always defined herself and charted her own path". I am grateful to these few who gave me succour, however little it was, the few drops kept me going. As I resolutely pursued my spiritual calling as a Spirit Medium, talking to people and explaining our African Traditional Spirituality, what I now get is "Tinozviziva zvinhu izvi. Takakura nazvo/ We know these things. We grew up in this tradition". Now people open up to having relatives or even parents that were mediums or healers (n'anga). It is my turn to not be really surprised.*

***Pain is....When my own people judge me through the eyes of foreigners.***

*My faith and spiritual practices are taking place in a context where the indigenous African person was conquered in war, subjugated under the authority of the invaders and for a hundred years, told that the indigenous faith was demon worship. The practitioners were deemed to be the devil's agents who do dark things, and as such the traditional ways of prayer should be shunned. We bought into the coloniser's perception of 'a dark continent with dark people with dark hearts who do dark deeds' and need to be saved from themselves. This was buttressed by the Witchcraft Suppression Act which criminalises the processes of Matare and / or Kurova Hakata, the divination process of consultations and communion with Spirit Guides of the Ancestors.*

*So instead of my kith and kin joining me in explaining to others how we pray and relate to the world of spirit, they desperately try and dissociate themselves so that they make it clear that they have nothing to do with me lest they be painted with the same brush. I am the already tried and convicted felon, but who are the prosecutor and the judge?*

***As a woman I also have to deal with male family members who do not readily accept a female medium.***

***Mediumship carries with it tremendous authority.*** *As one who is constantly in contact with the spirit guides, a medium is expected to have the added wisdom that must be strictly followed if uttered during trance or at least factored in if contributed in ordinary conversation.*

***Pain is... When the Goddess that I am is trifled with the questioning of my very Being.***

*Traditionally this was not an issue because women were revered and indeed carried power as Mother, Aunt or even First Wife. Woman is the reflection of Mother and Goddess as the Giver of Life. Only a woman can bring misfortune to a disrespectful son through Kutanda Botso, only a mother is given the Fuko blanket by their grown up child, and the one mother's cow (Mombe Yehumai) can curse the all the daughters of her children's families if it was not paid during the lobola ceremony.*



## MBUYA MUHERA (LUTA SHABA) (CONTINUED)

However, Victorian values and forms of patriarchy were super imposed and brought in an inferiority of women that over the years has led to an adulteration of our culture. The modern African man argues that it is part of 'our culture' for women to be subservient to men, and women now change their names to a Mrs. and yet culturally every person is called by their totem and a woman's totem does not change with marriage.

The **progression of most female mediums is hindered by male relatives** who may actively seek to use magic to disrupt the connection (*kutsipika mudzimu*), or just not provide her with the necessary support to brew beer and hold the Bira ceremony for her. This is because they do not want to give her the due respect, which they call hand clapping to a woman (*kuombera mukadzi*).

Women are the primary transmitters of cultural knowledge and yet some have become overly Christianised while others have just forgotten the knowledge that for women should never have become lost. Fortunately some pieces still remain of the broken Pfuko, some large, some small, and they can still be pieced together. The water pot will never look the same, but it will still hold water.

I am reviled and accused of wanting to take people back to the dark ages. **I was once invited to a radio programme where they hoped to cleanse me of the demons that possess me.** What gives me hope is that the 50% syncretic Zimbabweans are now coming out and openly declaring their beliefs in Ancestors and their values of Hunhu/Ubuntu.

**Pity the person who blames you for rocking the boat when you are in stormy seas.** Mbuya Muhera

As my contribution to piecing together our Pfuko yenhaka yedu/ The Water Pot of our heritage, I have written the Books Way of the Light Book 1 and Book 2 which speak to who we are and the need to preserve our heritage and take a stand against total identity erasure and annihilation.

I have set up Ubuntu Way/ Nzira Yehunhu Trust as a vehicle to educate the public through writings and public seminars. I have also taken up recording mbira music and my debut album Vepasi now has a sequel Wedenga scheduled for release on the launch of the publication.

I propose that we have an annual (traditional) Cultural Festival. This can feature music, fashion, arts and craft, traditional dance and cuisine. Local ethnic cultures will be showcased, for instance the Tonga, Kalanga, Ndebele, Shona, Venda. It can rope in other nationalities in the region like the Tswana, Zulu, Cewa /Nyanja for instance. Additional flavour can come in through European cultures.

**The local DJs shun traditional music.** Radio is a powerful medium and should be persuaded to ensure that of the local content of music that is played as a policy requirement, there is also traditional music like Mbira, Marimba and Ngoma arrangements.

The young people are hungry for the nutrition of their heritage and from the responses that I get from the radio programme where I am the resident guest on Sport FM (Zimbabwe), "Vechidiki vari kuda chivanhu chavo". (The young people want their cultural heritage.)



## FINDINGS: CULTURAL HERITAGE

### REFLECTIONS ON PROGRAMMING

There is a dichotomy and contradiction in the interpretations of cultural heritage, traditions and the authority of women. There is a growing resentment of traditional cultural practices in the modern day Zimbabwe. Zimbabwean we see the dearth in local languages, diet and the ways of the different cultures that constitute Zimbabwe.

Traditionally women in Zimbabwe commanded respect in their various roles, with their responsibilities fully appreciated and understood. For instance a woman would be called by her totem therefore retaining her identity. Along the way women's roles have changed and the respect accorded to women's traditional roles such as bearers of oral history and tradition has diminished.

How Culture and Heritage interfaces with the other sub-sectors to ensure that the culture preservation aspects are jealously safeguarded is yet to be fully explored.

### CHALLENGES OF WOMEN IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

- ❖ The erosion of traditional values which started with colonialism has resulted in the derogation and diminishing of the authoritative roles played by women.
- ❖ Male members of family are generally unsupportive of women possessed by clan spirits implying the women medium has higher authority in the family.
- ❖ Lack of knowledge on cultural heritage has affected appreciation of tradition in modern society
- ❖ Societal misconception on practise of cultural heritage associating with demonic practises

### STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

- ❖ Encourage publication of literature that explores cultural heritage issues
- ❖ Women's organisations that support women in cultural heritage should be enhanced
- ❖ Shifting mindsets is the foundation for appreciation thus initiatives that deliberately tackle paradigm limitation are required.
- ❖ Spaces that showcase and promote cultural heritage should be made more accessible to young people.
- ❖ More importantly the role of the woman in the sector as far as safeguarding the culture needs to be fully embraced by women in the sector and beyond.



## 4.0 GENERAL STUDY CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from this study;

- ❖ Development programmes that transcend technical skills to cover business, cross cutting issues and personal leadership are required for women to be au faire with pathways to their career progression.
- ❖ Gender literacy and its practical application in terms of policies that speak into the sector are important to creating a fair terrain for performance for women in the arts.
- ❖ The contribution of women working in the arts and culture sector, both to GDP and sector development needs to be documented so as to project women not as vulnerable people.
- ❖ Current constraining norms, values and perceptions require sustained comprehensive programmes to influence paradigm shifts about women working in the arts and culture sector.
- ❖ The issue of gender policy is not a panacea to all gender related challenges. Ownership and leadership is required to translate policy into living documents that change the face of the arts. Working in collaboration with government ministries, regulatory authorities and arts institutions, women artists must chart their destiny.
- ❖ Although each sub-sector has its own peculiarities that need specific responses the general view is that the situation of women working in the arts is almost the same across the board.



## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section draws from the sum total of issues raised through workshops, focal groups and in depth interviews. Recommendations directed to Culture Fund and Sida, key institutions and female artists were made.

### 5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CULTURE FUND AND SIDA

- ❖ While nobody can claim to provide a panacea for the gender discrimination and inequalities existing in the sector, it is crucial that the Culture Fund should partner relevant players in the sector and engage in dialogue with a view to implement concrete solutions to support women artists. The desired position is for women to find their space and thrive in it. The space for women however needs to be located within an overarching strategy for the development of the creative artists and supported by aggressive paradigm shifting programmes that tackle the socio-cultural barriers.
- ❖ This study acknowledges the need for integrated processes cutting across all sectors to take form in order to address not only the status of women but within the context of developing the creative sector as a competitive industry locally and beyond. Capacity development at individual and organizational or institutional level, networking within and outside the sector, and other engagements with the broader community and with the public remain central interventions within these processes. Culture Fund should conceive and implement programmes aimed at developing these capacities. Also Culture fund should fund more programmes aimed at strengthening capacities for women.
- ❖ Culture Fund should deliberately shift towards supporting female artists and female headed cultural institutions. The support should come in the form of starting capital, technical training, arts as a business, administration, managerial and marketing skills. Women artists also need to be capacitated to source negotiate and manage contracts, to acquire self-esteem and to conduct their business transactions in a professional manner.
- ❖ Culture Fund should channel more support towards gender and women's rights awareness raising in the sector to make it clear why issues of gender inequities and abuse of women's rights are detrimental to the family, the community, the sector, the nation and the economy. The need for gender justice in the sector, need to be highlighted and supported. Networking with gender focused organizations also needs to be encouraged and supported.
- ❖ Culture Fund and Sida should implement capacity building programmes for arts journalists on gender sensitive reporting. Media is very critical in influencing change in societal perceptions and prejudices of women artists. Media practitioners and platforms should deliberately create a more positive portrayal of the women in the arts. Coverage on cases of success stories can go a long way in influencing public opinion about what women in the arts are capable of doing. Focus on scandals and other negative issues for the sake of selling news yield little benefit for the industry.
- ❖ In addition, the CFoZT gender policy needs to be redrawn to focus on policy interventions that contribute towards addressing identified gender gaps.. CFoZT should have a strategic planning session to map out its support in line with the findings from this study. Resource mobilisation in support of this crucial programme would be essential.



## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS KEY INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

- ❖ Consideration could be made by councils and other stakeholders who provide venues for artists to improve the venues so that they can be friendly to women, especially the change rooms and rehearsal spaces. Women mentioned that venues which do not provide privacy have resulted in sexual abuse by men.
- ❖ Policies and procedures that encourage women to take up management and leadership positions in cultural institutions, as a way of addressing the gender imbalances that currently exist need to be considered.

## 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WOMEN IN THE ARTS

- ❖ Existing female arts associations should be strengthened in order to improve service delivery to women, provide combined voices advocating on behalf of women in the arts and in specific genres. There is need to investigate the reasons for failure of associations that were once in place. Women artists could emulate other sectors who have formed interest groups like the Women in Mining Association. Membership to groups such as Women in Business would give the women exposure into the world of business which is much needed in the sector. These groupings have provided a combined voice and platform for the women in the respective sectors, and the arts could do the same. The associations would be an important vehicle to lobby and advocate for women's interests and represent them at all levels, as well as for resource mobilisation. The sustainability of these associations should be beyond funding partner support.
- ❖ Women in the arts should advocate for and initiate the process of crafting a gender policy for the sector. There is need to have a gender policy for the culture sector and a code of conduct, which should be complemented by different genre gender policies. These should include a code of ethics and behaviour in the sector that safeguards women against all forms of discrimination and oppression. Punitive action for infringing on the code would be a tenet of the policy. Policies crafted should not be an attempt to replicate existing policies but to close the gaps that exist specifically for arts inclusive of contractual practises and remuneration. Women in the sector need to be guided to be conversant with the overarching frameworks that already exist that protect their interest especially in matters of sexual abuse.
- ❖ Female artists who have risen to success and fame in the various genres can be encouraged to act as mentors and role models to young and upcoming artists. Music stars like Dudu Manhenga and Sandra Ndebele-Sibindi have started doing this for women musicians and more should be encouraged.
- ❖ Women should focus on becoming proficient in their genre of choice.



## 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

- ❖ Cooperation across administration is necessary in tackling gender issues in the arts. Ministry of Sport and Arts and Culture in collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs should implement programmes aimed at strengthening women in the arts such as capacity building programmes and peer educator programmes.
- ❖ National Arts Council of Zimbabwe should strengthen women artists associations. A database for female artists should be created and from time update women on issues to do with their rights and how they can be assisted through the National Arts Council. NACZ can create a channel for reporting abuses in the arts and culture sector and when such abuses are reported they should act swiftly to deal with perpetrators.
- ❖ Ensure that built and external environments designed to host arts events are female friendly spaces. They should have rehearsal spaces that allow women some privacy when they change costumes.
- ❖ Incorporate UN, SADC and AU recommendations on women empowerment into law and implement laws and policies aimed at women empowerment. Also give greater priority to research on, and programmes to improve, status of women in the arts.
- ❖ Gender issues should be incorporated into school curricular so that awareness on the issues is raised among children from a tender age. This could help to debunk some traditional values that look down upon women in the arts.