

THE ROLE OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN THE PROMOTION OF PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL COHESION IN ZIMBABWE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to explore the contribution of culture and the arts in promoting peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe. This study was conducted in light of the Zimbabwe New Constitution of 2013 that provides a provision for setting up a National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) whose main mandate is to promote peace, reconciliation, nation building and social cohesion. In view of this, the Culture Fund commissioned this research to examine the contribution of culture and the arts sector towards peacebuilding, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe. The study therefore sought to explore the relationship between arts and culture and peace, reconciliation and social cohesion and examine how the culture sector can be mainstreamed in the NPRC to achieve sustainable peace in Zimbabwe.

The study employed a qualitative research design and sought data from 86 participants using in-depth and key informant interviews and 3 focus group discussions (FGDs). A purposive sampling method and snowballing technique was adopted to identify participants from the artists in the visual arts, performing arts, fine arts, cultural heritage and literary arts from the three provinces of Zimbabwe namely Manicaland, Harare and Bulawayo participated in this study.

The findings revealed the importance and subtleties of culture and the arts as effective locally owned mechanisms for peacebuilding, healing, truth-telling, memorialisation, and reconciliation, nation-building and social cohesion. Some working arts and culture initiatives such as “Two Villages Apart” and *Hochekoche* (by Amakosi, Rooftop Promotions and Zimbabwe International Film Festival Trust) are impressive efforts in the arts and culture sector that are being used to foster peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe. Literary Arts emerged as powerful instruments used to propagate seeds of unity and portray a good image of the Zimbabwean citizenry. In addition, traditional institutions and their subsequent sub-sectors play an important role in promoting and conserving the history of the country as well as upholding the norms and values of a people. Thus, traditional practices such as rituals, memorialisation and commemoration (such as independence, *kurova guva*, memorial services) are glue that binds humanity beyond regionalism and across ethnic divide. Also of paramount importance in the study is the role of music which emerged as a critical instrument that transforms relations and minds by a way of speaking and articulating on problems affecting society. Multimedia, audio-visuals and videos also came out as a medium through which peace messages can be messaged at a large scale. NAFUNA TV for example pointed out that cartoons can be used to communicate messages of peace and can be disseminated through mobile phones and television. The study established that this medium has the capacity to create national values and through which peace, national unity and social cohesion could be fostered.

The study drew arts and culture-based policy interventions and strategies that can be used by the NPRC and its relevant institutions to enhance sustainable peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. The following are some of the recommendations and policy interventions that should be adopted to promote the arts and culture towards peacebuilding, national healing, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

- ❖ Research in the arts and culture is still low, there is need to do more research that covers all the arts and culture sectors. There is need to come up with a robust research agenda on the thematic issues that need to be researched on as part of knowledge advancement and looking at Arts and Culture as a discipline or field of study.
- ❖ There is need to train the various artists on how to conduct policy relevant research that will help policy makers make informed decisions and the general citizenry of Zimbabwe in finding working models for peacebuilding and nation building in addition to other thematic issues.
- ❖ The findings of the study revealed a limited uptake of the arts and culture in the school curriculum and hence the limited appreciation of the creative products and services in the country towards peace and nation building. This study recommends mainstreaming of the arts and culture training in the formal school curriculum from primary to tertiary education because educating and socializing children from the early stages of their learning will ensure sustainable development of cultures of peace in society.
- ❖ Artists and experts in education from various backgrounds should contribute in curriculum development in the area of the arts and culture, and nation building and sustainable development.
- ❖ Sensitise the media through capacity building about role of the arts and culture in promoting peace and social cohesion to ensure well-informed coverage and development of media professionalism.
- ❖ The study showed the important role that traditional institutions and authorities play with their relevant foundations in promoting social cohesion and integration in the past. Furthermore, the traditional authorities and their institutions such as *masvikiro* are still of great significance in the peacebuilding and social cohesion discourse. In view of this, the study recommends utilisation of traditional authorities and institutions by the NPRC to promote peace, reconciliation and social cohesion. Examples are beer festivals and *nhimbe* as means to foster social cohesion.
- ❖ The study revealed that there is very limited engagement of the general citizenry and the artists in Zimbabwe in capacity building, training workshops and outreach programs whose sole purpose is to facilitate reconciliation and social cohesion. That noted, there is need for collaboration between the NPRC and the artists in holding workshops, capacity building initiatives for peace and reconciliation.
- ❖ The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission should partner with artists and key stakeholders in its programming and implementation of activities to ensure social mobilization.
- ❖ The study revealed that the film industry has been deteriorating and yet Zimbabwe was one of the most promising countries in the southern African region. In addition, the study highlighted the importance of film and the multimedia as avenues that promote nation building, togetherness and social cohesion. The study therefore, recommends adoption, promotion and protection of the film industry in the country and encourages the NPRC to engage the film industries towards creating a positive image of the country as well as fostering social cohesion and integration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

- ❖ National monuments, crafts, visual arts and other cultural heritage have emerged as a glue of society. They continue to reveal the history of the people, unite people and present a platform for the community to remember their past. Remembering through national archives, literary arts, national monuments and museums has the potential to unite people. In this view, the study recommends to the NPRC that artists, the government and other relevant stakeholders should utilise national shrines, museums, libraries and other cultural heritage in the promotion of peace and social cohesion.
- ❖ The NPRC needs to create an arts-based early warning mechanism system for the purpose of informing it on potential risks, threats and solutions to emerging issues and foster lasting peace and integration by utilising the hochekechoche project.
- ❖ The study established that creative products and services have the capacity to reach the general citizenry of Zimbabwe using different platforms. The NPRC needs to take advantage of the creative products and services which have the capacity to convey peace messages at a massive scale and reach a wider audience. In doing so, there is need to involve the producers of creative products and services in the identification of Zimbabwe's common goals and co-design the modalities through which the messages for peace and reconciliation are to be conveyed.
- ❖ The study recommends that once culture and the arts are given the attention they deserve, they should be utilised to promote peacebuilding, national healing, reconciliation and development through national arts and culture festivals, music galas, community theatre, drama, film and cultural heritage where spirit mediums continue to play a mediating role.
- ❖ The findings revealed a limited representation of the artists in the national peace efforts and recommends, the establishment of the Arts and Culture Desk within the NPRC and all line ministries to ensure the promotion of national unity and social cohesion in Zimbabwe.
- ❖ National monuments, crafts, visual arts and other cultural heritage have emerged as a glue of society. They continue to reveal the history of the people, unite people and present a platform for the community to remember their past. Remembering through national archives, literary arts, national monuments and museums has the potential to unite people. In this view, the study recommends that the NPRC, artists, the government and other relevant stakeholders utilise national shrines, museums, libraries and other cultural heritage.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
GPA:	Global Political Agreement
GNU:	Government of National Unity
IPLG:	Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance
MDC:	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-N:	Movement for Democratic Change-Ncube
MDC-T:	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPRC:	National Peace and Reconciliation Commission
ONHRI:	Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration
PF ZAPU:	Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People's Union
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Fund
ZAACA:	Zimbabwe Applied Arts in Craft Association
ZANU PF:	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front
ZANU:	Zimbabwe National People's Union
ZCCI:	Zimbabwe Chamber of Creative Industries
ZITTF:	Zimbabwe International Film and Festival Trust
ZTV:	Zimbabwe Television



SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

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❖ GLOBAL CONTEXT

Historical analysis of peace settlements and peacebuilding models from World War 1 through World War 2 up to the present day conflicts reveal that so much has been borrowed from conventional means of peacebuilding, reconciliation and transitional justice from the stance of restorative and distributive justice. Such peacebuilding and reconciliatory pronouncements necessitated ephemeral peace and restoration of social relations as evidenced by re-insurgencies in countries like Mozambique after the Rome Peace Agreement of 1992, Angola, and unending wars in the Arab countries and the recent clashes in Libya after the decapitation of Mohammed Gaddafi under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) interventions. Such interventions and peacebuilding models have either left a torn out social fabric, divided and very weak structures of peace. Some of the deficiencies of such normative forms of peace and reconciliation are that they seek to witch hunt and punish the offender and some are rather irrelevant to resolving micro or community level conflicts. Hence, the emergence of community-level peacebuilding approaches such as the gacaca of Rwanda and mato oput of Uganda which have been applauded as some of the best mechanisms for the enhancing peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in local contexts. Furthermore, normative forms of fostering peace and reconciliation are further discredited as conflict resolution approaches as they lack spiritual and cultural motivation required in resolving them. As such, non conventional and nonviolent means of ensuring peace and reconciliation for a resilient social fabric can be a formidable vehicle for peacebuilding, nation-building and social cohesion rather than the one-size-fits all methodologies that do not take into account the local contexts in which peace is to be achieved. In pursuit of non-confrontational means of peacebuilding, this research sought to examine the contribution of the arts and culture in promoting peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe.

❖ PRE-COLONIAL AND PRE-INDEPENDENCE STATUS OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE IN ZIMBABWE

Pre-colonial Zimbabwe was in a state of tranquil, with arts and culture being the pillars used to express identity, values, principles, and beliefs. Pre-colonial Zimbabwe (before 1890) was a period when people were informed by the indigenous knowledge (IK) that manifested in various forms such as medicines, agriculture, craft and oral tradition such as folktale and myths. Matsika (2012) noted that Indigenous Knowledge entails 'the traditional and local knowledge that exists and is developed through the experiences of the local community in the process of managing the conditions or context that challenge the people's everyday life'. He further highlighted six characteristics that encompass indigenous know that are as follows:

- a) A home grown form of knowledge, which is derived from the solution of everyday life problems;
- b) It is part and parcel of a community's cultural practices and ways of life;

- c) Often it is not documented but has passed from one generation to another through oral history;
- d) It is used in solving the immediate problems that confront the community;
- e) As a dynamic form of knowledge, it changes in line with events that may be taking place in a society, and
- f) It is always under scrutiny since it is valued for its ability to solve prevailing problems.

These characteristics are evident of the traditional lifestyles of the Zimbabwean people and have been used to confront social problems and providing the answers to solve them. Therefore, IK has been part of the way of living, thinking and understanding of communal life. In this study, they are the bedrock of the understanding of the African worldview that takes into account the traditional way of living, spirituality and culture that are an inseparable component of humanity in Africa (Mbiti, 1994).

Before the proliferation of the Christian doctrine and the individualistic tendencies that were propagated by imperialism, the IK were used to foster social cohesion, human security, health, justice, environmental protection and a level of development which were upheld by a strong social fabric and value system. Mapira and Mazambara (2013) noted that, laws were passed in order to subjugate these people and marginalize their cultural heritage. IK were often despised in order to promote Western forms of knowledge such as natural science. But modern research has demonstrated that IK are neither inferior nor backward as they were derived from centuries of accurate observation and experiments. For example, the Great Zimbabwe Monuments, a product of the country's ancient culture, are renowned as a world class heritage that is comparable to the pyramids of Egypt (Mapira, 2001). According to Mapira and Mazambara (2013) colonial masters could not ascribe them to the work of indigenous people since that would undermine their false claim or belief that Africans were primitive and inferior to Europeans. To further show how colonialism distorted our culture and artistic work, historians like Mpofu, Muponda, Mutami and Tavuyanago (2009) argued that,

'Early European accounts erroneously attributed the construction of Great Zimbabwe to non-Africans. Their argument was that Africans had not developed the technological capacity to build such a magnificent structure. Archeological studies have however proved beyond any doubt that local Shona-speaking people were responsible for the construction of the stone walls. Objects found at the site show that its origin was indigenous as the art and craft found at the site is similar to the work of recent Shona people' (2009, p.8-9).

All these issues point to the detrimental role that colonialism played in undermining our culture, history and knowledge systems that shaped our worldview and the way we relate to each other. The white colonial rule disregarded the African culture and art and therefore dispute resolution was relegated from the traditional system such as 'dare' to the contemporary courts that emphasise punishment and retribution rather than restoring broken relationships. Culture and the arts lost relevance in many of the Christianized Zimbabweans but they remain critical towards mobilizing the masses against colonialism. Many people could not read and write but music, dance, festivals and spirit mediums taught the people about the objectives of the war and it motivated many youths to join the

liberation struggle which led to the independence of the country.

It is in this era that arts and culture were dominant tools from which advice; informal education, social commentaries and teachings were drawn. For example, songs like “*Sarura wako*” (Pick your choice) guided youngsters to identify and memorise qualities of their desired life partners while “*Dudu muduri*” and *Jenaguru* (full moon) dance festivals which villages hosted rotationally opened up spaces for courtship, identity building and strengthening of social capital.

Notably, IKSs preserved and reinforced the concept of social capital through acknowledgement of the spiritual components of our lives through life-stage rituals, spiritual consultations and diagnoses, traditional medicines and other consistently observed cultural practices. This did not only create an identity for the Zimbabwean people but also provided a home grown and much appreciated conflict resolution package that was cost effective and relevant to the lives of the Zimbabwean populace. The inseparable components of arts and culture were the delivery modes through which issues of reunification, forgiveness, social memories and value systems were portrayed.

The scramble and partitioning of Africa however, dismantled and negated a once vibrant and cohesive social fabric that was based on culture and the arts. The colonial regimes infiltrated the culture and imposed alien values that undermined social cohesion in communities and created a one-dimensional individual that was detached from the community. The imposition of western culture resulted in the dilution of Zimbabwe's cultural practices that had so much respect on the spiritual world that was mediated by “*masvikiro*” (spirit mediums) and “*vadzimu*” (ancestors) to bring peace, social cohesion and reconciliation through ritual and beer festivals. Notwithstanding the terminal role of colonialism on culture and the arts, Zimbabwe continued to reflect on its cultural practices during the colonial era and hence the influence of spirit mediums such as Nehanda, Chaminuka and Kaguvi in the first Chimurenga War of 1896-97. Throughout the period of resistance of the Rhodesian colonial power and the subsequent armed struggle from 1966 to 1979 culture and the arts were influential in promoting unity and cohesion that built a spirit of nationalism towards fighting for independence. All these were influenced by indigenous knowledge that drew from the belief systems of the people of Zimbabwe, culture, identity, history and values that revered the importance of vitalism and togetherness.

The same trends remained dominant in the pre-independence era with publications from artists such as Thompson Tsodzo, Patrick Chakaipa, Solomon Mutsvairo and Aaron Chiunduramoyo with literary arts such as *Pafunge*, *Dzasukwa mwana asina hembe*, *Feso* and *Ziva kwawakabva* respectively. Notably, this pattern of creativity did not succumb to colonial suppression but strengthened and opened up more artistic works such as *Yaive Hondo* (novel), *Barika Remashefu* (novel), *Chiwokomuhomwe* (ZTV Drama) *Flags of rags*¹, *Hakurarwi*², among a multitude of creative arts. While post-independence arts and culture is expressed literally, its pre-independence mode was largely music, dance, night vigils and rituals. *Vava* (2014) identified drama, dance and music as a phenomenon that played

¹ Poem collection by Julius Chingono

² Poem by Chirikure Chirikure

a major role in social identity formation and a central component of the Zimbabwean society in the home, workplaces, religion and social ceremonies such as death, marriage and collective labour. Arguably, pre-independence arts and culture was different from the contemporary arts and culture in that, the former comprised elements of entertainment, emotional support, motivation, advice, emotional and spiritual healing and inspiration. As such, it provided the Zimbabwean with the needs of a complete human being, without neglecting the social, spiritual and psychology of a human being.

Despite their absence in the battlefield, musicians such as Thomas Mapfumo and Oliver Mtukudzi were sources of inspiration through their songs which carried themes of social justice, poverty, hardships and politics. Painters such as Tafadzwa Muzondo also played a role in portraying and amplifying the realities of injustices that exist in Zimbabwe from colonial time up to present day. Through poetry, poets such as Christopher Magadza and the late Freedom Nyamubaya intensified the understanding of the rest of the Zimbabwean citizenry about the experiences of the freedom fighters and the projections of the independent Zimbabwe.

The African Traditional Religion as a functional phenomenon was also projected through the arts and culture during the pre-independence era. Spiritual mediators were an important and respected institution in every society. Their major function was to facilitate communication between members of the physical community and those of the spiritual community. In the African worldview, the individual is not identified only by the bodily image but with the spirit and these spirit mediums complement what constitutes an African human being. As such, consultations with the spirit mediums and ancestors were not only made at community levels but were open to individuals and families which played a positive function in unifying families and communities to deal with a common problem. Spirit mediums would not only reconcile and unify people, prevent and resolve conflict but also preserved traditional values and belief systems through their leading role in practicing rituals.

Such Arts and culture were not only limited to literary arts, poetry, sculpture, visual arts and other creative works; it was also expressed in names, dressing, food, language as well as traditional leadership institutions and courts. Such components contributed to identity building, forgiveness, memorialisation and social cohesion. Through arts and culture, there was a complete and adequate portrayal of *unhu* (humanness) which is, to date, a celebrated phenomenon among the Zimbabwean people. As a result, the inseparable components were enabling pillars that anchored the capacity of the Zimbabwean peoples' efforts for peace, reconciliation, mutual understanding and development.

❖ ZIMBABWE'S ROAD TO PEACE AND RECONCILIATION: 1980 TO PRESENT

A number of peace efforts have been brokered in the post independent Zimbabwe since the attainment of independence in 1980 from the white settlers. Among them was the pronouncement of national reconciliation and nation building by the then Prime Minister of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Cde. Robert Mugabe in his famous speech when he said,

"Let us turn our swords into ploughshares, so we can attend to the problems of developing our economy and our society. If you were my enemy yesterday, today we are bound by the same patriotic duty and destiny.... As we become a new people, we are called to be constructive, progressive and forever forward looking, for we cannot afford to be men of yesterday, backward looking, retrogressive and destructive. Our new nation requires of every one of us to be a new man, with a new mind, a new heart and a new spirit. Our new mind must have a new vision and our new hearts a new love that spurns hate and a new spirit that must unite and not divide.....I urge you whether you are black or white, to join me in a new pledge to forget our grim past, forgive others and forget, join hands in a new amity, and together as Zimbabweans, trample upon racialism, tribalism and regionalism, and work hard to reconstruct and rehabilitate our society as we invigorate our economic machinery"

Drawing from the public speeches delivered by the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Cde R.G. Mugabe, on the eve of Independence, it has become evident that peace and stability is not a one-man's effort but can be achieved with the collective effort and determination of the different members of the community. The then Prime Minister, Cde Mugabe conveyed a strong message on the importance of peace and unity guided by the fundamental principle of safe guarding national interests and not mere party considerations. He envisaged a coalition which was anchored by the interests of reconciliation for the achievement of peace and mutual understanding among the Zimbabwean people. As such, the coming of independence was not an opportunity to oppress the whites but rather to foster respect for each other bearing that "an evil remains an evil whether practiced by white against black or by black against white". Notably, this journey to peace and reconciliation was not a political journey but also involved international and Zimbabwean musicians such as Bob Marley, Cde. Dick 'Chinx' Chingaira and Thomas 'Mukanya' Mapfumo. For in his song entitled 'Zimbabwe', Bob Marley brought up themes of peace, unity and equality. In some of his lines he sang;

No more internal power struggle; To divide and rule could only tear us apart; In everyman chest, mm-there beats a heart:

However, soon after that pronouncement the new government was confronted by conflict between the two major political parties, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF ZAPU). This was a period dominated by Cold war where major continental powers in Europe had so much influence on the affairs of the once colonized states in Africa by a way of sponsoring social unrest. The Apartheid South Africa together with the defeated Smith regime attempted to infiltrate the Zimbabwean peace that resulted in a number of political disturbances in Matebeleland and Midlands in Zimbabwe. However, the 1987 Peace Accord was signed between these two political parties to level political differences and promotes peace and social

cohesion although the Accord did not address the process of healing and reconciliation. The period between 2000 and 2008 was marked by political violence between the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) now MDC-T and the ZANU PF. The 2008 Global Political Agreement earmarked the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009 between Movement Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai, the Movement for Democratic Change led by Welshmen Ncube and the ZANU PF. The GNU created a platform for the deliberation of peace, reconciliation, nation building and national healing through the Organ of National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI). Article VII of the GPA provides for the creation of an environment in which the ideals of equality, national healing and unity can prevail. As an organ of the GNU the ONHRI had the mandate to advise on measures that might be necessary and practicable to achieve national healing, cohesion and unity. Artists continued to take a central role in the articulation of peace, reconciliation and development where theatre productions from Savannah Trust, Rooftop Promotions, Heal Zimbabwe Trust and other arts organisations were developed to promote peacebuilding, national healing and integration.

It is therefore important to acknowledge the role played by the arts in driving the agenda for peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe. The Arts and culture sector continue to play a prominent role in promoting peace, reconciliation and nation building beyond the independence period. From the findings, arts of different types such as music, theatre, poetry, visual arts, and craft among others have been harnessed to promote a common understanding in different communities in Zimbabwe. The national monuments and museums have remained symbols of social cohesion and unity. The study revealed the significant role these cultural heritage sites can play in upholding the social fabric of society in unity and promote values through a nation modeled on the principles of co-existence during and after conflict. The Arts and culture are as old as human existence and in that respect they continue to be relevant in strengthening human relations and people's way of life.

The general encouragement from the arts and culture industry made remarkable impact in pushing for liberation from the white colonial settlers. Artists in the cultural heritage, performing and multimedia arts made reference to songs such as *watch out the storm is coming, calling your name in the dark, lizofika lini ilanga le nkululeko* and the musical works of Susan Chenjerai as some of the musical pieces that challenged the status quo in Zimbabwe during the 1950s and 1970s onwards. In this period, the Zimbabwean people took no weapons but resorted to a non-confrontational method of resistance through music, poems and art. Poems such as *Zvababa Ngirande* which was recorded by Hugh Tracey and *Hakurarwi (Chirikure Chirikure)* are some of the powerful works that directly sought to address issues peacefully in a non-confrontational approach.

In view of this transformative capacity of the arts and culture in fostering positive social relationships, nation building and development, this study focuses on the positive role they play in promoting peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe. The findings are critical as they form part of a response by the Government of National Unity when it established the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) whose

purpose and aim was to establish a mechanism for national healing, social cohesion and unity. As such, the findings become relevant to the current social context as they lay a foundation of operationalising the activities of the National Peace, and Reconciliation Commission as they will contribute positively to the mandate of this commission of creating a society characterized by mutual respect, tolerance and development.

❖ PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to explore the transformative power of arts and culture in creating social cohesion and creating a resilient social fabric through conflict resolution mechanisms. The research documented the different roles that arts and culture play in the promotion of peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe and contribute to the transition from the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration into a commission within the structures of the Government of Zimbabwe. The findings will be shared with the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission for the purpose of contributing to the development of a national framework for peacebuilding, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe.

❖ OBJECTIVES

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Examine the conceptualisation and messaging of peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in the arts and cultural industries in Zimbabwe.
- ii. Examine the contribution of arts and culture in the mandate of the NPRC to ensure post-conflict justice, healing and reconciliation through development and implementation of programmes that promote national healing and cohesion in Zimbabwe.
- iii. Establish mechanisms and strategies of mainstreaming arts and culture in the NPRC structure to develop procedures at national level to facilitate dialogue among political parties, communities and other groups in order to prevent conflicts.
- iv. Use findings to influence policy interventions and build synergies between arts and culture and enhance the role played by arts and culture in promoting peace, reconciliation and build resilient communities in Zimbabwe.

❖ CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the role of arts and culture in the promotion of peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe?

❖ SUPPORTING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. How are peace, reconciliation and social cohesion conceptualised and packaged in the arts and cultural industries on Zimbabwe?
- ii. How do arts and culture contribute to the mandate of the NPRC?
- iii. What mechanisms and strategies can be used to mainstream arts and culture in the NPRC?



SECTION TWO: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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❖ INTRODUCTION

Evidence from global scholars has pointed to arts and culture as mediums of communication for both social and political dialogues. Music, visual and fine arts and dance, among other artistic and cultural practices have been used to as conflict prevention and management tools. These functions have not been limited to political spheres but have been also functional at community and family levels. Over the past years, Africa has been gradually abandoning its traditional knowledge systems for the Western solutions that have however inadequately addressed the nature of conflicts experienced by the African people. Although depreciated, culture with all its components such as language, food, values and norms play a significant role in building identities for social cohesion, national healing and reconciliation.

❖ THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by Shank's arts-based peacebuilding model that demonstrates how arts can be harnessed to build peace and reconciliation in three different stages of conflict that is before, during and after the conflict (Shank, 2005).

This theory provides a comprehensive framework through which conflict can be handled, transformed and sometimes prevented using the arts and culture. The theory resonates with the aim of this study that seeks to explore the possibilities of using arts and culture in promoting peace and reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe. As such the theoretical framework is relevant for this particular study based on the following understanding;

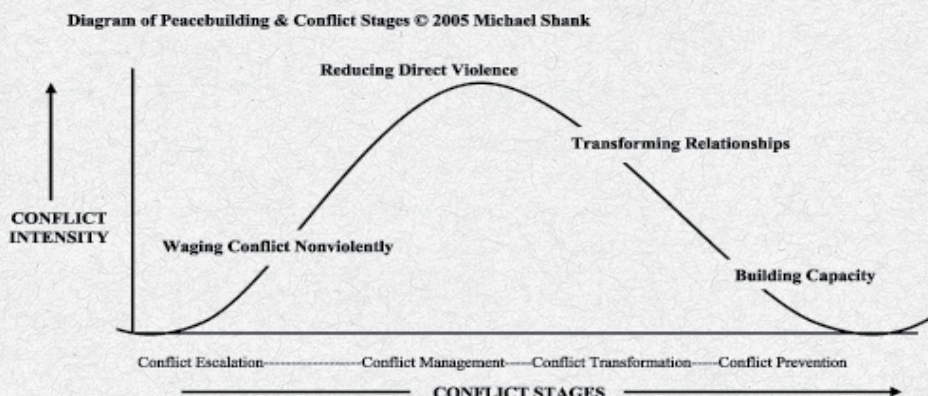


Diagram of Strategic Arts-based Peacebuilding © 2005 Michael Shank

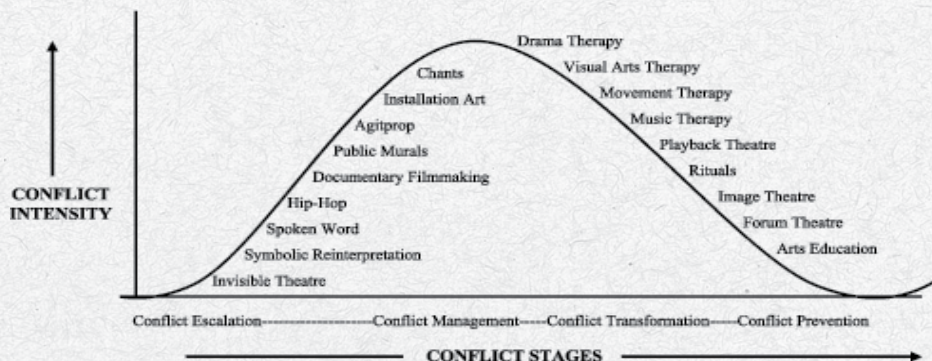


Figure 1&2 Peacebuilding and conflict stages & strategic arts-based peacebuilding Adopted from Shank (2005)

The two figures above show stages of conflict and peacebuilding, and the arts based strategies that can be adopted in peacebuilding and reconciliation at different stages of the conflict. This framework is suitable for this particular study because it takes a holistic approach in the analysis of the role of arts in peacebuilding from the point of conflict escalation through the stages of conflict transformation and management up to conflict prevention.

However, this model assumes a positive function where arts and culture promote peace, overlooking their negative function as causes of conflict. There is therefore need for a new way of thinking that explains the possible solutions for peace. The model also fails to consider its applicability in various African contexts in which spiritual and cultural knowledge play a crucial role in shaping people's lives and identities. Hence, indigenous knowledge as a conceptual framework was adopted to cater for such inequities in explaining complex subject matter that Shank's model of strategic arts and peacebuilding fails to address.

❖ INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Indigenous knowledge (IK) take into account the various practices, beliefs, local solution to community problems and the different assets (human, social, capital, natural and physical) that transform human relations and enhance co-existence and progress. In this view, IK are central in this study for they suit well the subject of peace, reconciliation and social cohesion using culture and the arts. As noted earlier in this study, Matsika (2012) pointed out that, 'the traditional and local knowledge exists and is developed through the experiences of the local community in the process of managing the

conditions or context that challenge the people's everyday life'. He further highlighted six characteristics that encompass indigenous know that are as follows:

Matsika (2012) proposes a home grown form of knowledge that speaks to philosophical understanding of life in Africa such as Ubuntu, which is part and parcel of community owned cultural practices that mirror the political economy of existence and being. In his view, IKs are those pieces and artifacts knit together by everyday life experiences but not documented. They are tacit knowledge that can be shared and passed on to other generations through oral history. The relevance of IKs is there applicability in solving problems that confront communities and individuals. They resonate well with the theory of change and they possess an adaptive capacity to problems prevailing at a particular moment. This qualifies them to be a multidimensional knowledge system that deals with problems which may disrupt social relationships and restore them.

Therefore, IK are an integral part of the community life that provides local solutions for local problems. Culture and the arts are locally owned and provide the answers to deal with the problems that affect society at community level.

❖ UNPACKING THE PEACE CONCEPT

The concept of peace gained popularity in development and international relations in the 20th century after the World War 2 and it is conceptualised differently and its meaning is varied in each context. However, Galtung (1964) provided the basis through which peace is both understood and conceptualised. In its narrow sense, peace suggests harmony, lack of war, absence of war and living together. This is a limited view and Galtung further argued that peace does not only mean the absence of war and brought about two important aspects that entail peace called positive and negative peace. Thus negative peace is the absence of war, absence of violence while other covert forms of conflict exist. In sharp contrast positive peace conjures a state of integration of human society that celebrates diversity while enjoying sustainable unity and cohesion (Galtung, 1964). These peace interpretations remain dominant among hegemonic western understandings of the world order and hence the non-western conceptualisations of peace that reflect upon cultural values are paramount to achieving national unity, peace, social cohesion and integration. Therefore, this study also recognises such philosophical thinking that includes togetherness, vitalism and coexistence as the basis for peace.

❖ CONCEPTUALIZING RECONCILIATION

The concept of reconciliation is complex thus no single academic definition can adequately capture all the nuances. Reconciliation encapsulates several definitions, meanings and principles that include justice and truth that are deemed necessary for sustainable peace. There is however consensus over the need for reconciliation if durable peace is to prevail. The most complicated task around this social trend is measuring it within communities and this emerges from the multitude of variables and definitions around the concept. In theory, the debate around whether reconciliation is a process or an outcome rages on between theorists and practitioners. While, Gibson (2004) asserts that rigorous and systematic social science methods can be used to measure and assess reconciliation, Astutz (2006) maintains that evaluations of reconciliation should quantify the scope, breadth, depth and intensity of divisions in society.

In the context of this study, reconciliation will be understood as a process through which mutual understanding and harmony is established between former enemies or antagonistic parties. This process mends once broken relationships and restores more cooperative and harmonious relationships that foster enduring peace. Reconciliation is viewed as an absolute necessity as it guarantees that the violence that happened in the past will never occur again and that victims and perpetrators of conflict and violence have to be at the center of reconciliation and healing activities.

❖ CULTURE AND THE ARTS: AFRICAN WORLDVIEW

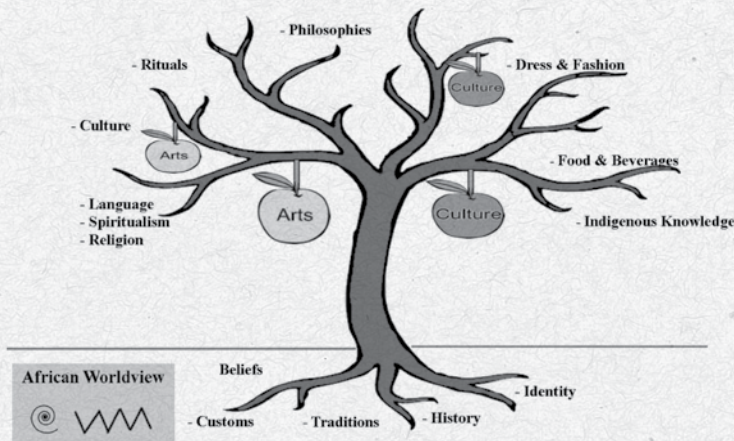


Figure 2 African Worldview

The understanding of culture in Africa is rooted from the African worldview that recognises the interrelationships between the belief systems, customs, traditions, history, and identity to form the foundation of cultural heritage. Amisi (2008) contends that the African worldview is a philosophical understanding of life and humanity shaped around customs, belief systems, history and identity and these are expressed in the culture of a people, philosophies, religion, rituals, language, food, dress, beverages and indigenous knowledge. These features of African culture influence the African spirituality and cosmology which shape how the African people understand life (Mbiti, 1969; Magesa, 1997). The African worldview is a central philosophical underpinning that views life as a dispensation between humanity and the spiritual world. Spirituality in the African worldview provides the value system engrained in the religion. It comes out especially through the convictions of prayers, invocations, rituals, offerings and sacrifices. This also shows a close relationship between the person, the community and spiritualism where the value system cultivates the area of the person that is well communicated with his or her environment. The Africa worldview produces fruits that continue to feed human through culture and the arts which are used as an adhesive that glue the social fabric. These fruits manifest in the form of the cultural heritage, visual arts, performing arts, literary arts and film, audio and multimedia arts. However, these fruits that manifest in the form of arts and culture can be good or bad, and hence their usage can be positive, that is when they promote development, unity, social cohesion, peacebuilding, reconciliation and national healing.

❖ PEACE THROUGH CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Art and culture can be useful effective sources of peace that offer tools and mechanisms which promote locally owned activities for peacebuilding, reconciliation and conflict prevention. The use of various forms of creative art and cultural activities such as drama, visual arts, dance, music, poetry, rituals and traditional institutions of elders, chieftaincy, mediators and village assemblies is not new to the field of peace and conflict. Instead, they date back to the 19th century during the world wars. In Germany, Nepal and Kosovo where civic resistance remained non-violent for 10 years music did not only mobilize citizens but was a uniting factor that built strong solidarity among citizens. Music was also used to clarify and disseminate ideological messages (Corte & Edwards, 2008) as was seen during the 10 years of non-violent civic resistance in Kosovo which used music videos to mobilise people (Clark, 2000). This has manifested in a multitude of African cultural reflections at very local levels within African communities where cultural components such as language and common belief systems continue to create spaces for unity and social cohesion.

The African cultural context perceives both men and women as mediators, preemptors of violence and having the capacity to restore peace and relationships and this is reflected in the practices and gender roles allocated to them. In addition, culture contributes to traditional networks which ensure full participation and involvement of every individual affected by conflict as well as those who can positively contribute to its resolution. One such example is the 'dare' concept used in Zimbabwe which provides a forum where issues are discussed and resolved in a manner that conserves relationships; mutual understanding and promotes social cohesion.

Notably, culture gives special emphasis to conflict prevention through traditional institutions of village assemblies, mediators, folk telling and rituals. It is within locally governed institutions that a sense of belonging, togetherness and social responsibility to protect a brother's back is instilled and nurtured. As Fukushima points out, culture contributes to peace through building peace in the hearts and minds of local people by building tolerance, mutual understanding, trust and confidence (Fukushima, n.d). The findings of this study affirmed this viewpoint through the directors of the national museums and Chimuka Arts and Crafts, when they stressed that through language, culture builds a sense of belonging which promotes togetherness, tolerance and social cohesion. Language, as the findings revealed can also be a strong divider especially on the basis of tribal differences in Zimbabwe, but in many instances language has influenced artists in the music industry to collaborate and sing in two or more languages as a strategy of packaging their music in ways that appeal to a wide audience. Such activities create help in creating platforms of associations aimed at influencing behavior through dialogue and construction of common identities.

Drawing from several writings by African story tellers such as Chinua Achebe, Ignatius Mabasa, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Yvonne Vera, visual arts, music and several aspects of culture have played a critical role in promoting peace. This is also notable in the cultural industries in which pottery, traditional foods, language and belief systems continue to bind people in a number of ways. Cultural components continue to instill a sense of community and togetherness and this has also influenced the Zimbabwean people to hold on to their values

and beliefs which are grounded in the philosophy of '*Ubuntu*' or '*hunhu*'. The *Ubuntu* philosophy drives a multitude of commonly accepted behaviors and social conduct such as dressing which greatly influence the worldviews including those of the Zimbabwean people. As such, all arts and culture in all its disciplines help smoothen and strengthen the social fabric which ties people together as well as cultivating social cohesion through music, arts, language, values and commonly shared life principles. This was also revealed in an interview with a Shona novelist cum poet who highlighted that within our cultural belief system, individuals such as aunts and uncles are believed to be pillars of support in people's lives. In times of family disagreements be it between father and son, mother and daughter, husband and wife or any other related individuals they often play intermediary roles for the purposes of tying fractured relationships.

Culture does not only identify sources of conflict but it also provides effective solutions as it determines how conflict and its resolution are perceived by different groups (Avruch, 1998). The manner in which conflict is resolved is largely determined by how it is perceived, thus, the importance of mainstreaming cultural mechanisms and approaches in promoting peace and reconciliation remain imperative. For instance, particular cultural aspects such as traditional institutions, rituals and shared philosophies such as *ubuntu* help establish relations that unite people on the basis of how they perceive life thereby lowering the chances of conflict among them. As alluded to earlier on, the African philosophy of *ubuntu* signifies that, *one is not but instead becomes because of those around him/her* thus speaking of togetherness and mutual understanding. That is where traditional institutions of chieftaincy, village elders, spiritualists and mediators guided by cultural values and norms become entry points as facilitators who monitor and nurture relations between people.

Rituals are also an important aspect embedded in culture that plays a critical role in conflict prevention and reconciliation following disharmony or any form of misunderstanding. In conflict prevention processes, ritual practices that are observed across many African cultures are observed at the birth of a baby, marriage and death ceremonies. Many of these rituals that have been designed as an African solution to African problems provide a spiritual dimension as conflict prevention and reconciliation mechanisms for the smooth running of the day to day lives of communities.

Having discussed the important role of culture in promoting peace and reconciliation we also realize that culture like identity has been criticized on the argument that it is negotiable in the sense that people of different cultural backgrounds tend to bring their cultural beliefs and thinking onto the negotiation table. However, other cultural elements such as language and perceptions about women sometimes make peace and reconciliation processes difficult or slow. Maddux, Kim, Okumura and Brett (2011) agree with Brett (2000) who criticized culture for negatively affecting negotiation processes and outcomes owing to the differences in how meanings and functions of apologies are interpreted by different cultural groups. Likewise, some art paintings, monuments and statues can be so provocative that they incubate bitterness, anger and seeds of conflict rather than peace, healing and reconciliation. For instance, the question of ownership of the Great Zimbabwe and the criteria of who qualifies to be buried at National Heroes Acre remains a bone of contention

among the people of Zimbabwe. This is also true with the freedom fighters' statues which have raised questions over the contribution of female fighters during the liberation struggle. As Avruch (1998) also argued, cultural aspects do not only establish relations for unity but if not appropriately used or interpreted they can be sites of power struggle. There is therefore need for greater sensitivity in raising awareness about how power and power relations can stand as lubricants to processes of conflict prevention through negotiation. This is where arts and culture can play critical roles in creating platforms for dialogue and support traditional institutions in fostering a sense of unity and solidarity.

❖ CULTURE AND THE ARTS DURING CONFLICT: A PEACEBUILDING APPROACH

During conflicts society is largely torn apart and social relationships are injured while crime and disorder reverse the gains of development of any nation. This is the period where guns and bombs speak louder than any other means to bring about peace but arts and culture have a significant role in singing the tune of peace and reconciliation through a number of mechanisms. These include but not limited to mobilisation, non verbal defiance, non verbal expression, humanising the enemy, reclaiming civic spaces and honoring the dead and transforming protracted political processes to more positive outcomes for peace and harmony (Mani in Mani & Weiss, 2011).

Arts through therapeutic music, drama, poetry and other forms of writing have been used to mobilise the masses to rise against oppression, violent conflicts and social injustices (Mani, 2011). Many academics, policymakers and experts in peace and conflict over the years assumed that during the conflict, arts and culture especially the theatre assumes a state of silence and yet, a lot takes place behind the scenes (Thompson in Salzburg Global Seminar Report, 2014: 9). Equally important to note, in Zimbabwe, *magandanga* (freedom fighters) used *pungwes* night gatherings (night vigils) that involved singing, dancing and composing of war songs in vernacular to insult the Rhodesians and mobilise the youth to join the war (Vava, 2014). This therapeutic music that *magandanga* used to sing and the dancing at night vigils provided emotional, psychological and social healing. Similarly, cultural and arts based approaches were employed in Bosnia-Herzegovina where non-governmental organisations and artists for peace held music festivals and theatre performances both at grassroots and elite levels to protest against conflict (Zelizer, 2003:1). For example, a music group in Bosnia called Seydah Café used arts through music to reconcile with the enemy.

The South African acapella was used during the apartheid regime by ghetto and inner-city inhabitants to fight oppression and other forms of dance called *toyi-toyi* in Zimbabwe, the *pungwes* during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, *mapuntsula*, *isicatamiya* and *gumboot* in South Africa were very instrumental in mobilising the masses to join hands and fight the settler colonial regimes (Mani, 2011: 109; Vava, 2014: 3). Even in the independent Zimbabwe, arts and culture has been critical tools that continue to sustain social cohesion among people of all ages. Through arts and culture festivals such as the Harare International Arts festival, the Chimanimani Arts festival and the Intwasa Arts Festival koBulawayo, all disciplines of arts and culture drive agendas of peace, social cohesion, mutual understanding and tolerance.

Among a number of themes celebrated by the Chimanimani Arts Festivals since its establishment in 1998 are concepts of oneness, love and peace. Both the Chimanimani Arts festival and the Intwasa Festival are commemorated in August and September respectively each year with the purpose of showcasing diverse African aesthetics and cultural expressions intended to promote cultural heritage and empowerment of youth, women and children. Much of the work that takes place at these festivals is impressive for its aesthetic quality as well as its socio-political efficacy. Dance for example is a key component of many cultures and traditional dance activities can present a more relevant choice of activity for individuals in particular communities. Such ceremonies do not only create opportunities for tangible and non-tangible cultural expressions but have the significance of developing and strengthening of identities and social participation among Zimbabweans. Therefore, arts and culture play a significant role in transforming communities and foster peace and reconciliation using people centered initiatives.

Arts and culture are very instrumental during conflicts and they offer non-verbal defiance and non-verbal expression of despair and hope in any conflict context. According to Gordon (2004) arts and culture were used in Palestine and Israel where art, visual and performance art played critical roles in protesting against continued oppression and offered solidarity amongst victims of oppression. Graffiti is one mechanism that was used in East Timor and Palestine as a non-verbal defiance and women of Quechua in Peru used arpilleras as non-verbal expression of despair and hope during civil war (Mani & Weiss, 2011). Arpilleras and quilts have been a means of artistic expression by women worldwide to depict the horrors and atrocities of human rights abuses. Sewing, embroidering, appliquéing and stitching, women explore the effects of armed conflict, suppression, vulnerability, violence and trauma, among other ordeals in their daily lives (Bacic, Sanfeliu & Ray, 2008). For example, in Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Thailand, Laos, Burma and Vietnam, oppressed people used silk and cotton to narrate their stories of life and survival under great duress (Zetlin, 2005). Arts and culture are easy to harness in peacebuilding and reconciliation as they use the available resources and initiatives to resolve and prevent conflicts.

The role of arts and culture in peacebuilding and reconciliation is imperative at all conflict stages. Arts and culture are instrumental tools for nation building and healing of broken relationships (Mauwa, 2013). An important part of arts and culture is music which was widely used as a vehicle for promoting peace in Zimbabwe. For example, musicians were invited by NGOs to perform at road shows during the election period to cultivate a culture of peace, tolerance and co-existence. In addition, the government of Zimbabwe uses music to promote peace, memorialize the fallen heroes of the liberation struggle and build social cohesion through galas to foster peace and reconciliation. Such music galas have been used to commemorate the Unity Accord of 1987 between Zimbabwe African National People's Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union-Patriotic Front (ZAPU-PF) (Vava, 2014; Mauwa, 2013). Furthermore, music galas are used to commemorate the death of persons like the Late Vice President Joshua Nkomo. These music galas are important for promoting social cohesion by a way of memorialisation of the past that builds on the

shared history. The talented and assembly of musicians from diverse backgrounds convey a convincing and memorable message of unity in diversity.

Zimbabwe has a good starting point of a shared liberation history and a national monument (shrine) such as the National Heroes Acre which presents a symbol of collective memory and remembering through which peace and reconciliation can be fostered. By using the national shrine as a forum for collective remembering of fallen heroes, it therefore suffices that cultural heritage still plays a prominent role of promoting social cohesion and nation building in Zimbabwe. Cultural sites and national monuments allow people to build their belief systems, shape cultural values that allow them to deal with problems confronting them. For an instance, national monuments such as the Great Zimbabwe are used as cultural sites that are of tourist attraction and can be used to shape the values that can build the nation's identity as well as boosting the economy of the country. In addition, Nigeria uses the cultural heritage to promote unity and integration. Amongst the things used to promote these are cultural foods, rainforests, mountains, rivers and deserts (Okafor, 2014). It is important to point out that cultural sites can be a good platform to carry out cultural festivals that promote social unity and cohesion. The current International Carnival festivals are one cultural festival that can be fostered towards nation building and integration in Zimbabwe. From this end, it is plausible that cultural heritage plays a significant role in promoting nation building and social cohesion.

❖ THE ARTS AND NATIONAL HEALING

Arts play a very critical role in national healing more than what any political strategy or process can do given that conflict which manifests in violence is often accompanied by human rights abuses, pain, and trauma, loss of memory, internal displacement and loss of identity. One of the means of promoting national healing as a way of resolving such violations and atrocities associated with conflict and violence is through arts. Healing has been defined in peace and conflict discourse as a deliberate attempt to address the root cause of physical, emotional and traumatic experiences with a broader aim of restoring, rediscovering of society through acknowledgement of the traumatic past (Mark, 2007; Amadiume and Naim, 2000).

Scholars such as Galtung (2001) define reconciliation as a process of truth telling and healing while Hamber (2003) is of the opinion that healing should be personal but with the respect of the socio-political context that affects the individual. Healing involves the process of venting out the frustrations, depressions and the pain of the past hence it is closely related to the broader understanding of transitional justice. National healing in this context can therefore be viewed as a process through which past human violations are addressed through dialogue, truth telling, forgiveness, remembering and memorialising (Machakanja, 2010; Mbire, 2011; Hamber, 2003; Amadiume & Naim, 2000).

Arts and culture have been applauded as effective mechanisms of enhancing peace, reconciliation, national healing and unity. The conviction for peace, unity and national healing can be best approached using theatre, festivals, drama, apilleras, graffiti and dance

among others. Examples where art was used to facilitate healing include Libya after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi regime in 2012. Arts and graffiti were used to express emotional expressions by individuals and some graffiti were written in support of the new government with statements such as “Libya is my heart” (Poort, 2011). Rwanda used dance festivals and the film industry to promote national healing, peace and re-integration into the socio-economic and political spheres while South Africa employed plastic dress of Ndwandwe and other cultural dresses to promote dialogue and truth telling (Zyl, 1999; Rwanda Film Festival, 2014). All these examples amplify the importance of arts and culture in national healing, reconciliation, social cohesion and nation building.

In the context of Zimbabwe, arts in all its forms continue to play a restorative and healing role in rebuilding divided communities. This research revealed that there is a long history for example, of painting and drawing in the heritage of Zimbabwe, where through national exhibitions different groups including school children, professional and reputable local and international artists exhibit their work side by side. Such symposia where all contributors have a voice enable participants and viewers of the public alike to leave with a collective message by understanding each other's point of view and inspire inner feelings of hope and reconciliation. The research has also revealed that artists in Zimbabwe are working towards extensive use of arts to facilitate and drive national healing through poems, sculpture and music. During interviews, poets, sculptors, musicians and those working in the film industry shared their commitment to promote the national healing agenda because of their ability to reach out to a wide audience. Two filmmakers for example, indicated that the film industry has the capacity to present views of the grievéd, thereby opening up avenues for truth telling, forgiveness, national healing and eventually nation building through their work. As such, film and cinema can be compelling means of carrying messages of peace with their ability to reach wide audiences.

❖ CREATION OF INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONS TO SUPPORT PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

In May 2013 Zimbabwe as a nation adopted a new constitution. The constitution is a legally binding document for all persons including the State, executive, legislature and judiciary and agencies. In line with Chapter 12 Section 235 of the new Constitution signed into law on 22 May 2013, the government mandated the setting up of six Independent Commissions in order to support democracy and ensure a culture of peace, democracy, and justice and service delivery. These independent commissions include the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, the Zimbabwe Media Commission, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. The commissions whose objectives are the same include:

- a) Supporting and entrenching human rights and democracy;
- b) Protecting the sovereign and interests of the people;
- c) Promoting constitutionalism;

- d) Promoting transparency and accountability in public institutions;
- e) Securing the observance of democratic values and principles by the State and all institutions and agencies of government, and government-controlled entities; and
- f) Ensuring that injustices are remedied.

These common objectives are meant to set a foundation of values and framework that guide the operational independence of each commission for the achievement and strengthening of people's rights, peace and democratic values. Of interest in this study the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC).

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION

In line with the aspirations of the Constitution, members of the Commission must not belong to any political party. Members of the Commission are nominated by the public and their names are submitted to the Parliamentary Committee on Standing Rules and Orders. The Committee of Standing Rules and Orders conduct public interviews and a list of more than 12 names of those found to be appointable is submitted to the President from which the appointments are made. The Presidents appoints eight members of the Commission from the list submitted. The criteria for selecting members of the Commission are based on their integrity and knowledge and understanding of, and experience in mediation, conciliation, conflict prevention and management, post-conflict reconciliation or peacebuilding. As Commissioners are expected to be apolitical issues of impartiality, commitment to human rights, and peace with justice, confidentiality and disclosure of truth become imperative. Parliament must ensure that the Commission has enough resources to enable it to exercise its functions in efficient, transparent and accountable ways. The Chairperson of the NPRC is appointed by the President in consultation with the Judicial Services Committee and the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders. He /She must be a qualified legal practitioner and must have practiced for at least seven years. For the Commission to be seen as truly representative, credible and legitimate it has to take into account issues of gender balance and the inclusion of all sectors of the Zimbabwean society irrespective of sex, ethnicity, religion and other components of diversity. Also for the Commission to be effective it has to work in close collaboration with all the other Commissions because issues of good governance, elections, the promotion of human rights, gender justice, and the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable peace, social cohesion and development are inextricably intertwined.

The Constitution stipulates that the life span of the Commission shall be ten years counting from 22 August 2013 when the Constitution became fully operational and when the President was sworn into office under the new Constitution.

❖ MAIN FUNCTIONS OF THE NATIONAL PEACE AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

The main functions of NPRC can be summarized as:

- ❖ Develop comprehensive and inclusive programmes for implementation that promote national healing, unity and social cohesion, and peaceful resolution of disputes in Zimbabwe;
- ❖ Ensure the promotion of post-conflict justice, healing and reconciliation;
- ❖ Bring about national reconciliation by encouraging people to tell the truth about the past and facilitating the mending of broken relationships for peaceful co-existence;
- ❖ Develop procedures and institutions at national levels to facilitate dialogue among political parties, communities, organisations and other groups, in order to prevent conflicts and disputes arising in the future;
- ❖ Develop programmes to ensure that person subjected to persecution, torture and other forms of abuse receive rehabilitative treatment and support;
- ❖ Conciliate and mediate disputes among communities, organisations, groups and individuals through dissemination of knowledge and information for public awareness about its work;
- ❖ Develop mechanisms for early detection of areas of potential conflict and disputes, and to take appropriate preventive measures;
- ❖ Recommend legislation to ensure that assistance, including documentation, is rendered to persons affected by conflicts, pandemics or other circumstances; and receive and take action on complaints from the public.



SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY

SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY

The study employed qualitative research design and methods of gathering data and analysis. The study sought interviews from participants in the arts and culture industries and categorized them into clusters for easy management of data. Purposive sampling and snowballing techniques were used to collect data from sample groups. Data was also collected during the Arts Indaba that featured key actors in the arts and culture industry. In designing the methodological framework of targeted participants, the study sub-divided the arts and culture industry into the following five categories:

- a) **Performing artists:** this category comprised musicians, theatre groups, art festival coordinators, traditional music dancers, poets and those who do stage performances.
- b) **Literary arts:** those identified in this category include novelists, story writers and script writers.
- c) **Fine arts:** in this category interviews were sought from artists involved in creative works such as batik, sun dye, wood art and craft, bone crafts, beads and leather craft, recycled crafts and dried flowers comprised this category.
- d) **Film, audio, visual and multimedia:** this category comprised film makers and photographers.
- e) **Cultural heritage:** this category refers to the legacy of tangible artifacts or intangible attributes of society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and are usually bestowed for future generations. Comprises historical monuments and artists who make traditional artifacts such as music instruments such as mbira and drums, and producers of traditional foods.
- f) **Cultural industries:** also referred to as creative industries combine the creation, production and distribution of goods and services that are cultural in nature and are protected by intellectual property because of their economic value. They include all the creative products and services that are concerned with generation of knowledge and information and the range of economic activities add value to the content and generate economic value for individuals and societies through employment creation and wealth.

❖ METHODS

Qualitative research methods were employed in this study through face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Participants were drawn from three provinces namely Bulawayo (Matebeleland), Manicaland (Mutare) and Harare. In Bulawayo data was collected from participants who attended the annual Arts Indaba event that saw the creation of the Zimbabwe Chamber of Creative Industries (ZCCI) in the year 2014. Face-to-face interviews were used to solicit information from artists in all the categories while key informant interviews were held with leader players in the arts and culture industry, whose positions allowed them to candidly provide more in-depth information on some sensitive issues. Interviews with visual and fine artists and filmmakers opened the research to groups that comprised artists who gave their views about the interpretation of peace, reconciliation and social cohesion issues in the context of

their work.

The interviews were conducted with respect to the five clusters namely:

- 1) **performing artists**; this category comprised musicians, theatre groups, art festival coordinators, traditional music dancers, poets and those who do stage performances;
- 2) **literary arts** comprising those novelists, story writers and script writers;
- 3) **fine arts** comprising artists involved in creative works such as batik, sun dye, wood art and craft, bone crafts, beads and leather craft, recycled crafts and dried flowers comprised this category;
- 4) **film, audio, visual and multimedia**: category comprised film makers and photographers and
- 5) **cultural heritage and industries** category comprised artists who make traditional music instruments such as mbira and drums, spirit mediums, and producers of traditional foods.

❖ DATA SOURCES

Data was solicited from artists from three provinces, that is, Manicaland, Harare and Bulawayo. A total of seventy-five (86) artists participated in the study. Fifty-one (60) participants across the five (5) arts and culture categories participated in the face-to-face and (8) key informant interviews while twenty-four (24) artists participated in focus group discussions. Thirty (39) face to face and twenty-one (21) key informant interviews were conducted in which twelve (18) participants were pulled from the performing arts category, five (5) from literary arts, eleven (11) visual and fine artists, six (6) filmmakers and eighteen (18) from intangible cultural heritage and cultural industries. Three (3) focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with performing artists comprising filmmakers and visual artists in Harare and Mutare. Each group comprised an average of 8 people. Apart from the primary data collected from interviews, the study also used secondary sources such as films, novels and books to review the use of arts and culture approaches in peacebuilding.



SECTION FOUR: FINDINGS

SECTION FOUR: FINDINGS

Research findings revealed that arts and culture in any context play a significant role in promoting peace, reconciliation and social cohesion. This study was conducted against the need to explore the functions of arts and culture in promoting peace, reconciliation with the bigger vision of creating resilient and strong communities in Zimbabwe. The study focused on the arts and culture from the creative industries that are more from a commercial side. However, for easy management of the data, arts and culture were categorised into sectors as indicated by below.

Sector	Description
Performing arts	Traditional dancers, theatre group performers, stage performers
Film	Film writers, film makers, photographers, film producers
Literary arts	Script writers, novelists, book authors, poet writers, story tellers,
Visual and fine arts	Sculptors, craftsmen and craftswomen (wood, leather, dried grass, batik bone, recycled household waste)
Music	Musicians
Cultural Heritage	National museums, National monuments, Spirit mediums
Cultural industries	Pakare Paye, mbira makers, Chimuka Arts and Craft
Institutions that support Arts	NGOs, Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture

❖ LINKAGES BETWEEN CULTURE AND THE ARTS

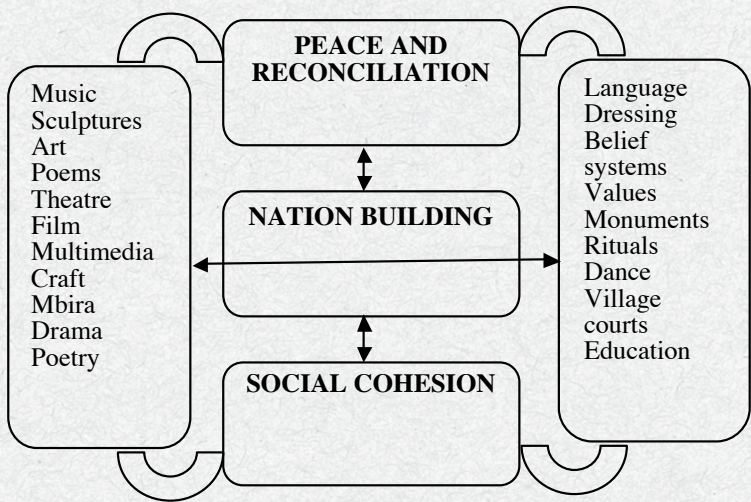


Figure 3: Connectivity between arts and culture

Arts and culture are an inseparable combination which, if well utilized have the potential to drive national healing, development and contribute to the building of a peaceful nation. Arts with all its components has proved to be a transmission tool through which cultural values, beliefs, dressing and language are expressed for the purposes of promoting peace and social cohesion in Zimbabwe. Speaking in an interview, a scriptwriter, actor and manager at Pakare Paye pointed to Oliver Mutukudzi as an example of a music ambassador who has undoubtedly packaged peace, reconciliation and social cohesion themes into his music throughout his music career. Noticeably, songs such as *Ngoromera*, *Rurimi*, *Tsika nditsikewo* and *Chinhambwe*, are among several social commentaries by the musician who also speaks of nation building, reconciliation and social cohesion through his music. Mutukudzi's music it was revealed continue to drive themes that promote forgiveness, reconciliation and mutual understanding among the Zimbabwean people. Likewise, culture also drives national healing and nation building by facilitating tolerance, mutual understanding and forgiveness through components such as language, rituals and beliefs that form the basis of uniting philosophies such as unhu which inform human behavior. This was also noted by a spirit medium who informed this study that through culture, Zimbabwe needs to rebuild the currently fractured value system that should guide our thinking and national vision as a people. Drawing from the social learning theory, learning through culture and socialization is also expressed through arts such as poetry and drama. Unique to this connectivity is that all components of arts and culture can be filtered through formal or informal education and still achieve peace, reconciliation, nation building and social cohesion.

❖ CONCEPTUALISATION OF PEACE, RECONCILIATION, HEALING AND SOCIAL COHESION

Peace is understood differently by the actors in the arts and cultural industries in Zimbabwe. Conceptualisation of peace ranges from peace as harmony, understanding, and living together without fighting to doing activities together while recognizing individual and group differences. One participant from Revival arts defined peace as:

"an element of togetherness, understanding of community – being one nation where we do things together, I mean putting away differences. Peace is also understanding since vanhu vanenge vachiwirirana pakuita kunyange mafungiro akasiyana (people have differences in the way they think), but then we-do-it-together is very important (Key Informant Interview 2/ 29.11.2014).

According to some participants peace is togetherness, understanding and doing things without reference to differences. A different interpretation of what constitutes peace emanated from one cultural industries artist and musician who pointed out that art is the beginning of peace and peace in itself is art. Another different interpretation of peace from a non-governmental organization participant showed that peace is all about economic freedom, political tolerance and ability to talk about problems affecting a person or community and engaging in dialogue to deal with everyday problems. A filmmaker from Harare described peace as a collective agenda, *“Peace means working together in spite of differences, integration of the people and communities, you can’t do peace alone”* This means that peace and reconciliation is a collective bargaining and not a zero sum game. A focus group discussion with the Zimbabwe Applied Art in Craft Association (ZAACA) described peace as the state of mind and social cohesion as a peaceful coexistence between human and the physical environment while Chimukai Arts and Crafts Association focus group discussion described it as lack of infringement, and respect of people’s way of doing things.

Social cohesion is understood as unity, oneness and togetherness while healing is interpreted as a means of removing pain through social memory, forgiveness and solidarity. An interview with one a musician, educationist and former Director of the Umoja revealed that social cohesion is unity that comes from acknowledging cultural diversity and the need to promote togetherness using common values. Peace and reconciliation is everybody’s business from the individual to the community through the organizations, state and international community. The different descriptions provided by the artists show that there is a high understanding of what entails peace and the need for peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. While there is an overwhelming understanding of what entails peace and reconciliation from the participants of this study, most of the participants pointed out that the playing field for peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe remains stifled by what they described as the political atmosphere. In their view, speaking about peace directly is likely to attract prejudice in Zimbabwe because it has been linked to a number of errors of the past such as the early 1980s experiences of *Gukurahundi* and the subsequent political violence that ravaged the country in the year 2000 through the decisive 2008 elections that culminated in the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Zimbabwe. Thus, the general understanding of peace and reconciliation is high and the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) provided a window of opportunity to at least deliberate on reconciliation issues and need for peace that fosters social cohesion.

Musicians, actors, sculptors, stage performers and those in the film industry share the view that peace and reconciliation involve acknowledgement of wrongs and errors of the past before any other processes. By acknowledging and admitting mistakes of a traumatic past, peace and reconciliation open up avenues for forgiveness which should only be given once it is sought for. Drawing from a book by Desmond Tutu, a poet and novelists pointed out that until perpetrators ask for forgiveness, it is impossible for victims to forgive without knowing who needs their forgiveness. Arts and culture therefore plays a significant

role in instilling the sense of togetherness, belonging and ownership within a people which lubricates the processes of national healing, peacebuilding and strengthens social cohesion irrespective of tribe, language or color. Above that, structures, mechanisms and the infrastructure for national building should be set up to create a resilient social fabric.

An interview with the Principal Director of the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Culture revealed the need for a people that understands what peace is in the African context, drawing from how the African people construed peace before peace studies were imposed on Africa's education. The imposition of globalization components within Africa was, in this interview, identified as the cause of lack of peace. Drawing in a different concept of peace, one key informant from a Non-Government Organisation whose mandate is to create spaces for freedom of expression among artists in theatre and literary arts emphasised the components of negotiation, engagement and dialogue as the inseparable pillars of peace. In view of this respondent, peace is a foreign import that has bombarded the African societies and it carries only western interests that have created enmity amongst Africans. In the past, before the colonial conquest of the continent by Europeans, communities lived together harmoniously and because we all subscribe to the African cosmology (spiritualism) togetherness, vitalism and respect for life remained guiding principles that regulated human conduct.

❖ PLAUSIBILITY OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE AS AGENTS OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Arts and Culture are both liberating and constraining in the discourse of peace and reconciliation. On one hand they can positively contribute towards consolidating peace and reconciliation while on the other they can be sources of divergence that can fuel conflict and stall reconciliation efforts. On the larger positive side however, arts and culture through festivals, theatre, film and literature set the tone and platform for both verbal and non-verbal dialogue.

As an agent of peace, art sets up a platform for both verbal and non-verbal dialogue. The uniqueness of this industry stems from the subtle nature and wide reach of audience through different communication processes which are not only achieved through physical contact but also by means of recorded life stories. A focus group discussion with Nafuna Film team revealed how film and photography provide a subtle way of dialogue which creates spaces where real issues are discussed for the realisation of social cohesion and reconciliation. It is within these spaces that opinions, views and grievances are understood without having to sit down around a table. For instance, *My Zimbabwe* story which was produced by one of the film makers captures the different perspectives and opens shelved stories by the general citizenry of Zimbabwe. It is through such short stories that are used to create peace dialogues and achieve reconciliation among Zimbabweans that we realize that "by knowing the other person's perspective, we reconcile better". Giving reference to one of the short films he has worked on entitled *Ndichiri Mudiki* (I Am Still Young), a renowned actor/film writer/script writer/film director and manager at Pakare Paye Arts

Centre explained how most dramas reflect on the nature of conflict in society. In his narration of the drama, the manager spoke of how a just married woman had lost her husband, an event that left her in denial such that she spent months awaiting his return (washing his clothes, talking to him in his absence) until her mother-in-law advised her to accept her husband's death and go through the process of bereavement and *kugova nhumbi* (distribution of the dead person's personal belongings amongst relatives). In the short play, cultural elements, particularly *kugova nhumbi* are portrayed as effective processes that help facilitate healing and peace of mind following a loss of a beloved one.

The same role was identified in the arts industry in which arts such as music are used to reach out to a wider audience. Its ability to create a dialogue that allows one to speak and the other to merely listen leaves no room for quarrelling and bursting of emotions, therefore giving music recognition as an instrument adequate for effective communication. Unlike direct conversation, art is a communication tool that speaks and allows the listener to reflect on the conveyed message with no pressure of a quick response. A focus group discussion with members of the Zimbabwe Applied Art in Crafts Association (ZAACA) revealed that art and craft pieces continue to be used to convey messages of love, apologies and reconciliation, drawing from the cultural principle that encourages the passing on of gift when seeking forgiveness. As revealed by a poet in an interview, stone sculptures can be used as a key that unlocks communication doors with former opponents by merely presenting a sculpture peace as a gift.

While arts are created, culture is what makes a people, it is within a people's way of life thus, influences their values, principles and conduct. Although Zimbabwe has no homogenous culture, there exists a similar expression of the diverse cultures through names and totems. An interview with a spirit medium revealed that reciting one's totem brings an inner peace that gives a peace of mind. This view was alluded to by a Shona poet who indicated that according to the Shona tradition, there is a conflict resolution package that comprises processes and ceremonies which are conducted as ways of resolving conflicts. Within this package are payment of reparations, reciting of totems and a variety of methods used to calm down anger in a restorative manner that repairs broken relationships.

Culture has managed to uphold national identity through historical events that the country has gone through and this identity has been harnessed through the training of heritage education teachers in the five regions of Zimbabwe by the Heritage Education Department and International outreach. There has also been a notable growing interest by universities to offer cultural studies as a discipline thereby strengthening the role of culture as an effective peace, reconciliation and social cohesion tool for nation. These efforts to mainstream the cultural components for peace and reconciliation in formal education come as a step towards the appreciation of culture in their diversities. This is therefore a build-up from the traditional setting where components of the traditional package such as dances, festivals, community courts, values and norms are often the anchor of relationships.

The greatest principle of vitalism (African ethics that respects the importance of life) and philosophy of ubuntu that emphasize understanding and interconnectedness of all beings and seeing the universe as one organic entity are used in peace and reconciliation efforts. *Ubuntu* or *hunhu* calls for the respect of each other's humanity and needs, seeks the contentment of the whole community not just some individuals, and applauds a conciliatory and non-adversarial dispute resolution process where understanding is the goal, not vengeance. This is similar to the restorative justice valued by the ubuntu philosophy and cultures in which forgiveness and empathy is championed as opposed to the retributive justice of "an eye for an eye". A respondent from the University of Zimbabwe in the arts and culture studies pointed out that the values that promote co-existence have been eroded by over-commercialisation of western individualistic and capitalistic cultures and this has compromised the ubuntu principles that used to glue people together and it offered a quick fix to problems relating conflicts. It offers amicable means of dealing with conflicts and brings people together through forgiveness and empathy.

Culture through religious practices can be harnessed to promote peace, reconciliation and social cohesion. In Zimbabwe, peace messages can be transmitted through artistic dances such as *Nyau* that also form part and parcel of some religious practices in some communities in Mashonaland East province. The intangible cultural heritage particularly the *vadzimu* (spirit medium) can play a significant role in the promotion of peace and reconciliation. The linkages between the dead and the living continue to shape the values that create peaceful coexistence of spiritual and human world. Some of the cultural practices that resonate with this view are memorialisation and ritualisation. Heal Zimbabwe Trust a local non-governmental organisation takes memorialisation and ritualisation as core programmatic areas where they hold memorial services that are intended to create platforms for dialogue where communities talk about their problems, sources of conflict, problems affecting communities and come up with solutions to redress them with the ultimate goal of creating peace and resilient communities.

Culture has managed to uphold national identity through historical events that the country has gone through and this identity has been harnessed through the training of heritage education to teachers in the five regions of Zimbabwe by the Heritage Education Department and International outreach. Interviews with informants from cultural institutions revealed that the significant institutions such as museums, shrines, historical monuments and other artifacts fall under the Ministry of Home Affairs. This has created struggles and contestations over ownership and management of the sites among chiefs and community members. These ownership claims therefore have the possibilities of reigniting old ownership struggles if poorly managed as they are not limited to cultural monuments alone but extend to national shrines such as the National Heroes Acre which has raised controversy over its status as a nationally owned monument. This has challenged the efforts for healing, unity and reconciliation among Zimbabweans.

A number of Zimbabwean communities have had their rights taken away due to stripped ownership of specific sites and centers of attraction. Examples include the Great

Zimbabwe and Chiadzwa in Marange where communities are indirectly and directly prohibited from exercising their cultural practices because the government has started development projects in those areas. This has brewed conflict between communities and authorities who stand as custodians of the sites.

The concept of peace has also been largely misinterpreted and at times misunderstood particularly in the political spheres as a phenomenon that only emerges following violence, thus, creating barriers for artists who work towards the mobilisation of rural communities to understand and deal with peace issues. Views from some informants revealed that the existing context in Zimbabwe is such that people who live in rural areas are heavily influenced by politicians and this has resulted in limited appreciation and exposure of several art works by the local artists.

It was further revealed that such limited appreciation is also fuelled by grievances over the distribution of funds in arts and culture industry. An interview with a filmmaker revealed how artists in the film industry are stereotyped for receiving external funding as *watenges* *wenyika* (sell-outs) by citizens who constantly remind them of how they fought the liberation struggle saying, *takarwa hondo* (we fought in the struggle). In the view of this filmmaker this kind of language is not conducive for building co-existence and social cohesion.

A number of artists in the film and traditional dance industries, expressed that peace and reconciliation can be achieved if the artists are used to promote reconciliation, dialogue and allow people to speak about the errors of the past that do not always come out in normal gatherings. The artists further pointed out that arts and culture have the capacity to address the root causes of the wrongs of the past, facilitate the process of reconciliation through truth telling, forgiveness and promote social cohesion. In the opinion of some informants it is that element of unresolved issues along tribal lines that bottle up anger and bitterness which results in stereotyping of some tribal groups. The President of the Zimbabwe Traditional Dancers' Association pointed out that stereotypes over the superiority and inferiority of other tribes and languages continue to challenge the sufficiency of traditional dance as an effective agent of peace and reconciliation as dance groups sometimes label one another in ways that promote discrimination and stereotypes. The President emphasised that traditional dancers from Bulawayo feel that they are better than those that come from other areas. However, the association plays a significant role in unifying the dancers and promotes tolerance and mutual understanding within their cultural diversities.

This misconception has not only affected the arts industry but has in many cases resulted in the abuse of the heritage of some monumental sites where communities claim ownership. One of the identified sites that have brewed ownership struggles is the Great Zimbabwe whose ownership has been contested by chief Murinye, Mugabe and Charumbira. As such, this challenges the mandate of the Museums and Monuments to manage cultural values associated with the sites.

Focus group discussions with street artists revealed that low recognition of the visual and fine arts and crafts sector by some members of society poses a challenge to their contribution in the promotion of peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Low recognition was identified as a factor which undermines their confidence and esteem as a constituency with an audible voice. Discussions revealed that the level of recognition received by street artists is low such that their work is usually highly appreciated by people from outside Zimbabwe than it is by locals. As a result, they get more opportunities to speak to tourists through their art and explain the meanings of their work. The burden of having to design art pieces without getting an opportunity of speaking to the people through those pieces lies with the Zimbabwean artists, thus, limiting their potential to influence peace and reconciliation. As a result of limited recognition the visual and fine arts and craft sector continues to disintegrate, leaving it susceptible to exploitation by middlemen who are driven by money and self interest.

Another factor that challenges the adequacy of art and culture in the promotion of peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe is the politicisation of the industry. While artists develop themes, their work is also determined by the external funders and this raises questions from the government over information these artists provide in order to receive funds. Perceptions are that those artists who have the ability to mobilize funds from external donors are suspected of having hidden agendas which are meant to destabilize Zimbabwean political spaces. As such, informants lamented the fact that artists who continue to receive funds from external donors are perceived to be anti-government. Such a factor has stripped play writers, scriptwriters and filmmakers of their freedom to fully express themselves in creative ways that would be appreciated by all Zimbabweans.

While preservation of arts and national monuments is a satisfying factor that qualifies art as an agent of peace and reconciliation, an interview with the director of Zimbabwe National Museum pointed to the need to moderate traditions and customs that fuel hatred. In his view this will erase some contested memories which otherwise will continue to generate hate and never get to have people reconcile as a nation.

A renowned Shona novelist respondent revealed that freedom of expression for novelists and generally for all those in the arts and culture is also limited by the Board of Censorship which examines and approves works of the artists and determine what can and cannot be exhibited, disseminated, displayed or published. One Shona novelist and poet noted that the censorship of peace, reconciliation and social cohesion issues has shaped his style of writing into satire as a strategy to avoid any perceived confrontation with some Zimbabwean authorities. However, this has been a limiting factor as his intended themes are misrepresented in search of more acceptable themes for discussion.

More often, the general people fail to derive the intended messages that are aired by artists and this often distorts the meaning or leaves the work with no meaning at all. The ability of the artists to create sculpture pieces and play music that speak for itself was therefore identified as one of the factors that make art a sufficient and satisfying agent of

peace and reconciliation for the Zimbabwean people. However, despite the construction of the different meanings and themes by artists, there is lack of a unanimously understood meaning and explanation of art pieces. This has resulted in the work of the artists, particularly stone abstracts, to have their meanings and themes distorted or simply misunderstood thus challenging the role of the artist in promoting peace, reconciliation and social cohesion.

To further illustrate the plausibility of culture and the arts as agents of peace and reconciliation, it is paramount to reflect on the role art and culture play in promoting early warning mechanisms that prevent conflict and provide answers otherwise conflict situations. This helps in building unity and makes the social fabric to remain intact and enhance cohesiveness founded on common understanding and togetherness. Culture and the arts provide early warning mechanisms through theatrical productions and music with the communities where issues affecting communities are confronted and articulated by the artists and those affected. This has the capacity to send strong messages to responsible authorities who deal with these issues being raised by artists in their pieces of art. For example, culture and the arts have been used in Bulawayo through a film project called *Ibhayisikopo* to speak about the residents' social problems such as lack of water, and the *Hochekecho* project which is at its formative stage by Rooftops Promotions, Zimbabwe International Film and Festival Trust and the Amakhosi also promote the use of culture and the arts as a means for early warning mechanisms and to look for solutions to the daily problems faced by society and help solve some problems and those that are likely to occur. The salient and subtle nature of culture and the arts allow communities to confront problems non-violently and thus allowing future projections by learning from past experiences and the current situations to foster continued positive peace and sustained social cohesion and integration. While acknowledging the underutilisation of culture and the arts, it is therefore relevant to point out that culture and the arts continue to play a prominent role in promoting peace, reconciliation and nation building. Culture and the arts have been used to inform policy makers on essential social service delivery issues and other relevant stakeholders on issues affecting communities, thereby preventing outburst of negative emotions and violence.

❖ MESSAGING OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Actors, musicians, film makers, photographers, dancers, sculptures and those in the cultural industries have adopted different ways of conveying peace and reconciliation messages that range from music, paintings, sculpturing, film, theatre, festivals, rituals, memorialisation, cartoons, storytelling and rituals. The Director of a non-governmental organization that deals with peace and unity that is based in Harare pointed out that art

acts as an awareness raising tool. The informant further pointed out that messaging of peace and reconciliation follows an identification of problems by artists from communities and provides messages to policymakers and they act on those problems. The Director of the NGO further noted that,

“an element of togetherness, understanding of community – being one nation where we do things together, I mean putting away differences. Peace is also understanding since vanhu vanenge vachiwirirana pakuita kunyangwe mafungiro akasiyana (people have differences in the way they think), but then we-do-it-together is very important (Key Informant Interview 2/ 29.11.2014).

Thus, music drama and theatre in the perspective of Director of the NGO is the medium through which peace and reconciliation messages are conveyed to communities affected by conflict and through the communities polices that advocate for reconciliation are devised and crafted, and taken back to policymakers for implementation. From the **Chiadzwa** drama group, the community members are allowed to remember their ancestral lands, reflect on their pain of displacements and find solutions to their problems. A professor from the University of Zimbabwe who specializes in Arts and Culture pointed out that messaging of peace and reconciliation should be carried out in the everyday school curriculum through teaching of moral values and norms. In his view the school as an institution is an agent of positive change and can promote peace and reconciliation through teaching cultural practices. According to the Professor the school provides didactic moral values through myths, legends that teach about great people of the past and such stories are used to keep people together. Apart from storytelling, cultural practices such as names given to babies become quite significant methods of messaging peace and reconciliation issues. The responses from the University of Zimbabwe Professor further revealed that the way things and people are given name promotes and signifies the principle of co-existence (community) commonly held within our belief system of **Ubuntu** philosophy. He cited names such as **Chidzachepo**, **Mutangakugara** and **Muwanikwa** as expressions of co-existence and they have always worked as symbol of unity and oneness. Thus, cultural practices such as naming of newly born babies are central in fostering peace, reconciliation and the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable resilient communities through the process of social remembering.

The messaging of peace and reconciliation issues through arts and culture has taken different shape and typology in Zimbabwe. In fragile contexts artists employ indirect means to convey peace messages. Film and cinema can provide a compelling means of carrying a message of peace with their ability to reach to large audiences. One organisation in the film, audio-visual and multimedia industry called Nafuna TV uses animations or cartoons to convey peace messages, while the Amakhosi centre in Bulawayo uses film to convey messages of peace and reconciliation. Nafuna TV uses the mobile phones to send cartoons that portray and speak about peace and this is a salient and subtle way of raising awareness on issues of peace in Zimbabwe. The justification for the use of mobile phones was given based on the fact that the internet penetration in the country is said to be very high and many people possess mobile phones. The simplest of such mobile phones are popularly known as **‘kambudzi’**. This medium does not require workshops and meetings to

talk about peace and it is cost effective and can reach out to many people at a large scale.

Ibhayisikopo Film Project is another example that produced a film on peace and reconciliation through filming people's concerns on peace and reconciliation, engage in dialogue and provided a platform for people to reflect on the past wrongs and draw lessons that will help correct the errors of the past hence taking the people through the path of healing. The director of the *Ibhayisikopo* Film Project pointed out that outside dialogue and direct confrontation film provides sound and picture while provoking dialogue indirectly and seek for answers by seeing and listening. Thus, film, multimedia and video play a prominent role in communication peace messages and allow people to vent their frustrations while drawing lessons for way forward. Nevertheless, film has the potential to open up wounds of the past and revitalise traumatic experiences so there is need to have clear cut mitigation measures that will lead to positive remembering, reconciliation and national healing as well as social forgetting.

An interview with a filmmaker revealed that peace messages are best communicated using film and foster social cohesion. She made reference to the American approach to national issues. "Yes we can" is a national philosophy that unites their country. She further highlighted how the American heroism is expressed in their films and how such visions unite the people. She used the US simile so that a national vision for our county could be created and enhance integration through film.

Peace and reconciliation issues are explored using multiple mechanisms in Zimbabwe. An interview with the Manager and Coordinator of arts activities at *Pakare Paye* identified the family institution as a perfect and ideal structure that can be used to promote peace and reconciliation. The family in his understanding is a manifestation of love. It is a cohesive unit with values and norms that can inform national unity and social cohesion. Thus, the family is an institution that continues to communicate peace with the aid of norms and values that glue it together. ZAACA is an arts and craft association with artists from different backgrounds with different methods of showcasing peace messages. Group members use sun tie and die and batik, beads and leather, bone and wood and recycled art to convey peace messages. One of the group members pointed out that he is into recycled art that promotes harmony between the environment and people.

Views from literary artists revealed that writing and poetry, widely known as literary arts can also foster peace, reconciliation and social cohesion. It was pointed out that, "Peace literature" has been written by local writers on themes of peace and inter-ethnic harmony. Informants reiterated that Shona and Ndebele myths, legends and folk should be a part of peace education and should be incorporated in the education curricula from primary education through to university. It was also pointed out that international literature which carries messages of peace can also be included in the education curriculum. An interview with a writer, poet and educationist revealed that there is no syllabus in Zimbabwe that teaches arts and culture from primary leave up to university yet these are critical subjects that can shape the cultural values of ubuntu and coexistence. Another respondent from the University of Zimbabwe suggested a change of literary narratives that focus on the colonial history to that of the people of Zimbabwe. There is need for a shift from writing for

profit to writing for nation building. In his view, the colonial-cum literature and scholarship that is largely individualistic does not promote social unity and hence the need for change of mindset that fosters social cohesion. However, respondents who contributed to this study cited a number of challenges that work against their literary freedom. Among them is censorship and the fear of political implications to the individual writers and poets hence some peace and reconciliation literature would rather remain tacit knowledge and unpublished work.

The study findings showed that peace and reconciliation issues have found place in the media, local non-governmental organisations, the state, the traditional institutions and universities. One means of transmitting messages of peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe is through trainings and workshops mainly conducted by non-governmental organisations through the creation of peace parks and peace caravans. Road shows have been conducted to communicate peace and reconciliation issues but these are done at a commercial level hence the true voices of the artists are at times silenced. The government holds bashes and galas in commemoration of independence and unity day and memorial services such as that of the Late Vice President and leader of Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) Joshua Nkomo. Such platforms in the view of a number of artists are used to memorialize and remember the fallen heroes as well as promote reconciliation through the 1987 Unity Accord between ZANU and ZAPU.

These commemorations do not only facilitate the storage of memories but remind the Zimbabwean people of the national vision which the liberation struggle fighters shared as they engaged in the liberation war. Such memories are not only engraved in the minds of the Zimbabwean people through music, dramas and other visual performances but have their primary source on the national flag on which every colour represents something worthy to be remembered for the sake of the national development agenda. It is such memorialisation that continues to remind the Zimbabwean people of how they have embraced development, peace, nature and nation building when the national flag was designed. As such the drive for a peaceful nation is traced back to the period Zimbabwe got its independence which saw musicians such as Thomas Mapfumo and Cde Dick "Chinx" Chingaira singing songs of forgiveness and nation building. There also exist some ceremonial artifacts such as the symbolic statues of liberation war fighters which harbor memories of the new beginnings symbolized by the eternal flame.

In his effort to unpack the what reconciliation is, a renowned musical artist and former Director of the National Arts Gallery defined reconciliation as the correction of wrongs of the past which presupposes the need for an apology from either one or all actors involved as well as the need for emotional healing. In his view, this kind of understanding amplifies how critical the component of accepting responsibility is if reconciliation is to be achieved with success. Equally important is the need for serious engagement through dialogue where actors present grievances, accept responsibility for the wrongs done, ask for forgiveness and eventually mend broken relations. Although the process requires so much time due to the amount of time needed to heal emotional wounds, the study revealed that the use of arts cools down tempers and ensures sustainable calmness because arts

remain a part of everyone's everyday life. There is no detachment from arts as it comes in every possible package that includes music, poems, drawings, pottery, batik, stone works and theatre productions. As Basic, Sanfeliu & Mari (2009) argued that apilleras were used by women to voice or communicate their grievances it is still relevant in these findings that drawings, pottery and batik made by women offer a platform to communicate both happiness as well as grievances nonviolently.

Another dimension that amplifies arts and produces echoes which reach the human soul is the role played by the human body as a tool for expression in the arts and culture industry. According to an artist who does stage performances, the human body is a very powerful tool that does not only enhance the message intended to reach to an audience in a theatre or film piece but goes further to achieve a transfer of emotions into the audience. This mode of packaging has been successfully used by artists in the film industry with organizations such as Zimbabwe International Film and Festival Trust (ZIFFT), which screens films that bring people together during its 10-days film festivals held every October.

Like ZIFFT, other organisations that work with artists such as EDZAI-ISU and the Savannah Trust use film and theatre as platforms for communication and amplifying social problems and finding solutions to social injustices. For instance, ZIFFT advocates for a film industry that sends strong peace messages and in an effort to set an example, the organization has collaborated with Amakhosi and Rooftop Promotions in a project entitled *Hochekecho*. An interview with the ZIFFT Director revealed that such collaborations do not only ensure quality outputs but are an effort to break tribal divides and smoothen the tribal nodes that continue to create “them” and “us” scenarios among some people. This corroborates with the Rwandan Film Festival (2014) approach where festivals were used to lubricate the social fabric and build national understanding. Similar stories of peace and reconciliation are displayed in scripts and television productions created by Zimbabwean artists such as *Ben Mukwerekwere*, *Apocalypse*, and *the team*. Speaking to the scriptwriter of these scripts, he identified the main objective of the productions as that of portraying how people identify themselves as one and complementary to each other's efforts whenever they find themselves in difficult situations. The scriptwriter noted that themes of reunification, community building and mutual understanding have been portrayed in a multitude of Zimbabwean productions and all that is left for the Zimbabwean people is to embrace the messages passed on to them and ignite social cohesion and promote sustainable peace.

Messages of peace and social cohesion within the arts and culture industry are not limited to performing, literary and visual arts but go beyond those forms to embrace dress and language that offer freedom of expression. These forms of expressions are demonstrated during the Zimbabwe International carnival which is celebrated annually with the purpose of promoting cultural diversity and social cohesion using artistic performances that promote freedom of self-expression. A Coordinator of the Carnival in Harare since the year 2013 pointed out that, it is critical to have diverse cultures as people tend to realize their ability to reduce the spaces between the diverse cultures. Familiarity with one another

therefore lessens phobia of diversity by creating spaces where individuals and groups find comfort in diversity. However, gender disparities create wide inequalities for women to access the arts sector as they cannot fully participate in such events for fear of labels from some sections of society who are often inadequately informed about the intended objectives of such events.

There are a number of civil society organisations and theatre groups that also use theatre as a tool to communicate peace and reconciliation. EDZAI-ISU is one theatre group that is based in Harare that promotes peace through theatre productions. For example, a play called NO"VOICE NO CHOICE" directly speaks to issues of violence in communities and offers solutions to what is viewed as community level misunderstandings. As such, theatre is used to bring those who have been locked in situations of violence to a platform of dialogue that helps them find lasting solutions to community level conflicts. Savannah Trust, Heal Zimbabwe Trust and Rooftops all make use of community theatre to communicate peace messages and they create forums where community members speak about their problems, engage in dialogue and go to the extent of performing rituals to heal the wounds of those perpetrated by violence. Savannah Trust uses the family and community structures to deal with issues of gender based violence and attempts to promote peace through such structures.

Apart from the voice, theatre, music, poetry and a host of other mechanisms that communicate peace and reconciliation, the body has a critical role in both communicating peace messages and as a symbol of unity. The images that the body carries either to enhance voice or action through gestures can be useful to communicate messages of remorse, affection and that of attraction. This is typical in some drama and plays where one's actions through the body can communicate meanings that are widely shared by the community. An interview with a scriptwriter and musician reaffirmed the importance of the body as a powerful tool that can both a symbol of humankind, life and God's creation. As such it carries respect and no harm should be done against this body. While acknowledging the body as a symbol of unity and life, one renowned poet and musician from Matabeleland is of the opinion that the body has the capacity to evoke emotions into the people such as crying. The respondent made reference to a song called Senzenina by Albert Nyathi which in his view evokes emotions and allows one to cry thus allowing healing which is a critical element of effective national reconciliation.

❖ HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PRACTICES FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

A people without history are like a tree without roots and as such history is an integral part of any society that carries the values and identity of a nation. Art and culture shape history and define a nation. In the history of Zimbabwe, there were social figures, activities and institutions whose sole role was to ensure social cohesion and peace within societies. Their focus was not merely to promote peace, reconciliation and social cohesion between human beings but also between the living and the spiritual community. As such, they also ensured that the spiritual dimension of conflict was addressed. These figures comprised aunts, uncles, chiefs and spirit mediums known as *masvikiro* among the Shona-speaking people.

Traditional dance festivals for love, celebration of new bride, courtship, beer festivals and memorial services created platforms for social cohesion, mutual understanding and identity building despite cultural diversities. It was during such dance festivals that traditional dances that include *Nyau*, *Chimutali*, *Dinhe*, *Mbende* or *Jerusarema* were used to communicate through dance drama, unify and resolve conflicts. While such activities were an agent of peace and social cohesion, aunts, uncles, chiefs and spirit mediums played a role at both family and community levels. An interview with a novelist revealed the role that aunts and uncles played in the management and resolution of family disputes. It was the role of the aunt to mediate, negotiate and counsel married couples, thus reducing events of dragging one another to the chiefs' courts. Instead, the concept of reconciliation was best expressed through the processes of *kuripa* (reparation) where the wronged person would be given for instance a live chicken, goat or cow, depending on the nature of the offence. Such practices upheld a justice system that focused on mending broken relationships and reconciliation. It is the same essence of building relationships that the NPRC seeks to achieve at the national level.

History is an instrumental tool through which peace and reconciliation can be achieved in Zimbabwe. It is the bedrock through which cultural values of a people, community and nation can be revitalised and remembered. The Director of National Museums and Monuments reported that history is a vehicle that can preserve our national heritage and the education that can be used for nation building; provide a sense of identity, belonging and national healing. Cultural heritage plays a prominent role in peace and reconciliation and is the glue that binds a nation together regardless of ethnicity and regionalism.

Drawing from the cultural practice of memorialisation of the dead, Zimbabwe has some national shrines and monuments that deliver peace and social cohesion messages through various artifacts associated with the monuments. In the view of the Director of National Museum and Monuments of Zimbabwe, national shrines and monuments promote nation building and social cohesion through their strong emphasis on cultural heritage. He further pointed out that places such as the Great Zimbabwe, the National Heroes Acre and Victoria Falls are of monumental significance in that they glue the society together. Machakanja (2010) reaffirmed this position by adding that national shrines are a symbol of unity that promotes social cohesion and solidarity. In this respect, national unity is possible when such cultural heritage and history is owned and shared by everyone in the society. However, the Director of National Museum and Monuments of Zimbabwe reported that history is not always part of memory which implies that where history is not shared then some segments of society may choose not to respect and remember it. As for Zimbabwe, the liberation struggle should be that kind of history where every Zimbabwean should rally behind and eventually accelerate social cohesion. Efforts should be made to help people understand and remember the essence of the liberation struggle. This is because history provides the narratives of a nation, builds and reproduces the core values of co-existence widely known as *ubuntu/hunhu* that once existed and continues to focus the country towards prosperity.

However, there are a number of factors that continue to challenge the historical cultural

practices that strengthened the social and moral fiber of society. These factors include globalization, emerging individualistic cultures that promote capitalism. Globalization has brought some things which are good but some are equally bad and need to be taken with caution. Globalization projects a sense of a global village whose accessibility is a click away and this has threatened the cultural setup which has existed for generations and generations. Some of the social and family ties have been broken by the distance which continues to grow among members of the same family, community or society as people relocate and establish themselves in different countries around the globe. For instance, people seldom gather to conduct family or community rituals such as *kurova makuva*³ or *nhimbe*⁴. An interview with a traditional custodian of culture revealed that globalization has created irreplaceable gaps in the family institution whereby the critical role played aunts and uncles in uniting and strengthening family relations have been eroded. In the past, these family figures were pillars that mediated and negotiated in cases of misunderstandings but all this has been replaced by institutions such as the courts.

Christianization of various components of life was also identified as a factor challenging the flow of the history of Zimbabwe in our efforts to achieve reconciliation and social cohesion. Various cultural components that are meant to promote healing, forgiveness; truth-telling and reconciliation are slowly being eroded and demonized as forms of works of the dark kingdom. While processes such as reparations were meant to mend broken relationships, an interview with a traditionalist revealed that some religious doctrines shun and do not appreciate the role of culture in promoting social cohesion and reconciliation. He went on to explain how spirit mediums would facilitate dialogue between angered spirits in negotiation for peace through such activities as home-brewed beer, reparation, family rituals and community ceremonies. During interviews, there were views that the loss in the culture of volunteerism has cost the Zimbabwean nation its peace. Many people have now adopted the individualistic way of life which is currently defeating the *ubuntu* philosophy. The humanness within a human being is fading away due to the commercialization of services which according to many cultures in Zimbabwe should be used to create bonds within members of any society. In the history of Zimbabwe, greeting the elders was a must-do for the youth but this is being challenged by the western notion that *ane mari ndiye mukuru* (one who is richer is the elder) mindset.

❖ MEMORIALISATION AND RITUALISATION PROCESSES FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Although complicated and controversial the process of memorialisation seems to play a key role in reconciliation. Memory as perpetuated through processes of memorialization and ritualisation can assist survivors of human rights violations through symbolic reparations to begin the process of healing. Research findings revealed that public acknowledgement and remembrance of atrocities is an act of collective recognition. Public acknowledgement it was revealed tells victims and survivors that the community or society values their humanity and

³ A cultural ritual associated with appeasing the spirit of the spirit of the dead.

⁴ It is a community gathering where members rotationally work in each other's field, eat and drink for the purpose of fighting poverty, hunger and increase social integration.

recognizes the tragedy of what happened. The opinion of those who work to preserve the arts in museums and national monuments is that it is important to acknowledge what has to be forgotten and what has to be remembered otherwise more hate would be generated through these institutions and sites. However, despite the continued visibility of some monumental sites and the trauma they may cause, they remain significant symbols of healing and nation building.

By ignoring the past, the nation's attempt to find just ways of addressing an unjust past will be defeated. Efforts for building peace and reconciliation through processes of memorialisation and ritualisation are quite significant in Zimbabwe. In an interview with the director of Heal Zimbabwe he pointed out that,

"We conduct memorial services; I mean to promote the spiritual aspect of communities which also deal with our belief system. This allows us to accept or acknowledge that there were some violations. Arts are also part of the process of truth telling that allow people to speak about issues and their solution. Learning the facts, which involves the long and painful work of exhuming mass graves and acknowledging them publicly contribute to restore the dignity of the deceased and allow survivors and families to find spaces for peace," (Interview 2, 11/12/2014).

The NGO covers areas affected by political violence including Mashonaland Central, Masvingo, Manicaland, Matebeleland North and Mashonaland East with the purpose of promoting peace and reconciliation. The objective of the NGO is to promote dialogue and efforts for unity and nation building through local and traditional structures that sustain community peace. The memorialisation and ritualisation mechanisms are used to restore broken relationships in the community and build peace for the purpose of creating lasting and resilient communities. He also reiterated that at the national level, artists in the music industry and those who do poetry commemorate for example, the Unity Day between the Zimbabwe African Nation Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) the two major liberation war political parties. In this context, memorialisation processes can have a powerful healing and restorative function.

The literary arts have remained consistent as an instrument that creates historical narratives about the nation and a granary of memories that continues to mirror about a people and their culture. Although this sector of the arts industry has contributed to the preservation of contested history in Zimbabwe, an art which is written with a positive mind is what cultivates the seeds of peace and social cohesion. Several influential writings in the pre-independence era continue to have space in the hearts of the ordinary Zimbabweans to date. Drawing from one of the publications, *Echoes from Zimbabwe*, a poet/singer/ writer pointed out that any literature written with a positive mind does not brush away issues but builds on what is viewed by society as productive for healthy lifestyles. Despite the reality that wounds take time to heal; artistic works have strong healing properties that only need to be appreciated by the recipients of the final productions and publications.

❖ CULTURE AND THE ARTS AS PRESCRIPTIVE METHODS OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

An interview with a *svikiro* (spirit medium) revealed that culture has a role to play in the promotion of peace, reconciliation and social cohesion through its value system that is anchored by *masvikiro* who promote practices that push for peace. Explaining the role of spirit mediums, she explained that their obligation is to unearth traditional practices that bring an underlying value system of peace and harmony which according to her is missing in the contemporary Zimbabwean society.

According to the spirit medium the general construction of reconciliation entails three steps or processes identified in the traditional setting. These are the identification of the problem, acceptance that something has gone wrong and agreeing on what can be done to correct the situation. However, the most usual cultural prescriptions for reconciliation are spiritual processes that are understood to calm down anger and grievances. This belief is grounded in the acknowledgement of having committed a crime which is then cleansed by spirit mediums. The spirit medium accepts the realities of relations between the dead and the living. In the context of art and cultural values and practices spirit mediums are therefore not silent players in the promotion of peace and reconciliation.

However, it was observed that at times culture offers rigid methods that are systematic and can only be effective if followed accordingly. For instance, the processes of reparation and compensation are understood as the only legitimate route towards healing, forgiving and healing when a family or individual is haunted by angry human spirits. Culture prescribes reparation with a virgin who will be given to the family of the deceased, a practice which goes against the upholding of human rights in contemporary society. An interview with a community spirit medium revealed that this is done as a way to appease the angry spirit and calm it down in order to achieve peace, thereby signifying the closure of the case.

Another element that views culture as a rigid and prescriptive agent is its respect for wisdom which is believed to come with age. This element confines the young as subjects to the elder's decisions, due to the understanding that the elderly have seen it all and often make better decisions without the need to consult the youth at times. During interviews, it was revealed that such cultural practices tend to undermine the capacity of the youth to take any initiative thereby losing the sense of belonging or ownership. This sense of misplacement was identified as an obstacle to social cohesion which one of the participants who is a lawyer and is also involved in the cultural heritage industry defined as commitment to a sense of tolerance among youth. This view was also reiterated by the director of the Zimbabwe Traditional Dance Association who emphasised the need for cooperation from all generations if peace and reconciliation is to be achieved in Zimbabwe.

❖ CULTURE AND THE ARTS AS AGENTS OF PEACE

While peace is understood as a state of the mind characterised by emotional and mental calmness, freedom and absence of fear, creative artists and advocates of culture subscribe to various creativities for peace. The creation of what members of the Zimbabwe Applied Art in Craft Association (ZAACA) termed “*peace pieces*” through art and craft work such as batik, leather craft, recycled art, bone art, art on tyres and dried flowers has been an expression of the artist’s role as a peace agent since the 1960s. The nature of the productions in the art and craft industry does not turn a blind eye to the need to be in harmony with the environment, thus massive production of art pieces are created from worn out vehicle tyres, bones and soft drink cans, among other materials which are often disposed as waste, are used to create artistic pieces.

There has also been a constant shift from decorative art and craft pieces such as pottery, paintings and weaves to batik sun dye, earrings and other worn pieces. While decorative pieces are believed to bring peace in homes, cloths and jewellery such as earrings, neck beads and friendship wristbands are also believed to fill a human being with a sense of peace of mind. This is expressed by the themes generated for every art or craft piece. There exists a mutual understanding of peace and reconciliation themes in the art and craft industry which is seen in the interpretation of created art pieces. Members of Chimukai arts and crafts recognize the Holy Spirit as the giver of peace and constructor of reconciliation. In the same manner ZAACA interprets similar sculpture carvings which they call *High Priest* and *Paradise*. It is in these carvings, among others, that are identified as instruments for reconciliation and forgiveness as they provide a sense of peace and ability to move with life.

❖ THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL HEALING

The process of national healing is perceived as long overdue by many Zimbabweans but the question as to our preparedness to bury certain cultures of violence and impunity for truth telling and forgiving remain unanswered. This in the view of some artists presents many challenges to possible actors such as those in the cultural and art industries. This study revealed a number of questions pertaining to the whole process regarding the country’s preparedness to undertake the process of national healing and peace building.

Findings from participants in the cultural industry indicated that there is need for truth telling, forgiveness and reconciliation if Zimbabwe was to go through a successful healing process. But the questions that many fail to answer refer to the understanding of what the nation wants and the approaches to forgiveness and reconciliation. These issues in the view of a number of informants continue to raise so much debate with some arguing that it is the state that needs to provide leadership in the search for forgiveness from its people while others shared the view that the process of forgiving and creating peace has to start with the individual. A focus group discussion with members of Nafuna TV revealed that film could be the most appropriate tool to create a platform that opens up the nation to the realities of the dangers of not brewing anger and hatred. Although it is not perfect, the group discussion pointed to film as the only healing agent that has the capacity to open the dialogue through short stories and documentaries on peace and co-existence.

While some participants argued that national healing as a process should begin with the people, a component that raised more questions than answers was, “who should lead the process?” Interviews with a Shona novelist and the coordinator of art activities at Pakare Paye pointed to the traditional leaders as the sole custodians of culture, therefore qualifying them as the leaders of the process of national healing and peace building. It was argued that traditional leaders take the family institution as having the ideal template for forgiveness and healing because in this institution, members accept that they are wrong and can seek forgiveness without putting so much emphasis on age or the position of the family member. They argued that the same template could work for the better if the nation was to adopt it with political will and commitment.

However, some of the practitioners in the arts industry such as dancers were not sure of their capacity to influence the healing process arguing that their performances do not involve audible and authoritative voices, a factor that could limit the transmission of the message to the audience. To them, the process of national healing should involve having the ability to speak out, ask questions and seek answers and this could not be adequately achieved through dance alone.

Although several ways of thinking arose on this subject, both artists and those in the cultural industries were positive that national healing is achievable but needed a deliberate collective effort which should start with an apology. In addition there is need for a common understanding of what the nation aims to achieve and allow everyone to play their part in this endeavor.



SECTION FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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❖ CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the research revealed the importance of utilising arts and culture as an effective instrument for promoting sustainable peace, reconciliation and social integration in Zimbabwe. It was emphasised that arts and culture possess a transforming power that allows people to remember about past events, reflect on them by way of engaging both in interpersonal dialogue and having dialogue with those in spiritual world. Furthermore, the findings unveiled the potential of using arts and culture other than the normative means of pronouncing peace and reconciliation where experts in peacebuilding preside over the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation. Arts and culture are accepted more and resonate with the cultural beliefs of the people and hence they are an effective way of dealing with the inner problems of the people and provide a therapeutic healing together with internal healing and the preservation of memory. The country can adopt workable examples of *mato oput* and *gacaca* as a traditional court and mechanism used in Rwanda to deal with the horrors of the 1994 genocide. Set aside, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) can also provide good lessons for Zimbabwe towards confronting peace and reconciliation using the arts. In addition, the Libyan case of graffiti and art could be used to express emotions but in the process facilitating healing of the nation. South Africa use acapella music to protest against oppression and Zimbabwe used *toyi-toyi* and these are working models which can mirror the way the NPRC can utilize the arts and culture in peace and reconciliation.

The research also revealed the plausibility of cultural industries and cultural heritage as an adhesive of social cohesion, unity and nation building. Culture reproduces values and norms that create a resilient social fabric in society. Thus, cultural practices such as *nhimbe*, traditional dance, national shrines and monuments, the education curriculum and the intangible cultural heritage emerged as critical ingredients for enhancing peace, reconciliation and have the capacity to integrate people through shared values and a common vision. The findings of this research further revealed an existing relationship between peace reconciliation and social cohesion. Artists and custodians of culture in the cultural industry agreed that it is their role to facilitate peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe as they communicate with a wider audience across sectors.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that applaud the arts and culture by artists and those in arts organisations as a possible entry point for peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, a few shortcomings of the arts and culture - based strategies of peacebuilding could be noted. Some factors that undermine the effectiveness of arts and culture in promoting peace and reconciliation range from politicization of the industries, poor recognition and appreciation by the government, stereotypes, globalization, funding to ownership disputes that surround Zimbabwe's cultural heritage sites. By and large, this research established that arts and

culture are an effective means to promote peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe despite the few enumerated shortcomings.

❖ RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study generated a number of policy interventions, recommendations and lessons that could be used by government, the artist, captains of the arts and culture sector, the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), the academia and policymakers. The following interrelated recommendations emerged from the findings of the study:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CULTURE FUND

- ❖ Continue to facilitate, coordinate and monitor progress made in the arts and culture sector and implementation of the work of all Commissions for the achievement of peace, social cohesion and development.
- ❖ Strengthen the data bases and data collection tools with a view to ensure systematic collection, collation, analysis and presentation of data and creation of knowledge and information on the development of the arts and culture sector.
- ❖ There is need for continued resources mobilization by Culture Fund and its critical partners to promote arts and culture in Zimbabwe.
- ❖ Research in the arts and culture is still low, there is need to do more research that covers all the arts and culture sectors. There is need to come up with a robust research agenda on the thematic issues that need to be researched on as part of knowledge advancement and looking at Arts and Culture as a discipline or field of study.
- ❖ There is need for greater capacity building training on how to conduct research in the field of Arts and Culture and acquaint researchers with appropriate methodologies relevant for the sector.
- ❖ There is need to train the various artists on how to conduct policy relevant research that will help policy makers make informed decisions and the general citizenry of Zimbabwe in finding working models for peacebuilding and nation building in addition to other thematic issues.
- ❖ Culture Fund should make gender and gender mainstreaming a cross-cutting theme in all its research activities as a way of informing its programming as well as responding appropriately to the diverse strategic and specific gender needs within the arts and culture sector.
- ❖ There is need for Culture Fund to develop a research fund for artists to promote policy relevant research to address national and regional issues regarding peace, human security, reconciliation and development.
- ❖ Sensitise the media through capacity building about role of the arts and culture in promoting peace and social cohesion to ensure well-informed coverage and development of media professionalism.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE

- ❖ The findings of the study revealed a limited uptake of the arts and culture in the school curriculum and hence the limited appreciation of the creative products and services in the country towards peace and nation building. This study recommends mainstreaming of the arts and culture training in the formal school curriculum from primary to tertiary education because educating and socializing children from the early stages of their learning will ensure sustainable development of cultures of peace in society.
- ❖ Artists and experts in education from various backgrounds should contribute in curriculum development in the area of the arts and culture, and nation building and sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ARTISTS

- ❖ One key finding of this study is that creative products and services are losing their relevance due to the commercialisation of the arts and used by those who are not artists themselves to carry out agendas that are not of particular gain to the sector.
- ❖ Artists from performing arts recommend the need for autonomy in conducting their work. Once autonomy is maintained, there is need to democratise the laws and airspaces for the artists and those in cultural industries to conduct their business so that their activities add value to national efforts towards promoting peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in Zimbabwe.
- ❖ There is need to strengthen the existing collaboration among national, regional and international artists as a way of sharing knowledge and skills and broadening their exposure.
- ❖ Artists who have been in the business for a long time should be encouraged to mentor to the upcoming artists as way of developing their self-confidence and skills.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE

- ❖ The study revealed limited appreciation of culture and the arts both as a profession and the limited national budget to fund activities of those in the arts and culture sector. This has also affected full exploitation of the culture and arts sector in the articulation of peace, reconciliation and nation building issues. Therefore, the study recommends the professionalization of culture and the arts sector, allocate adequate funds for their activities for the purpose of building capacities of the sector to promote productions that enhance social cohesion, nation building, reconciliation, national healing and development.
- ❖ There is need to identify and strengthen collaboration between and among line ministries that could benefit from the arts and culture sector for the benefit of the country-for example the Ministries of Education, Primary and Secondary Education, the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Gender, Women's Affairs and Community Development among others.

- ❖ In consultation with the National Arts Council institute policies and legislation to eradicate piracy and exploitation of artists' creative products and works by instituting Intellectual Property policies and laws that protect artists and their works.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL PEACE AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

- ❖ The study showed the important role that traditional institutions and authorities play with their relevant foundations in promoting social cohesion and integration in the past. Furthermore, the traditional authorities and their institutions such as *masvikiro* are still of great significance in the peacebuilding and social cohesion discourse. In view of this, the study recommends utilisation of traditional authorities and institutions by the NPRC to promote peace, reconciliation and social cohesion. Examples are beer festivals and nhimbe as means to foster social cohesion.
- ❖ The study revealed that there is very limited engagement of the general citizenry and the artists in Zimbabwe in capacity building, training workshops and outreach programs whose sole purpose is to facilitate reconciliation and social cohesion. That noted, there is need for collaboration between the NPRC and the artists in holding workshops, capacity building initiatives for peace and reconciliation.
- ❖ The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission should partner with artists and key stakeholders in its programming and implementation of activities to ensure social mobilization.
- ❖ The study revealed that the film industry has been deteriorating and yet Zimbabwe was one of the most promising countries in the southern African region. In addition, the study highlighted the importance of film and the multimedia as avenues that promote nation building, togetherness and social cohesion. The study therefore, recommends adoption, promotion and protection of the film industry in the country and encourages the NPRC to engage the film industries towards creating a positive image of the country as well as fostering social cohesion and integration.
- ❖ National monuments, crafts, visual arts and other cultural heritage have emerged as a glue of society. They continue to reveal the history of the people, unite people and present a platform for the community to remember their past. Remembering through national archives, literary arts, national monuments and museums has the potential to unite people. In this view, the study recommends to the NPRC that artists, the government and other relevant stakeholders should utilise national shrines, museums, libraries and other cultural heritage in the promotion of peace and social cohesion.
- ❖ The NPRC needs to create an arts-based early warning mechanism system for the purpose of informing it on potential risks, threats and solutions to emerging issues and foster lasting peace and integration by utilising the hochekoche project.
- ❖ The study established that creative products and services have the capacity to reach the general citizenry of Zimbabwe using different platforms. The NPRC needs to take advantage of the creative products and services which have the capacity to convey peace messages at a massive scale and reach a wider audience. In doing so, there is need to involve the producers of creative products and services in the identification of

Zimbabwe's common goals and co-design the modalities through which the messages for peace and reconciliation are to be conveyed.

- ❖ The study recommends that once culture and the arts are given the attention they deserve, they should be utilised to promote peacebuilding, national healing, reconciliation and development through national arts and culture festivals, music galas, community theatre, drama, film and cultural heritage where spirit mediums continue to play a mediating role.
- ❖ The findings revealed a limited representation of the artists in the national peace efforts and recommends, the establishment of the Arts and Culture Desk within the NPRC and all line ministries to ensure the promotion of national unity and social cohesion in Zimbabwe.
- ❖ National monuments, crafts, visual arts and other cultural heritage have emerged as a glue of society. They continue to reveal the history of the people, unite people and present a platform for the community to remember their past. Remembering through national archives, literary arts, national monuments and museums has the potential to unite people. In this view, the study recommends that the NPRC, artists, the government and other relevant stakeholders utilise national shrines, museums, libraries and other cultural heritage.
- ❖ The study also revealed that errors of the past such as *gukurahundi* and political violence between the year 2000 and 2008 have compromised peaceful co-existence and tolerance among groups of people. NGOs, artists and those in the culture sector recommend the promotion of dialogue, truth telling and forgiveness mechanisms. Rwanda is a good case study where *gacaca* and *mato oput* were used to confront the 1994 genocide. As such the NPRC through consultation of different stakeholders needs to develop mechanisms such as ritualisation, memorialisation and remembering which are consistent with our cultural values to deal with the errors of the past but remaining accommodative of all stakeholders through peace and reconciliation.
- ❖ Based on the working models and international best practices used regionally and internationally, this study recommends knowledge sharing and networking in the area of peace and reconciliation using the arts and culture. NPRC should engage prominent artists regionally and internationally to promote the effective utilisation of creative products and services in the promotion of peace and reconciliation.
- ❖ For NPRC to be effective and achieve its mandate it has to work in close collaboration with all the other Commissions, line ministries, civil society, traditional institutions including the arts and culture sector through the National Arts Council because issues of good governance, elections, the promotion of human rights, gender justice, and the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable peace, social cohesion and development are inextricably intertwined.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION WORKING IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE

- ❖ The study found that no one person or institution has the monopoly over the promotion of peace, reconciliation and social cohesion. As such it is the responsibility of everyone including artists, and civil society organisations to promote peace and social cohesion in Zimbabwe. In view of the above, it is recommended that civil society organisations adopt arts - based and broad - based cultural dimensions in their efforts to promote peace, reconciliation and social development initiatives.
- ❖ Civil society should work with artists to generate awareness about peace and promote cultures of peace in society.
- ❖ Collaborate with artists in promoting the sharing of good practices, experiences and lessons learnt on progressive models and systems that facilitate efforts peace building, social cohesion and development.
- ❖ Collaborate with artists in lobbying and advocating for support with key legislative institutions to curb or eradicate piracy and exploitation of artists' creativeness and innovation.

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