



Improving relations between female sex workers and the general public in Zimbabwe: An action research project

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation is a participatory expository of how theatre for conflict transformation can be used as a tool to build better relations between female sex workers and members of public in Harare and Seke in Zimbabwe. In this study the treatment of sex workers in Zimbabwe and worldwide is highlighted using both literature review and personal experiences of female sex workers and members of public. The dissertation provides a thematic analysis of life histories of female sex workers with four themes emerged from the data namely, childhood experiences, motives of why the women entered sex work and continue to engage in sex work, the women's experiences of sex work, and discontinuity. A participatory theatre for conflict transformation derived from the themes is conducted by a group of members of public. Results of this research show that participatory theatre for conflict transformation can be used as a tool to mend broken relationships where members of the public can be turned into empathetic and conscientised spectators

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation and that neither any part of this dissertation nor the whole has been submitted for a degree to any other university or institution.

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, my dissertation does not infringe upon anyone's copyright or violate any proprietary rights, and that any ideas, techniques, quotations or any other material from the work of other people included in my dissertation, published or otherwise, are fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard referencing practices.

I declare that this is a true copy of my thesis, including any final revisions, as approved by my supervisor.

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Farai Chirimumimba

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to the research participants, whose willingness to be involved made this project possible.

# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ABBREVIATIONS.....	x
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Background and research problem .....	1
1.2 Context .....	4
1.3 Conflict transformation.....	5
1.4 Rationale of the study.....	7
1.5 Aims and objectives.....	8
1.6 Research design .....	8
1.7 Research methodology .....	9
1.8 Data collection .....	9
1.9 Sampling.....	10
1.10 Organisation of the study.....	10
1.11 Summary and conclusion .....	11
CHAPTER TWO: SEX WORKERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS .....	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Sex work worldwide .....	12
2.2.1 South Africa .....	13
2.2.2 Namibia .....	14
2.2.3 The Netherlands.....	14
2.2.4 Germany.....	15
2.2.5 Sweden .....	15

2.2.6 New Zealand.....	16
2.3 Sex work and livelihood .....	16
2.4 Stigma and discrimination.....	19
2.5 Sex workers and human rights.....	22
2.6 Summary and conclusion .....	25
CHAPTER THREE: SEX WORKERS IN ZIMBABWE .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.2 Historical background and development of sex work in Zimbabwe.....	27
3.3 Stigma and discrimination of sex workers in Zimbabwe .....	30
3.4 Sex workers and human rights in Zimbabwe .....	36
3.5 Summary and conclusion .....	41
CHAPTER FOUR: PARTICIPATORY THEATRE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION.....	44
4.1 Introduction.....	44
4.2 Conceptualisation of the meaning of conflict transformation.....	44
4.3 Participatory theatre (PT) worldwide .....	47
4.4 Contribution of Augusto Boal to participatory theatre.....	48
4.4.1 Image theatre .....	49
4.4.2 Invisible theatre.....	50
4.4.3 Forum theatre .....	51
4.5 Participatory theatre as an intervention.....	51
4.5.2 Participatory theatre in HIV/AIDS behavioural change .....	53
4.5.3 Political theatre influencing ideologies and citizen participation. ....	55
4.5.4 Participatory theatre for health care issues .....	57
4.5.5 Participatory theatre for human rights .....	57
4.6 Overview of the history and development of theatre in Zimbabwe .....	58
4.6.1 Characteristics of Zimbabwean theatre after independence.....	60
4.6.2 Recent trends in Zimbabwean theatre.....	60
4.7 Participatory theatre for conflict transformation .....	61
4.8 Summary and conclusion .....	65
CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODS.....	66
5.1 Introduction.....	66
5.2 Research approach .....	66

5.2.1 Exploration .....	66
5.2.2 Action research.....	67
5.3 Research design .....	67
5.4 Selection of participants .....	68
5.5.1 Narratives .....	70
5.6 Ethical issues.....	71
5.7 Member checking.....	72
5.8 Summary and conclusion .....	72
CHAPTER SIX: LIFE STORIES OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN SEX WORK .....	73
6.1 Introduction.....	73
6.2 Recruiting participants.....	73
6.3 Life Stories of Six Sex Workers .....	74
6.3.1 Takudzwa’s story .....	75
6.3.2 Rachel’s story .....	76
6.3.3 Emily’s story .....	76
6.3.4 Tendai’s story .....	77
6.3.5 Memory’s story .....	78
6.3.6 Tererai’s story.....	79
6.4 Data Analysis .....	81
6.4.1 Childhood experiences .....	82
6.4.2 Motive for entering and staying in the industry.....	83
6.4.3 Experiences of sex work .....	84
6.4.4 Discontinuity.....	85
6.5 Validity and reliability .....	86
6.6 Limitations of the study .....	87
6.7 Summary .....	88
CHAPTER SEVEN: PARTICIPATORY THEATRE FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION.....	89
7.1 Introduction.....	89
7.2 Recruiting members of public.....	90
7.3 The participatory theatre for conflict transformation in context.....	91
7.4 The participatory theatre process .....	92
7.4.1 The enactment .....	93
7.5 Immediate outcomes.....	96



7.5.1 The impact of participatory theatre for conflict transformation for the participants .....	96
7.5.2 The impact of participatory theatre for conflict transformation for the sex workers .....	101
7.6 Validity and reliability .....	102
7.7 Limitations.....	103
7.8 Summary and conclusion .....	103
CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS .....	105
8. 1 Introduction.....	105
8.2 Summary of thesis.....	105
8.3 Summary of findings.....	107
8.4 Limitations.....	108
8.5 Personal reflections.....	109
8.6 Recommendations .....	110
REFERENCES.....	111
Appendix 1.....	127
Appendix 2.....	128
Appendix 3.....	131
Appendix 4.....	132

## **List of abbreviations and acronyms**

AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

ASWA – African Sex Workers Alliance

CEDAW – Conference on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

ETD – Theatre for Development

FWCW – Fourth World Conference on Women

GVB – Gender Based Violence

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ICPD – International Conference on Population and Development

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

PAR – Participatory Action Research

PT – Participatory Theatre

Safaids – Southern Africa Aids Dissemination Service

SRC-- Sexual Rights Centre

SRH – Sexual and Reproductive Health

STI – Sexually Transmitted Infections

SWAN – Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network

SWEAT – Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce

UNAIDS – Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS

UNICEF—United Nations Children Education Fund

UNESCO—United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation

WHO – World Health Organisation

ZIMSTATS – Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency

# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background and research problem**

This study acknowledges that sex work is illegal in Zimbabwe and, therefore, the profession has no legal status. However, due to a deepening economic crisis where an estimated 85% or more of the Zimbabwean population are not gainfully employed, the numbers of women resorting to commercial sex work is escalating. A local NGO, the Centre for Sexual Health, reported in 2015 that it had registered a staggering 52 214 sex workers in Zimbabwe (Anon. 2015a).

Sex work in Zimbabwe, include solicitation, procuring, keeping a brothel is illegal but thriving (Ncube 2012 cited in Nkala 2014:68). The act of sex work is criminalised, and reported cases of arresting women and charging them for vagrancy to appease the offended majority are still common. Zimbabwean police are viewed as the worst abusers of sex workers. In a survey conducted by the UK-based Open Society Foundation released in July 2012 which covered Zimbabwe, South Africa, Russia, Namibia, United States of America, and Kenya, revealed that Zimbabwean police rank top in terms of harassing and physically abusing sex workers. Surveyed prostitutes confirmed to have been physically and sexually abused by 85% of law enforcement agents (Open Society Foundation 2012:4).

Even though the arbitrary arrest of women walking in the streets at night on suspicion of loitering or soliciting for sex work has been outlawed, sex work is still an illegal act and communities still discriminate against female sex workers. Nkala (2014:69) postulates that sex work is a profession that comes with guilt and shame to any society exacerbating stigmatisation, discrimination and forcing some governments, including Zimbabwe, to adopt a criminalising approach as a means to eradicate its existence.

As a result, female sex workers and members of the public from Seke in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, where I come from are at loggerheads. The community regards female sex workers as a nuisance in the community. This reality in

Zimbabwe suggests that our communities look for ways to accept and co-exist with the female sex workers in ways that can improve relations and mitigate the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and public hatred.

The prevailing situation thus mirrors the larger picture of how female sex workers are excluded from the Zimbabwean narrative. Grace Mugabe, the wife of President, Robert Mugabe, has open disrespect for female sex workers and has baldly urged rapists to go for prostitutes. On 14 August 2015, she said, "Men with an insatiable appetite for sex should go for prostitutes because they have been given a blank cheque to freely offer their services by the courts. Don't rape minors; prostitutes are there" (Anon. 2015b). By extension due to her marriage to President Mugabe, she has a master identity because she is a role model which legitimises and reinforces her philosophies ( Muwonwa 2007:12). Though sex work is a profession as old as humankind, in Zimbabwe it is still frowned upon by many who consider it as immoral; it is viewed as a public nuisance that offends cultural and moral standards and spreads sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis, herpes and HIV/AIDS (Hahlani and Kahlamba 2015:3).

In January 2015, a study by Aids Fonds in partnership with Northern Star Alliance found that, in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia and Botswana, 71% of sex workers experienced violence emanating from negative attitudes towards them at work, with only 21% having the courage to report to police (Aids Fonds and Northern Star Alliance 2015).

Newspapers are awash with stories that narrate the plight of female sex workers. The following is one such example:

Florence, a sex worker in Seke, Chitungwiza, wants more. "This judgement (in reference to the Constitutional judgement that outlawed the arbitrary arrest of women without proof that they were soliciting for sex work) does not go far enough in protecting our rights as sex workers," she says. Ruth Dube, a sex worker who operates in the seedy backyard bars in Chitungwiza, also believes more should be done and that prostitution should be legalized.

"This is our only source of income. We cannot even go for regular medical check-ups because of the stigma associated with our work," she said. Criminalization of sex work compounds the plight of female sex workers. Another sex worker who identified herself as Angel Pee explained: "You really have to be careful not to bump into police officers on patrol. If you are caught and have no money, they demand sex. You cannot report this as rape because you will be operating illegally." Sometimes men who abuse us do not use protection, which exposes us to sexually transmitted infections. If prostitution is legalized, we will not face such hassles," said Angel (Vinga 2015).

In Seke, Chitungwiza, a female sex worker who had been engaged at Ziko in Seke by a married man "was thoroughly beaten and forced to walk through the streets naked after being caught with someone's husband" (Anon. 2014c). The client who had been offered services was not vilified in such degrading manner which shows the attitude of community towards female sex workers.

Therefore, the research problem is that female sex workers are marginalised in Zimbabwe which creates environments in which unity with members of the public is absent. This study is thus a call to build better relations between sex workers and members of public within Zimbabwean communities. I propose through this research to investigate how participatory theatre (Young–Jahangeer 2004:149) can be used as a platform to shift perceptions that result in better relations between female sex workers and general public. Due to the sensitivity of the research I did not include men as participants because I felt it will be difficult for them to openly interact with women on sexual issues especially when they are considered as the clients of female sex workers. As a result, apart from the female sex workers I conducted the participatory theatre for conflict transformation with women member of public. In short, this research was composed of two groups' namely six female sex workers and eight women participants selected from members of public. Throughout this research I may refer to women participants selected from member of public as simply general public or members of public to avoid monotonous repetition.

## **1.2 Context**

The study locations were the working places in Harare and Seke, Chitungwiza. The locations and context in which sex work takes place in Harare and Chitungwiza are extremely varied; thus, sex workers' practices and experiences also vary significantly. Sex work takes place in an organised fashion in many places in Harare, but I chose the Avenues area for their reputation as the red-light district. In Chitungwiza, I worked at hostels at Makoni shopping centre that has a reputation for housing sex workers. These two places have areas called the 'hot spots' for sex workers. These specific study locations were identified through interviews with key informants during the first two weeks and newspaper articles on sex workers. Snowball methods were used to find the hot spots: places described in articles and those mentioned by key informants were visited, and from there key informants gave directions to other 'hot spots'. In the end, two 'hot spots' were included in the research.

These two are similar due to certain characteristics such as the type of sex worker, the men visiting, shared norms or the amount of payment given by the client, while not being physically close.

The first site is named the Avenues, which extends north and east from Harare's central business district. Avenues is an area where many 'hot spots' are located. Avenues is more of a down town 'hot spot' where the so-called upper class sex workers hang out and is famous for its busy nightlife where many clubs and bars are located close to each other. Mostly younger women are working from these spots and traditional African music is performed. The second site is called Makoni hostels in Seke, Chitungwiza. The different establishments are located behind the main transit zone to places such as Harare, Mutare, Marondera, Seke rural and Wedza among other destinations. This area, like the Avenues, is one of the rare places that are lively throughout the whole night. Adolescent sex workers tend to work from these spots. (In addition to Seke, Chitungwiza has three other suburbs, namely Zengeza, St Mary's and Manyame Park. Apart from Harare, this research was also undertaken in Seke, Chitungwiza.

Having derived life stories from female sex workers I conducted the theatre for conflict transformation with the eight women participants from general public from Seke, Chitungwiza. It was an area that I was familiar with and was easily accessible since it is where I reside.

### **1.3 Conflict transformation**

Conflict transformation suggests that conflicts in relationships are a necessary part of human existence. Conflict transformation is relevant to my study as it focuses on constructive change that builds better relations between female sex workers and members of the public. Lederach (2003:3) rightly points out that it is through conflicts that solutions to bad relations can be generated by those involved in the conflict. If the root causes of conflicts are not resolved, conflicts can degenerate into violence which becomes very difficult to solve.

Bad relations in this context between female sex workers and the general public are usually as a result of influence of culture (Kambarami 2006:3). In one of his works, Galtung (1990:291) provides an interesting explanation on relations built on the basis of culture which is often used as a tool to stigmatise and discriminate against and oppress women, in this case, female sex workers. Cultural violence is influenced by perceptions of those aspects of culture which are usually influenced by religious beliefs, ideology and language among other factors that can be used to justify or legitimise direct or structural violence – in this context against female sex workers. Therefore, conflict transformation is the right tool to employ in conflict between female sex workers and the general public as it transforms cultural violence into cultural harmony.

It should be noted that, "... conflict also creates life; through conflict we respond, innovate and change. Without it, life would be a monotonously flat topography of sameness and our relationships would be woefully superficial" (Lederach 2003:18). Search for Common Ground (2009:2) who are pioneers of participatory theatre for conflict transformation suggest that:

A conflict that is transformed can have numerous benefits. In fact, all social change stems from conflict. Without conflict, our society would not evolve, injustices would never be called into question, and relations would remain frozen. Conflicts can create progress, dialogue, better understanding of each other and even greater trust and intimacy.

Wall and Callister (1995:517) defined conflict as “a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party”. Lederach (2003:14) defined conflict transformation as:

To envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships.

Female sex workers and the general public's bad relations cannot be best resolved using conflict resolution or conflict management which attempt to eradicate conflicts using quick solutions. This leaves no room to deal with the underlying problems causing bad relations. As a result, over a period of time there is recurrence of conflicts because the underlying issues would not have been resolved (Lederach 2003:3). This is dangerous if conflicts are allowed to persist; with time such conflicts not mended will degenerate into violence as people find it as the only solution to solving the problem (Lederach 2003:21). Conflict resolution and conflict management has been used in the Netherlands where female sex workers are kept out of sight by their setting location and the times they are allowed to work. In the Netherlands, female sex workers offer their services at a designated road commonly referred to as the Red Light District provided they have a permit.

However, conflict transformation, as described by Lederach (2003:3), does not suggest that we simply eliminate or control conflict as is the case with conflict resolution and conflict management, but rather, it recognizes that conflicts help to initiate a change process that can improve relations. This means that social



conflicts are naturally created by both female sex workers and the general public who are involved in a relationship. When conflicts occur, they transform events, people, and relationships that created the initial conflict.

Using Lederach's analysis of conflict transformation, my study focused mainly on finding the underlying causes of conflicts between two groups namely female sex workers and members of the public. The perceptions that influence stigma and discrimination of female sex workers are dealt with using conflict transformation theory and, as a result, there will be better relations.

#### **1.4 Rationale of the study**

A number of factors motivated this research. First there is realisation that although progressive democracies like Zimbabwe predicated their practices upon noble intention, they tend to perpetuate systems of oppression they purport to oppose (Fraser 1990, Philips 1992, 1988, Ricardo, and Schwarzmante 1988:165). Bell (2009:1) points out that some counter perceptions towards sex workers are unjust:

Sex work has long been criticized and stigmatized in our society. While many members of society view sex work as immoral and degrading to women, I argue that sex work is essentially just work, and that it is not necessarily harmful to women. Under circumstances in which sex work is accepted and regulated in society, in which the sex worker is protected and granted the same rights as any other labourer, sex work has the possibility to be beneficial to women.

In addition available studies have concentrated on the subject matter in the context of health and HIV/AIDS phenomenon which support the well-being of female sex workers. Improving relations between female sex workers and the general public is however, a topic that ought not to be ignored if Zimbabwe, for instance, in the continued fight in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS. If the immorality ascribed to female sex work is to remain unchallenged, then violations against female sex workers will continue to be normalised and this will have a bearing on the fight against HIV/AIDS. It is due to these observations that the

need to interrogate the harmony and dissonance between relations of female sex workers and members of public and mend broken relations in the process. An approach of this nature, has to my knowledge, not been done by existing works on participatory theatre for conflict transformation in Zimbabwe

### **1.5 Aim and objectives**

The overall aim of the thesis is to build better relationships between female sex workers and the general public. The specific objectives were:

- To highlight the treatment of female sex workers within the context of their work worldwide.
- To describe the treatment of sex workers in Zimbabwe.
- To investigate the link between participatory theatre and conflict transformation.
- To examine life stories of sex workers in relation to emerging themes
- Together with a group selected from members of public, stage a participatory theatre for conflict transformation and examine the extent of its impact on building better relations with sex workers.

### **1.6 Research design**

This is participatory action research (PAR). PAR is primarily focused on understanding the reality of the subjects in the research – in this context, female sex workers and the general public. The aim of having “participants involved in the research process is also that they will be empowered in some way and made more conscious of the issues that affect them through their participation in the research” (SWEAT 2005:11). Bhana (1999 cited in SWEAT 2005:11) argues that a reason that makes participatory action research is unique is that it aims to produce not only data, but also some kind of political change through knowledge that has been generated. The goal is to challenge and if possible change this in this case change negative perceptions about female sex workers and to improve relations with the general public.

PAR typically involves exploratory components to determine the nature, extent, causes and consequences of the problem. This is followed by action that is, designing and implementing an intervention or possible solution. Finally, there is

an evaluation of the outcomes. In this study, participatory action research will provide planning for and implementation of an intervention designed to build better relationships between female sex workers and members of the public.

### **1.7 Research methodology**

The study employed a qualitative research method since it is exploratory in nature, thereby allowing the collection of narrative information and an understanding of participants' lived realities. In-depth interviews were conducted to buttress the demographic and biographic information gathered from all participants in the form of a brief, one-page questionnaire on female sex worker's age and marital status and current sex work activities. However, with general public participants, demographic and biographic data was obtained and a post-theatre analysis was conducted to understand the feelings of the participants.

Data gathered directly from female sex workers provides the most accurate and reliable account of the lived realities of their daily activities, and when gathered using a qualitative approach, allows the capture rich and nuanced detail. Qualitative methodology best captures participants' views and experiences on female sex work and how relationships can be improved with the general public activities (Arnott and Crago, 2009 cited in Scorgie et al 2011:22). Salkind (2010:1159) posits that qualitative research "provides holistic, in-depth accounts and attempts to reflect the complicated, contextual, interactive, and imperative nature of the social world". Therefore, qualitative inquiry allows me to get thick and rich data from a small number of participants, which is more useful to my study than more superficial data from larger numbers. Data generated by a qualitative methodology is rich in description, in this case, on the perceptions of female sex workers.

### **1.8 Data collection**

Narratives from lived experiences are analysed and reconstructed in narrative form. Clandinin and Connelly (2000:20) highlight that, in narratives, collaboration between a researcher and participants happens:

Over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer... concludes the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social. Simply stated ... narrative inquiry is stories lived and told.

### **1.9 Sampling**

A small sample of 14 research participants was chosen for the range of experiences and depth of information they would provide and data from interview transcripts and theatre for conflict transformation will be analysed. There were six female sex workers participants and eight women participants selected from the general public. However, even within the framework of a qualitative study, with relatively small numbers of participants in each study site, it was possible to capture a relatively representative sample. The sample was selected from six female sex workers, three from Harare and another three from Seke, Chitungwiza and eight women selected from members of public. The female sex workers contributed life histories through narratives. Themes were derived from the narratives and the eight women from the general public conducted the participatory theatre for conflict transformation. A further six-member voluntary advisory group consisting of three female sex workers and three female members of the public was supposed to assist me during the course of the study.

This study used the convenience, or 'snowball' sampling method to find participants for the study. By default, 'snowball' sampling strategies tend to recruit sex workers that are more visible, cooperative, and interested in participating in the research, rather than capturing a truly representative sample that reflects the diversity and heterogeneity of sex workers in a given setting (Shaver, 2005 cited in Scorgie et al. 2011:22).

### **1.10 Organisation of the study**

In chapter one, I present background on female sex work and its implications especially in regard to Zimbabwean traditional norms and values. I also elaborate on the overall objective and the specific aims of the study, the research design

and methodology. In chapter two, I review relevant literature on the treatment of sex workers with particular focus on relation to human rights worldwide. Chapter three discusses the treatment of female sex workers and its impact on individuals and communities in Zimbabwe.

Chapter four explains the relationship between participatory theatre and conflict transformation in building better relations between female sex workers and the general public. Chapter five explains the methods that were used for data collection and justification of their choice. In chapter six the life stories of the six sex workers are presented. Chapter seven presents the intervention, which was a mixture of forum and image theatre, both of which are forms of participatory theatre derived from the themes of the data, and how the participatory theatre was conducted.

Chapter eight is the summary and conclusion of the thesis, where personal reflections, limitations and recommendations are presented.

### **1.11 Summary and conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the background of the study, the research problem and theoretical framework. It has also discussed the aims and objectives of the research and the proposed research design and data collection methods. It has offered the rationale for the research, and has placed me and the participants within the context of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: SEX WORKERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

There are, of course, male sex workers but I have chosen to limit this research to females because they are the most viable in Zimbabwe. This chapter reviews literature highlighting the treatment of female sex workers in the context of their work worldwide. The aim of the chapter is to fulfil my objective number one which is to highlight the treatment of sex workers worldwide.

Understanding of treatment of sex workers is important in influencing the environment in which sex workers must operate. Furthermore it is only by knowing and understanding public opinion in this context of general public perceptions towards sex work and investigating whether or not those views are motivated by misinformation, that suitable corrective measures can be implemented to educate, clarify misunderstandings, and dismiss stereotypical views (Pudifin and Bosch 2012:3). Interventions can take any form however, in this study I used participatory theatre to promote behavioural change towards sex workers. Therefore as discussed in chapter one this study have two groups of participants namely sex workers who provide the life histories and women members of public who conducted the participatory theatre for conflict transformation.

### **2.2 Sex work worldwide**

D'Adamo (2015:1) confirms that worldwide, sex workers are organising themselves into unions with the support of labour groups, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which has resulted in the repositioning of the story of sex work away from morality and toward economic justice. In countries like India and Brazil, labour organizing has historically been a central model of organizing in the sex industry.

D'Adamo (2015:1) further argues that the advent of globalisation and increased commercialisation of non-traditional labour have led to unprecedented levels of

visibility, development and better understanding of both labour and labour organising. This has created an opportunity for the general public and governments to proactively engage with workers' rights movements around the world which are actively expanding what is possible in labour organising, and include the needs of those engaged in sex work into dialogues and programmes as workers re-invent traditional organising strategies.

Scorgie et al. (2011:15) note that, in African countries, sex work is illegal and sex workers caught will face the full wrath of the law. Following are some examples of how some countries are taking the issue of sex work. For instance, The Brazil Business (2013 cited in Hahlani and Kahlamba 2015:2) argues that, in Brazil, sex work has been a legal profession since 2000. This move shows that Brazil is serious about improving relations between sex workers and the general public. Vinga (2015) highlights that Mozambique, Mali, Senegal, Ethiopia and the Ivory Coast have legalised sex work for reasons ranging from: attempts to improve relations between sex workers and the general public, to the decrease the number of rape cases, STIs and human trafficking for the purpose of engaging in sex work.

Worldwide, there are many organisations that represent sex workers in upholding their rights. These include the Sexual Rights Centre in Zimbabwe, Women Arise for Change in Uganda, Action Hope Malawi in Malawi, the Community and Family Aids Foundation in Ghana, the Devine Economic and Development Group in Tanzania, the Nigeria Sex Workers Association, the Global Network for Sex Work Projects, and the Guyana Sex Work Coalition, among many others.

### **2.2.1 South Africa**

Sex work as a trade is a fairly new crime in the South African legislation books. As recent as the late 1980s, the exchange of sexual acts for reward was not criminalised in South Africa. However, was criminalised was the various acts associated with sex work, including soliciting, living off the earnings of prostitution and brothel-keeping. In 1988 Parliament effected an amendment to the Immorality Act (Pudifin and Bosch 2012:6). Other writers including Anortt and

Cargo (2009:21) agreed with Pudifin and Bosch in that the South African law under the Sexual Offences Act of 1957 criminalise soliciting, brothel keeping, and living off the earnings of a sex worker. A further amendment in 1988 of the Sexual Offences Act sought to criminalise persons who repeatedly sell sex for compensation or reward. Despite the *South African Law Review's* assertion that adult sex work can be legitimised, sex work has remained prohibited in South Africa. However, in South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe, only the acts associated with sex work are criminalised.

There was renewed interest in the idea of decriminalizing sex work from around 2007. This was supported by a number of individuals and several NGOs. However, the idea faced resistance from certain quarters who believed that legalising sex work is against moral expectancy. In the end, the idea suffered a still birth (Pudifin and Bosch 2012:9).

### **2.2.2 Namibia**

Namibian law does not necessarily criminalise the selling or buying of sexual service. The provisions of the legislation prohibit a wide range of activities that can result in sex work such as soliciting for sex. Namibia has a history of raiding brothels. For example, in 1998 sex shops in Windhoek, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund were raided by the police. The police confiscated videos and magazines. Owners of the brothels challenged the constitutionality of section 17 (1) of the Combating of Immoral Practices Act of 1980 as the material was considered to be 'indecent photographic material' in terms of section 17 of the Act. The High court agreed with the brothel owners that this section of the Combating of Immoral Practices Act, under which the police used to raid the brothels, was vague and broad to the extent that it violated the applicant's constitutional rights to be engaged in trade or business (Tyson 2010).

### **2.2.3 The Netherlands**

In the Netherlands, sex work has been illegal and only recently have brothels been legalised, although they were widely tolerated (Cook 1995:553). Since 2000, sex work in the Netherlands has been legalised, and sex work is



considered as a regular job, meaning sex workers even pay taxes on their earnings. Sex workers are also eligible for unemployment and invalidity benefits (Netherlands Bureau National Rapporteur 2002:15). There are sex shops, brothels and anything related to sex work covering several blocks (Legal Assistance Centre, 2011:20). Legal sex workers have the same rights, protections and obligations as any other worker (Kilvington 2001:81). Although sex work is legal, it is limited by a wide range of laws and regulations that prescribe who can be allowed to do sex work and under which circumstances (De Graaf 1995:9). Generally, a local authorities' licence and, in some instances, registration, is required for sex work to be legal (Dutch Policy on Prostitution: Questions and Answers, 2012:8). Sex work that is criminalised includes street solicitation outside designated areas, any non-licensed sex work in an area that requires licensing, employing non-EU nationals who do not have a licence, employing sex workers under the age of 18, and trafficking and forced labour (Dutch Policy on Prostitution: Questions and answers, 2012:15).

#### **2.2.4 Germany**

Like the Netherlands, Germany is basically involved in conflict management of sex workers and the general public by regulating the times and places where sex work can be conducted. However, the law prohibits advertising sex work (Cook 1995:553). A 2001 law in Germany recognised sex work as a legitimate form of employment; hence, the encouraging tolerance of sex workers (Legal Assistance Centre 2011:21). This initiative taken by Germany is heartening, and will go a long way in influencing other nations to consider providing legal frameworks that will improve relations between sex workers and members of the public.

#### **2.2.5 Sweden**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January 1999, Sweden put in place a law that prohibits the purchase of sexual services. In other words, the Swedish laws criminalise sex workers' clients. The thinking behind the law is that sex workers are victims who require government protection from exploitive men. However, the law does not

outlaw sex work but seeks to protect sex workers from being abused in their work.

### **2.2.6 New Zealand**

In addition to other countries mentioned earlier on, Vinga (2015) argues that New Zealand is one of the countries that has adopted a liberal approach to sex work which allows for its prohibited existence through the Prostitution Reform Act of 2003. This sought to decriminalise sex work and reduce harm caused by sex work, while not endorsing or morally sanctioning sex work. According to Jordan, (1991c, 1993c) and Lichtenstein (1997), cited in Jordan (2005:26), the New Zealand Prostitution Reform Act 2003 decriminalized sex work and allowed sex workers to unionise by forming the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC). This effectively gave sex workers the same employment rights as any other worker. This means that sex workers are now protected from sexual harassment, poor working conditions when working in brothels, and unfair treatment by clients.

These steps taken by New Zealand are encouraging in that they reduce incidences of stigma and discrimination of sex workers. The initiative helps shift negative perceptions towards sex workers. It also helps reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS as sex workers will be able to apply their rights over their bodies. Overall, this will result in better relations between sex workers and the general public.

### **2.3 Sex work and livelihood**

Edlund and Korn (2002, cited in Hahlani and Kahlamba 2015:4) argue that sex work is “a multi-billion dollar business that employs millions of women worldwide.” Sinha (2015) in a study on motives for entering into sex work by women in India also found that women there entered sex work because of poverty. In another study, Fielding-Miller et al (2014) also conducted a qualitative study to explore the needs of sex workers in terms of health in Swaziland. They concluded that women entered sex work because of the high

levels of poverty in Swaziland. SWEAT (2005:7) also concluded that poverty is usually the driving factor for woman to engage in sex work:

In most cases, the decision to enter the industry is an economic one. However, there can be many different reasons why people enter the industry. Some people start doing this work to support their families, to finance their studies or because they value the independence that the work provides.

Edlund and Korn (2002, cited in Hahlani and Kahlamba 2015:4) cite countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand where the sex work sector accounts for significant percentages of the gross domestic product. Although sex work is a multi-billion dollar business women are not the sole beneficiaries. Instead, they are just like any other workers whose labour is exploited through capitalism.

This study accepts that some individuals reject sex work on moral grounds. However, this research takes the view that laws should not be used to prohibit and enforce the morality of sex workers or any specific group as this has an effect of encouraging bad relations between the parties concerned. "An opposing point of view [to the above statement] is that sex work is a means to earn a living that is chosen by adults and that legally prohibiting sex work infringes on people's fundamental right to earn a living" (SWEAT 2005:6). For instance, sex work provides a means for livelihoods for women who might not have other sources of income (Bell 2009: 1). This view was supported by Safeek (2013 cited in Hahlbani and Kahlamba 2015:4) who suggested that some women choose to engage in sex work because it is a viable livelihood option that can give them hope for survival. Sex workers are commonly and incorrectly regarded as women who are not capable of being good parents. However, as asserted by Scorgie et al. (2011:32), this is a general statement because evidence has shown that some women use their income from sex work to support family members and to pay school fees for their children.

Interestingly, many women, some of whom are highly educated and accomplished, willingly choose to enter the sex work trade. Highly educated women choose to engage in sex work because it “maximises their ability”; that is, they are able to earn more money than they would do in conventional jobs. Sex work is seen as among several livelihood options available to women, particularly those from poor backgrounds (Hahlani and Kahlamba 2015:4).

A study conducted by Scorgie et al. (2011:31) in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa suggests that the factors motivating individuals to sell sex are complex, no matter where they are located in the world. While many sex workers we interviewed had clearly entered the sex industry for economic survival, and often in the face of severe poverty and unemployment, it is important to acknowledge that several found that the work gave them financial independence and the ability to improve their lives quite dramatically. ... Another stated, “I manage my own business – my money is not taxed” (\*Female SW, Hillbrow, IDI9).

The above has demonstrated, therefore, that the benefits of sex work for livelihood cannot be under-estimated. However, there are cases of sex workers’ labour being exploited which can include sex trafficking (and efforts are under way to fight such practices); it then it becomes immoral and degrading to women. Edlund and Korn (2002 cited in Hahlani and Kahlamba 2015:5) believe that in spite of bad relationships between sex workers and a community induced by cultural violence, sex work has its benefits and that it is a relatively well paid profession, despite being low skill and labour intensive. Therefore, I argue for the intervention, through participatory drama that this study intends to recommend, to influence behavioural change and improve relations between sex workers and the general public.

However, besides its immense benefits to both sex workers’ livelihoods and national economies, the sex work profession has its own risks or hazards such as, for example, HIV/AIDS which this study may help to address, once relations between sex workers and the general public are improved.

## **2.4 Stigma and discrimination**

Sex workers are harassed in the communities in which they live and operate. They are made objects of scorn. Society does not tolerate them because it is argued that sex work activities offend the moral and religious sensibilities of most people. Married women feel sex workers are there to destabilise their marriages, while mothers believe that they are setting a bad example for their children.

Stigma, on the one hand, refers to “a brand, a mark of shame or a stain on one’s character. Social stigmatisation of an act entails severe disapproval from society for behaviour that is considered to be outside the bounds of social norms” (SWEAT 2005:20). On the other hand, discrimination is the underlying message that society has traditionally given to women that sex is only acceptable within marriage settings (Goffman, 1968; Pheterson, 1998 cited in SWEAT 2005:20). This has seen women’s needs being neglected through misrepresentation of the Bible and dominance of men in leadership and, as SWEAT (2005:20) rightly suggested,

This can be understood as part of society’s attempt to keep women’s sexuality controlled within the bounds of marriage. As a result, sexual relationships that do not occur within a marriage set up or at least within a committed relationship are seen as being against the social norm. Relationships that do not conform to the norm-setting nuclear family are rejected and branded as abnormal.

Discrimination, which can be referred to as “unfair treatment of one person or group, usually because of prejudice” is rife. Sex workers experience discrimination and unfair treatment, for instance, in the provision of housing, health and employment (SWEAT 2005:27. In a study by Scorgie et al. (2013:16) conducted in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Uganda and Kenya, sex workers lamented how they are often detained and unlawfully arrested, with violence, extortion, vilification and exclusion. Sex workers gave their account of exploitation and repeated human rights violations at the hands of the police, health workers and

the general public. As a result, such acts of violence have had an extreme impact on their physical, mental and social well-being.

A consistent pattern of state failure to punish or otherwise hold accountable either police or non-state actors (that is, the general public) who perpetrate violence against sex workers constitutes a policy whether explicit or implicit of tolerance for such abuses (SWAN 2015:20).

Stigma and discrimination of sex workers is usually derived from patriarchy which, in its wider definition, means the persistent and normalisation of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the central institutions of society which gives them almost absolute control and that women are disadvantaged from accessing to such power. However, it does not mean that women are totally powerless, deprived of rights, influence, and resources (Lerner 1989:239 cited in Sultana 2010:3). Mirkin (2009:42) suggests that stigma and discrimination of women who, in the context of sex workers, usually comes,

... within [the] patriarchy [of] men, [who] by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labour, define the part that women shall (or shall not) play. Women are thought of as a subgroup in a man's world: 'Patriarchy' is believed to be 'equivalent to culture and culture is patriarchy,' and the 'great' or 'liberalizing' periods of history are thought to have been the same for women and men, children and adults.

The above statement shows that patriarchy is an authoritative male system that is both oppressive and discriminatory to women in this context a sex worker trying to make a living from the money they get from a service they render to clients. Patriarchy is oppressive in social, political, economic, and cultural environments. It is discriminatory in its control of access to power, management of resources and benefits, and the manipulation of public and private power structures because, in most cases, sex workers are excluded from programmes

that may generally benefit them, for example, in terms of livelihood and reproductive health.

Kohm (2012:104) discusses the history of patriarchy from a Judeo-Christian perspective which has a foundation of male dominance based on the Ten Commandments. While Christianity holds that the Mosaic Law was fulfilled through the person of Jesus Christ, to Christians, Christ brought humanity freedom from sin, regardless of gender, status or national origin. He offered true liberty equally to both men and women.

Negative attitudes towards sex workers can result in physical violence which can cause death or injury or disability. They can also lead to sexual abuse including emotional trauma, rape and harassment, all of which can lead to emotional scarring. Furthermore, negative attitudes can also subject sex workers to physiological violence in the course of their work where, for example, they are called derogatory names that are stressful and cause low esteem (Church et. al. 2001, cited in Rekart 2005:2124).

Stigma and discrimination in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa has resulted in sex workers expressing fears of gossip and vilification by neighbours and, consequently, they try to conceal their sex worker status from members of the public. A number of sex workers described how they are laughed at, called derogatory names and are accused of “stealing men” from other women, or of being HIV positive (Scogie et. al. 2011:9).

SWEAT (2005:22) believes that sometimes hiding the work they do makes it very complicated for sex workers to manage their personal and social lives. Hence, Suicide (2013: para.8 line2) contends that stigma is at the root of the hateful attitudes that allow assault and impunity, the discriminatory laws that keep the sex workers underground, and the harmful working conditions that result from hiding in the shadows of society.

According Goffman (1968, and Moane, 2003 cited in SWEAT 2005:21) there are notable psychological consequences of internalised stigma including difficulties

with self-esteem, feelings of shame, despair and powerlessness, which SWEAT (2005:23) noted as causing sex workers to plan their social life in order to keep the people in their lives who know of their sex work activities completely separate from those who do not know. This was also confirmed in an investigation produced by the United Nations (2014:8) which concluded that, in four African countries – Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe – sex workers felt that stigma towards them was very high. In these countries, many sex workers do not wish to disclose their occupation to health-care providers and, generally, stigma and discrimination were considered a major barrier in their willingness or desire to test for HIV infection. That may be a contributing factor to the United Nations (2014:3) conclusion that in 110 countries where they were able to obtain data, the prevalence of HIV infection is almost 12 times higher among sex workers than for the population as a whole, with prevalence at least 50-fold higher in four countries. However, Scorgie et al. (2011:51) advise on the need to desist from stigmatising and discriminating sex workers as a tool to effectively manage and control STIs and HIV/AIDS.

At the same time, UNAIDS (2014:5) argues that a reduction of violence against sex workers will reduce instances of STIs and HIV/AIDS among sex workers and the general public. I argue that better relations between sex workers and the general public, as advocated through this research, will probably go further to drastically reduce the levels of STIs associated with sex work.

## **2.5 Sex workers and human rights**

The purpose of the laws that criminalise sex work is to eradicate sex work and protect people from being forced into the industry. However, evidence has shown that legislation making sex work illegal has not succeeded in eradicating sex work. The laws have done the opposite through increasing the stigma attached to sex work making sex workers more vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation (SWEAT 2005:9). Laws and policies, including ones that criminalize sex work, may exacerbate sex workers' vulnerability to all forms of violence. For example, forced rescue and rehabilitation raids by the police in the context of



anti-trafficking laws and eradicating sex work may result in sex workers being evicted from their places of residence if they rent and onto the streets, where they may be more exposed to forms of violence that include rape, repeated beating, illegal arrests, harassment and humiliation (WHO 2013:24).

Therefore, this study intends to re-claim the human rights of sex workers. Human rights are naturally considered as basic freedoms and entitlements that human beings must claim. Some of the human rights include the right to freedom of movement, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of equality.

Murphy (2015:para. 1 line 3) highlights that human rights should not be selectively applied to citizens as is the case with sex workers who are extremely marginalised and are frequently forced to live outside the law. In an article, Aviva (2012: para. 6 line 1) pleaded with the members of the public by saying that, “even if our opinions on the sex work industry diverge, we can all agree that being a sex worker – whether by choice, circumstances or force – should not disqualify someone from basic human dignity, care and respect.”

This study argues that the world today, which is accelerating global unification, requires countries to embrace and respect greater rights for sex workers, which will improve relations with the general public. Most countries are signatories to several international treaties that spell out the basic human rights to which all persons are entitled. These include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, and the International Protocol on Civil and Political Rights. As a result, Suicide (2013: para. 4 line 1) argues that there should be mention of perceptions against sex workers in any human rights conversation, as well as discussion of violence against women at high level meetings such as the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. I agree with Suicide because these conversations will promote behavioural change toward sex workers in the general public.

The same author, Suicide (2013: para. 7 line 1), while trying to understand the suffering sex workers go through every day, was at pains to ask,

Why are sex workers not a part of the violence against women conversation? Sex workers are daughters, sisters, mothers, and community members living in your town, riding on your buses, eating at your restaurants, and reading in your libraries.

The SWAN (2015:20) suggests that the stigma and discrimination towards sex workers are acts prohibited by international law, including the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Convention against Torture) and article 7 of the ICCPR5.

In an article in a local newspaper, Vinga (2015) argues that notable international strides have been taken to address sex work. For example, the 1986 International Charter for Prostitutes' Rights (ICPR) urges responsible authorities across the world to decriminalize all aspects of adult sex work resulting from individual decision. The same author states (para: 23 line1) that the ICPR was created out of two World Whores Congresses held in Amsterdam in 1985 and Brussels in 1986. He continues (para 24 line 1) that, "In 2003, an article published in the journal, *New Humanist*, noted that the World Charter was now being utilised by human rights groups in most countries to legalize sex work." This has seen some countries discussed in this chapter taking action to improve relations between sex workers and the general public.

However, seeking human rights for sex workers is not about encouraging people to enter the industry. It is about acknowledging that sex workers have the right to choose. If women and men choose to remain in sex work they have a right to be protected. In addition, drawing from a study carried out by Bell (2009: 1) who noted that one can agree that a person has a right to make informed decisions about her/his own body and, therefore, there is no basis to discriminate female sex workers who are only making their own choices. Alexander (1997 cited in Bell 2009: 2) argues that female sex workers have no freedom if laws are used to restrict and control their bodies.

This statement by Bell augurs well for the thrust of this study where it endeavours to change perceptions against female sex workers so that they are allowed to express and explore their sexuality and sexual desires.

The Global report for the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014, launched in February 2014 by the United Nations Secretary-General, calls on States to “decriminalize adult, voluntary sex work to recognize the right of sex workers to work without coercion, violence or risk of arrest.” Removing punitive laws associated with sex work can help to create empowering environments that allow sex workers to access HIV and other health services, to report violence and abuse, and to take steps to mitigate the impact of HIV. Biradavoluet et al. 2009, Monoek (2012 cited in Scogie et al. 2011:16) agree that there is need to remove laws that discriminate sex work because,

In practice, authorities seldom formally prosecute these since they are difficult to prove and enforce. Instead, police invoke municipal by laws or vague non-criminal legislation to arrest or detain sex workers on charges of loitering, indecent exposure, public nuisance or offences that do not warrant arrest, such as “blocking the pavement”, but often without charging them.

I would like to posit that the law should take its rightful position with respect to protecting all people regardless of their job or livelihood. The idea is to view sex work from the same perspective as other work considered to be of national importance.

## **2.6 Summary and conclusion**

The hope is having country where there is peace, justice and strong institutions that encourage building of better relationships is goal number 16 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Murphy (2015: para. 7 line 1) notes that organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Aids organisation (UNAIDS), the International Labour organisation (ILO), the Open Society Foundation, the Global Network on HIV and the Law, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are all highlighting the treatment of sex workers with a hope of having an improvement in relations with members of

public. In line with this, my thesis will help towards achieving this goal as I work towards building better relationships between sex workers and the general public.

## **CHAPTER THREE: SEX WORKERS IN ZIMBABWE**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to fulfil my objective number two by highlighting the treatment and experiences of sex workers in Zimbabwe. Many sex workers face cultural, social and legal hurdles in life caused by the perceptions of the general public towards them. They also experience violence when on their work which increases their vulnerability to negotiate peace and health issues (Maseko 2012).

A number of authors explore the attitudes and behaviour towards sex workers in Zimbabwe. These case studies include those done by Scorgie et al. (2011), Hahlani and Kahlamba (2015), and Overs (2002), and both print and electronic media carry many stories showing the general public's perception towards sex workers. These studies demonstrate that, in Zimbabwe, sex workers are fragile in different ways, but three main common features emerge: namely stigma, marginalisation and violence towards sex workers. These stem from the fact that most Zimbabwean families hold strongly to the opinion that discussing issues related to sexuality – in this context, sex work – in their homes is taboo.

This has left female sex workers fearful, anxious and depressed, making them feel discriminated against, embarrassed, humiliated and mortified (UNAIDS 2014). Which makes it important for sex workers to find a way to improve relations with member of public through the women participants' I conducted a participatory theatre for conflict transformation with as discussed in chapter seven.

### **3.2 Historical background and development of sex work in Zimbabwe**

In Zimbabwe, sex work is highly stigmatised and sex workers are often subjected to blame and discriminatory treatment. There are no laws governing sex work, and law enforcement agents rarely do anything to improve relations between sex workers and the general public through, for example, stopping the violence experienced by sex workers. According to Scorgie et al (2013:45), common

terms of abuse used to stigmatise and discriminate sex workers in Zimbabwe include “bitch” and “whore”.

This has left sex workers’ social standing lower than that of members of the public, which could be attributed to the stereotyping, impunity and violence towards them. I argue that this has silenced and normalised the general public’s perception of sex workers. This is because, as Bell (2009:2) posits, “sex is a taboo topic in society and women especially are not supposed to be sexually assertive.” This statement by Bell is typical of a patriarchal society where women should be submissive to men. Bell (2009:1) further writes that, in order to build better relations with sex workers, the general public must change perceptions on sexuality and human nature and begin to allow sex workers to express and explore their sexuality without limits; then sex work can enjoy respect and dignity.

Zimbabwe’s Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, Chapter 9:23, as amended in 2015, section 61, defines a sex worker as a male or female person who for monetary or non-monetary rewards agrees to have anal, extra marital sexual intercourse with other persons. Overall (1992 cited in Nkala 2014:66) defined sex work as “soliciting other persons to anal or extra-marital sexual intercourse to engage in other sexual conduct with him or her.” UNAIDS (2000 cited in Scorgie et al. 2013:14) says that the term “sex worker” can be defined as trading which is “any agreement between two or more persons in which the objective is exclusively limited to the sexual act and ends with that and which involves preliminary negotiations for a price.” The three definitions show that, for sex work to take place, there be a sexual act.

Sex work is not a criminal offence in terms of Zimbabwean law, and the act of engaging in sexual intercourse for a reward is not criminalised, though Section 81 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act criminalises solicitation for purposes of living off the earnings of sex work. The Southern African Litigation Centre (2012 cited in Hahlani and Kahlamba 2015:3) agrees that the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, which repealed both the Sexual Offences Act (2001) (Chapter 9:11) and the Miscellaneous Offences Act (Chapter 9:15), only

prohibits what it calls public indecency and publicly soliciting another person for the purpose of sex work. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is public soliciting and not sex work as such, which is a criminal offence in Zimbabwe.

Jock McCulloch (2000a:89) notes that sex work existed as early as the twentieth century in Zimbabwe. Pape (1990:703) wrote, concerning a large influx of sex workers into Zimbabwe around 1914, that this was driven by disparity between the sexes at the time. Pape (1990:703) further highlights that the sex workers were not black women but white women who were coming from their home countries. By 1908, it is believed that there were an estimated 19 sex workers on the streets of Salisbury (now Harare). Even at this time in Zimbabwean history, sex work was highly unwelcome in the society as shown by the white population which was not subtle in unleashing their wrath on any white women who did not pay attention to the existing racial lines when conducting their business affairs. McCulloch (2000a:89) noted that the influx of sex workers during 1914 drew the attention of the Salisbury Council which publicly denounced sex work. The discontent had cascaded to the general public with calls as early as 1908 from ratepayers for the government to suppress sex work, supported by letters in April 1909 to the High Commissioner, Lord Selbourne, protesting the existence of sex work on the streets of Salisbury.

The previously enacted Ordinance No. 13 of 1900, like the current Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) law of 2004 as amended, did not explicitly make sex work illegal and this, according to McCulloch (2000b:90-91) let in a loop hole that gave the police room to tolerate sex work. As a result, several protests ensued with one notable November 1909 speech by von Hirschenberg encouraging tough measures to eliminate sex work. However, all these efforts did not stop sex work as year's later black women were to join the trade.

Three distinct legacies affected the lives of black Zimbabwean women at independence in 1980. First, pre-colonial society still has a strong impact on culture and customs, particularly on family structures and personal relationships. Second, colonial society, imposed by white settlers who began arriving in the late

nineteenth century, brought its own gender ideology along with new economic relationships. Finally, the struggle for independence changed the practical conditions under which many Zimbabwean women live and influenced new kinds of relationships between women and men. Each of these legacies has different implications for the roles women are expected to play, and each set of expectations affects the social institutions that frame women's lives (Seidan 1984:421).

Seidman (1984:419) writes that, when the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) won the election in 1980, it promised to empower and emancipate women. The party's Women's League declared that, for the revolution to fully realize in its totality, there must be emancipation of women. It is sad that the Zimbabwean people are conservative and wish to discourage sex work to the extent that, prior to independence in 1980 and barely four years into Zimbabwe, colonial vagrancy laws were used against sex workers. In 1983, there was a major effort to eliminate sex work in post-independence Zimbabwe by rounding up hundreds of women and detaining them until they could prove they were not involved in sex work. As a result, several thousand women were detained for suspicion of being involved in sex work. In Mutare, Zimbabwe a total of 200 women who were on their way to work were arrested. They were detained until they proved that they were not involved in sex work.

### **3.3 Stigma and discrimination of sex workers in Zimbabwe**

Stigma, discrimination and harassment in Zimbabwe takes place because of unjust and unequal power relations between the female sex workers on the one hand and the general public, the police and health workers on the other hand. Maseko (2012) suggests that stigma and discrimination through hate speech attributed to leaders in Zimbabwe has perpetuated or encouraged an environment of homophobia. Frequent statements from government, leadership, the Christian church and traditional leaders condemning female sex work has encouraged stigmatisation and violence towards sex workers.



The print and electronic media is awash with evidence of stigma and discrimination of sex workers. For instance, politicians' statements which may be considered as influencing hate speech towards sex workers with, for example, Grace Mugabe (Secretary for the Women's League in the ZANU-PF party and the President's wife), having an open disrespect for sex workers and has publicly urged rapists to go for female sex workers arguing that sex workers had been given permission to do their work freely by the Constitutional Court judgement on 25 May 2015 (Anon. 2015d).

When vendors were protesting against their removal from street pavements in the central business district of Harare in September 2015, some of them held placards denouncing the move and questioning why they were being relocated from the streets where they made a livelihood, yet the Constitutional Court ruling of 27 May 2015 allowed female sex workers to go about their business (Tandi 2015).

Statements attributed to Grace Mugabe and the vendors were a misinterpretation of the Constitutional judgement. Therefore, Tandi (2015) corrected these misconceptions by referring to a case involving nine women where the court found that, for the police to arbitrarily arrest any women without proof that they were soliciting for sex, amounted to a violation of a person's right to freedom of movement as enshrined in the Constitution. Hence, for a woman to be arrested for sex work there must be a person, whether a male or another female, who claims that he/she was solicited for sex work. Thus, the Constitutional Court did not legalise sex work in Zimbabwe; all it did was to stop the arbitrary arrest of women on suspicion of being a sex worker without evidence.

Kavhu (2016) wrote that, in May 2016, Zimbabwe's parliamentarians had a chance to meet with sex workers at a workshop in Beitbridge. A senator, Lillian Timveros, was quoted as saying that non-governmental organisations that support female sex workers should be careful and avoid a situation where they are accused of perpetuating sex work in Zimbabwe. This is another example that shows the extend of polarisation between sex workers and members of public in

Zimbabwe were even organisations are muted which this study hopes to correct through improving relations.

In another example, a local non-governmental organisation, Safaids, in 2015 gave a total of 25 sex workers self-defensive sprays to protect themselves from abusive clients in Mhondoro, Mashonaland East province. A health expert present at the handover ceremony discouraged Safaids from implementing such an initiative in the future by suggesting that the strays may end up being used by sex workers to indulge in criminal activities (Nsingo 2015). However, although the health expert's argument cannot be totally disputed, again such statements disengage sex workers from society and discourage the building of better relationships between female sex workers and members of the public.

However, Bishop Johannes Ndanga, the Chairperson of the Apostolic Churches Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ), a regulatory authority of indigenous churches in Zimbabwe was liberal when he was quoted after the 25 May Constitutional Court ruling against the arbitrary arrest of women suspected for soliciting for sex work. Munyoro and Nemukuyu (2015) write that Bishop Ndanga said,

The law is the problem and it makes it difficult for the police to effect arrests. As a church, we are moving for the amendment of the law to empower the police to arrest the suspected prostitutes without violating the women's rights.

According to Vinga (2015), in an article published in a local newspaper, Christian conservatives are a fighting hard against the decriminalisation of sex work. Johannes Ndanga, president of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ), was again quoted saying,

Every country has its value systems and ours are hinged on Christian principles. These are the very issues which led to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Even the Bible in Leviticus 19:29 reads, 'Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore, lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land becomes full of wickedness.

In a study, Pswarayi (2010 cited in Scorgie et al. 2013:14) confirmed that, in Zimbabwe, stigma and discrimination against sex workers is rife at health institutions where nurses usually wish to attend to a female sex worker only after having attended to all other patients. According to Scorgie (2013:7) in another study, sex workers' accounts emerged of having to bribe health workers for treatment in Uganda and Zimbabwe, where sex workers had to pay extra for STI treatment, in spite of the fact that they might have been the first to arrive at the health centre seeking medical services. UNAIDS (2014:5) suggests that stigma and marginalisation discourages female sex workers from seeking treatment. The above narrative shows the marginalisation and exclusion of sex workers in mainstream support and services in health care.

UNAIDS (2014:5) highlights that members of the public and health workers are not alone in stigmatising and discriminating sex workers in Zimbabwe, as the police are part of the sex workers' human violations. Several other studies have shown that law enforcement agents are also involved in abusing and harassing sex workers. For example, a study in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa by Scorgie et al. (2011:7) found that human rights violations in the form of sexual violence perpetrated by police and related authorities was common. Some sex workers, both female and male, described their experiences of multiple times of abuse, often in the form of gang rape, by police. Sex workers further described how they have to bribe the police with money or through sexual favours, which constitutes sexual violence. Women regarded sexual favours to police as robbery rather than bribery.

The abusive law enforcement agents results in stigmatisation, discrimination, extortion, sexual abuse and rape has exacerbated the vulnerability of sex workers (UNAIDS 2014:5). Scorgie et al. (2011:18) argue that in Zimbabwe, as in most parts of the world, stigma and discrimination perpetrated against sex workers is common and also that sex workers are said to be associated with an increased risk of acquiring HIV infection. I argue that HIV and STIs cannot be blamed solely on sex workers because, for example, UNAIDS (2014:3) describes

how a group of sex workers in Zimbabwe reported that relations with police were difficult and that police were confiscating their condoms, thus placing them at risk as they struggle to earn a living. Such police actions were earlier confirmed by Scorgie et al. (2011:32) when they heard lived experiences of a sex worker in the hands of the police in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe,

I was escorting my client to his car after his massage and there were plain-clothes policemen ... three of them. Just as he drove off, they came and I thought they were thieves trying to take money, so I tried to explain to them, 'No, I am not carrying anything.' I discovered that they were policemen. There's a car park next to the flat and they took me there and they took turns. [Female SW, Bulawayo IDI4]

In part, the above narrative shows attitudes and behaviour that may result in the stigmatisation and discrimination of sex workers. Despite the controversy surrounding sex work in Zimbabwe, with a view to counter stigma and discrimination towards female sex workers, former MDC legislator, Thabita Khumalo, in 2011 proposed the decriminalization of sex work in Zimbabwe. She argued that legalizing sex work would have positive benefits and address three important issues: corruption, HIV/AIDS, and women's rights. Khumalo went further to suggest that the word "prostitute" should be replaced with the word "pleasure engineer" (Anon 2015e). This was a plea to the general public to at least dignify female sex workers, rather than stigmatising, discriminating and harassing them.

The Member of Parliament for Epworth, Harare, Zalerah Makari, like Thabita Khumalo, showed remorse for the sex workers and was quoted by Machakaire (2015) saying:

It is up to government's line ministries, technocrats, pastors, lawmakers and politicians to spearhead efforts of giving sex workers a better way to make a living. When I look at you, my heart bleeds, I am filled with so much hurt, Makari said as she fought back the tears during her address to sex workers who had gathered in ward six, Epworth (about 25 km south-east of Harare)

on Saturday. I can't promise that I can give all of you jobs ... some of you have degrees, others have never been in school. I am going to do my best to ensure that you start your own businesses depending on your level of education. The sex workers used the platform to share harrowing experiences they are facing while executing their duties. Many said it is not their desire to be on the streets at night but were being forced by the economic hardships. "Sometimes we are given 50 cents [and told] '*woti ita hako zvaunoda nemuviri wangu* (do as you please with my body).' It's not what you want but the situation pushes you," said a sex worker only identified as Ruth, before opening up on other encounters (Machakaire 2015).

It is encouraging to note that the Member of Parliament understood that In Zimbabwe, sex workers' issues require urgent intervention and there is need for all stakeholders to work together to benefit themselves and sex workers.

The above has showed that there is need to act to improve relations between sex workers and the general public. Bell (2009: para. 1 line 1) argues that, in order to transform attitudes and improve relationships, it is imperative to address perceptions in this context against female sex workers. Research has shown colouration in the reduction of negative attitudes towards sex workers with a fall in HIV infections (UNAIDS 2014:6). Just as in the case of Thabita Khumalo and Safaids, in 2015, Murphy (2015: para. 2 line 1) highlighted that Amnesty International, a human rights organisation, was condemned for advocating for sex work by journalists and other people after initiating a consultation to develop a policy to protect the human rights of sex workers.

This shows that stigma and discrimination goes beyond sex workers and is not peculiar to Zimbabwe alone. The spirited attacks of such noble efforts by some of these organisations and people were unwarranted as it perpetuates perceptions that marginalise and discriminate female sex workers. However, it is not too late to shift attitudes and behaviour towards sex workers which is the effort this study

hopes to achieve, and to improve relations between female sex workers and the general public.

To resolve the issue of stigma, sex workers form alliances among themselves. They have become family to the extent of assisting each other with financial resources where necessary. Friendships, mutuality and reciprocity among sex workers are very common in Mkoba (a township in Gweru, Zimbabwe). Most sex workers interviewed said they had joined hands with fellow sex workers to form burial societies and rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) for purposes of mutual support during bereavement and whenever one of their own was in financial need (Hahlani and Kahlamba 2015:10). This shows that sex workers are stigmatized and discriminated against, and there is need to work on changing perceptions concerning them and improving their relationship with members of public.

### **3.4 Sex workers and human rights in Zimbabwe**

The Constitution represents the supreme law of Zimbabwe and any law or conduct that is inconsistent with the Constitution is automatically invalid. In the Zimbabwean Constitution, of particular importance are the rights that are conferred on the citizenry of the country, and the method of application and enforcement of these rights. These rights are contained in Chapter 4 of the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, which has a total of 64 sections.

The Bill of Rights constitutes the cornerstone of democracy in Zimbabwe. It enshrines the rights of all Zimbabweans and affirms democratic values. According to the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No 20 (Zimbabwe Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs 2013:27-38), section 48 gives every person the right to life regardless of gender unless the person is under a death penalty. Sex workers have to provide for their livelihood just like any other persons through their work. Section 49 gives all persons the right to personal liberty, meaning that sex workers can move and work at any time they desire without any restrictions from the general public or police. In section 51, the Constitution provides for inherent human dignity that must be respected and

protected; hence, for example, sex workers when arrested should not be paraded and humiliated. Section 52 articulates the right to personal security from any forms of danger to health or bodily harm. The Government should put in place adequate measures to ensure that, for example, sex workers should be treated fairly and within a reasonable time when they visit health institutions.

Section 56 (1) of the Constitution affirms the right to equality and fair treatment, meaning that all persons, including sex workers, must enjoy this right without discrimination, while Section 56 (3) gives the right to freedom from stigma and discrimination. Sex workers should be respected just like any other persons and should not be stigmatised within communities by police and health service providers. In section 57 the Constitution gives the right to privacy to all persons without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, colour or ethnicity. Here, sex workers should not be humiliated by the general public, police or health officers. Section 62 gives the right to information; sex workers must also be given information which concerns their health like any other persons. In this way they will be able to know about reproductive rights which help to reduce HIV prevalence rates in the country.

The State is tasked with respecting, promoting and protecting the rights enshrined in the Constitution. The Bill of Rights applies to all laws, and binds the legislature, the executive, the judiciary and all organs of State. In terms of the Bill of Rights, all three arms of government have particular duties in the realisation of social transformation of Zimbabwe and, as such, certain obligations are placed on these arms in order to reach those aims as enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

Social transformation in Zimbabwe in the post-colonial period has been founded on the rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights also ensures that everyone has the right to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care, to sufficient food and water, and to social security, including social assistance if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants. In this regard, the State is tasked with taking reasonable legislative

and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights.

According to the Zimbabwe Constitution (Zimbabwe Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs 2013:95-99), the State is required in terms of Chapter 12 to set up independent bodies, namely, the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission through sections 251-253, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (sections 242-244) and the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (sections 245-247). This study emphasises that a strong, credible, and capable institutional regime is critical to encourage attitude and behavioural change towards sex workers and peaceful co-existence with the general public.

There is also the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Community Development which exists to emancipate, empower and voice human rights issues concerning women. Sadly, Jessie Majome (Zifm Stereo News bulleting 2016), a former Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development, a women's rights lawyer and Member of Parliament for Harare West, bemoaned that a crafted National Gender-based Violence Strategy 2012-2015 was never implemented by the government. The National Aids Council is another institution that can help reduce human rights violations against sex workers in Zimbabwe. These institutions help to provide checks and balances in the furtherance of the Bill of Rights outlined in Chapter 2 of the Constitution. In this context, sex workers have the same rights as any other persons and can visit any of these bodies with any complaint for investigation. However, due to the nature of sex work and the vilification associated with it, sex workers may not be able to fully utilize these commissions.

Despite the Constitutional Court ruling in July 2015 that outlawed the arresting and harassment, stigmatisation and discrimination of women loitering, or sex workers loitering for the purpose of sex work; several sex workers in Mupandawana, Masvingo province (Zifm Stereo News bulletin 2016) expressed dismay and anger over the persistent illegal arrests by the police whom they accused of demanding bribes of between US\$5 to US\$10 for the sex workers to



be set free. This is a clear violation of human rights which warrants investigation. However, with the stigma and discrimination associated with sex work, sex workers find it difficult to get recourse in such circumstances.

The current discourses where sex workers are labelled as nuisance has to be discouraged which is the aim of this research. It is imperative that sex workers are allowed to go on their daily business and their freedom of movement and is respected. This will help encourage peaceful co-existence between the sex workers and general public within the communities since sex work is a profession which general public cannot just wish away.

In revealing some of the stigma and discrimination they encounter as sex workers, another study by Scorgie et al. (2011:33) further confirmed these experiences of police behaviour towards sex workers in Zimbabwe,

Closely linked with these experiences of sexual violence was that of having to bribe the police, in the form of either money or sex. Bribery is so common, when asked, 'In the past year, have you been forced to pay bribes to the police or anyone else?' many participants simply answered that they pay bribes 'all the time', explaining that there were too many instances to recount individually. Some characterized this as 'theft' or 'robbery' rather than 'bribery'.

The police are a huge problem. One night you can work and then all your money is just taken by the police. Police are really making big money from robbing sex workers... \*Female SW, Bulawayo IDI12]

With the police we bribe them every day even if we don't need to. If they see you outside the club they call it loitering, but you don't get to the station; they just say 'Give us some money' before you get there ... it's all about money. \*Female SW, Bulawayo IDI7]

[The] Police ... usually stand outside night clubs; they arrest you and tell you that you are loitering. So when I don't have money to bribe, they demand sex. \*Female SW, Bulawayo IDI9]

Neither of the above outrageous attacks on civil liberties has attracted much interest in Zimbabwe. Yet these cases and others are symptomatic of the way that the struggle for sex worker civil liberties is changing in recent times. There is an urgent need now to stand up for civil liberties as an inalienable right. The danger today is not just that, if we do not act we will lose the sex worker, but we risk surrendering their precious liberty without a fight.

Therefore, there is need for a holistic approach that will result in an improvement of relations between sex workers and the general public. In an article in a local newspaper, Vinga (2015) cited Tariro Tandi, a women's rights lawyer, arguing that,

When criminalization and regulation fail, the sound option becomes decriminalization. This is the complete removal of prostitution and related offences from the ambit of criminal law. Unlike regulation which reinforces marginalization, decriminalization improves the prostitutes' quality of life ... This is mainly due to the realization that laws which segregate against prostitutes further drive them to violence as there are people who are bound to manipulate them.

The Sexual Rights Centre (SRC) has identified five key recommendations to protect sex workers' human rights: the decriminalization of sex work, which would enable sex workers to access justice and work to reduce violence and discrimination against sex workers; to create a safe and enabling environment that encourages sex workers to report human rights violations; to end impunity for the perpetrators of violence against sex workers; to support sex worker-led projects and initiatives that ensure the self-determination of sex workers; and to educate service providers and NGOs about a rights-based approach to working with sex workers (Maseko 2009).

Member of Parliament, Thabitha Khumalo, laments,

The duty of the media should be to prioritize the issues that affect women and give adequate coverage of issues affecting women. The law must

protect women regardless of any factor characterizing them. The continuous suffering of prostitutes is a result of inadequate protection from law. (Vinga 2015).

This study will dismiss the myths surrounding sex work and foster good relations that will make it possible for sex workers to enjoy their rights without fear of victimisation. Through a participatory play derived from the themes of collected data, the study will influence general public attitudes and behavioural change to protect and respect sex workers. Respect for human dignity and care will build better relations between the general public and female sex workers.

### **3.5 Summary and conclusion**

A review of the literature seems to indicate bad relations between sex workers and the general public in Zimbabwe. Therefore, Bell (2009: para. 2 line 3) argues that sex workers need to be rescued from the general public that clings to negative ideas of what is “moral”. Aviva (2012: para. 3 line 1) highlights efforts that sex workers are fore-fronting to correct misconceptions against them through, for example, creating blogs and writing about their experiences. To encourage the inclusion of sex workers in policy formulation, programmes and empowerment in Zimbabwe, a number of organisations are working with sex workers; these include Safaids, the African Sex Workers Alliance (ASWA) and the SRC among others.

Therefore, an improvement of relations would go a long way in fostering a belief in and recognition of the fundamental oneness of sex workers and the general public, and would offer both a unifying vision and the foundation for a new system of values. Such an improvement has the power to inspire the transformation in attitudes and behaviour. At the same time, it can help chart the structural changes necessary for the emergence of a sustainable pattern of development in a peaceful and prosperous Zimbabwe. Furthermore, improved relations will promote a health-seeking behaviour among sex workers, leading to the promotion of safe sex practices and sustainable livelihoods in the country. In a nutshell, an improvement in relations between sex workers and the general

public would help in removing those structures, moral or otherwise, which, for years, have stood in the way of the full enjoyment of basic civil, political, social and economic rights by all sex workers in the same way other fellow Zimbabwean citizens enjoy the same basic rights. Failure to change perceptions by members of the public may lead to perpetuating negative perceptions and barriers to building better relations with sex workers.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: PARTICIPATORY THEATRE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to fulfil my objective number three. The chapter explores participatory theatre in relation to conflict transformation in an effort to build better relations between sex workers and women participants selected from members of the public. The term “participatory theatre” is defined and we will examine how it is being used to transform attitudes and behaviour of the general public towards sex workers. The case studies of how Zimbabwe and other countries have used participatory theatre to promote change will also be discussed.

The concept of conflict transformation which is the backbone of any of improved relations will be discussed. The chapter will explore the contributions of Boal’s concepts of Image theatre, and Invisible versus Forum theatre in Theatre of the Oppressed, in relation to their approaches to promoting change. I will propose the adoption of participatory theatre in the form of Image theatre as an overarching concept that is grounded on inclusiveness of both sex workers and the general public in attitudes and behavioural change that improves relations. The study will explore the use of theatre as an intervention in, for instance, gender-based violence issues, HIV/AIDS behavioural change issues, as political statements, and in health issues.

The history and development of theatre in Zimbabwe during the pre-colonial era and after independence will be explored and, in particular, how theatre has evolved over time to the present day. This chapter will discuss how bad relations can be addressed in the context of participatory theatre for conflict transformation at the community level and its potential for peace-building.

### **4.2 Conceptualisation of the meaning of conflict transformation**

I am not particularly interested in the definitions of transformation, resolution (or even conflict management). Rather, I am concerned with the meaning extracted from the terms (Lederach 2003:29). Essentially, a conflict involves: (a) attitudes,

(b) behaviours and (c) contradictions (Galtung 2000: 95). It is when contradictions are met by negative attitudes and behaviours that a conflict is born, in this context, between sex workers and members of the public. Rasmussen (1997: 64) makes a distinction between resolution and transformation: "... conflict resolution means solving the problems that led to the conflict, and transformation means changing the relationships between the parties to the conflict." In addition, as Mitchell (2002:1) correctly alludes, it is the clear implication (and often directs the statement) that "transformation is a process that will make up for the inadequacies of mere resolution." The literature on conflict transformation has a strong underlying inference that this conceptual thinking rectifies the major deficiencies of conflict resolution theory and, indeed, practices. In addition, Bercovitch and Houston (1993; Carnevale 1986; Touval and Zartman 1989; Wall and Lynn 1993 cited in Bercovitch, J and Kadayifci-Orellan 2009:178) suggest that conflict resolution thus seeks to come up with a common understanding on conflicts which leaves the underlying cause unattended through reconstructing the conflicts to build better relations as is the case with conflict transformation.

With regards to conflict management, it is viewed as a promoting intervention to achieve political settlements, mostly by those who have the power to exercise pressure on the conflicting parties in order to induce them to settle. According to Bloomfield and Reilly (1998:18),

Conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence. Rather than advocating methods for removing conflict, it addresses the more realistic question of managing conflict: how to deal with it in a constructive way, how to bring opposing sides together in a co-operative process, how to design a practical, achievable, co-operative system for the constructive management of difference.

The purpose of conflict management is to change the entire structure of a conflict situation with the aim of reducing "the destructive effect in the conflict process (e.g. hostility, use of violence) and helping the parties to construct goals to find

some solution to their conflict” (Bercovitch 1983:109). With the above view, Pia and Diez (2007:5) are right to argue that conflict management approaches consequently see reconstruction largely as a process of agreeing to new institutional arrangements that allow for the peaceful management of conflict through the provision of information and the stabilization of mutual expectations through the codification of rules. This is in direct contradiction to the views of Lederach, and others, who insists that conflicts should not be contained but should be eliminated. According to Lederach (2003:29), conflict transformation offers more than the mere elimination or control of conflict as is promised by the resolution. Conflict transformation “directs us toward change, to how things move from one shape to a different one.” In this context, it will direct the change of attitudes and behaviour of the general public towards sex workers.

I am in complete agreement with Pia and Diez’s (2007:8) submission that conflict transformation mainly focuses on the fundamentals of social justice as it rejects the traditional aim of conflict management to “restore the status quo and instead, develops a notion of conflict as a positive agent for social change.” In addition, it focuses on the importance of creating new infrastructure for empowering underprivileged members of society that foster equality with the aim of long term social reconstruction and reconciliation. It is clear from the above statements that conflict transformation is the ideal theory for this study because it has all the necessary inputs to improve relations between sex workers and the general public. The conclusion I have reached is supported by Lederach (2003:20) who suggests that, “conflict transformation views peace as centred and rooted in the quality of relationships.”

However, it is pertinent to note that there is no consensus that the term ‘conflict transformation’ is necessarily the correct term. For at least one peace scholar the answer is clear. In his investigation of “conflict resolution as conflict transformation,” Rupesinghe (1995: 51) argues why a conflict transformation perspective has more to offer. He says that underlying the conflict resolution perspective is an assumption that every conflict has a limited life and a clear end



and can be solved or not be solved. The thinking is that conflicts are never ending. Resolution fails to fully address the underlying cause of conflicts which leave room for recurrence. Rather, conflicts require a transformation process that will arrest any recurrence in future.

### **4.3 Participatory theatre (PT) worldwide**

The term “Participatory Theatre” is generally understood to include practices such as Applied Theatre or Drama, Community Theatre, Workshop Theatre, and Role Play among others. The performance can take the form of a social, political or economic nature. Participants come from a diverse background, some professional and others amateurs. Participatory theatre is internationally associated with radical and popular theatrical practices such as Theatre in Education, Young People’s Theatre, Forum Theatre (Theatre of the Oppressed) and Theatre for Development (Rifkin 2010:14). It is from these that the study will use image theatre – a form of forum theatre – for its intervention to improve relations between sex workers and the general public.

Theatre has a long history of engaging the public in moral, social and political issues (Nisker et al. 2006:259). The role of performance is important to all African cultures, and for many years Africans have been communicating with each other in this way. African performance is different from that in Western countries because “it is part of the whole fabric of African life and culture, existing as part of the larger communication environment” using arts-based approaches “which includes dance, drama, storytelling, music, games, and visual” (Morrison1991: 31).

A close look at experience in Africa has shown that popular theatre can play an important role in social transformation programmes, expanding participation, increasing self-confidence, and providing a stimulus for critical analysis, discussion, and action (Ugboajah, Hurly, Kidd 1985 cited in Morrison 1991:32). Different scholars have long emphasised how African theatre differs from European theatre with Morrison (1991:32) stating that,

The roots of African theatre are supported by ritual, seasonal rhythms, religion and communication which are also roots common to world theatre. However, in comparison, whereas it may be argued that European theatre is divorced from its functional roots as to be almost unaware of them, African theatre remains directly and immediately related to them.

In Kenya, participatory theatre, since the early 1990's, has been seen as an increasingly important process within development (Odhiambo 2008:13). This has led to the growth of participatory theatre where pioneers such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and the Kamiriithu project (1986) and Kenyan theatre practitioners, with both local and global funding, have applied the use of theatre methodologies to promote community development and social transformation (Journiett 2013:6). In Latin America, participatory theatre of the oppressed served as an important tool of resistance during the civil war and recovery after the war for example after the 1995 Ecuador and Peru dispute in the Cenepa War (Baker and Oshima 2010:16). It is clear from the above statements that theatre is used to foster social change and empowerment in many countries, including in conflict regions (Reich 2012:3).

#### **4.4 Contribution of Augusto Boal to participatory theatre**

I entirely agree with leaders of participatory theatre who recognize the power that theatre would have if used in the proper way that encourages active change, respects and includes participation of communities, promotes a bottom up approach as well as supports questioning power relationships within society (Thyagarajan 2002, Abah 2007 cited in Sloman 2011:3). It is my view that, to fully understand and comprehend PT, we have to know the work of one of the most important and influential contemporary theatre practitioners, Brazilian theatre artiste, Augusto Boal. His ideas of empowerment and emancipation have been considered crucial to self-development; his point of view is that theatre should be used to serve those who are oppressed so “they can express themselves and so that, by using this new language, they can also discover new concepts” (Boal 1979:121). There is no doubt that, in this present study, theatre is the right tool

to promote change and improve relations between sex workers and the general public.

Participatory theatre was popularized by Boal, who created the famed Theatre of the Oppressed in the early 1960s. The Theatre of the Oppressed has its basis in three main categories, namely, Invisible theatre, Image theatre and Forum theatre, and they can be applied according to the goal of each theatrical event. Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed was an important influence in the development of participatory theatre. His work enabled the audience members or spectators to practice for the "revolution" to come, which is undoubtedly the change that will result from the influence of the play. Theatre seems to lend itself to this action-reflection praxis. An actual issue or event can be presented on stage, seen and analysed by the audience, who then reconstruct this reality. This recreation can be done literally on stage by re-staging the theatre (Francis 2011:7).

Hayes and Tombs (2001 cited in Baker and Oshima 2010:13), bring a broader analytical perspective to the discussion on the contribution of Boal to participatory theatre, suggesting that when Boal developed his ideas and methodologies, he had an enormous impact on the field of participatory theatre.

#### **4.4.1 Image theatre**

Image theatre is a non-verbal process through which participants are asked to paint images of their lives, feelings and experiences to reveal truths about society (Journiett 2013:10). Image theatre consists of a series of exercises designed to uncover essential truths about societies and cultures without spoken language. The participants make static images of their lives, feelings, experiences or oppressions, and a group of participants then suggest titles or themes for them. Next, the individual creates three-dimensional images under the titles previously suggested by the group, using only their bodies. With this technique, an image is the starting point for an action, which is revealed in a process where the individuals discover the direction or intention innate in them (Boal1992: xxii). "We can only learn by the multiplicity of feelings, opinions, and evocations of the participants" (Boal1992:139).

The aim of Image theatre is to get an image that represents the feelings of the participants. When all the participants agree about an image, that one becomes the real image which portrays the reality of the problem in which the participants are living. After the agreement of the real image, the spectators are asked to create the ideal image, which is the image of the ideal community they hope for, a community where there is no oppression (in this context against sex workers). For Boal, images can be closer to our true feelings because people are able to discover subconsciously what they did not know existed in their minds. Image theatre is a cross-cutting technique which goes beyond culture, nationality or race (Gonzalez 2015:160).

#### **4.4.2 Invisible theatre**

Invisible theatre takes place in a public space and involves the spectators subconsciously (Journiett 2013:9-10). Similarly Boal (1992 cited in Gonzalez 2015:15) agrees with Journiett that Invisible theatre is a public theatre that involves the public as participants in the action without their knowledge. Boal (1992: xxiii) called them 'spectators', the active spectators of a piece of theatre. Invisible theatre takes place outside the auditorium or other usual theatrical venues. It takes action with an audience that does not know they are participants, and does not know the events being portrayed are not real even though they are presented in real life. To make Invisible theatre work, actors rehearse a scene they will perform in an appropriate public space which will incorporate the audience. The scene has an unexpected subversion of acceptable behaviour within a particular community and usually the audience ends up reacting to the incidents in the play, "especially because another actor, part of the audience, expresses extreme and opposite reactions to the events of the performed scene." Invisible theatre, therefore, creates debate as the audience is afforded the opportunity to question social issues in a public forum and they take up any position they desire.

#### **4.4.3 Forum theatre**

Boal calls for the spectator to invade the space usually occupied and controlled by actors. He calls not only for the liberation of critical consciousness but for the liberation of the body too, where the audience invades the stage and transforms the images that are shown. When this happens, theatre breaks the performance space and flows into real life, where change is possible. The performance piece or theatre is effectively then the rehearsal for change to come and life becomes the fundamental for change (Boal 2000: xxiv).

Rather than remaining a spectator to the theatre, this relationship goes further to an equal participation. This way, the passive spectators are encouraged to become active spectators and take control of the situation and change the dramatic action to another level that promotes change. Effectively the oppressed members of the community are invited to negotiate power-relations in the theatrical space that the stage offers. The idea as presented by Boal is that, by being participants, the Spect-Actor deliberately performs a responsible act. The spectator exists both in the play and outside it, resulting in a dual reality. Reich (2012:9) suggests that forum theatre demands improvisation on stage, where the participant makes use of all his/her lived experience and knowledge, to transform the story and move it in a different direction. The oppressed confronts a problem, analyses what is happening, and takes action to change his or her situation. In other words, forum theatre gets spectators to discuss difficult issues in public that they would normally be uneasy about in personal life. In public, the audience can discuss issues and their solutions. After a discussion of the challenges and identifying some problematic behaviour of the people involved, members of the public are often motivated to avoid similar behaviour of their own which they might have been unconscious of before, in this case, towards sex workers.

#### **4.5 Participatory theatre as an intervention**

Participatory theatre sets out to be part of a movement towards greater empowerment on the part of participants (in this context, sex workers and the general public). It tries to be part of social and political change as well as

individual behaviour change. It strives to enable those who are marginalized in some way to examine collectively their issues from their perspectives, to analyze causes of these issues, to explore avenues of potential action, and to create an opportunity to take such action (Lambert 1982 and Bryant 2006 cited in Sloman 2011:3).

In this circumstance, Scharinger (2011:116) suggests that the advantages of using participatory theatre in a conservative society like Zimbabwe are that participatory theatre is not only used to express one's suspicions or challenges of life (for example, in working with sex workers who are victims of intolerance by the general public), but such a process can provide a safe forum to freely explore and express their lived experiences while also having therapeutic effects "on trauma-recovery such as identity-rebuilding, disruption of processes of isolation, re-connection of the physical, intellectual, emotional self or encouragement and empowerment to engage in social activism" all of which would improve relations.

#### **4.5.1 Participatory theatre and prevention of gender based violence (GBV)**

There can be no doubt that, in Zimbabwe, there is evidence of the use of theatre to promote behavioural change in the context of gender-based violence (GVB). Roset (2015: Para. 8 line 1) highlights that Amnesty International Zimbabwe worked with the local "All Generations drama group" and trained 28 women from six different zones of the Hopley Farm settlement in Harare on gender based violence and women's rights. The women took the training anchored on theatre as a tool to become active human rights defenders to break the taboo preventing people from talking about domestic violence. They then went on to organize community or interactive theatre and dialogues to open discussions with both men and women on GVB.

According to Baker and Oshima (2010:12), in post-conflict Latin American countries, burgeoning violence prevention programmes use critical pedagogy, liberation theology and popular education to heal the trauma of "dirty wars,"

address the violence that continues to plague their cities, and prevent the further perpetration of violence. Many of these programmes use theatre as a tool to initiate community dialogue to move towards a better future. They goes on to give an example of the Escuela Equinoccio (Equinox School) of Centro Bartolome de las Casas (CBC) in San Salvador which shows some examples of using popular education and participatory theatre as tools for the prevention of GBV which had been used in Latin America and can be used with adolescents in the United States. Michau and Naker (2004 cited in Journiett 2013:6 ) highlight that participatory theatre has been used in more contemporary projects such as the Raising Voices and UN-Habitat's Safer Cities Programmes to prevent GBV. This is because theatre has been given privilege based on its predetermined ability to bring transformation in communities through easily communicated information.

#### **4.5.2 Participatory theatre in HIV/AIDS behavioural change**

The ministries of education and health are in the forefront in using theatre in HIV/AIDS education with the help of such multi-donor agencies namely UNICEF and UNESCO (Magwa 2006:91). The use of theatre groups in Zimbabwe's AIDS health education started in 1989 when Batsiranai Theatre Production Unit produced a play on HIV and AIDS. Leading theatre organisations such as the Zimbabwe Association of Community Theatre (ZACT) and Amakhosi Theatre Workshop also began using theatre extensively, together with AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) and other Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to use theatre in HIV, AIDS and family planning prevention. The lack of continuity in these programmes, and the recognition that theatre is an effective tool in HIV and AIDS behaviour change and maintenance communication, resulted in various strategic partners and stakeholders meeting in January 2002 to discuss the creation of a body that would support the activities of theatre groups working on HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe. The various stakeholders present were Safaids, Training and Research Support Centre (TARSC), John Snow International (JSI), the University of Zimbabwe and the Centres for Disease Control (UZ/CDC), the

Department for International Development (DFID), Over the Edge Theatre Group, Community Theatre Group, and Masala Media (Chihambakwe 2017).

Swedish Workplace HIV/AIDS Programme (SWHAP) has been in the forefront in harnessing the power of theatre to tackle HIV/AIDS issues in the workplace and the community at large in Zimbabwe. According to Chihambakwe (2017), SWHAP Regional Coordinator Southern Africa, Edith Maziofa-Tapfuma said, Ever since we started engaging with people over the years through theatre, we have noticed that there is a reduction in HIV prevalence and incidence. In the early '90s, the HIV prevalence rate in Zimbabwe was around 25 percent but right now it has dropped to around 14 percent. This shows the impact of the programme combined with the efforts of our partners as well as the Government. However, to maintain this, these efforts need to be sustained and theatre plays a critical role in enforcing behavioural change.

Kresby (2000, Mill, 2001 cited in Bagamoyo College of Arts et al. 2002:333) when they highlighted that, in Tanzania, participatory theatre is used in programmes to combat the spread of HIV. Theatre was mainly used to influence behavioural change from around 2002. In addition, Journienn (2013:6) writes that, during the rapid spread of HIV in the 1990s in Kenya, theatre was seen as an appropriate form to inform communities about prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. However, the trend of using Theatre for Development (ETD) when addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS shifted in the aftermath of the post-election violence of 2007 when Kenya suddenly found itself having to deal with the idea of building, consolidating and maintaining peace (Journienn 2013:6). This was a shift from the pioneering endeavours, such as the University of Nairobi Free Travelling Theatre's projects to combat illiteracy and promote adult education in the early 1980's (Odhiambo, 2005:85 cited in Journienn 2013:6).

While acknowledging theatre as an effective medium to transmit information, there has been some scepticism about the ability of theatre to have a significant



impact on attitudes and risk behaviour, particularly early on in the epidemic (Denman et al., 1995 cited in Francis 2011:2) highlight that,

A number of other scholars have found that interactive theatre in particular can be used effectively to engage audiences with regards to their attitudes about people with HIV, and their own beliefs with regards to their susceptibility to HIV.

#### **4.5.3 Political theatre influencing ideologies and citizen participation.**

There has been some Zimbabwean literature that focuses on political theatre particularly from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, including Kavanagh (1997) and Rohmer (1997; Chivandikwa 2012:31). Munowa (2012:2) writes that civic organizations and youths concluded that theatre is an effective tool for information dissemination and participatory communication. Theatre acted as the voice for Zimbabweans who were being muted by the government using, for example, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Chapter of 2002. Theatre played a pivotal role by articulating alternative narratives of the Zimbabwean past and present needs.

Through theatre, we can draw moral, psychological and sometimes political conclusions from the imagined situations (Nisker et al. 2006:259). Apart from the boom in theatre aimed at HIV/AIDS education over the past 20 years or so, however, there has been an increase in mostly NGO-sponsored protest plays that have thrived on challenging the need for democratic structures, with many of them produced mainly by Rooftop Promotions being performed at a popular venue called “Theatre in the Park” in Harare.

According to Munowa (2012:7), these

protest theatre plays have been highly critical of the ZANU-PF-led government’s policies, especially on issues such as the accelerated land reform and redistribution, which began in 2000, various elections from 2000 onwards, political violence since the 2000 general elections, HIV/Aids

interventions, corruption, and many other issues concerning national discourse.

It follows that Munowa (2012:8) argues that a critical overview of post-performance discussions of plays such as Cont Mhlanga's *The Good President* (2007), Silvanos Mudzvova's *Final Push* (2008) and others mentioned earlier, shows that they were all inflected with political rhetoric which inspired spectators to voice open defiance against political intolerance, disrespect for human rights, political violence and suffocation of the freedom of expression and movement (which are the issues of the day in Zimbabwe).

The play, *Heal the Wounds* by renowned academic and prolific playwright Stephen Chifunyise was first performed at Theatre in the Park in September 2009. The play attracted attention because it brought to the fore issues of national healing, reconciliation and integration that is current and topical to the country. The play *Waiting for Constitution*, again by Stephen Chifunyise, staged at Theatre in the Park in February 2010 again sought to engage the communities with the process of drafting a new Constitution in Zimbabwe. This play initiated debate on the struggles and contradictions which spoiled the whole process from 2009. *Waiting for Constitution* sought to question the constitution making process which had begun in 2009 and was eventually finalised with a new document in 2013. Interestingly enough, debates are continuing not only within government, but also within civil society and theatre circles, concerning the role of this form of theatre in relation to its eventual goal.

Other plays such as "Super Patriots and Morons", "Decades of Terror", "Final Push", "Overthrown", and most recently in 2015, the play, "I Want my Share of the US\$15 Billion," have incurred the State's wrath because of their perceived and apparent anti-government stance (Antonio 2016 para.6 line 1).

The government has become increasingly sceptical of the scale of protest theatre plays, especially in Harare and Bulawayo, which are the major cities in Zimbabwe. As a result, it has become increasingly persuaded that protest

theatre has a sinister motive. The actors have been harassed and arrested while the plays themselves have been banned, with the state using the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act Chapter 10:04 of 1967, the Access of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Chapter 10:27 of 2002 as amended in 2003, the Public Order and Security Act, Chapter 11:17 of 2002 as amended in 2005, and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, Chapter 9:23 of 2004 as amended in 2015, to ban such plays and arrest the actors (Munowa 2012:3). This study will not be able to provide all the examples of protest theatre that have been conducted in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.5.4 Participatory theatre for health care issues**

Red Cross National Societies in countries such as Togo, Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe are using theatre and drama for community social mobilisation activities. The campaigns are incorporated into community-based health education programmes to raise awareness about childhood immunisations, malaria prevention, and other health education (Mbizvo 2006).

Theatre has been used as a tool to educate the public regarding health care issues (Nisker et al. 2006:259). Popular theatre has been used in other instances throughout the world to create awareness and deliver health messages (Santiago, 2000; Weisberg, 1996 cited in Bagamoyo College of Arts et al. 2002:333). For instance, a play that addresses the health issues of very poor people in the Niagara Region and invites the audience to be involved was staged on 06 November 2016 (Anon 2016:para.1 line 1).

The theatre production, arranged by students of the Niagara Regional Campus of McMaster University's Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine, is aimed at finding ways for people living in extreme poverty to improve their access to the Niagara health care community (Anon 2016:para.1 line 2).

#### **4.5.5 Participatory theatre for human rights**

Amnesty International saw the relevance of using participatory theatre activities to create awareness; to mobilize members of the community in implementing

human rights friendly practices; to support the other activities linked to overall human rights programmes (e.g. lobbying, skills development training, establishing community run literacy programmes), and public education through, for example, radio (Ben ni walin 2006:19).

Plays that deal with issues relating to women and children have been part and parcel of theatre in Zimbabwe since independence, in part because women and child rights organizations have used theatre to address issues such as sexual abuse of children, rape and violence against women, and women and the law, particularly inheritance and wills, as well as issues related to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. For instance, Chembira Women in Theatre, formerly known as Glen Norah Women's Theatre Group, started in 1990 as an all-female theatre group. The purpose for creating a distinctive, women-only theatre group was to support theatre among women so that they could articulate themselves freely and help each other to solve their problems. The group uses theatre for development, for education, to raise awareness of the social problems faced by women in different communities, and to explore ways to solve these problems (Munsahu 2003:49).

#### **4.6 Overview of the history and development of theatre in Zimbabwe**

In much the same way as other aspects of Zimbabwean cultural and national life, theatre and the performing arts emerged out of decades of colonialism largely segregated and highly fragmented. When the country attained independence in April 1980, three distinct strains of theatre emerged out of the colonial period. These were the semi-professional and well-endowed white theatres, popular musical theatre in the black townships, and a revolutionary theatre of black cultural nationalism that had emerged out of the nationalist struggle (Seda 2004:136). Therefore, theatre in Zimbabwe has evolved in three stages, namely, the pre-colonial period, the colonial period and the pre-independence period (Munsahu 2003:45).

George Kahari (1994:31-34) in his book, "The Romances of Patrick Chakaipa," provides a comprehensive background prior to independence in 1980, where few black Zimbabwean playwrights wrote in English. This is not surprising, because

the only stages available to black Zimbabweans in the Rhodesian colony were the mission schools where there were only white people apart from, in some cases, the priest and sisters. First, missionaries who came to Zimbabwe to spread Christianity, and later, the Rhodesian Literature Board, encouraged the development of the second theatre tradition, an indigenous languages theatre and its playwrights.

However, it is held that an early form of protest theatre evolved from within the liberation camps in Mozambique and Zambia among others, as the combatants and recruits are said to have started using theatre to communicate grievances regarding life within the bases (Kaarsholm 1994:234). This development would probably have been necessitated by the stringency of military life, whereby one had to follow appropriate channels in order for any problem to be addressed. Theatre in this case would provide a means to protest without causing alarm, fright or harm. Kaarsholm (1994:234) states that within the bases,

Dramatisation became a way of expressing your needs and getting what you wanted. In this way, a tradition of discussion theatre, a drama dealing with and directly articulating the political grievances of everyday life, developed in the camps...

In the liberated places during the struggle for independence, theatre was performed at night to boost morale and as an educational tool to mobilize the masses to support the struggle. The all-night theatre activity, called *Pungwe* (a traditional all night meeting), was accompanied by dances and war songs called *nziyo dzechimurenga* (songs of war) and has been described as a highly participatory form of cultural festivity, learning and mobilisation (Kidd 1984 cited in Munsahu 2003:45). At independence, theatre was used to dramatise the black majority victory and local languages such as Shona and Ndebele were used to make it more effective and acceptable to the indigenous people. Sadly, however, there is “very little documentation of theatre performances during this phase, because of the spontaneous nature of the indigenous theatre groups and their low levels of sustainability” (Munsahu 2003:45).

#### **4.6.1 Characteristics of Zimbabwean theatre after independence**

For a decade after independence in April 1980, Zimbabwean theatre was primarily dominated by isolation, disintegration and indeed, at times, outright disagreement. There were now two different theatre associations with the colonial established National Theatre Organisation (itself an subsidiary of the Southern Rhodesia Dramatic Association founded in 1954) which continued in its efforts to manage the activities of mainly white amateur theatre companies, while the Zimbabwe Association of Community based Theatres (ZACT) established in February 1986, was meant to promote new theatre in the townships where blacks lived. The new association, it was hoped, would assist the post-independence state in its aim to establish a just society. This theatre was strongly dependent on indigenous performance idioms, and was supposed to go beyond simple “voyeurism”. It was initiated to tackle society’s continuous developmental issues (Seda 2004:137-8).

One of the major characteristics of Zimbabwean theatre has been resistance (Chifunyise 1990:289). It has gone beyond being a platform for mere entertainment. Zenenga (2008:15) posits that, “In Zimbabwe, major historic moments – colonisation, liberation, the introduction of economic structural adjustment programmes, the fight against HIV, and the struggle for land, rights and democracy gave birth to specific theatrical practice.”

Theatre in Zimbabwe “reacts to the status quo and therefore tends to be issue based” (Chifunyise1990:289). Given this trend of Zimbabwean theatre, this research merits theatrical focus with the aim to improve relations. It is the issue of the day as senior Zimbabwean citizens and government who lead opinion have taken it upon themselves to castigate sex workers as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

#### **4.6.2 Recent trends in Zimbabwean theatre**

The turn of the new millennium saw an upsurge in theatrical activity as noted above. The government faced criticism and, as a result, sponsored theatre in order to restore its power and repress upheavals; nevertheless some young

people responded by resisting that repression and political hegemony using the same theatrical medium (Muwonwa 2012:1). Between 2000 and 2012, many plays were produced and performed addressing socio-political matters like human rights, democracy, voter education, HIV/AIDS, abuse of women and children, and gender equality (Chivandikwa 2012:35). The government responded with a legal framework to control theatre as noted earlier with the hope of containing theatre which was posing a threat, attesting to Augusto Boal's (1979:ix) claim that,

... Theatre is a weapon. A very efficient weapon. For this reason one must fight for it. For this reason the ruling classes strive to take permanent hold of the theatre and utilize it as a tool for domination...but the theatre can also be a weapon for liberation.

#### **4.7 Participatory theatre for conflict transformation**

When conflicts erupt, for instance, in this context between sex workers and the general public, Search for Common Ground (n.d:3) suggests that participatory theatre is even more effective in serving this mission. It not only encourages the spectator to identify with characters in conflict but then also asks audience members to step onto the stage and literally fill a character's shoes. The act of empathizing is taken one step further as the public attempts to find novel and positive solutions to the conflict. Participatory theatre productions offer communities the opportunity to actively reflect together by using the stage as a place to explore new ways of living and to express new visions of the future. It follows that the capacity of a theatrical performance to function as an effective agent for social progress is premised on the thesis that theatre can influence ideas, emotions and values (Devlin 1989: 3; Hansen 1993: 6; Needle and Thomson 1981: 1; Hornbrook 1989: 100 cited in Chivandikwa 2012:32).

There are case studies of arts-based approaches in conflict transformation worldwide with Cohen et al. (2011; Ifa 2011, Arbeitsgruppe Kultur und Entwicklung 2011 cited in Reich 2012:3) arguing that arts-based programmes are increasingly finding a space in the study of conflict transformation. In addition,

this view was also amplified by there are many evidences of the application of the arts-based approaches in Peace building from the literature for instance in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the practical use of artistic processes in peace building conflicts can unite the conflicting parties beyond their ethnicity using, for example, musicians and organisers (Zelizer 2003:62). Bakare (2013: para 27 line 1) suggests that, with Africa today being full of conflict, and taking up from their earlier members of the theatrical tribe, the current generations of African Theatre Practitioners have been using theatre as a massive tool for the communication and entrenchment of peaceful existence. The same author goes on to argue that,

In response to these myriads of conflicts and security challenges, many African Theatre Artists have been engaging theatre in pursuit of peace. For instance, Jessica Kaahwa, a Ugandan playwright presented the world premiere of 'Putting Words between the Eyes,' a 20-minute, one-act play that she created especially for World Theatre Day, celebrated in Paris at the headquarters of UNESCO, the UN cultural agency. Set in the fictional republic of Sarkina, which has just gone through a protracted violent conflict, the play looks at how people try to rebuild shattered lives. It also shows well-meaning ambassadors trying to overcome their despair in the face of failed peace resolutions, as both civilians and peacekeepers get caught in the 'dilemma of hope and distrust,' according to Kaahwa. Perhaps intentionally, the play evoked the current conflicts in Libya and elsewhere in North Africa and the Middle East, with a sense of desolation and sound effects that included the screaming of warplanes and the firing of guns. 'Theatre subtly permeates the human soul gripped by fear and suspicion, by altering the image of self and opening a world of alternatives for the individual and hence the community,' Kaahwa said in her keynote message. 'Theatre can give meaning to daily realities, while forestalling an uncertain future. It can engage in the politics of peoples' situations in simple straightforward ways,' she added. In Uganda, Kaahwa has used drama to raise awareness of human rights as well as gender rights.



Another example is the Search for Common Ground (SFCG), a community theatre group that uses participatory theatre for peace-building in Rwanda. It is designed to help citizens and government leaders take ownership over the process of collaboratively negotiating land disputes (Bakare 2013: para. 30-31).

On the other hand, Baker and Oshima (2010:12) highlight that social programmes in Latin America have a long tradition of using participatory methodologies to engage marginalized groups in the transformation of their societies with theatre being the main tool for this purpose. With these views, Reich (2012:3) is right to suggest that a participatory approach provides space for an attentive investigation of one's own patterns of relating and relationship building.

It is pertinent to note that Lederach, who coined the term "conflict transformation", allocates a role for the arts in his comprehensive framework for Peace building (Lederach 2005a; Lederach 2005b; Lederach/Appleby 2010-2011 cited in Reich 2012:3). In Israel, the Peres Centre for Peace brings together Palestinians and Israelis to create joint theatre projects to foster dialogue (International Platform on Sports and Development, 2007). In Venezuela, Dr. Jose Antonio Abreu creates orchestras and choirs for low-income youth as a means of contributing to social integration and improving self-esteem. In the Philippines, theatre artists tour the island of Mindanao using performances to introduce the concept of a peaceful co-existence between Muslim, Christian, and Indigenous communities (Fernandez, 1995 cited in Ewubareh 2014:15). Lumsden (1999 cited in Zelizer 2003:65) suggests that the arts and artistes have a central role to play in post-conflict reconstruction, in that they can help foster a creative process for rebuilding broken social relationships. This is the role that participatory theatre, in this context, fosters better relations between sex workers and the general public.

Other scholars, such as Premaratna and Bleiker (2010:377-384), have suggested that theatre, as one specific art form, can help foster community dialogue and make an important contribution to peace building by changing conflict attitudes at the personal, emotional and societal levels.

Interactive theatre is used to foster social change and empowerment in many countries, including in conflict regions (Bteich and Reich 2009; Joffre-Eichhorn 2011; Premaratna and Bleiker 2010; Shank 2004; Thompson et al. 2009 cited in Reich 2012:3). In Zimbabwe there is evidence of the use of participatory theatre in conflict transformation, with Roset (2015: para 10 line 1) writing how Amnesty International managed to transform Hazel (not real name) through the empowering and inspirational,

Dialogues and the theatre performance she decided to live a violent free life,' Vongai reports. 'As a result, she has become an activist herself and has started to educate other women to speak up in order to stop the domestic violence in their homes.'

The above review has demonstrated the various applications of arts-based approaches in conflict transformation. Zelizer (2003:65) argues that there are several inherent challenges in addressing the connection between arts and peace building. First, the arts are only one of a number of peace building processes that can have an impact on both the conflict and post-conflict peace building efforts. A second challenge is distinguishing the purpose of art and its possible impact. Not all art is geared towards positive or destructive purposes; a great deal of art is created simply for expressive purposes without a larger goal of promoting any specific outcome. However, in order to narrow the research, I focus on processes that have an implicit or explicit connection to peace building.

Therefore, the challenge is to create a participatory approach that does more than merely reinforce the prevalent narratives, myths and forms of storytelling that already circulate in the conflict system); instead, the process should encourage disentanglement from old habits of doing things and create new signifying practices (Reich 2012:3). It should be noted that the impact of theatre may be determined by the form that the intervention takes (Francis 2011:2).

#### **4.8 Summary and conclusion**

In this chapter, we have discussed the meaning of conflict transformation from various scholars. We sought to define participatory theatre as an intervention that involves the audience for conflict transformation.

This chapter has also shown that participatory theatre can be an agency through which perceptions towards sex workers can be challenged outside the mainstream media. The chapter has shown this through, for instance, theatre productions that reflect on everyday challenges which, when contextualised within the socio-political domain, promotes attitudes and behavioural change with issues such as HIV/AIDS.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

It is important to discuss the fieldwork involving sex workers and women members of public participants. In this chapter, I argue that a qualitative research method using narratives is the ideal tool for understanding the experiences and perspectives of life stories of sex workers. It is especially important to discuss the challenges of fieldwork involving sex workers and the women members of public how they can build better relations. In this chapter, I discussed the research methodologies I employed, and some of the challenges I faced in the field. In addition, I also discuss the research approach, research design, the selection of participants, data collection methods, and the methods of analysis used in this thesis. The ethical considerations guiding this research are based on voluntary participation. Lastly, the chapter also discusses some challenges faced in undertaking this research and how they were overcome.

### **5.2 Research approach**

This research approach was twofold: exploration based on narratives from the life stories of six sex workers and, second, action research in the form of a participatory theatre play derived from the main themes of life stories of sex workers which was conducted with members of public.

#### **5.2.1 Exploration**

Burns and Groove (2001:374) define exploration research as research conducted to gain new insights, discover new ideas, and for increasing knowledge of the phenomenon. This study explored the life experiences of sex workers from childhood to the present. The exploration is based on narratives from the life stories of six sex workers. Brown (2006:43) also agrees with Burn and Groove that exploratory research “tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done.” The goal of exploration is to identify any relationship between the factors that are relevant to the research purpose. This is the most appropriate approach for my research which addresses a subject about

which there are high levels of uncertainty and ignorance (Singh 2007:64) about building better relations between sex workers and members of the public.

### **5.2.2 Action research**

Action research was the most suitable approach for my research, according to Kaye and Harris (2016:40). Greenwood and Levin (2007 and Kaye and Harris 2016:41) define action research in the following way,

Action research (AR) is social research carried out by a team that encompasses a professional action researcher and the members of an organization, community or network ('stakeholders') who are seeking to improve the participants' situation. AR promotes broad participation in the research process, and supports action leading to a more just, sustainable, or satisfying situation for the stakeholders.

Action research provides a change strategy for participants to have a sense of control over issues within their practice. Field work took place during the months of March and May 2017. With the permission of the participants, the four narrative sessions were audio-taped to provide an accurate record of the proceedings, which were transcribed for subsequent analysis. I recorded directly onto my cell phone. Each audio file was labelled with the date on which the particular session occurred. The sessions were conducted in Shona (a local language). I conducted the transcription through analysis of the audio recordings and written narratives. However, for the other two narratives, I directly transcribed because the participants felt uncomfortable being recorded.

### **5.3 Research design**

Research design is a clearly defined structure for implementing the research (Burns and Grove 2001:223). The research design is participatory action research and the research methodology is qualitative. The former involves respondents as equal partners in the study whilst qualitative research involves a small number of respondents who are investigated in depth. The nature of the data involved in this study required me to choose qualitative research because I

wanted to explore the lived experiences of sex workers. The in-depth data gained from a small number of participants provides unique understanding of the reality of the experience (Munhall 2001:106).

There is no doubt in my mind that qualitative research emphasises the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of the human experience, and attempts to capture those experiences in their entirety, within the context of those experiencing them (Yin 2011:8).

It may be difficult to arrive at a singular definition of qualitative research. Yin (2011:7) suggests that it has five features:

- Studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions
- Representing the views and perspectives of the people ....
- Covering the contextual conditions within which people live
- Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behaviour; and
- Striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone.

#### **5.4 Selection of participants**

A small sample of six research participants was chosen for the range of experiences and depth of information they would provide, and 40 pages of narrative transcripts were analysed. Narratives were continued until no new insights or information emerged (Ulin, Robinson, Tolley, & McNeill, 2002 cited in SWEAT 2005:14). The sample was selected from adults who identified themselves as sex workers and who were working in Harare and Seke, Chitungwiza. I interviewed three sex workers working in Harare and another three working in Seke, Chitungwiza.

Sex workers are such a hard-to-reach population because they are usually mobile and not easily identifiable. The researcher purposefully consulted sex workers who were accessible and, to these, more respondents added on a referral basis. Therefore the study used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling.

In a qualitative study, the participants are likely to be chosen in a deliberate manner known as purposive sampling. The purpose for selecting the specific participants is to have those that will yield the most relevant and in-depth data, given my topic of study (Yin 2011:88). In turn, those sex workers who were interviewed also gave the researcher the names and contact details of other sex workers that they thought might be willing to participate in the research, putting into motion the snowball sampling. Of all the sex workers approached, seven persons refused to participate in the research. One sex worker agreed to participate, but terminated the interview right after they had given consent as clients arrived and had to leave. The sample for the general public was eight persons from Seke, Chitungwiza. The participants were again chosen using purposive and snowball sampling. Like in the case of the sex worker participants, general public participants I was looking for persons who were not shy and were able to articulate and be able to be involved in theatre. Snowball helped in this regard as participants referred me to other persons they knew could easily get involved in this research.

### **5.5 Data collection methods**

I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the six sex workers between March and May 2017. Data was collected in the form of interviews. The interview questions followed the life story interview as well as focus questions regarding participant experiences as sex workers. Participants responded to interview questions using story narratives. The interviews were to obtain life stories of the sex workers. According to Linde (1993:3), life stories show our sense of self, "Who we are and how we got that way." They are also one very useful means by which we communicate this sense of self and negotiate it with others.

This research explored events that led these women to be sex workers. Thereafter, a workshop devised a play with women members of the public so that they can understand where these sex workers are coming from and develop a good relationship with them.

### **5.5.1 Narratives**

I used questions to help tell the life stories of the sex workers. But narrative is not research. Rather, it is a data collection method. Clandinin and Connelly (2000:20) suggest that narratives assume that people construct their realities through narrating their stories. The researcher explores a story told by a participant and records that story. Getting narratives requires a great deal of openness and trust from participants and the researcher(s). As Bruner (2004:692) put it,

We seem to have no other way of describing 'lived time' other than in the form of a narrative. In a basic linear approach, they encompass the study of the experiences of single individual embracing stories of the life and exploring the learned significance of those individual experiences.

I conducted two narrative meetings with the participants. I managed to have four of the narratives partly tape recorded during the first meetings with the permission of the participants involved. The second meetings were transcribed as the participants refused to be recorded. Two participants totally refused to be tape recorded during the two meetings I had with both of them; I had to write notes as they narrated their life stories. However, both recording and notes were helpful for data collection. I went a step further to authenticate this research by convincing most participants to sign consent that they had voluntarily agreed to participate; this included the date the narratives were obtained.

With narratives which may make the participant feel isolated, I promised that I would be very positive toward the participants. I was to immediately stop the narration whenever I felt the participant showed signs of discomfort or advised of such or any other circumstances that might happen during the interview process. I understood this because my research was sensitive in several aspects, particularly when it came to the identity and confidentiality of information from participants.



In this work, I employ narratives to do research with sex workers aged between 17 and 32 years, the reason being that some women are engaging in sex work at a younger age because of different factors, chief among them, poverty. I opted to have a mixture of sex workers from the big city and those who operate in a small town. This was done to get different perspectives of sex work. Three of the six participants were from Harare and three from Seke, Chitungwiza.

The following were the guiding interview questions:

1. Would you tell me about your childhood, about growing up, about your parents and siblings?
2. What sort of relationship do you have with your parents and siblings now?
3. Do you have any children/are you in a relationship now?
4. Can you tell me a bit about how you became a sex worker?
5. What are the main challenges you face as a sex worker and in life in general?
6. What keeps you in the sex industry?
7. Do you have anything to say to those people who are critical of sex workers?

## **5.6 Ethical issues**

Ethics refers to the quality of research procedures that result in a professional conduct that respects the rights and privacy of the participants. It is the subdivision of philosophy that deals with morality. Some important ethical concerns that should be taken into account while carrying out qualitative study are: anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent (Halai 2006:5).

Therefore, it was necessary that I guarantee the anonymity of the participants by not using their names; instead I used pseudonyms. I promised to respect their privacy and every effort was made to ensure the objectivity of this study. Participation in narratives was consensual and, hence, the participants volunteered to take part. The nature of this study was explained to the participants so that they could be at ease in the interviews. For instance, their right to privacy was to be respected throughout the study. Although there is no guarantee of absolute confidentiality, member checking is important for

participants to review the research. In that regard, information provided by participants remained confidential. Furthermore, any participant could withdraw from the study at any time she wished. A six member advisory board was supposed to assist me during the research; however, only one was consistent in supporting throughout the whole process. This did not affect the ethical issues as we were able to conduct the research without any known allegation of infringing on the rights of the participants.

### **5.7 Member checking**

Member checking is used in qualitative research and is defined as a process by which a researcher seeks to explore the credibility of results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness of results is an essential part of high quality qualitative research. Results of research are returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences (Morse et al, 2002). The participants either approve or disapprove the summaries as a true reflection of their thoughts, feelings, and experiences; if truthfulness is affirmed, then the research is said to have credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the case of disapproval, member checking gives participants an opportunity to correct errors and challenge what are perceived as wrong interpretations of their views, feelings and experiences.

In other words, member checking is validation of results an exercise important because it determines whether data obtained is credible and reflects the purpose of the study. Member checking is one method of triangulation. According to Yeasmin and Rahman (2012:156) triangulation a process of confirmability that increases validity by including several view points and methods was used to enhance the validity of results.

### **5.8 Summary and conclusion**

The research approach, research design and data collection methods employed, and ethical considerations were described. A qualitative research design was adopted and narratives were used as the principal means of data collection for the life stories. Clear protocols for dealing with trustworthiness were also discussed.

## **CHAPTER SIX: LIFE STORIES OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN SEX WORK**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The chapter investigates the life histories of six women engaged in sex work by fulfilling objective four of the study. First, I discuss the participant recruitment process. The study explores the sex workers' life experiences from childhood to the present. Having presented the life stories, a thematic analysis was used to identify themes, and four themes emerged from the data. The first theme is childhood experiences. The second theme is the motive for which the women entered sex work, while the third theme is the women's experiences of sex work. The fourth theme is discontinuity. I discuss the validity and reliability of data, as well as some of the challenges and dilemmas faced in the field.

### **6.2 Recruiting participants**

The participants for this study consisted of six sex workers. Recruiting the participants was realised through purposive sampling along with a snowball sampling technique. I visited the two main red-light areas of Harare and Seke, Chitungwiza to enrol the participants for the study. The participants were informed about the scope, nature, and purpose of the study, and were given a referral sheet with all the study information (see Appendix 1 for the letter). Those who volunteered to participate informed me, and an appointment was scheduled at their convenience. Each participant's consent was obtained before the narrative meeting (see Appendix 2 for the letter of consent). The participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw at any time. No real names have been used in this thesis. The question that was repeatedly asked was what I will do with their data and will their information end up in the media. I assured them that I will respect their privacy and will only use the data for presenting this thesis.

For the eight women members of the public, I also used a combination of purposive, convenience and snowball sampling to find the right participants. However, for these participants, the programme ended up being oversubscribed. I had to conduct the research with participants who arrived at the venue earlier than the others. Initially, the participants were 11 when I wanted eight only. I decided to proceed with the exercise with the 11 participants, but then three decided to terminate their participation. When the exercise had concluded, two more eligible participants arrived. Sadly, I could not conduct the exercise with them alone (see Table 6.1 for details of the sex workers participants).

*Table 6.1 Details of the eight sex workers participants*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>No. of children</b>	<b>Years of sex work</b>
Takudzwa	20	Not married	No children	5
Rachel	33	Divorced	2	2
Emily	20	Divorced	No children	4
Tendai	19	Divorced	1	2
Memory	29	Not married	No children	7
Tererai	19	Not married	No children	4

### **6.3 Life Stories of Six Sex Workers**

#### **The Participants**

The participants for the life stories were all females three live in Harare and whilst the other three were residence of Seke, Chitungwiza. I have assigned different names to them in order to help protect their identities. I also desisted from mentioning the schools they attended due to ethical consideration in order to protect the integrity of the schools. However, apart from sex workers, the other group of women participants selected from members of the public which conducted the participatory theatre for conflict transformation that constitutes the

second group for this study are discussed in detail in the following chapter seven together with the responses of the sex workers to the play.

### **6.3.1 Takudzwa's story**

The first interview was with Takudzwa. She was born in Mutare, a city about 280 km east of Harare. Technically, she has spent more time of her teen years as a sex worker than most of her peers; more than five years of sex working since she left school during form three, after having been seen with a boyfriend and chased away by her father. But Takudzwa is an extremely analytical person and possesses a great deal of insight. Her input was invaluable in helping me understand the circumstances of her growing up and being involved in sex work at a tender age.

She is creative and artistic and won modelling contests in her youth, and her accomplishments as a choral practitioner at church competitions showed a bright future. "I thought I will make the most of my life. Back then, like any girl, I dreamt of getting married and living my dream. Sadly, it's not me anymore". Having been chased away by her father, she moved in with her boyfriend for a while before they separated. Homeless and hopeless, Takudzwa moved to the Avenues area of Harare where she befriended a sex worker who for a period gave her shelter and food. Before long, she begun frequenting bars and engaging in sex work to supplement her friend's earnings. With time she was able to move into her own lodging in the same area.

She vividly talked about some of the challenges they face as sex workers that include menacing police, where some opportunists try to extort money from them. She stated that, although sex workers help each other, the women are mostly fighting amongst themselves. These fights usually emanate from serving a client who was once served by the other sex worker. She said the intolerance of the general public to sex workers harms their relationship. "People sometimes do not understand that I will be looking for money to survive." I asked her if any of her relatives are aware that she is a sex worker. She replied that none of her family members and close acquaintances is aware. The reason she says is that

sex work is a shameful job and a taboo. There are also clients who refuse to pay, making their job even more difficult. However, she is able to raise enough money to for rent and food.

### **6.3.2 Rachel's story**

Rachel grew up in Glen View and Greendale suburbs in Harare. Rachel came from a functional middle class family. Her father passed on when she was young. Her mother strived to provide her with all the necessities of life which she traded for alcohol which begun as an adventurous once-off drinking spree due to peer pressure from friends when she was in form two of her secondary education. In spite of her addiction, Rachel managed to conclude her secondary education and obtained six subjects at Ordinary level (in Zimbabwe, five subjects are considered a pass). However, she failed mathematics. Her mother gave her money to attend a college to supplement the mathematics, but Rachel had other plans for the money and joined her friends for her old habit of running away from home and partying. "I had really learned how to drink," she said.

She left home and went to South Africa where she married a Nigerian but the marriage did not last. When Rachel returned in 2015 with her two children who are currently staying with her mother in Glen View suburb she wanted to stay at home, but having children and being broke she again resorted to sex work. "I had a 3½ -year-old son and a newborn daughter at the time. I was 30 years old," she explained. She now stays in the Avenues area of Harare, a hot-spot for sex workers. She goes home often to see the children. Her parents and relatives are neither aware of her job nor where she stays. "I have to keep the job I do a secret because of the taboo associated with it." The challenges she faces as a sex worker emanate from clients who refuse to pay, and the general public that is intolerant of sex workers, which forces her not to disclose her whereabouts and form of employment to family members and close acquaintances.

### **6.3.3 Emily's story**

Emily was born and raised in the rural area of Seke, about 30 km south-east of Harare, in 2000. She came from a broken home and was raised intermittently by

a grandmother. Her upbringing was rough in a myriad of ways, including sexual abuse by a family member. As she put it, “I didn’t have much of a fairytale.” Emily did not perceive herself as differing from mainstream society. “Well, values were the same as everyone else: family, work, a little bit of money, home, security, being loved ... all that stuff that is all normal.”

Emily began sex work when she was 16 years old. I asked her to talk briefly about how she ended being a sex worker. She paused and looked fragile before she answered, “Well briefly, I was raped by a family member and the case was bribed at the courts. I was pained that the perpetrator didn’t go to prison. I chose not to stay with a monster and I ran away from home.”

This she says made her rebellious despite her mother’s futile attempts to take her home so that she remains in school. Having been taken back to continue from Form two after a term, she just felt school was not the best place to practice freedom. She ran away from school and began a new life, first as a wife and later as a sex worker after having had a miscarriage that did not go down well with her in-laws. The continuous conflict with her mother in law forced her to leave her husband. Without a place to stay, she was helped by a sex workers she had grown up with in Seke rural. With time the need to fend for herself forced her to indulge into sex work. On challenges she faces, Emily divulged on an intolerant society to sex workers, jealous colleagues, and clients who sometimes rob her and those who refuse to pay.

#### **6.3.4 Tendai’s story**

Tendai was born and bred in the Seke rural area. She and others were expelled from school for involvement with drugs and love affairs with older men. “I befriended older school girls and they influenced me into drugs like marijuana and sleeping with men for money.” She refused her Aunt’s insistence to go to another school. “I regret being resistant to advise from my Aunt,” she lamented. “Who knows maybe I might have been living a better life.” Instead of going back to school Tendai chose to take up work at a restaurant in Seke, Chitungwiza. It

was during this time that she met her ex-husband who she separated from when she was seven months pregnant in 2015, and went back home to Seke rural.

“My uncle asked me to pack my child’s clothes and go and leave him with his father. He said he only wanted me at home, not with my child”. Afraid of being arrested for dumping a minor to her father, she did not do as instructed by her uncle. Her ex-husband’s first wife looked for a place for me to stay here at the hostels. “I came here without any other clothing besides those I was wearing because my uncle wanted me to come back home after having left my child with his father.”

When she got at the hostels, she was advised by her friend that if she went to the bar and got clients for sexual activities, she would be able to look after her child and pay rentals. So, at the beginning of 2016, she started sex work and has been doing so up to now. Before, her boyfriend she stayed with used to pay for rentals and provide for food. She says she ended up being a sex worker because of poverty. She noted that only her sister was aware of her job. She said that her other family members suspect that she is a sex worker but she always has a defence whenever cornered. She said she does not want family members and acquaintances to know about her sex work because of the stigma and discrimination associated with it.

### **6.3.5 Memory’s story**

Memory was born in Harare’s Mbare suburb, but her family moved to the town of Kwekwe when she was nine and she spent most of her formative years there. She comes from a poor working class background and she describes her neighbourhood as “really tough”. “My early teen years were spent basically running from home and hiding in the back alleys.” Memory said that she was sort of a rebel as a youth, but she never talked about what motivated her to quit school in the first place and become a sex worker, an act which would be considered taboo and immoral. Nor did she want to talk much about her peers during her early teens. However, she disclosed how she would sneak out from home during the night to beer-hall during her early secondary education years.



“We made some good money from the *makorokosa* (illegal gold miners). They made lots of cash from selling gold in Kwekwe and I and my friends would engage in sex with these older men for money which we made sure our parents never knew about it although after several months my mother discovered my trick through community members.” I concluded that indulging into sex work at an early age might have been the major motive for her abandoning her studies.

However, Memory was later able returned to school in 2005 for her secondary education after constant persuasion from her mother and became interested in nursing work as a career. “I had compassion for the sick and really wanted to lend a hand. And I think that’s one of the main reasons I was attracted to nursing work was because I thought I could make a difference.” She applied to several nursing schools but, despite having the right qualifications, she failed to obtain a place. Memory’s dream of a career as a nurse came to an abrupt end when she began taking drugs and drinking heavily. She got a taste of sex work when she was 22 years old.

Now 29 years old and having had a child, sex work is becoming harder for her. But for now, she has no choice. “This is a very strange job. I get involved with a lot of ugly scenes – for instance, when a client refuses to pay.” I am a sex worker because of poverty, but that isn’t me. That isn’t me!” However, her inability to find meaningful work combined with the hostility of the community towards her caused her to decide to move to Harare where she lives in the red light district of Harare. “I don’t tell people the job I do in because of the stigma and intolerance. Imagine my family and community members knowing I am a sex worker.”

### **6.3.6 Tererai’s story**

Tererai, aged 19, was born in Marondera, Mashonaland East Province (about 70km south-east of Harare). She grew up in a disjointed family. Tererai managed to go for both her primary and secondary education. However, the death of her father and mother in 2008 and 2009 respectively changed her life. She and her two siblings now had to move to stay with their aunt in Uzumba,

Murehwa. Her aunt had four children of her own and could not handle the added burden of Tererai and her siblings. At Form 2, she was forced to drop out from school and became a house keeper in Tafara, Harare. Frustrated with the poor salary and sometimes non-payment of it, for three years she moved from one employer to the next.

The turning point came when she met a girl she had grown up with in Uzumba who was now a sex worker. Tired of the poor salary and unhealthy working conditions, she entrapped herself in sex work hoping to make more money. Her friend gave her a place to stay while she manoeuvred her way to making her own money for food and rent. This led her to become a full-time sex worker in Seke, Chitungwiza. Even though she has no children, the money she gets is barely enough for her basics. She says that her family has disowned her after learning that she is engaging in sex work. The community near her place doesn't like her either because they say she and others are a bad influence on their children. She tries as much as possible not to associate with clients at home for fear of the wrath of the landlord and community.

After the recorded interviews were transcribed, I composed a brief life history for each participant using the information from the narratives. Some of the material in these stories is comprised of direct quotes from the participants. These narratives were compiled from disparate speech units gleaned from different parts of the interviews so it was possible that I may have quoted them out of context. To address this concern, and to ensure that I was not distorting their intended meanings, I took copies of the drafts to the individuals for them to check for content and accuracy.

After feedback was received, I edited accordingly and again shared the finished product with the participants to approve for publication in the thesis. Thus, the life stories are, to some degree, co-authored and approved by the participants. Three of the participants live in Harare while the other three live in Seke, Chitungwiza (which is adjacent to the Seke rural area). I make no claims that these six narratives are representative of all sex workers. Poignantly, each of the

participants made statements to the effect that theirs was a unique story; that they were different from other sex workers in Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, I believe that each individual voice represented here helps shed light on the range of human responses possible from those involved in sex work. With this in mind I tender the following findings.

#### **6.4 Data Analysis**

Narratives go beyond just telling stories. Clandirin, Pushor and Orr (2007:33) assert that, "... telling stories is not enough. We need to move to the retelling and reliving of life stories, that is, to inquiry into stories." According to Marshall and Rossman (1999:150), data analysis begins with listening to participants' verbal narratives, and is followed by reading and re-reading the verbatim transcriptions or written responses. It is a time consuming process. This means that, as the researcher, I had to analyse the six life stories. The life stories of the six women participants offer some core themes, as well as point to some similarities in how elements found in sex work discourses are taken up. Although these themes and experiences cannot be claimed as universal for all sex workers with complex lives and experiences and with the attitudes and behaviour of the general public towards sex work, it remains possible that these themes may be shared by other sex workers with similar experiences.

For each participant I had two narrative sessions. However, four of the participants allowed me to audio record our first meetings. I listened to the recordings of the first narrative meetings. For the other two participants and the second meetings with the four, I transcribed the narratives. This resulted in 30 pages of verbatim conversation. Despite the time consuming nature of the transcription, the end result was beneficial in that the transcription was, essentially, the first phase of the analysis.

As I read these women's words, themes began to emerge. Some of these themes were already partly identified by the questions I asked during the narratives with the sex workers. It was clear that thematic analysis was suitable for analysing data for my research. Braun and Clarke (2006:79) define thematic

analysis as, “A method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data.” Thematic analysis allows for rich, detailed and complex descriptions of data.

Once I had an initial list of themes, I created a colour coding scheme with highlighter markers and began my first analytical reading of each of the transcripts. Many of the items from my first list have become integral to the analysis of the sex workers’ life stories. In addition, some other items were used that were identified during later readings. Green, Camilli and Elmore (2006:477) remark that a story, as it is utilised in narrative inquiry, is “a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful.” I took my time deducing meanings of the experiences in the life stories shared by the women. Following are the four core themes that emerged in all six women’s stories:

#### **6.4.1 Childhood experiences**

It was found from the data that there are certain experiences such as living in poverty, facing education obstacles, and experiences of sexual or physical violence during childhood that cultivates these women to become sex workers. For instance, Emily narrated how she was raped by her cousin. She had this to say,

I couldn’t bear staying with a monster; I hates him ... (paused) the hatred I has for him forced me to run away from home because I was afraid of being raped again. What pains me the most is that he was tried and found not guilty after all he did to me. I feel justice was not served.

This corroborates some research on life stories of woman who are involved in sex work that concluded that there are certain experiences most sex workers go through during childhood. Scholarly research has shown that most sex workers experienced sexual and structural violence, loss of parents, early marriages, poverty and dropping out of school. Scorgie et al (2011) have discussed, in chapters two and three in a study titled: “I expect to be abused and I have fear:

Sex workers' experiences of human rights violations and barriers to accessing healthcare in four African countries namely Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe," provided evidence that showed how childhood experiences force women and girls into sex work. The profound vulnerability to such childhood experiences undermined their ability to protect themselves from exposures of being teenager and women who has no other means for livelihood.

#### **6.4.2 Motive for entering and staying in the industry**

The second theme identified from the data is the reason that pushes women to enter and to continue to stay in sex work. It was found that socio-economic circumstances such as poverty, unemployment and peer influence are the main reasons women enter and continue to be sex workers. Takudzwa, the first participant to narrate her life story said that,

I am not proud of being a sex worker. The situation we are in right now forces me to become a sex worker. Poverty is everywhere in this country; I have to survive, I need to money to pay the rent and to have food on the table. I hope my situation will change for the better soon.

As discussed in chapters two and three Nkala (2014) conducted a qualitative study to explore the influx of sex workers in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. His findings were that the decline in economic activities that has resulted in high unemployment has increased poverty levels that, in turn, have forced many women to resort to sex work. Hahlani and Kahlamba (2015) conducted a qualitative study to explore whether sex work provides a livelihood in Mkoba, Gweru in Zimbabwe. They concluded that sex work is providing a means of livelihood that can mitigate poverty in Mkoba

Rachel and Tendai know the burden society gives to motherhood, and will be ashamed if they do not look after their children. This places another burden on them which forces them to remain as sex workers.

### 6.4.3 Experiences of sex work

The third theme found from the data is women's experiences as sex workers. They experience violence emanating mostly from cultural confrontations which can be through stigma from members of the public which usually shows through stereotyping. Stereotypes can be defined as the "beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviours of members of certain groups" (Hilton and von Hippel 1996:240), and they are as a result of oversimplified, often mistaken assumptions about groups, in this case sex workers, that also fail to see individual differences within those groups. SWEAT (2005:16) in a study noted that participants rarely have anyone to talk to about their traumatising experiences,

Research participants were often glad to have someone to talk to. Some indicated that the research interview was the first opportunity they had to speak freely. Participants needed an opportunity to talk about more traumatic experiences in their lives.

The sex workers felt that they were made to be strangers in an unfamiliar country where they do not quite understand the members of the public. "I feel lonely and alienated in a country I am supposed to call home", lamented Tererai. Memory felt the same, "The loneliness and feeling of not being loved by the general public is something that hurts me every day." Rachel had this to say,

I feel alienated; people just don't understand us, and they probably wish we lived in our own world which is unreasonable. We are all humans and there is need to respect the privacy of everybody. The name calling that is associated with sex work is hurtful and shameful.

Tendai said,

I never told my family that I am a sex worker. There is a lot of stigma and stereotyping in the community. Once they know that you are sex worker, they call you shameful and degrading names such as *hure* (whore) which is

hurtful. Why call someone who is honestly trying to make a livelihood such names?

The sex workers experienced fear of judgement from others, but the term 'fear' does not embolden the reality of their situations because this 'fear' is founded on repeated real experiences of judgement and shaming from the general public. For instance, Emily told her story of being shamed by her mother-in-law. These experiences of shaming and misplaced blame resulted, understandably so, in these women beginning to blame themselves for their situations because the social focus is on questions like, why did she engage in sex work? Why doesn't she stop sex working? Does she not care about herself or her children? What is wrong with her for choosing to be a sex worker? The blame and focus is removed from the general public (subject) and she (sex worker) becomes the subject. How might the stories of these women have differed if the discursive operations of language in reference to attitudes and behaviour were publicly exposed, and if the general public responded to these sex workers as victims in need of protection and deserving of respectful, gentle, and just treatment, as opposed to failing mothers or women in need of treatment for their deficits. These are all experiences discussed in depth in chapters two and three above.

#### **6.4.4 Discontinuity**

Discontinuity is a feeling of uncertainty, fear, fragmentation, or difference that people feel when they are rejected. While discontinuity is not always a negative feeling, it is a feeling that occurs when the society, culture, and even nature are different from what the participant knows. According to Akkerman and Bakker (2011:133), within discontinuity there are also feelings of sameness or continuity, meaning that sex workers work to find something that is familiar. Tendai in particular describes how she experienced discontinuity at home in the Seke rural area,

After I divorced and went back home, my uncle instructed me to return my child to his father and come home. I love my child; he is still very young to leave him with his father. I became scared of being arrested for dumping

my child with his father, so I chose to run away from home and begin a new life – a life that I never imagined being a sex worker.

Emily was scared and screamed when her mother-in-law chased her from her home where she stayed with her husband. She said,

I didn't know what else to do, I just screamed because I had felt hopeless with nowhere to go. I just had to make a living. So a friend introduced me to sex work. Although sex wasn't something new, it was the exchange of payment that was.

These coded themes that identify patterns and trends will be integrated into a participatory theatre in forum and image structure. This participatory theatre is to encourage building of better relations through detecting differences, discovering relationships and developing explanations.

### **6.5 Validity and reliability**

Qualitative study is trustworthy when it accurately represents the life experiences of the study participant (Streubert and Carpenter 1999:333). The method of ensuring trustworthiness of data was adopted from that of Lincoln and Guba (1985:294) who posit that trustworthiness of research is essential to evaluate its importance. Data collected through narratives should be trustworthy to ensure credible results. Trustworthiness includes credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. I had a strong social relationship with my participants, not only at the time of research in the field but also in the process of writing the research text. I developed trust from the participants because I was open to them about how I would use collected data and I also showed appreciation for their life stories.

I worked hard to represent all of their voices with their further input throughout the process of writing. I was also in constant relationship with them to discuss social stories although sometimes it was difficult to contact them because of their mobility. I checked with the participants to ensure transparency, and research accountability, and that my analyses were accurate. I went with my stories to my



participants to read and check if their voices were adequately represented or wanted any parts removed because of the sensitivity of the research. Rachel was especially critical of the way I composed her story. She felt her voice was not adequately represented in the summary I had written on the part of how she ended up becoming a sex worker. I discussed with her about the details of the narratives so that she is represented as much as possible. By such checking, I made sure the stories I had written correctly represented their perspectives. Emily told me that returning the transcript for validation made her more trustful that the information they shared was neither misused nor misunderstood. Tendai and others were pleased to be able to read their own words. This showed that I had represented their life stories well and gave validity and credibility to the research through making it easier for me to derive themes and for the second group of participants that conducted the participatory theatre for conflict transformation to be able to understand the life stories much easier.

#### **6.6 Limitations of the study**

Recruitment of participants took place during the months of March and May. However, during this period I faced challenges in locating sex workers willing to talk to me. Some of the sex workers I initially met opted not to become participants. The potential participants said they were wary of me because many of them have fallen prey to journalists who come to them as students conducting research only for them to have their stories and pictures in the media. From the point of the initial introductions, I made a significant effort to assure the participants of the confidential nature of the project, as this was one of their key concerns. Gaining trust takes time; in the end, the sex workers who decided to become research participants willingly shared their life stories with me. However, of the six participants, four allowed me to audio-record the first meeting but not to take any videos or pictures of them. During the follow-up meeting, they also refused to be audio-recorded. I resorted to transcribing which I had done with the other two participants who also refused to have at least one of our meetings audio-recorded. I had to transcribe while they listened to their narratives.

## **6.7 Summary**

The present study reveals that there is need for sex workers desire to improve relations with general public that will lead to peaceful co-existence. In this study, the sex workers expressed the various hurdles that they come across in their day-to-day work. In addition, the sex workers shared their concerns over the struggles in hoping for better relations with the general public. The chapter began by explaining how the six participants were chosen. It goes further to present the life stories of six sex workers. Three of the sex workers stay in Harare while the other three are from Seke, Chitungwiza. It is through my analysis of the data from the life stories that five themes are derived. The six life stories are important because they illustrate the experiences of the sex workers and the need for improving relations with members of the public. Validity and reliability of the data is also explained with major focus on how it helps make the research credible.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: PARTICIPATORY THEATRE FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Part of the problem in confronting marginalisation of sex workers by the general public, for example through shaming, is often delegitimised as a real issue. Marginalisation of sex workers is so woven into the public discourse on sex roles that it becomes difficult to imagine a community that changes perceptions towards sex workers. For this reason, it is important to improve relations between sex workers and the general public. However, that can only happen when members of the public understand the role they play in perpetuating isolation of sex workers.

This chapter presents the action research experience in order to meet objective number five which focuses on creating a participatory theatre for conflict transformation involving the general public through eight women participants in performing a participatory theatre for conflict transformation derived from the themes of the collected data. In short, this chapter focus on influencing change in the general public's attitude and behaviour towards sex workers. This is proposed through taking a fresh look at the six life stories of sex workers by also involving the general public as participants in the process of building better relations in order to initiate a transformational shift in thinking.

Participatory theatre is the ideal medium to engage people, in this case sex workers and members of public, in processes of creation and re-creation that transform relationships as well as strengthen peace and development (Sloman 2011:1). Failure to change perceptions by members of the public may lead to perpetuating negative perceptions and barriers to building better relations with sex workers.

## 7.2 Recruiting members of public

Recruiting the eight women participants' form the general public was realised through a mixture of purposive and snowball convenience, or the snowball sampling method. I used purposive convenience because I wanted to find the right participants. According to Shaver (2005, cited in Scorgie et al. 2011:22) a snowball sampling strategy tends to recruit women members of public who are more visible, co-operative, and interested in participating in the research, whilst capturing a truly representative sample that reflects the diversity and heterogeneity of women in a given setting.

Snowballing is important as a recruitment tool because the researcher only needs to find at least one participant who will in turn help recruit another or other participants and the chain goes on until the required number of participants is attained. Chitungwiza, where there was a workshop on participatory theatre, is divided into 25 wards with a population of 356,840, according to the 2012 census. There are 205,896 women; with there being more women in the community than men. I failed to find a breakdown of the women from the Seke suburb only. I collected various elements of demographic information varied among participants, including age, marital status and the number of children each participant has (see Table 7.1). Four are married and four are not. They range in age from 21 to 42 years. I organized to work with a mixed marital status to derive a balanced view. In order to protect the identities of the participants, I have assigned different names to them.

*Table 7.1 Details of the eight female members of the public*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>No. of children</b>	<b>Place of residence</b>
Fadzai	21	Married	1	Seke,Chitungwiza
Martha	36	Married	2	Seke,Chitungwiza
Pamela	33	Married	3	Seke,Chitungwiza

Rutendo	42	Widow	3	Seke,Chitungwiza
Mildred	26	Divorced	2	Seke,Chitungwiza
Loveness	24	Divorced	1	Seke,Chitungwiza
Tatenda	26	Not married	No children	Seke,Chitungwiza
Thelma	21	Married	1	Seke,Chitungwiza

### **7.3 The participatory theatre for conflict transformation in context**

Participatory theatre showcases peaceful conflict transformation through acting. Theatre performance reproduces the local conflict, in this case between the general public and sex workers for the audience as well as an unsatisfactory outcome to the conflict. Participatory theatre is designed to engage audiences with an alternative ending that will be seen as satisfactory to every actor involved. After the initial ending, the audience engages an alternative ending that tends to meet the contending actors' interests in the play. The audiences are also invited to act the alternative ending. This method of theatre for conflict transformation pioneered by Search for Common Ground (SFCG), a non-governmental organisation, not only helps communities understand the impact of violent conflict but also helps them to find alternative means to a mutually satisfying outcome to the conflict, which becomes a learning process for the audience and the community.

Participatory theatre for conflict transformation offers an alternative to this blight. Using of participatory theatre strategies in conflict transformation mends broken relations. Nisker et. al. (2006:259) quoting from different sources suggested that, Through theatre, we can relate the imagined action (happening there) to the ongoing actions of our present situation (happening here), drawing moral, psychological, and sometimes political conclusions. We can make sense of the suffering by recognizing that one might oneself encounter such reversal. Good theatre provides the audience with possibilities for rich engagement with the issues, but leaves them to interpret as they wish.

In the context of improving relations, participatory theatre is effective because it favours critical thinking and highlights social injustice and psychological aspects that sex workers face on a daily basis. By presenting certain challenges related to sex work, such as stigma, and then demanding the entire audience to search for resolving the issues, participatory theatre breaks the silence around marginalisation of sex workers. Ideally, audience members will leave with a renewed sense of their own personal responsibilities. For example, afterwards, some might be compelled to go on to build better relations with sex workers. Some could leave with the important message that it is possible for members of the public to peacefully co-exist with sex workers. Hopefully, many will be leave with a greater commitment to support sex workers.

#### **7.4 The participatory theatre process**

The programme was conducted at Seke, Chitungwiza Unit L Community Hall open space on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2017. The project set out to examine the effectiveness of participatory theatre for conflict transformation as a perception changing tool for enabling members of the public to build better relations with sex workers. My work was primarily focused on discovering the impact of participatory theatre for conflict transformation in helping members of the public to construct positive perceptions, and to create a safer community where they co-exist with sex workers. My research was based on the hope that participatory theatre methods, alongside dialogic discussion, could empower the general public, on the one hand, to externalise their systems of beliefs and, on the other, to step back from them so that they may gain a positive perspective.

We took our time listening to the life stories of six sex workers through an audio recording. I allowed the participants to listen to the audio of the life stories. However, for those life stories for which I did not have an audio, I read the life stories of the sex workers. Having heard the life stories, I had five minutes to reflect on the stories with the participants. I presented the five themes emanating from the six life stories of the sex workers.

I asked the participants to divide themselves into two groups of four. One group was to be the actors while the other the audience. I helped the actors to come up with a participatory forum and image play derived from the four themes I had presented to them. As discussed in chapter four, forum and image theatre are forms of participatory theatre that involve the audience as participants. For instance, an audience member can volunteer to take the place of one of the actors at any stage of the play.

#### **7.4.1 The enactment**

We devised the play using the four themes I derived from the data as explained in chapter six (see section 6.4). For convenience I will repeat the themes which are:

- Childhood experiences
- Motives for entering and staying in sex work
- Experiences of sex work
- Discontinuity

The audience gathers on the other side while four women act out a scenario where sex workers have been abused or mistreated. They then invite their audience to suggest how the story could have played out differently: community members will enter into the scene and assume a character, changing the course of events. Together the group explores solutions, acutely realising the challenges these sex workers face.

The scene as devised was about two sex workers who were disliked by the village head which showed and amplified the theme of guilt and shame as experienced by sex workers (Nkala 2014:69). The village head cursed sex workers with the help of women who felt sex workers were a threat to their marriages. The enactment began with the village head coming across two sex workers from her village on her way to the Chief's homestead. The two sex workers were discussing their activities and life in general – a scene derived from the themes of the motives for entering and staying in sex work and the uniqueness of their stories. The village head went towards the sex workers and

began to shout her dislike of sex workers in her village, saying the two sex workers were a shame in the community – a scene derived from two of the themes, namely the experiences of sex work. These narratives presented sex workers as those who are unworthy of love, weak and odd, damaged, naïve, not well enough, and a burden to the general public. Life experiences of abuse, emotional suffering and guilt, shaming and judging by the general public resulted in the reinforcement of this narrative. There is also the theme of discontinuity as the sex workers felt hopeless in this situation.

An altercation began and some of the village women passing by tried in vain to cool the temper of the village head. This scene reflected the theme of childhood experiences as the sex workers pleaded with the village head to leave them because it was their upbringing that contributed to the life they are living. At the end, a policewoman approaches and is asked by the village head to arrest the two sex workers for bringing shame to her community. This final part of the enactment was derived from the theme of discontinuity because it showed that sex workers are not sure what may happen in their lives at the hands of members of the public. It also highlighted the theme of the motive of staying in sex work, with the sex workers telling the village head that sex work is their source of livelihood. The theme of the experiences of sex workers was also captured through the violent behaviour exhibited by the village head and the audience towards the sex workers as they were led away by the policewoman.

During the play, the other four women who were audience members took turns to replace the actors during the play which helped them to understand the context of the play from different angles. All the women showed compassion after hearing the life stories as they tried to put themselves in the shoes of the sex workers. The actors first performed their skits without words or sound. After the group performed, the audience members described what happened while the actors remained silent. The actors then performed their skits with voices and sound.



As the facilitator (researcher), I stopped the skits at the point where conflict broke out and asked the actors to remain frozen in an image (image theatre is a form of participatory theatre as discussed in chapter four of this thesis). I asked the audience members to point out which of the two sex workers looked distraught by the whole situation they were experiencing. The audience pointed at Tatenda. I asked one audience member to replace one of the actors and directed the play towards building better relations between the village head and the sex workers. After a while, I again asked the actors to freeze for another image. I asked the audience members who were the most oppressed person in the image, who was the worst affected, and who the most was discriminated against.

The audience members said the two sex workers were the most oppressed and discriminated against on the image. To demonstrate how the sex workers and the general public can improve relations, I then invited other audience members to replace the actors one at a time to “rewind the cassette” and rework the scene using the themes already mentioned. I asked the participants and audience members to examine their reactions to the skit. As the one sex worker was being dragged away, the audience members began to whistle and make jokes. The jokes legitimise bad attitudes and behaviour towards sex workers. I also brought to their attention how members of the public legitimised hatred through blaming sex workers for society’s curse – for instance, when the community fails to get enough rains.

This example of participatory theatre for conflict transformation in forum and image theatre methods shows how powerful theatre can be in helping build better relations between sex workers and the general public. Participants come to realise how they contribute to systems of discrimination and oppression. As Boal (1979: ix) put it, these programmes are rehearsals for finding better ways of managing conflicts and building better relations.

During and after the participatory play, the empathy the women showed was touching and genuine to the extent that they vowed to improve their relations with

sex workers without necessarily engaging into sex work or encouraging women to be sex workers.

Through the participatory play, I was able to relive the stories of the sex workers in a humorous and entertaining way that allows people to reflect and interact. The process gave me an opportunity to put the theory of the life stories into practice. This initiative worked well because it was flexible and all participants were equal and able to initially choose the parts they wanted to take during the whole process. The participants showcased their acting talent, which some never thought they possessed.

## **7.5 Immediate outcomes**

A brief discussion of this play will sketch out some of the key issues that this thesis wants to address. It was not one of the most effective of participatory theatre enactments, yet it reveals some of the complexities of the sex workers. At the end of the play, I asked participants what they had learnt. Following is a summary of their stated views at the end of the intervention.

### **7.5.1 The impact of participatory theatre for conflict transformation for the participants**

It is a verbatim piece about, and performed by, eight members of the public. These are people with very different opinions who step out of the shadows to share them with us. It was funny and celebratory for many of the performers (all appearing under assumed names). There was a clear sense of relief and triumph at being able to talk openly for the sex workers and about themselves in public. It clearly turned the spotlight on to individuals who are marginalised in society and allowed them to speak for themselves through the stories. Most of the participants expressed satisfaction at having attended the participatory theatre for conflict transformation. They said that, when coming for the programme, they did not know what to expect and were filled with anxiety. After the play, a number of the participants agreed that the programme made them appreciate the reality faced by sex workers. One participant emphasised the need to continually undertake such projects in the community because they

provide the means to initiate a change process that improves relations. It is possible to build better relations between sex workers and the general public despite societal expectations that looked down upon sex workers.

Despite the enjoyment associated with participatory theatre, the majority of the participants' generally showed compassion for sex workers because they were able to understand that sex workers are also humans. Most of the participants agreed that there is no need to force sex workers to do what they do not want to do, that we should love one another, that people should learn to forgive those who hurt them, that sex workers should be guaranteed the same opportunities as any other persons, and that they should not be verbally abused. These responses show that most participants understood the importance of building better relations with sex workers.

Pamela was cautious on the need to improve relations between sex workers and members of public,

We don't condone sex work. What they are doing is immoral and taboo. However, I learned that sex workers are humans after all, and that they should be treated with respect and dignity. I will try my best to have a working relationship with sex workers.

Rutendo was liberal on the need to improve relations with sex workers when she said,

We cannot continue to isolate sex workers from the community, especially now that we have learned to preach the same gospel of co-existence. As humans we have to find a place to sit and talk through our issues with sex workers and come up with a common understanding that works for us all. Oneness is the direction the community must take. Today, through theatre, we have learned how we can live in harmony with sex workers. Women come from different backgrounds some of which force them to be sex workers at the end of the day. Our attitudes should not be impediments but should be exemplary when we go back in to the community. We should

spread the gospel of love towards sex workers, even if we don't condone the activities that they do; there is always a way to come to an agreement.

Loveness agreed, saying,

It's been such a privilege to have gained the sex workers' confidence, and we've learned so much about building better relations through their stories. And we're aiming to transfer what we have learned through the participatory theatre. People should not hate others, because hate is the evil that creates animosity between the public and sex workers. There is need for a paradigm shift towards unity that will bring peace and harmony for all of us. As long as we continue to quarrel with the sex workers, there can be no peace in the community.

The participatory theatre for conflict transformation had a major bearing on Loveness. This was because of the structure of the play. For her, the themes, characters and conflicts in the play clearly reflected the reality of the community. This ties with the findings of Search for Common Ground (2007:26) who says that participatory theatre for conflict transformation reflex conflict that are associated with communities.

Mildred's words were twofold. She first advised sex workers to quit sex work and earn a living through better means, but then became more moderate as she further discussed the participatory play,

Sex workers are a menace in the community. We should encourage them to quit sex work and earn a living through other, better means. However, this is a process that requires that we first build better relations. It will not be easy, but if we make an effort we will have some sex workers embracing change that will lead them to leave sex work through the empowerment brought about by improved relations.

The first part of Mildred's response reinforces the stigma and discrimination towards sex workers, as was discussed in Chapter Two (section 2.4) and Chapter Three (section 3.3). Arnott and Crago (2009:25) confirm that sex work

cannot be outlawed because it is the oldest profession which, despite its ills, is providing a source of income. Maseko (2012) noted that demonising statements perpetuate marginalisation of sex workers. The second part of Mildred's comments reiterate what WHO (2014:25) has been advocating for when they say,

Sex workers should be in decision-making positions where they can engage in processes to identify their problems and priorities, analyse causes and develop solutions. Such methods strengthen programme relevance, build enduring life and relationship skills, and help ensure the long-term success of programmes.

We cannot run away from sex workers in the community, and they are even our relatives, noted Martha when she said,

These sex workers we call names are our relatives. Nothing can take that away, even if we continue to dream that we don't want these people in the community. I have learned that building better relations between us and the sex workers is possible if only we try.

Martha's comments corroborate what Scorgie et al. (2011:40) observed in their research in Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe, where sex workers are subjected to name-calling and "banned" from speaking with married men. They reported on one case,

One day I\* was at a club when a neighbour's husband joined the table where I was seated. Someone saw us chatting and called his wife. The wife took some neighbours to protest at the club. They beat me up and took me to the toilet. There, they pushed my head inside a dirty sink to drink the sewer. It was horrible. The husband ran away instead of telling them that there wasn't anything bad we were doing but just talking. Back at home, the landlord told me that I could no longer reside in his house as all women were furious with me as I could steal their husbands (\*Female SW, Mombasa IDI19).

Thelma, one of the oldest of the participants, expressed her feeling of joy and appreciation about the participatory play,

I did not have any remorse for the sex workers before this participatory play. My thought was almost evasive as I did not know what to expect. But when I heard the life stories, I realised that I have a role to play. What amazed me is that, despite the anger, bitterness and pain exhibited in the play, it is possible to build better relations with sex workers.

Another of the participants, Tatenda, said that she thanks God for giving her any opportunity to be an instrument of peace in the community. She said,

At first I was reluctant, but the participatory theatre taught us about behaviour change in a totally new way. Through the process of behaviour change, it's possible to empower sex workers. There is a reason why God gave us this opportunity to meet. This participatory theatre we conducted today brought us together and gives us the chance to understand the lives of sex workers. Now God has made us instruments and advocates that will find a mechanism to work together with sex workers despite the differences we had with them.

However, Tatenda also advised sex workers not to work in their home community. Rather, sex workers should work away from their homes where they will not have to meet their relatives. In their home areas they are bound to meet relatives and people who know them and, in the end, there is friction.

These statements show most participants were cautiously willing to build better relations with sex workers in the community. This general acceptance by the women about their wrongful attitudes and behaviour towards sex workers shows that it is possible after all to unite warring parties through participatory theatre. Analyses of the statements by a number of participants show that the staging of the participatory theatre was a desirable platform to improve relations between sex workers and members of the public.

### **7.5.2 The impact of participatory theatre for conflict transformation for the sex workers**

Having heard the views of the members of the public, I had hoped to bring the sex workers and members of the public together. However, this did not materialise and I had to take part of the participatory play which was on video to the sex workers to hear their views. Sadly, because of the mobility of the sex workers, I only managed to locate three, namely Rachel, Emily and Tendai, and only on an individual basis. A meeting of the two groups could have produced a better understanding of the issues surrounding their bad relations and probably improve relations in the process.

On showing the video of part of the theatre event to Tendai, she thanked the eight participants for showing love towards sex workers,

I am extremely grateful for the consideration shown by the participants. I hope their new found wisdom will have a ripple effect in the community. Imagine if they go and help eight other people change their perceptions towards sex workers and those do the same. At the end of the day, they may not be able to change everyone, but this will go some way in helping our cause.

When people come together for a noble initiative that benefits other people, those set to reap more benefits in the process feel inspired. Emily could not hide her excitement but was cautious,

I am glad that these women have shown support for us, but we cannot control their feelings especially now back in the community. I can see that they seem truly to be showing [positive] emotions toward us for which, once again, I am grateful, and I hope they continue to provide the necessary support in the community. At the end of the day, we all want to live in harmony.

Building relations is not an event but a process. People usually require more time to be able to initiate a change process. As a result, Rachel also cautioned regarding the remorse of the participants,

It's unfortunate that I can't meet them because I wish to protect my identity. I would have wanted to know if what they said and did on that day is what they are practising now. I don't want to judge them, but knowing people, they can sometimes pretend to love you when it is the opposite.

Through such comments, one can understand the frustrations that sex workers are faced with in building better relations with the general public. The big challenge is that perception change by members of the public is necessarily gradual and may need to be accompanied by more stimulus activities as PT. The role of improving relations is a collective initiative between sex workers and the general public.

## **7.6 Validity and reliability**

I had a strong working relationship with my participants, and the action component made it possible for us to relate with hope and compassion with one another. By engaging participants at each stage of the research, I allowed for a shift in power to ensure that participants had full control over the way information was sought, analysed, and ultimately presented. The goal was to highlight self-determination of the participants in the research. It was easy for me to contact the participants during the process of writing the research text. The participants' voices were represented through the forum and image theatre process. The amplification of the voice through writing text was done with the hope of representing all of our voices. I member checked to ensure representation of all the participants' voices. They all agreed without reservation that their voices were correctly represented. Consultation after writing the initial text changed the minds of those who were sceptical about whether I was going to use their data for malicious purposes. For instance, when we undertook the theatre programme, at first Martha was hesitant to participate. However, when I showed her what I had written, she gave her approval.



I had hoped to bring the sex workers and members of the public together for an interaction. But this did not materialise and I had to take part of the participatory play which is on video to the sex workers to hear their views. As mentioned earlier, however, because of the mobility of sex workers, I only managed to locate three of the six that was Rachel, Emily and Tendai.

### **7.7 Limitations**

The major limitation is that the long term impact of the participatory theatre for conflict transformation is not known since it was a one-day workshop. It is very difficult to conclude that, after the programme, the participants “really” changed their behaviour and attitude as people may not change in a day, as in some cases change is not an event but rather a process. Salomon (2013:4) asserts that short term programmes usually yield only short term benefits, and that a researcher should never be satisfied with a day’s event. However, I can only hope that participants take their words into action. That way the programme will have a ripple effect in the community. Another challenge is that, due to the mobility of the sex workers I was only able to locate three of the six individually to show them part of the video of the participatory play after each one of them rejected the idea of meeting the participatory for conflict transformation participants for an interaction. An interaction between the women members of public and sex workers would have been more effective in improving relations.

### **7.8 Summary and conclusion**

There is the suspicion that the therapeutic benefit to those taking part has sometimes been allowed to take precedence. The six sex workers maybe live in partial safety and peace today, knowing that there are eight women who dedicated themselves to improving relations with them and many others like them, and to help many others do the same. Each of the sex workers articulated that it is a daily battle to disregard these messages that continue to pop up and interfere in their lives, but since they still face situations that reinforce this narrative, they find it much easier to focus on their strengths and ignore the damaging narrative. The more researchers provide detailed descriptions of the

programmes, in this case perspectives about a theme from life stories, the more the results become realistic and richer (Creswell 2014:202). Participatory theatre was effective in improving relations between sex workers and the general public as participants showed emotions throughout the play and discussed how they felt about discriminating others. Seeing that participants were not young people who had volunteered to take part, their emotions throughout the play can be seen as genuine.

This study was undertaken with the objective of analysing the impact of PT in the context of a group of eight women. My aim was that of finding whether participatory theatre could have a positive impact on building better relations between sex workers and the general public. The findings cannot be generalised beyond these participants, nor can this study compare the relative impact of such participatory theatre with other methods of improving relations between two or more opposing groups. Despite this, the programme was successful in building better relations between sex workers and the eight participants.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS**

### **8.1 Introduction**

A conclusion of the thesis is given in this chapter. This includes the lessons learned, what actually transpired in the data collection to shape the intervention, the limitations, aims and objectives, and a summary of the findings. Recommendations are given at the end of the chapter.

### **8.2 Summary of thesis**

Chapter One contains the background to the study, the aim and objectives, the sample size, and the organisation of the research. It is in this chapter that the research problem of perception towards sex workers is articulated. Structural violence towards sex workers is being neglected by researchers despite the fact that it is rampant. Most research has focused on the health aspect of sex work in relation to HIV/AIDS without noting the humiliation that the sex workers go through every day. My study focused on improving relations between sex workers and members of the public. The belief was that, by including members of public in building better relations with sex workers, positive change can be achieved through peaceful co-existence which may be followed by development in the community. In short, my justification is also contained in this chapter. A brief introduction and ethical considerations are dealt with in this chapter, as well as my research contributions in filling a gap.

Chapters Two and Three are a review of literature on the ill-treatment of sex workers worldwide and in Zimbabwe. It is in these chapters that the definition of sex work, its prevalence, causes and effects in general are discussed. Cultural practises in Zimbabwe are listed as a major cause of bad relations between sex workers and the general public. It was shown that the ill-treatment is designed to disrupt the everyday functions of sex workers, thus robbing them of their support systems which are necessary for their well-being and work. These two chapters described the daily fear, embarrassment and impunity that characterises being a sex worker, and the need for positive behavioural change towards sex workers

by the general public. The two chapters also discussed the necessary conditions identified for promoting change to improve relations. Cultural practices continue to affect sex workers not only in Zimbabwe but throughout the world. Other scholars argue that socialisation is a major contributor to marginalisation of sex workers as children are taught to stigmatise sex workers from a young age.

Chapter Four particularly discussed five case studies of how participatory theatre is being used to promote attitudes and behavioural change, for instance, in issues to do with HIV/AIDS. It was observed that, in all the contexts in which the case studies were done, the sex worker's situation is similar because all the cases encouraged attitudes and behavioural change through effective participation of all the parties involved. The chapter also discussed the history and development of participatory theatre in Zimbabwe and, more importantly, the link between participatory theatre and conflict transformation. I dedicated Chapter Five to presenting the research methods.

Chapter Six presented the life stories of the sex workers. In this study, I have illuminated the experiences of three mothers who have struggled with challenges related to violence, abuse, mental illness and substance abuse. With great courage, honesty, and emotion, these women shared their personal narratives as they had constructed and made meaning of them. The goal of this research has been to present the stories with integrity and respect. The research was not an attempt to discover "truths" about women's experiences with these challenges that could be generalized to a larger population. However, I believe that the stories of Takudzwa, Rachel, Emily, Tererai, Tendai and Memory have much to offer in the way of tentative suggestions or considerations for people working in professions supporting women with similar experiences. Five themes were derived from the stories and were used to create a participatory theatre for conflict transformation in Chapter Seven with eight women members of the public. Chapter Seven also evaluated the outcomes of the participatory theatre in building better relations between sex workers and the general public.

### **8.3 Summary of findings**

By way of conclusion, it would be important to note that the research provided sufficient reasons to assert that members of the public had negative perceptions towards sex workers which showed that there was a legitimate reason to implement a participatory theatre for conflict transformation programme to improve relations. Looking at life stories of sex workers from this perspective was important in that it shifts the discourse on degrading sex work from a moralistic perspective to tolerance among the general public.

This research was able to articulate the issues viewed as barriers and stumbling blocks to improving relations between sex workers and members of the public. Structural violence in the form of stigmatisation, discrimination, intimidation, fear, impunity and attack on dignity were identified as being significant issues. This fulfilled the second and third objective which was to identify the experiences of sex workers in relation to the general public worldwide and in Zimbabwe. Sex workers identified a desire for unity, recognising the conditions they are subjected to by the general public, while women participants saw the need to mend the dysfunctional relationships which are mainly influenced by cultural practices.

Chapter Four showed the link between participatory theatres in influencing change of perceptions. Using five case studies, participatory theatre was shown to be an effective tool in changing perceptions which proved that it was possible to use it in this study. Further, an analysis of the link between participatory theatre and conflict transformation showed that participatory theatre is being widely used in peace building initiatives in many countries. This fulfilled objective four of the study that set out to prove the relationship between participatory theatre and conflict transformation.

The fifth objective of the research was to derive a participatory play from the themes of the data with the aim of improving better relations between sex workers and the general public. The participants found two main aspects were found to be useful. First, the participatory theatre session offered participants an

opportunity to understand the six life stories of sex workers in an environment that was open. Second, participants found that the participatory theatre session encouraged attitude and behavioural change that is likely to build better relationships between sex workers and the general public. Furthermore, participants showed remorse toward each other's situations.

Finally, the participatory theatre session itself, and the actual acting of their life stories, also provided room for participants to embrace the future with confidence. It showed, too, that the play had therapeutic effects in their lives as well. Participants evaluated the effectiveness of participatory theatre in promoting perceptions for change towards sex workers. Participants showed remorse for their attitudes and behaviour toward sex workers, and generally said that they will encourage others in the community to view sex workers as human beings who deserve to be respected. Although it was not possible to have the sex workers and women participants meet together, a month later, three of the sex workers were shown a part of the recording of the participatory play and indicated that it helped members of the public to view sex work issues differently. They said that more of such interventions were necessary to encourage perception change by more members of the public. Overall, the research found that, through participatory theatre for conflict transformation, it is possible to encourage attitude and behavioural change within communities with the aim to build better relations. The action involved the participants seeing what they are involved in on a day to day basis in a creative manner.

#### **8.4 Limitations**

Probably the biggest limitation that this study had in terms of its aim to improve relations between sex workers and the general public is that men were not part of the participants because I felt the sensitivity of the topic will put them in an awkward position. Still, this did not affect the overall aim of the research since the participants agreed to incorporate them within the community. Nevertheless, this study has demonstrated that an improved relation among the participants is

possible, and that there are likely to spread the purpose and results to other community members.

Another limitation was the sensitivity of the research. As mentioned in chapter seven a meeting between sex workers and the women participants would have been desirable to enhance the building of better relations. Three of the six sex workers I managed to locate rejected the idea because they were afraid that the meeting will reveal their identities. The mobility of sex workers was also a limitation: for instance, locating the sex workers for the second and third meetings was difficult because some of them did not have cell phones and had no fixed residence. As a result, this study relies on three sex workers to evaluate the participatory theatre event conducted with members of the public. This in a way also affected the full treatment of my objective number 5, which was an evaluation of the outcomes. Nonetheless, this did not affect the overall outcomes of this research.

Time also affected the long-term monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the study since improving relations is a process not an event especially with a sensitive study of this nature. While I received feedback at the conclusion of the participatory theatre for conflict transformation, finding out how participants have build better relations with sex workers three or five years after the research would be a better indicator of the long-term effectiveness of the participatory theatre in improving relations, and would go a long way in stringing the validity and credibility of the research.

### **8.5 Personal reflections**

At the formative level of this research, I was afraid of the repercussions of researching on such a sensitive topic in a conservative society. I anticipated that during the research I will be stereotyped and accused of perpetuating sex work in Zimbabwe. However, I was proved mistaken, with the surprise turn of events that suggested that change is possible through the effective participation of all parties involved. I am happy that the study confirmed that it is possible to use participatory theatre for conflict transformation to mend broken relationships.

This was possible even though the sample used can never be representative of Harare or Seke, Chitungwiza. The research indicates that a participatory approach can bring people of different beliefs and work habits together for a common purpose.

Therefore, sex workers were bridged from the debilitating past fraught with guilt, shame and hurt, while the general public found out that their actions cause so much pain and grief for sex workers. This short use of participatory theatre is not exhaustive. The successes of participatory theatre approaches are undoubted, and they are important. Yet, the failures are also apparent. This rather cynical assessment should not lead us to underestimate the very real value of participatory empowerment approaches in building better relations between conflicting groups. Bringing the sex workers, through their life stories, and the general public into dialogue, and encouraging and facilitating an improvement of relations is crucial for conflict transformation.

## **8.6 Recommendations**

Therefore, this study recommends that, in order to continually improve relations between sex workers and members of the public, there should be more of these interventions like the one used for this study to improve relations, without necessarily legalizing and encouraging sex work. Although the law does not explicitly criminalize sex work, the continued harassment of sex workers by the general public makes sex work implicitly criminal. Improvement of relations in most communities would protect sex workers from the inadvertent negative perceptions by the general public, police harassments, arrests and detentions while, at the same time, it would help these women to freely report cases of harassment and bribes from the police, insults from members of the public, assaults by clients and their husbands. It would also help them to report cases of fraud perpetrated against them by the general public, some of their clients and the police. In addition, as stated earlier, fear of the normalised stigmatisation has often discouraged sex workers from seeking treatment for sexually transmitted infections at public health institutions.



Whereas it might be too late to reach the entire older generation, the study recommends that:

- It might be prudent for government to address the issue of improving relations between sex workers and the general public, beginning with the younger generation of school-going age
- Although the current sex work programmes address the issue of condom use and general health, this research may offer a creative approach to building better relations which can be customized for a specific community
- Sex work issues must be included in the school curriculum. This is after I realised that it is a taboo to discuss sex with parents in the present community. Questions such as: At which year do we teach this? How do we teach it (with both male and female teachers together or separately)? How will the children react? Are some of the factors that may affect the teaching of sex issues at school?

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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix 1**

#### Female sex workers interview guide

Date:

Time:

Number of participants:

Topic Title: Improving relations between female sex workers and the general public in Zimbabwe: an action research project

Narratives questions

Introduce myself and the purpose of the interview. Thanked participant participation. I, outlined the ethical considerations and ask for permission to tape record the session. I stated that the tapes will only be used by the researcher and that the tapes will be stored in a secure place. The following were the guiding questions:

1. Would you tell me about your childhood, about growing up, about your parents and siblings?
2. What sort of relationship do you have with your parents and siblings now?
3. Do you have any children/are you in a relationship now?
4. Can you tell me a bit about how you became a sex worker?
5. What are the main challenges you face - as a sex worker and in life in general?
6. What keeps you in the sex industry?
7. Do you have anything to say to those people who are critical of sex workers?

## Appendix 2

Demographic questionnaire for female sex workers

*Please kindly tick where appropriate*

1. What is your age?
  - Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you married?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Divorced
3. How many children do you have?
  - Specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - None
4. *Education*

What is the highest degree you have?

  - Secondary School (High School)
  - College / University
  - Graduate Degree
  - PhD
  - Technical school
  - None of the above
5. How many years have you been involved in sex work?
  - Under 1 year
  - 2-5 years
  - 5-10 years
  - 10-15 years
  - 15-20 years

## Appendix 3

Demographic questionnaire for general public participants

*Please kindly tick where appropriate*

1. What is your age?
  - Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you married?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Divorced
3. How many children do you have?
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - Specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - None
4. *Education*

What is the highest degree you have?

  - Secondary School (High School)
  - College / University
  - Graduate Degree
  - Technical school
  - None of the above
5. Which area best describe your work?
  - Community development
  - Conflict resolution
  - Business management
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4



### LETTER TO INFORM

#### Dear Participant

Thank you for taking an interest in my research. My name is Farai Chirimumimba. I am currently registered for a Masters in Peacebuilding at the Durban University of Technology. I wish to provide information of my research study so that you have a clear understanding of what it is about.

The title of my study is “: Improving relations between female sex workers and the general public in Zimbabwe: an action research project.” Negative perceptions towards sex workers are a major concern internationally, nationally and within our communities. I want to find out the causes and consequences of violence towards sex workers in your community and together with you develop, implement and evaluate a programme to reduce such violence in your community. If you choose to be part of the study you will:

- You may be part of a group of 6 or 8 participants as part of interviewees or participatory theatre participant.
- Be requested to take part in individual interviews of which the information given to me will be treated with anonymity and confidentiality.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. There will be no negative consequences should you choose to withdraw from the study. You will not be paid for participating in the study and you will not be expected to pay anything to take part in the study. The focus group and individual interview sessions will be held at a time convenient to you.

I will not use your name when reporting on in the thesis. Your answers will be seen by me. However, if you participate in the action team to develop and implement the perception change programme then you may be known to everyone. Kindly note that if you have any queries please contact me (+263 773 894 542) or my supervisor Professor G.T. Harris (+2731 201 4027) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or [dvctip@dut.ac.za](mailto:dvctip@dut.ac.za)

## Appendix 5



08 June 2016

To the Ward Councillor (Seke, Chitungwiza)

My name is Farai Chirimumimba. I am currently registered for a Masters in Peacebuilding at the Durban University of Technology. I would like to interact with people from your community in a study that I am conducting. Below are the details of my study so that you have a clear understanding of what it is about.

The title of my study is “: Improving relations between female sex workers and the general public in Zimbabwe: an action research project.”

Attitude towards commercial sex workers is a major concern internationally, nationally and within our communities. I want to find out the causes and consequences of attitudes towards sex workers in your community and together with the people develop, implement and evaluate a programme to build better relationships within your community. Participation is voluntary and no harm will befall participants during and after the study has been carried out. For this study, I am guided by the code of ethics of Durban University of Technology to ensure confidentiality of information provided to me by the participant.

I do hope that I will be granted access to work with the people of your community. In any case, should you have any problems or queries then please contact me on (+263 773 894 542) or my supervisor Professor G.T. Harris on (+2731 201 4027) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on +2731 373 2382 or [dvctip@dut.ac.za](mailto:dvctip@dut.ac.za)

Sincerely

Farai Chirimumimba

## Appendix 6



### CONSENT

#### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: \_\_\_\_\_,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Participant**                      **Date**                      **Time**                      **Signature** /  
**Right Thumbprint**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Researcher**                      **Date**                      **Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Witness (If applicable)**                      **Date**                      **Signature**

