



**EDUCATING SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS ON  
NONVIOLENCE USING A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH TO  
REDUCE VIOLENCE IN A ZIMBABWEAN SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy in Public Administration - Peace Studies**

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Faculty of Management Sciences  
at the Durban University of Technology**

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**13 April 2023**

**Declaration**

I Dorothy Moyo do declare that the research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university. It is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Dorothy Moyo

## **Abstract**

Zimbabwe is facing increased violence by and against learners at institutions of learning. As part of efforts to reduce school violence, this study sought to educate learners on non-violence, using a transformative approach to learning. The aim of the study was to build a culture of peace at the school of study. To achieve this, the study used a participatory action research approach to address the problem and find solutions. The study was informed by Lederach's Conflict Transformation theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory. Twenty-four learners and four teachers were purposively sampled to participate in the study. Data was collected using questionnaires administered at the beginning of the study to 274 learners and 20 teachers. In addition, focus group discussions, interviews and observations were used to collect data. Working with participants, an intervention to address the problem was planned, implemented and evaluated. The intervention that was put in place was a peace club. Experiential learning was the pedagogy used by the peace club. To reinforce peace club learning peace club members attended a two-day workshop on conflict resolution and transformation. Quantitative data was analysed using percentages and reported in graphs and tables. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis and reported in narrative form with the use of thick descriptions. The study was evaluated for short term outcomes and the finding of the study revealed that learners can be taught non-violent ways of resolving conflict. The main reason learners resort to violence as a way of resolving conflict is because they have not been taught non-violent alternative methods. Learners are brought up in violent settings, at home, school and wider community and as they develop, they learn that violence is a means to an end and the only way of resolving conflict. Since violence is learnt, it can also be unlearnt

Key words: school violence, non-violence, culture of peace, transformation, experiential learning, action research

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to the Almighty God. You brought me this far.

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## **List of abbreviations**

AVP-Alternatives to Violence Project

AVPKZN-Alternatives to Violence Project (KwaZulu Natal)

AVPZ-Alternatives to Violence Project (Zimbabwe)

AR-Action Research

BICC-Brethren in Christ Church

CCTV- Closed Circuit Television

CJCP-Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention

COVID-19-

CRC- Convention on the rights of the child

IKS-Indigenous knowledge systems

MCC-Mennonite Central Committee

MoPSE- Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

NBSLEA-National Baseline Survey on Life Experiences

PAR-Participatory action research

RCT- Randomized Controlled Trial

TRC-Truth and Reconciliation Commission

FG-Focus groups

FGD-Focus group discussions

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UN-United Nations

UNICEF- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNDHR-Universal declaration of human rights

WHO- World Health Organization

# **Chapter 1: Study Context**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the study whose aim was to build a culture of peace at a school in Zimbabwe. The study is about educating secondary school learners on non-violence using a transformative approach to reduce violence at Mzilikazi High School. This chapter presents the background to the study, my motivation for carrying out the study, the research problem, statement of the problem, aim, objectives, significance of the study and limitations.

The objectives of the study were;

- To assess the causes, nature, extent, and consequences of violence in a secondary school in Bulawayo Zimbabwe.
- To document the current approaches to dealing with violence at the school and to assess their effectiveness.
- Using a participatory action research approach, to plan and implement a programme of action over a 24-month period aimed at building a culture of peace at the school.
- To evaluate the short-term outcome of the programme.
- 

## **1.2 Background to the study**

Violence at schools in Zimbabwe is an area of concern both to the school authorities and parents. The increase in school violence poses a challenge for scholars to tackle the problem through research to identify the causes, nature, extent and consequences of the violence and come up with ways to tackle the problem and reduce the violence that is becoming endemic at schools.

Zimbabwe can be said to be a product of four historic influences, which were all characterized by violence, the pre-colonial, colonial, armed liberation and post-independence eras. During the pre-colonial era those who dissented or sought power had to leave and find their own political entity elsewhere. Dissent and competition for power was not allowed and could be fatal. The second era, which was the colonial era was autocratic and highly undemocratic with exclusionist policies which limited political participation and

not tolerance to political competition between blacks and white citizens (Ndlovu- Gatsheni 2000:102). The country was colonized through violence, and violence continued thereafter to be used as an instrument to administer and impose power over the civilians (Nyere 2016:94-95). This led to the third era of liberation movements that fought against colonialism and racism. Liberation movements were also undemocratic and authoritarian in nature. Those who did not embrace and support the nationalist movements were labelled as sell-outs and killed by brutal means. Within the liberation movements themselves, there were factions, intraparty violent purges, assassinations, witch hunting and intimidation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2002). The liberation war that was waged from 1966 to 1979 and which was meant to liberate the black population from oppression, was a continuation of the use of violence as a means to an end. Brutal and savage acts were unleashed on civilians by both the colonial regime forces, the liberation armies, and some militia groups (Sachikonye 2010). Political independence in 1980 was therefore achieved and consummated through violent means (Nyere 2016:94). Soon after that, the country entered into new violent conflicts in the 1980s and from the year 2000 the country witnessed violent elections, mass displacements and continued repression directed at civilians (Research Advocacy Unit 2018:2). The negative aspects of the liberation struggle continued to affect the post- independence era, confirming Karl Marx statement that *“the tradition of the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living”* (Marx 1852:1).

According to Raleigh *et. al.* (2013:14), when compared with other states across Africa, Zimbabwe has a high violence rate for the size of its population although its fatality rate is low. Political violence increased in Zimbabwe from 2002 and remained stable with an average of 300 reported cases per year. Although a citizen in Zimbabwe may experience political violence, they are unlikely to be killed as a result. The average reported fatalities for the period 1997 to 2011 were 22 deaths per year due to political violence but these figures disguise the 800 cases reported during the 2002 and 2008 elections. High rates of violence and low fatality rates serve the political objectives of keeping the citizens in a constant state of repression, fear of political parties and violent wings and keeps foreign intervention at bay. Over 80% of violence that takes place in Zimbabwe each year is violence against citizens

The Global Peace Index is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit making think tank that measures and communicates the economic value of peace in 163 independent states and territories. In ranking these on their peacefulness, the Global Peace Index uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators and three



thematic domains. The thematic domains are the levels of societal safety and security, the extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict, and the degree of militarization. In 2022 the Global Peace Index rated Zimbabwe as low in terms of being peaceful. Against 163 countries (99.7% of the world's population) reviewed in the Global Peace index, Zimbabwe ranked 154 and ranked 31 out of 44 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2022:2, 11). It is evident that, although there is no open war going on in Zimbabwe, the country is not peaceful. To compound the matter, one of Zimbabwe's neighbouring countries, South Africa, which has a lot of influence on the socio-economic and political landscape of Zimbabwe occupied position 145 out of the 163 countries, and position 26 out of the 44 sub-Saharan countries on the Global Peace Index (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2022:11).

According to Harris *et.al.* (2014), South Africa is one of the most violent countries in the world and was ranked number 15 in the world by the United Nations in terms of its homicide rate per 100 000 people (Harris *et.al* 2014). Due to the proximity of Zimbabwe with South Africa and the high mobility between the two countries the violence in South Africa is spilling over to Zimbabwe. A Zimbabwe daily newspaper, The Chronicle reported in 2016 that during the festive season Zimbabweans working in South Africa bring along a spirit of crime and reports of assaults, murder, theft and gun crimes by the returnees dominate the press.

In 2022 the World Happiness Index ranked Zimbabwe as one of the unhappiest countries at 144 out of 146 countries. The ranking is done after an analysis over three years looking at categories such as social safety nets, freedom to make life choices and perception corruption (Helliwell *et.al.*2022:19).

In the education sector, Zimbabwe inherited a system anchored in structural violence along racial lines. The educational system provided inferior and limited education to black people and superior quality education to the white population Shizha and Kariwo (2011) A dual system of education existed, and racial discrimination and segregation legalized and enforced. The two systems were a product of the socio-political philosophy of racism and racial discrimination. Discrimination applied to the content, and scope of the curriculum and the provision of the infrastructure and financial resources. The education system for white learners was highly advanced, preparing learners for economic, political and technological dominance and leadership The education system for black learners was inferior, unbalanced, non-compulsory, lowly financed and designed to produce poorly educated graduates who would provide cheap labour for the white employers and communities (Nziramasa, 1999:2). The colonial government

spent as much as 20 times more per white learner than the black learner (Shizha and Kariwo 2011). Black children were not afforded well-rounded education, and African education was under-funded. As late as 1979, fifty percent of black children were not attending school and the first government-run secondary school was only established in 1946 (Mlambo 2019:15). The presenting political, social and economic structures at the time were discriminatory and violent.

Harber and Sakade (2009:174) stated that the key purpose of education by colonial powers when they extended education to the indigenous populations was for control and the benefit of the colonizers. Missionary and state schools were used by the colonizers to teach the indigenous populations the superiority of their culture. The schooling system that was designed to meet the needs of colonialism remains a legacy in many post-colonial societies and post-colonial governments did not hesitate to use schooling as a tool for political control to serve their interests.

The attainment of independence in 1980 ushered in a new socio-political order which was non-racial. Racial discrimination in all spheres of life was outlawed and education declared a human right for everyone. The government adopted policies to redress past injustices and structural inequalities. Primary education was made free resulting in over 100% increase in enrolment. The unprecedented increase in learner enrolments resulted in reduced resources and over-crowding. By the early 1990s the government was faced with a huge budget to resource schools (Nziramasanga,1999:9). With time, the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe began to deteriorate rapidly with violence taking centre stage. Schools experienced high levels of political violence especially those in rural areas where both teachers and learners experiencing direct violence. During election time, notably in 2008, teachers and learners were beaten, harassed and humiliated. Militia bases, were set up in schools or within their proximity, posing a potential danger to learners and teachers especially females who were in additional danger of rape and sexual abuse (Shizha and Kariwo 2011).

In Zimbabwe, youths have always been involved in violent conflicts either as victims or perpetrators of violence. The reason for such involvement is that young people are mainly affected by socio-economic challenges and they are flexible and agile. After being involved in violence, they carry the moral blame, regret and psychological trauma and those coming after them continue the cycle of violence. It is important therefore that serious and effective interventions be put in place as preventative measures or to ameliorate the damage already caused to the youth. In schools, teaching of peace and tolerance as an

integral part of education is necessary so that the spirit of peace and tolerance becomes part of the society (Dodo 2018).

### 1.3 Profile of school of study

Figure 1.1: Mzilikazi High School sign



Source: Pindula 2018

Mzilikazi High School, the school of my study, is a public school situated in the second largest city in Zimbabwe, Bulawayo, in a high density suburb called Mzilikazi. The school is within a kilometre from Makokoba suburb, the oldest suburb built for black people in Bulawayo in pre-independent Zimbabwe. Makokoba and Mzilikazi suburbs were built during the colonial era to house male single workers. The two suburbs now house thousands of families in squalid housing with poor sanitation conditions and are home to the most poor, needy, deprived and disadvantaged urban populace. Mzilikazi High School therefore serves a large community including the surroundings that are dominated by high poverty, unemployment and violence (Moyo 2010:8).

Mzilikazi High School was named after King Mzilikazi of the Ndebele people. The name is loosely translated in English to mean "*the great road*." The school is located in the vicinity of Mzilikazi's palace which is the present state house in the city of Bulawayo. Mzilikazi High school is fondly referred to as Mgandane after

the army commander of Mzilikazi's son Lobengula. The school has managed to put its name on the map of Zimbabwe in terms of academics, sports, arts and culture. It has produced talented soccer players in the history of Zimbabwe such as Peter Ndlovu who played in the English Premier League, the late Adam Ndlovu Benjamin Konjera, Kudakwashe Mahachi, and Josta Konzo (Mzilikazi High School n.d.). Other notable alumnis who attended the school and are a pride to both teachers and learners are, novelists. Yvonne Vera and Noviolet and prominent politician Professor Welshman Ncube (Pindula 2018:1).

Mzilikazi High School not only draws its learners from the surrounding schools but across the city of Bulawayo and embraces diversity. This is demonstrated by the schools offering of the two main indigenous languages, Ndebele and Shona as subject. The former Head boy, Lonesome Tapiwa (2017-2018) summed it up in a school report stating, *"It was a pleasure to be a student at Mzilikazi High. I learnt a lot in terms of Ubuntu not just concerning my academics but also how to live in and embrace a diverse society"* (Mzilikazi High School n.d).

## 1.4 Motivation

In 2015, as I was completing my studies for MSc in Peace Leadership and Conflict Resolution, I met a PhD student from the Durban University of Technology (now Dr Ntombizakhe Moyo Nyoni) who introduced me to an organization called Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP). The organization carried out workshops to equip participants with skills and knowledge to live non-violent lives (see section 8.7). I enlisted and attended the workshops up to the Training of Trainers and, after apprenticeship, became a qualified facilitator. During my involvement with AVP, I realized just how practical peacebuilding could be and how anyone could be capacitated to build peace within their environments.

In 2017, I attended the AVP Southern African Gathering (conference) for facilitators in Howick, KwaZulu Natal. At the gathering, I met with peacebuilding scholars and practitioners who engaged in practical peacebuilding and research. Although I was aware of what action research was, I became even more aware of it and its potential for transformation. This was during informal discussion with other participants who were involved with action research in peace building. It was at this gathering too that I met my supervisor, Professor Harris, who challenged me to think about pursuing a PhD using action research. After serious consideration I took up the challenge.

I was inspired by Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and the African concept of *Ubuntu* when I decided on my topic on reducing violence in a school setting.

#### 1.4.1 Freire's dialogic pedagogy

Freire (1970) described two types of teaching, banking education and problem posing education. He described banking education, as education where the learner is seen as an empty vessel and the teacher as possessing all the knowledge that is deposited into the learner who is a patient listening object. Such education, Freire argued, is education for domination and oppression. Banking education resists dialogue because dialogue is not about depositing information on another person but allowing learners to participate in the learning process. In banking education, content is detached from reality, the learner does not have to understand the meaning behind what is taught. Instead, learners memorize what is being taught without catching the significance of what they are learning. Both the teacher and the learners are dehumanized by this practice.

In problem posing education, the teacher is not the only one with all the knowledge. The teacher is also being taught through dialogue with the learner. The teacher is teaching while also being taught. Teaching becomes a joint responsibility for the teacher and the learner, and they all grow together. Learners are no longer docile listeners with knowledge being poured into them but are critical thinkers and co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. Critical thinking sees reality as a process that can be transformed and not as a static entity that cannot change (Freire 1970).

Banking education inhibits creativity whilst problem posing education is based on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action based on reality. Problem posing education acknowledges that people are historical beings in the process of becoming. People are unfinished beings with an unfinished reality moving forward, looking at the past to understand who they are so that they can move forward in a wise manner and build their future. The importance of experiential learning is at the focus of problem posing education (Freire 1970).

The intervention that I jointly put together with the participants at the school of my research was anchored on experiential learning. In addition, my study was carried out using Participatory Action Research (PAR). In PAR, the researcher and participants are co-researchers. Participants determine

solutions to their problems through critical thinking, reflection and taking informed action. This can only be possible in schools if education is emancipatory and not oppressive.

When I further reflected on Freire's dialogic pedagogy, I realized that banking education that is found in mainstream education can be a hindrance to attempts at reducing violence in schools given its resistance to dialogue and conformist nature. Instead, I realized that the problem-posing approach recommended by Freire (1970) was a better approach to education and would assist in efforts to reduce violence in schools because it focuses on dialogue, questioning, critical thinking, love, hope, humility, and faith in others. It is education for freedom and not oppression.

Although my research did not target formal education at the school, it was my aim that, through my intervention, targeted at teachers and learners throughout the curriculum would impact on how teachers and learners engaged each other even in formal learning, thus creating peace at the school.

#### 1.4.2 Ubuntu as an African philosophy

*Ubuntu* is an African philosophy that is an alternative to the western philosophy of individualism and utilitarianism. It is a Zulu/Xhosa/Ndebele word which, in English, translates to "humanness". It is best expressed in the Nguni languages (of which Ndebele is one such language and is spoken at the school where my study was located) by the saying "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" meaning a person is a person through other people. *Ubuntu* as a social philosophy is based on principles of care, community, harmony, respect for others and solidarity in the face of adversity. It expresses the value of collaboration, co-operation, and community. It is a philosophy of peace, and it was used in South Africa as an important concept during reforms in education after apartheid. It was also used as a framework for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa that looked into the injustices of apartheid from both victim and perpetrator perspectives (Bolden 2014:1).

The TRC Chairman, the late Bishop Desmond Tutu, stated that,

A person with *Ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or

diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as they were less than who they are (Tutu 1999:32).

*Ubuntu* has been viewed as a normative philosophy on how people should relate to each other and has been helpful in understanding and contextualising research and practice in sub-Saharan Africa. It is usually summarised as “*I am because we are.*” This stresses the fact that a person cannot be detached from their social context and emphasises the subjective emotional appreciation of human experience instead of the objective rationality of human existence. In research, this approach to human existence calls for a qualitative inductive approach of how people make sense of the world around them (Bolden 2014).

Education for *Ubuntu* seeks to impart the *Ubuntu* values to learners and enables them to live lives that are anchored on a communal understanding of personhood and humanness. *Ubuntu* articulates “our communal inter-connectedness, our common humanity, our interdependence and our common membership to a community (Letseka 2013:339). In *Ubuntu*, no one is self-sufficient, other people are an essential part of the very structure of the self. It would not be possible for a person immersed in *Ubuntu* to hurt another person because that would depersonalise them. *Ubuntu* articulates a “relational and compassionate worldview that resonates with many principles of participatory action research (Bolden 2014).

However, the above notwithstanding, *Ubuntu* has challenges. There is a huge gap between what the *Ubuntu* philosophy espouses and the actual lived experiences of people who advocate for it. Across Africa, there are serious inequalities and disparities in the distribution of wealth, power and status. Africa is bedevilled with corruption and collusion in politics, business, and society where those in the upper echelons benefit at the expense of those further down in the hierarchy. At times, those in political power use *Ubuntu* to promote loyalty and to suppress any resistance to government reform (Bolden 2014). It may be necessary, as Oviawe (2016) argues, not to totally eliminate the Eurocentric paradigms that are individualistic when dealing with the education system but, instead, to adopt the good attributes from them and from *Ubuntu* and, in this way a holistic, transformative, and emancipatory education experience for all may be achieved (Bolden 2014).

## 1.5 Statement of the problem

Zimbabwe is facing challenges of violence that has become prevalent at schools. Violence at schools is an area of concern both to the school authorities, parents and the wider community. The increase in school violence poses a challenge for scholars to tackle the problem through research to identify the causes, nature, extent and consequences of the violence, and to come up with ways to tackle the problem and reduce the violence. The violence that is going on in the larger society is reflected in schools. Through socialization, learners have learnt that the only way to resolve conflicts is through violence. Learners bring to school the violence that they have learnt from the wider community and model it at school. Violence has become an acceptable and normal way of resolving problems and conflicts for learners. The increase in incidents of violence in schools hinder learners from realising their potential, attaining their goals, and positively contributing to the socio-economic development of the country. It is imperative that children who are future leaders are educated and equipped with knowledge and skills of resolving conflicts and differences non-violently. In addition, teachers continue to use punitive methods of disciplining learners, such as corporal punishment, despite the banning of these methods. This may be due to the fact that teachers have not been equipped with non-violent alternative methods of disciplining learners. My study assumed that if learners are equipped with knowledge and skills to resolve their problems and conflicts non-violently this could reduce the violence that is currently being witnessed at schools.

## 1.6 Aim

In light of the endemic levels of violence in the Zimbabwe school and wider community the overall aim of my study was to build a culture of peace at a school in Zimbabwe.

### 1.6.1 Objectives

The research objectives of the study were:

1. To assess the causes, nature, extent, and consequences of violence in a secondary school in Bulawayo Zimbabwe.



2. To document the current approaches to dealing with violence at the school, and to assess their effectiveness.
3. Using a participatory action research approach, to plan and implement a programme of action over a 24-month period aimed at building a culture of peace at the school.
4. To evaluate the short-term outcome of the programme.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The main significance of my study is that it will build some peace at the school of study. The expected effects of the research are a transformed school environment where teachers and learners will not resort to violence when resolving conflicts and disagreements. It is expected that a culture of peace that will be built at the school will spread to families and peers resulting in less conflict-ridden communities.

My study will contribute towards the national dialogue on how school violence can be reduced in all its forms. Educating learners in non-violence has the potential of reducing school violence and creating peaceful schools. The study will increase awareness on the causes, nature, extent and consequences of school violence and proffer alternatives that can be used to equip learners with skills and knowledge on non-violence. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) can use the results of my study as it looks for ways of dealing with the prevailing high levels of school violence in its efforts to build peace in Zimbabwean schools. The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission which are Constitutional Commissions, may take an interest in the findings as they carry out their mandates in peace and human rights.

## **1.8 Limitations**

My research was a case study of one school in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and the results cannot be generalized as they are not representative of all schools in Bulawayo or Zimbabwe. The geographical position of the school, which is characterised by overcrowding and high crime rate, may not be representative of other schools which are located in areas where there is no overcrowding and less crime. Violence varies from

school to school depending on the learners, teachers and how the school is managed; hence, the results cannot be generalized.

## **1.9 Thesis overview**

This study is presented in 10 chapters:

### **Chapter 1**

This chapter introduces the study and outlines the background, the context, the research aim and objectives, the statement of the problem and the significance of the study. Freire's dialogic pedagogy and the *Ubuntu* philosophy are discussed as well as the motivations for the study.

### **Chapter 2**

The chapter reviews the theoretical foundations of the study, that is, the theoretical frameworks and conceptual concepts that informed the study. The two theories that informed the study are: Lederach's theory of Conflict Transformation, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. The terms, conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation are defined and differentiated. Definitions of peace and violence, the concept of a culture of peace and transformative approaches leading to peaceful schools and peace education are discussed.

### **Chapter 3**

The chapter continues with the review of the literature. It summarises and evaluates relevant literature and empirical studies on violence at school. The discussions centre on the causes, nature, extent and consequences of violence in the school environment.

### **Chapter 4**

This chapter documents and analyses the existing literature on violence in Zimbabwean schools. The discussion and analysis looks at the causes, nature, extent and consequences of violence at school.

### **Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 discusses traditional and restorative approaches to discipline, differences between discipline and punishment, current approaches to dealing with violence at school. Restorative justice, and restorative approaches to reducing school violence are detailed. Under restorative approaches to reducing school violence, indigenous knowledge systems, peace circles, and peace clubs are discussed.

## **Chapter 6**

This chapter details and justifies the methodology that was used in the study. Sampling procedures, data collection methods, research instruments, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity and reliability. action research and participatory action research are presented in detail. Challenges faced by the researcher are discussed and how they were overcome. The role of the researcher and the impact on the study are discussed.

## **Chapter 7**

This is the exploration which analyses and interprets the data that was collected using quantitative and qualitative methods. The data is summarised using tables, graphs and pie charts. This shows the relationships of parts to the whole, demonstrates trends and patterns. The research findings were used to draw conclusions.

## **Chapter 8**

Chapter 8 is the intervention chapter. It discusses the research story. It details how the peace club, to reduce violence at the school, was planned and implemented.

## **Chapter 9**

The chapter details the outcomes of the study focussing on peace club and AVP training outcomes.

## **Chapter 10**

The chapter draws conclusions makes reflectionsand makes recommendations. The conclusions became a basis for formulating recommendations. The findings reveal that it is possible to address and reduce violence at school.

## 1.10 Summary

This chapter introduced my study by highlighting the background and my motivation for the study, the research problem, the statement of the problem, the aim, objectives and significance of the study, and overview of the thesis. The next chapter will define some critical terms and introduce an in-depth literature review on the conceptual and theoretical framework that will inform my study.



## 2 Chapter 2: Literature review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature review aiming at finding out what previous scholars in the area of the study have done. The interest is on how other scholars have investigated the research problem relating to the study, and from the body of accumulated scholarship learn from other scholars: how they have theorized and conceptualized on issues, what they have found empirically (Mouton 2001:87). The chapter looks at the key terms and concepts that are used namely, conflict, violence, peace, non-violence, and culture of peace. The chapter also reviews the theories that informed the study which are: Lederach's theory of conflict transformation, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

### 2.2 Conflict violence and peace

Conflict refers to the relationship of two or more parties who have or think they have incompatible needs or interests. Conflict is so common such that it is considered to be inevitable (Harris 2010:294). Conflict may or may not result in violence, Violence is one choice of resolving conflict and conflict can be "managed, resolved and/or transformed" through non-violent means (Hove and Harris 2019:3). Conflict and violence therefore do not mean the same thing, and this will be apparent after the definition of violence later on in the chapter. In peacebuilding when discussing conflict three concepts emerge; conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

Conflict management involves separating the conflicting parties and the imposition of peace. Conflict management does not deal with the root causes of the conflict (Hove and Harris 2019:1). It seeks to contain and manage conflicts and at times achieves historic compromises where violence is laid aside and normal politics resumed (Miall 2001:3).

Conflict resolution recognizes that, in communal and identity conflicts, people will not compromise their needs and interests; hence the need to transcend the conflicts and help parties to explore, analyse, question and reframe their positions and interests. Root causes of the conflicts are explored, and creative

solutions identified and agreed upon (Miall 2001:3). Conflict resolution involves the collaboration of the conflicting parties which may involve a mediator to help the conflicting parties come up with a win-win solution. However, the parties may continue to be ill-disposed to each other after the resolution of the conflict (Harris and Hove 2019:3).

Conflict transformation, which my study focused aims on ending the conflict and building right relationships between the conflicting parties (Hove and Harris 2019:3). It sees constructive conflict as a catalyst for change. It focuses on relationships by recognizing that the very structure of parties and relationships may be in conflict beyond the particular site of the conflict (Miall 2001:4).

Galtung (2004) posits that all conflicts must be processed with transcendence (going beyond) and transformation so that parties can live together peacefully. Transcendence is non-violent and creative and pre-supposes hope that is positive and does not rehash a traumatic past but constructs a positive future. For conflict transformation to take place, there must be transcendence, going beyond the goals of the parties and creating a new reality so that parties can live and develop together. Untransformed conflicts are like festering wounds whether visible or invisible.

In contrasting conflict resolution with conflict transformation, Lederach (2003) noted that conflict resolution seeks to find a solution to a problem, bringing some usually painful events or issues to an end. Conflict resolution seeks a conclusion of undesired events or issues, whereas conflict transformation seeks change, the movement of things from one shape or stage to the other. The change process is fundamental in conflict transformation. Conflict transformation seeks to end something that is not desired and to build something that is desired. Conflict resolution looks at the present problem and its immediate solution, thus concentrating in the substance and content of the problem. Conflict resolution is content centred, focusing on the symptoms of the crisis and disruption. Conflict transformation is concerned with content, but also looks at the context, exploring and understanding the system of relationships and patterns that give rise to the crisis. It is concerned with the immediate issues and the system of relational patterns (Lederach 2003).

Conflict resolution tends to focus on methods to de-escalate the conflict while transformation involves de-escalation and engagement in conflict even to the extent of escalating the conflict in pursuit of constructive change. In this regard, transformation seeks the epicentre of the conflict. The epicentre of

the conflict consists of a web of relational patterns which may provide the history of the conflict from which new issues and episodes may emerge. The episode creates an opportunity to address the epicentre. Therefore, transformation addresses the episode and the epicentre of the conflict (Lederach 2003:31).

There are instances where transformation is limited such as when a quick and direct solution is required and where parties do not have any significant relationship. Conflict resolution through negotiation and mediation may be appropriate, and the exploration of relational and structural patterns unnecessary. However, in situations where parties have a history and a potential for significant future relationships, conflict resolution may be too narrow as it misses out on constructive change (Lederach and Maiese 2009:12).

Lederach and Maiese (2009:5) summarised the difference between conflict resolution and conflict transformation in a table (see Table 2.1 below).

**Table 2:1 Conflict resolution and conflict transformation: A brief comparison of perspective**

	Conflict Resolution Perspective	Conflict Transformation Perspective
The key question.	How do we end something not desired?	How to end something destructive and build something desired?
The focus.	It is content centred.	It is relationship centred.
The purpose	To achieve an agreement and solution to the presenting problem creating the crisis.	To promote constructive change processes, inclusive of but not limited to immediate solutions.
The development of the process.	It is embedded and built around the immediacy of the relationship where the presenting problems appear.	It is concerned with responding to symptoms and engaging the systems within which relationships are embedded.



Time frame.	The horizon is short-term.	The horizon is mid- to long-range.
View of conflict.	It envisions the need to de-escalate conflict processes.	It envisions conflict as a dynamic of ebb (conflict de-escalation to pursue constructive change) and flow (conflict escalation to pursue constructive change).

Source: Lederach and Maiese (2009:5)

Violence is a frequent response to conflict; it is a choice and never inevitable. It produces a “quick fix” but is costly and ineffective. It is improbable that violence can resolve conflicts to the satisfaction of all conflicting parties. The use of violence to resolve conflicts results in win-lose outcome and the conflict may re-emerge (Harris 2010:4). Gandhi stated that he opposed “violence because the good it does is always temporary but the harm it does is permanent” (Clements 2015:1). Violence breeds more violence and deeper divisions, resulting in a cycle of violence that continues for generations (Kaye 2017:7).

Galtung (1969:168) defines violence as “present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations.” Violence is seen as the cause of the variance between what is and what could have been. Galtung (1969) makes a distinction between direct and structural violence although the two are not independent of each other. Direct violence is violence with a subject, there is a sender or actor who intends to inflict violence on another party. Harris and Hove (2019:3) describe direct violence as actual or threatened physical or psychological injury and give as examples, domestic violence, verbal and economic abuse and corporal punishment. Continuing with the definition of violence, Galtung (1969:171) defines structural violence as violence that is built into the structure showing up as unequal power and subsequently, unequal life chances. Structural violence or indirect violence comes from the social structure itself (Galtung 1996). It refers to damage that results from social, political and economic structures in society (Harris 2010). The violence is built into the structure and manifests as unequal power and subsequently, unequal life chances. The unequal distribution of resources and the power to decide on the distribution of resources gives rise to structural violence. The resources can be material such as economic or non-material such as education and health

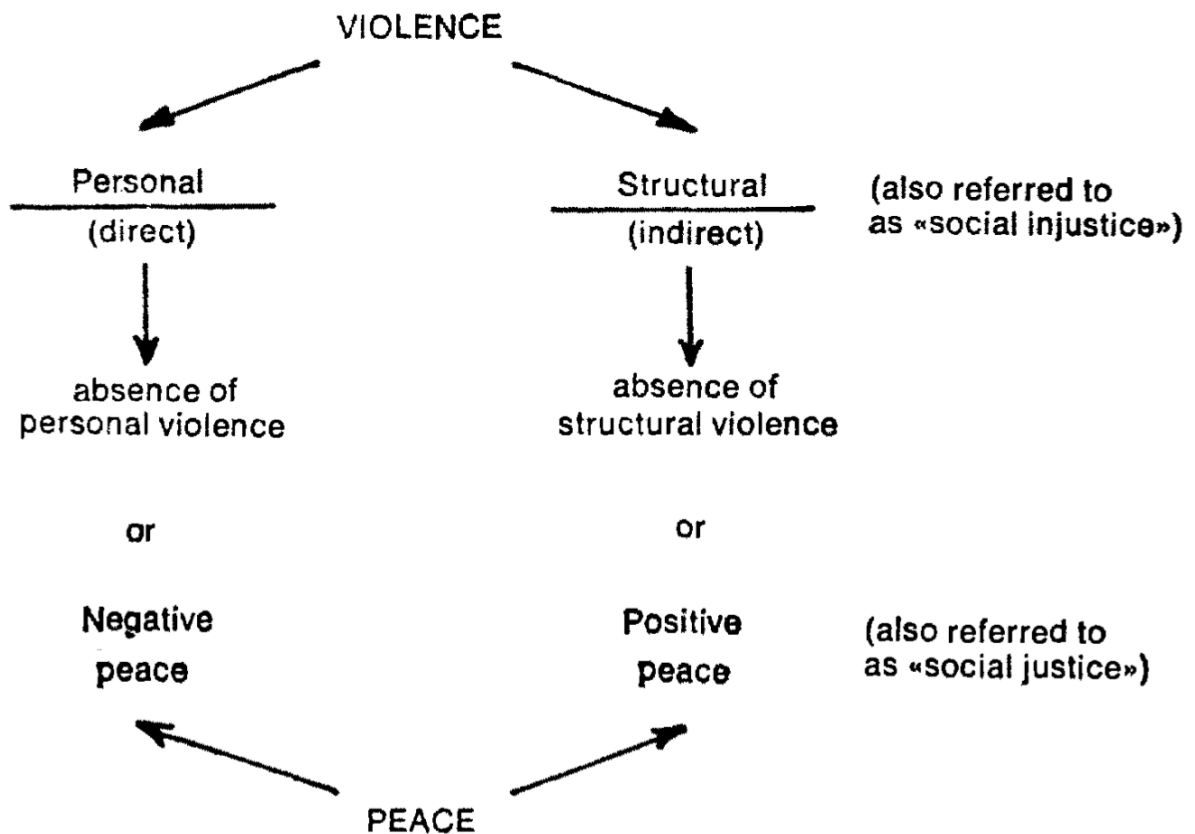
care (Galtung 1969). Galtung (1985:12-13) graphically describes how structural violence happens as a “process working slowly as the way of misery in general, hunger in particular erodes and finally kills human beings.” If structural violence happened quickly then it would be noticed and defences against it built making it less lethal. Galtung (1975) contends that when violence is structural, victims may not even be aware of what is going on, they may be disorganized, scattered and apathetic and incapable of organizing any type of defence.

Galtung (1969:173-174) surmised that focus is usually put on direct violence rather than on structural violence because direct violence can be seen and structural violence is not visible. The object of direct violence recognizes the violence and may complain whereas the object of structural violence may not perceive the violence. Structural violence is silent and static, it does not show, it is like tranquil waters although it can contain more violence than direct violence (Galtung 1969).

Harris and Hove (2019:4) observed that cultural violence is a different concept to direct and structural violence. Cultural violence refers to the justifications and excuses for the use of direct and structural violence. Cultural violence can be in the form of language culture or religion. Galtung (1990:291) had earlier stated that cultural violence sanitises structural and direct violence and makes them right and acceptable and is exemplified by aspects of culture, such as religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics).

Kaye (2017:7) construed that when Galtung (1969) conceptualized the transformation from conflict to peace by seeing peacebuilding at two levels, that is, positive peace and negative peace. This implies that cessation of conflict does not necessarily mean that the problem has been resolved. Tensions and the problem can continue to simmer and later erupt in further conflict or violence. Galtung (1996:76), therefore defines peace as the absence or reduction of violence of all kinds. It is non-violent and creative conflict transformation. If peace is to be considered as the absence or reduction of violence, then peace should be structured the same way as violence. An extended concept of violence leads to an extended concept of peace (Galtung 1969:183). Galtung linked the three types of violence to two types of peace, that is, negative and positive peace. Negative peace is the absence of direct violence, and positive peace is the absence of all kinds of violence, direct, structural, or cultural. Positive peace is a condition that is brought up by the establishment of social justice, human rights, and sustainable development among others (Galtung 1996). Figure 2.1. depicts Galtung’s extended concepts of violence and peace.

**Figure 2.1. Galtung's concept of extended peace and violence**



*Source:* Galtung 1996:183

The Global Peace Index 2019 defines positive peace as the absence of violence or fear of violence. It consists of attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. These same factors also lead to many other positive outcomes which societies consider important such as better performance, “thriving economies, better inclusion, high levels of resilience and societies that are capable of adapting to change” (IEP 2019:12). Positive peace creates an optimum environment for human potential to flourish. Countries that have positive peace have restorative capacities and are resilient during periods of unrest. Such periods of unrest tend to be short and less violent. Ninety one percent of violent civil unrest has been waged in countries with weak positive peace (IEP 2019:12).

Harris (2010:3) defines peace as, a way of life committed to non-violent resolution of conflict, and a commitment to personal and social justice. Positive peace is therefore present where structures have been changed to promote greater equality in society (Harris 2010). Positive peace provides a framework to understand and address complex challenges faced by societies. It is transformational in that it is a cross-cutting facilitator of progress, shifting the focus from the negatives to the positives, thereby creating conditions for societies to flourish. Without positive peace it is difficult to achieve trust, co-operation and inclusiveness (IEP 2019:10).

Bodine *et.al* (1994:2-3) looking and creating peaceable schools defines peace as a state where an individual can survive and thrive without being hampered by conflict, prejudice, hatred, antagonism, or injustice. It is a continuous process that espouses nonviolence, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation, respect and tolerance. When conflict occurs as it is inevitable, it will be recognized and resolved constructively. When schools become peaceful, they become safe and productive allowing learners and teachers focusing on learning.

## 2.3 Gender, violence, and peace

In reviewing Galtung's peace theory, Confortini (2006:333) avers that, although Galtung's theory articulates a unified framework on violence through the distinction between direct, structural and cultural violence, feminism can enrich the theory by bringing in the gender perspective. Confortini stresses that violence produces and defines gender identities and is conversely produced and defined by gender identities and any proposed non-violent methods of dealing with violence that do not take into account gender, become temporary and piece-meal solutions.

Earlier in 2000 the United Nations (UN) Security Council through its Resolution (1325) recognized the important role of women as change agents and contributors to peace and security. This was the first UN resolution that made special mention of the impact of conflict on women. The Security Council highlighted the importance of bringing the gender perspective to the centre of all UN conflict prevention and resolution, peace building and peace keeping, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. It reaffirmed the important role played by women and the need for their increased participation in conflict prevention,

conflict resolution and peacebuilding (United Nations Security Council 2000). Resolution 1325 became the foundation for the women, peace and security agenda.

Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said

*But women, who know the price of conflict so well, are also often better equipped than men to prevent or resolve it. For generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and in their societies. They have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls. They have been crucial in preserving social order when communities have collapsed (Rehn and Sirleaf 2002).*

## 2.4 Non- violence

Mahatma Gandhi is known for his non-violent strategy referred to as satyagraha during the time he fought for people's freedom and independence in South Africa and India. The method involved, endurance, determination, total avoidance of violence, love and truthfulness. Gandhi saw peace as located in the idea of Ahimsa. Ahimsa is a Hindu word which is translated in English as nonviolence. Ahimsa does not only refer to non-violence but the action of doing something to counter oppression. Gandhi believed that it was the duty of individuals to actively oppose oppression than to accept it silently or to only refuse to participate in violence (Agnihotri 2017:912). Gandhi argued that nonviolence was not a state of passivity, instead nonviolence was a positive state of love and doing good even to the evil doer. Doing good to the evil doer did not mean helping the evil doer to continue the wrong or tolerating the evil passively. Nonviolence required action (Mathai 2012:79).

Mathai (2012:78), noted that Mahatma Gandhi regarded truth as one of the defining features of nonviolence. To Mahatma Gandhi, truth was the end and nonviolence the means to the truth. Gandhi (1992:6) stated that *"where there is Truth, there also is knowledge which is true. Where there is no Truth there can be no true knowledge."* He saw the need for truth in thought speech and action. *Ahimsa*, nonviolence, and truth were so interwoven that it was not possible to separate them. The truth as the end and nonviolence the means.

According to Mathai (2012:82-83) the most fundamental assumption of Gandhian nonviolence is the recognition of the oneness of life. Everything that exists is seen as intricately and inseparably related and by extension one cannot hurt another without hurting oneself. Nonviolence, therefore, can be used to resolve any form of conflict or dispute and ordinary people, the poor, the illiterate and women can use it. Meijer (2015:20) posits that since Gandhi, non-violence has been used as a method of resolving conflicts and injustices by large social movements as well as individuals at interpersonal level. Since violence begets violence, this gives reason for advocating for a nonviolent approach rather than the use of force in addressing conflict.

There are two ways of using non-violence: principled non-violence and pragmatic non-violence. Principled non-violence has a religious or ideological basis, while pragmatic non-violence emphasises the fact that non-violence works (Harris 2010:4). Clements (2015:2-3) states that principled nonviolence is based on rejection of all physical violence and rests on the willingness to suffer rather than inflicting suffering on others. Principled nonviolence seeks to end violence and to celebrate the transformative power of love and compassion. It promotes nonviolent peaceful means to peaceful ends and its preferred methods are persuasion, cooperation and nonviolent resistance. Gandhi differentiated between non-violence for the weak and nonviolence for the strong. Nonviolence for the strong is a permanent non-violent lifestyle involving discipline, simple living, an inner search for the truth and courage to confront injustices and oppression through non-violent means. It derives its legitimacy from values that cannot be compromised. Non-violence for the weak uses non-violent techniques in resisting oppression and is also referred to as tactical or strategic non-violence. It does not demand a personal commitment to pacifism or a non-violent lifestyle (Clements 2015:2-3).

Nonviolence as a way of life for social change has proven to be more rewarding and is accessible to everyone. It does not seek to alienate the opponent and has the potential to end cycles of violence (Irene 2016:64). Gandhi and King did not ostracize or shun their opponents, they interacted with them. They worked to build friendships with opponents and looked for win-win outcomes without compromising their beliefs and hopes (Hove and Harris, 2019:69). Gandhi was to influence Martin Luther King Jr who was the leader of the American Civil Rights Movement and Nelson Mandela the first black president of South Africa (Padhi 2014:29).

Martin Luther King Jr is most known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience. His peaceful methods were influenced by Gandhi's philosophy of satyagraha. For King, the heart of Gandhi's nonviolence was love. Nonviolence to King was not passive neither was it cowardice. He had this to say about nonviolence, *"It does resist. It is not a method of stagnant passivity and deadening complacency. The nonviolent resister is just as opposed to the evil he is standing against as the violent resister, but he resists without violence"* (Constitutional Rights Foundation 2017:2). Nonviolence to King was not merely refusal to retaliate or turning the other cheek, it was in its own way aggressive. It meant putting self in the face of violence and actively confronting it and responding with love to its punches. King appreciated the practical side of nonviolence given the fact that black people were a minority and with the power that the whites had, violence was a dead end (Constitutional Rights Foundation 2017:2).

In his Nobel Peace Prize lecture in 1964, King underlined that;

*Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. I am not unmindful of the fact that violence often brings about momentary results. Nations have frequently won their independence in battle. But in spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones. Violence is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding: it seeks to annihilate rather than convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends up defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers (King 1964).*

Nelson Mandela the first black President of South Africa is known for his advocacy for non-violence. According to Padhi (2014:26-28) Nelson Mandela was a man of courage, of passion, of struggle who like Mahatma Gandhi learned not to harbour ill will against those who hurt him. He was jailed in 1962 and when international pressure was exerted on the South African apartheid government, he was freed in 1990. Before his release, the South African government had offered to release him if he renounced violence. Mandela refused to do so unless the South African government also renounced apartheid. After protracted negotiations Mandela was released unconditionally and he became the first black president of South Africa. That was when the influence of Gandhi became apparent when as President Mandela did

not punish those who had imprisoned him but instead tried to reconcile the black and white South Africans. Mandela learnt the virtues of compassion and forgiveness from Gandhi. Mandela stated that if people can be taught to hate persons of different skin colour, they could also be taught to love them. In 1999 Mandela was awarded the Gandhi/King award for nonviolence from the World Movement for Nonviolence (Padhi 2014:32) He was awarded 250 major honours, including the Nobel Peace Prize, which he shared with the last president of apartheid South Africa (Avery 2013:113). The greatest difference between Mandela and Gandhi on nonviolence was that Mandela believed that violent protest could sometimes be necessary in the face of governmental violence whereas Gandhi rejected this idea (Avery 2013:114). However, earlier on Mandela had expressed his views on the use of violent means before his release from prison as follows

*I followed the Gandhian strategy for as long as I could, but then there came a point in our struggle when the brute force of the oppressor could no longer be countered through passive resistance alone. We founded Umkhonto we Sizwe and added a military dimension to our struggle. Even then, we chose sabotage because it did not involve the loss of life, and it offered the best hope for future race relations..... Gandhi himself never ruled out violence absolutely and unreservedly. He conceded the necessity of arms in certain situations. He said, "Where choice is set between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence... I prefer to use arms in defence of honour rather than remain the vile witness of dishonour ..." Violence and nonviolence are not mutually exclusive; it is the predominance of the one or the other that labels a struggle (Mandela 1999:1).*

## 2.5 Peacebuilding

It was not until the Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali's report titled "Agenda for Peace" in 1992 that the term peacebuilding gained traction. The report stated that peacebuilding aims to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict (Boutros-Ghali 1992). In this definition, the aims of peacebuilding are identified as the resolution of injustice in non-violent ways, and the transformation of structures that generate violent conflict. Lederach and Maiese (2009) assert that peacebuilding is, a transformative process that seeks to establish sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of violent conflict.



Similarly, Kaye an (2017:3-4) asserted that the goal of peacebuilding is to promote transformation and change, foster solutions that result in ending hostility or conflict, and to profound change where harmony and peace are realities and not wishes. Peacebuilding seeks to understand the nature of destructive 284 tendencies or practices that lead to destructive acts of violence as means of resolving problems. Violence can result in cycles of violence that can continue for decades. Peacebuilding therefore involves how people learn, how change and transformation come about, the dynamics of power, and of groups, understanding the history and the context in which the conflict occurs and seeing beyond the conflict.

It therefore seems appropriate to mould the entire education system as a powerful means of peace building because it is the only channel through which mass impact can be achieved through the curriculum and pedagogies. Education should be used to create peaceful environments. In this regard it is noted that the critical role of peacebuilding in education was recognized by the late former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, in his address at the Learning Never Ends colloquium in 1999 when he said, “education is, quite simply, peace building by another name” (UN 1999a). This is evidence of the realization of what Gandhi had said earlier that, “if we are to reach peace in this world, we shall have to begin with children” (Agnihotri 2017).

## 2.6 The concept of a culture of peace

In 1998 the United Nations through Resolution A/RES/52/15 declared the year 2000 as the International Year for a culture of peace. A culture of peace was defined as consisting of,

values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society (UN 1998).

A culture of peace is intimately linked with a culture of human rights and democracy. There can be no peace if the basic rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups are not respected and when discrimination and exclusion generate conflict. The protection of human rights and the promotion of a

culture of democracy are important elements for the construction of peace (Chofuma *et al* 2020). A culture of peace advocates for equality of men and women and participation in governance by the citizens making democracy to thrive against dictatorial and authoritarian leadership. In a culture of peace, parties use dialogue rather than fight when resolving conflict. They show a high level of understanding, tolerance, solidarity and shun enmity (Irene 2018:12).

Subsequently, the United Nations, through Resolution A/53/25, declared 2001 to 2010 as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. Children were put at the centre of the decade because they were experiencing a great deal of suffering resulting from violence throughout the world. The United Nations General Assembly specifically acknowledged the role played by education in the creation of a culture of peace and non-violence. Article 4 of United Nations Resolution A/53/25 states that education, "at all levels is one of the principal means to build a culture of peace. In this context, human rights education is of particular importance" (UN 1995).

## 2.7 Programme of action on a culture of peace (Resolution A/53/243)

To achieve its goals of putting the children at the centre of the decade, the UN adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace through Resolution A/53/243. The Declaration defined eight areas of action, which areas previously had been priorities for the UN except that the eight areas were now linked into one approach through a culture of peace and non-violence. The eight areas of action were: the promotion of a culture of peace through education; sustainable economic and social development; respect for all human rights and freedoms; equality between women and men; democratic participation; understanding, tolerance and solidarity; participatory communication and free flow of information and knowledge; and international peace and security. Member states put education first (UN 1999).

Article 8 of the United Nations Resolution 53/243 identified the key players in promoting education for a culture of peace to include parents, teachers, politicians, journalists, religious bodies and groups, intellectuals, health and humanitarian workers, social workers and non-governmental organizations (UN 1999).

Stakeholders were required to foster a culture of peace through education ensuring that the educational system from its early stages fosters values, attitudes, and modes of behaviour that enable children to resolve “any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity and of tolerance and non-discrimination.” Equal access to education, especially for girls, revision of the curriculum, involving children in activities that promote a culture of peace, promoting dialogue and consensus-building, strengthening education and training “in the areas of conflict prevention and crisis management, peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as in post-conflict peace building” were to be the main focus (UN 1999).

Power (2014:48) observed that the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace recognized that democracy and peace cannot be imposed from above but must grow from the bottom up. This could be possible as the Programme focused on children from an early age ensuring that they benefited from an education that would enable them to resolve disputes peacefully with respect for human dignity, tolerance and non-discrimination.

A culture of peace can be learnt by learners after being taught skills on how to resolve conflicts respectfully and non-violently. By engaging in discussions, dialogue and negotiations, learners develop their capacity to build a culture of peace. With teachers continually encouraging such behaviour, non-violence can become a way of life for both teachers and learners (UNESCO 2017).

Earlier, Galtung (1996:77)), had stated that a culture of peace is not a set of peaceful, non-violent representations of reality. The test of the validity of a culture of peace lies in how it affects behaviour in conflict. The way one behaves during a conflict demonstrates how much peace culture they have. This resonates with the observation by Harris (2011:124) that a culture of peace does not imply the end of conflict which remains part of any social order. What is important is how people deal with their differences or conflicts and that is what shapes societies.

Adams (2005) uses the terms “culture of peace” and “culture of non-violence” and identifies eight features of a culture of peace that correspond to the eight features of a culture of violence and argued that non-violence is a necessary aspect of a culture of peace. The comparison is at Table 2. 2 below.

**Table 2.2: Culture of violence vs a culture of violence**

<b>Culture of war and violence</b>	<b>Culture of peace and non-violence</b>
Belief in power that involves the use of force	Belief in dialogue to resolution of conflict
Having enemies	Tolerance, solidarity, understanding
Authoritarian governance	Democratic participation
Secrecy and propaganda	Free flow of information

Armament	Disarmament
Exploitation of people	Human rights
Exploitation of nature	Sustainable development
Male domination	Equality of women and men

*Source:* Adams 2005

For Adams (2005) a culture of peace is an integral approach to prevent violence and violent conflicts and an alternative to a culture of violence. It is based on education for peace respect for human rights, gender equality, tolerance and democratic participation amongst others. He further argues that in order to transform a culture of war and violence to a culture of peace the key components at Table 2.1 must be replaced. In actual fact a culture of war and violence cannot function even if only one of its key components is replaced.

## 2.8 Hague Appeal for Peace

The main aim of the Hague Appeal for Peace conference in 1999 was to develop sustainable global strategies to reduce conflict and to foster peaceful settlements of disputes. The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice was the main outcome of the conference. The document has four themes and 50 areas of international action. The four themes are:

- The root causes of war/culture of peace
- International Humanitarian and Human Rights law and Institutions
- Peace and Prevention, Resolution and Transformation of Violent Conflict
- Disarmament and Human Security (Hague Appeal for Peace and Justice conference 1999).

My study was informed by two of the themes, these being the root causes of war/culture of peace, peace and prevention, resolution and transformation of violent conflict.

The actions under the root causes of war/culture of peace theme include:

- Educating for peace, human rights and democracy.
- Eliminating racial, ethnic, religious and gender intolerance.
- Promoting gender justice.
- Protecting and respecting children and youth.
- Proclaiming active non-violence.
- Eliminating communal violence at local level (Hague Appeal for Peace and Justice conference 1999).

In the fight against a culture of violence, there must be a radical paradigm shift in the education system where learners are educated for peace, non-violence, and not to glorify war. Therefore, the Hague Peace Appeal seeks to empower people at all levels with peace making skills such as mediation, conflict transformation, consensus building and non-violent social change. This will see the role of children and the youth being recognized in peace building (Hague Appeal for Peace and Justice Conference 1999).

The theme of peace and prevention, resolution and transformation of violent conflict aims at strengthening local capacities, empowering young people, and engendering peacebuilding. In many instances, conflict is resolved by outside actors with little or no involvement by the affected parties who have to live with the proffered solutions. Such interventions produce short-lived solutions. The involvement of those affected in peace building is important in reducing and preventing conflict, and breaking the cycle of violence (Hague Appeal for Peace and Justice Conference 1999).

## 2.9 Theoretical framework

My study was informed by Lederach's theory of conflict transformation and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. I chose the two theories because both theories emphasise the importance of positive relationship in the development and learning of a child. In that regard I deduced that to effectively address the issues of violence at school relationships must be at the centre.

At the core of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory are five systems that shape the child's development, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem macrosystem and chronosystem. A child does not develop or learn in a vacuum but in a complex web of relationships at different levels. The environment that surrounds the child starting from home, to school, the community up to cultural values and laws affect the development of the child. Children learn through their interactions and experiences with their family schoolmates, teachers and the outside world.

Lederach in his theory on conflict transformation theory places emphasis on the importance of relationships for constructive change has to take place starting at individual, to family, community and national level. Each of these levels are related similar to Bronfenbrenner's nested ecological system. Change has to start at the lowest level and that spread to other levels.

In my study it was the assumption that if peace club learners were equipped with skills and knowledge of living non-violently and began to demonstrate the behavioural changes this would spread to other non-peace club members and eventually to the wider community. Long-term, as learners interacted with family and community members or left school to take up positions of leadership the message of non-violence would spread.

### 2.10 Lederach's Theory of Conflict Transformation.

Lederach is one of the renown scholars who is associated with the Conflict Transformation theory. He noted that human beings experience social conflict when disruption occurs in the natural flow of their relationships. Those affected feel that something is not right and they become attentive to issues that they have been taking for granted. They interpret and reinterpret the meaning of what is going on.

Communication becomes difficult, it becomes difficult to hear what others with a different view are saying. Physiologically anxiety frustration and pain may set in (Lederach 2003:7). The common way of addressing such situations is to focus on the specific issues of the conflict, that is the content of the conflict. Whilst this common approach seeks to end an undesirable situation, Lederach proposes a lasting way of resolving conflicts that goes further and seeks to end the undesirable situation and build a desirable one. He underlined that quick solutions do not bring about sustainable results (Lederach 2003). Lederach et al (2007:17) stated that conflict transformation focuses on change and addresses questions. What do we need to stop? And What do we hope to build? Change involves moving from one thing to the other and peacebuilders must therefore focus on the starting point, at the goal and the process in between.

Lederach (2003:14) provides a short but complex definition of conflict transformation that has various components that require elucidation. He defines 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.”

To envision and respond are proactive steps that have to be taken when resolving a conflict. Envision is an active verb that sees conflict as natural, inevitable and as having the potential for constructive growth. Conflict must not be viewed as a threat but as providing opportunities for growth and increasing our understanding of ourselves, of others and our social structure. Conflicts helps people to stop, assess and take notice of themselves and their surroundings. “Respond” implies that vision must result in action and engaging the opportunity for positive change. It requires a willingness to respond and maximize the potential for constructive positive change. Respond recognizes that a deep understanding of conflict results from the learning process derived from life experiences. Through conflict people, respond, innovate and change (Lederach 2003).

Whilst conflict resolution focuses on de-escalating the conflict transformation allows for the ebb and flow in the conflict and sees the presenting issues as an opportunity to transform relationships and the systems where the relationships are embedded (Lederach et al 2007:17). Ebb and flow depicts the escalations and de-escalations of conflict. Instead of focussing on one episode of the conflict, conflict transformation seeks to understand the greater patterns, the ebb and flow of “*energies, times, and even whole seasons, in the great sea of relationships*” (Lederach 2003:16).



Human relations are central to conflict transformation and have both visible and less visible dimensions. Conflict transformation requires that concentration be placed on the less visible dimensions of conflict as well rather than concentrate on the visible ones only. This does not mean that issues that people fight over are not important. They are important, but notice must be taken that relationships represent a *“web of connections that form a larger context, the human eco-system from which particular issues arise and are given life”* (Lederach 2003:17). Relationships whether visible or invisible, immediate or long-term are core to conflict transformation (Lederach 2003).

Lederach (2003:18-19) sees conflict as a gateway to life giving opportunities. He does not view conflict as a threat but as an opportunity for growth, an opportunity for one to understand self, others and social structures. Conflict creates life because through it people stop, assess, notice, respond innovate and change. The change envisaged by Lederach is constructive change. Creating constructive change processes acknowledges that conflict can be violent and destructive. Conflict transformation therefore focuses on creating positives from conflicts. The idea is that of transforming and building new things from a conflict. The energy from the conflict is used to build constructive change through creative conflict resolution methods that deal with all causes of the conflict, the visible and the invisible. The movement of conflict from being destructive to being constructive can only be achieved through seeing, responding to issues in the context of relationships and ongoing change processes (Lederach 2003).

Lederach (2003) does not propose any specific techniques in dealing with conflict but instead argues for a set of lenses which the conflicting parties can use as tools to make sense of the conflict. Each lens helps the conflicting parties to see realities from a different perspective by bringing to focus a specific aspect of reality. Since each lens cannot give the complete picture on its own, multiple lenses are held together in a frame to bring to focus all the dimensions and implications of the conflict. Three lenses are mentioned by Lederach. The first focuses on the immediate situation, whilst the second focuses beyond the presenting problem and views deeper relational patterns that form the context of the conflict. The third and holds these together to create a platform for addressing the content, context and the structure of the relationships (Lederach and Maiese 2009:1). It is not effective to resolve a conflict using only one lens. All the three lenses are necessary for conflict transformation to take place.

Lederach’s theory emphasises peace that is *“embedded in justice, the building of right relationships and social structures through respect for human rights and nonviolence as a way of life”* (Lederach 2003). The

highlight is that to settle conflicts, justice and respect for human rights are a necessary ingredient. Peace is rooted in the quality of relationships and the quality of the relationships depend on these. Peace is dynamic, adaptive and changing yet it has form, purpose and direction. Peace work addresses the natural ebb and flow of conflict through non-violent means. Peace must address issues of justice by changing relational and structural patterns that create injustice. To increase justice people must have a voice on issues that concern them. In this regard, dialogue is essential for justice and peace at interpersonal, intergroup and social-structural levels. Processes and spaces must be provided where people can engage and shape the structures that order their lives (Lederach 2003).

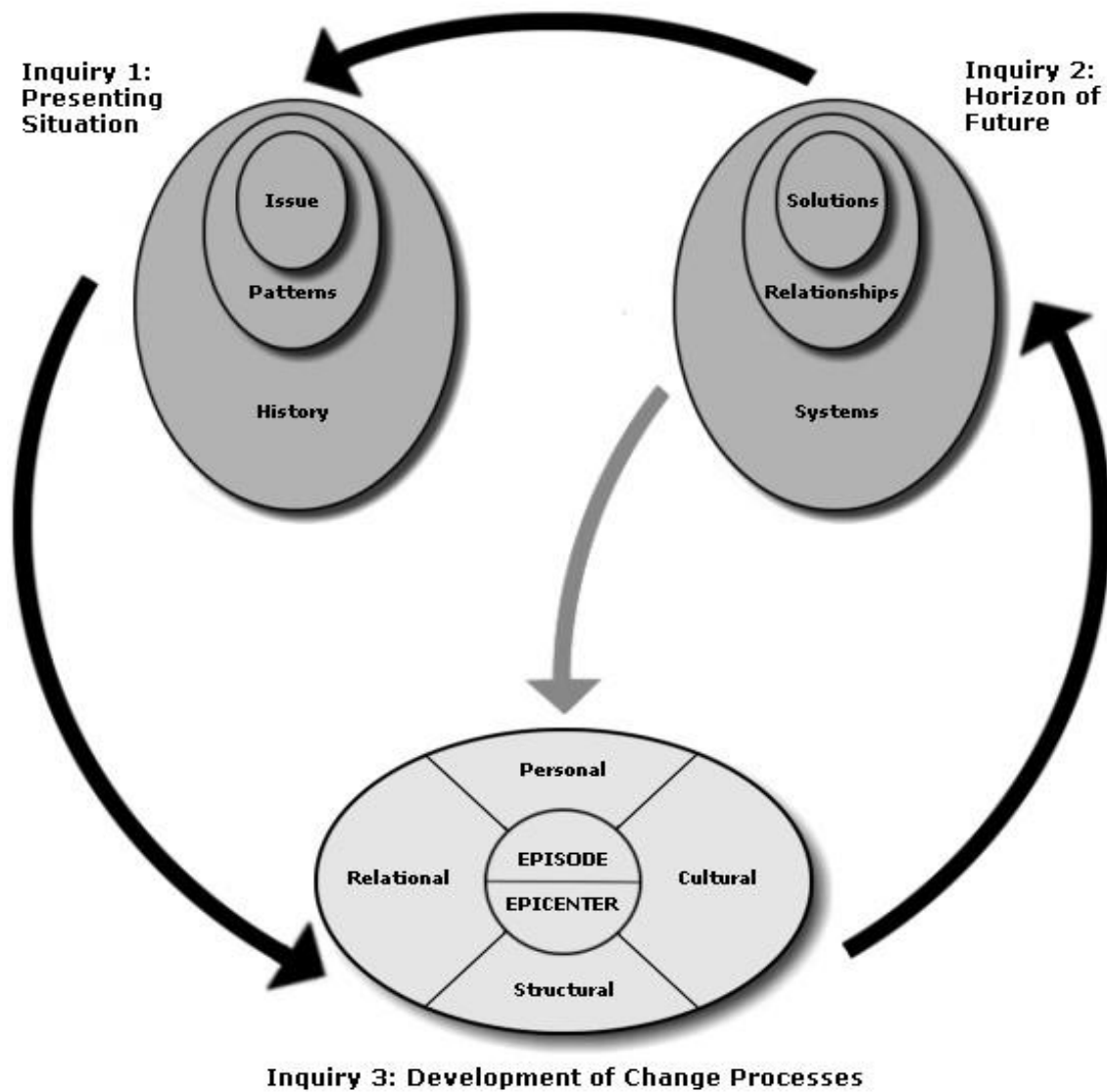
Lederach (2003) observed that social conflict brings changes in four dimensions, that is at personal, relational, structural and cultural levels. Personal and relational dimensions propose change at individual, personal and community level whilst structural and cultural dimensions target processes that impact institutions and wider social, political or economic patterns that represent broader usually longer-term scope and impact (Lederach 2003). At personal level, conflict affects the individual's physical well-being, self-esteem, emotional stability, perception and spiritual integrity. Personal change is usually attitudinal and behavioural. The relational dimension looks at changes in relationships resulting from conflict. When conflict escalates, communication patterns change, stereotypes are created, polarization increases, and trust decreases. Relationships that can be affected by conflict include those within families, communities, neighbourhoods and schools. Conflict transformation seeks to bring to the surface relational fears, hopes and goals of those affected. (Lederach et. al. 2007:21). The structural dimension focuses on the underlying root causes of conflict and changes that conflict brings to the social, economic and political structures. It focuses on how relationships are organized and power relations in families and wider society. This dimension fosters the creation of structures that meet basic human needs and maximize the participation of people in decisions that affect them. The cultural dimensions seeks to identify and understand the cultural patterns that give rise to violent conflict. (Lederach 2003). Violent conflict causes deep seated cultural changes. Cultural change can be slow but open violence can quickly and deeply erode culture (Lederach et.al 2007:23).

### **2.10.1 The big picture of conflict transformation**

Conflict transformation provides lenses through which we can make sense of social conflict. These lenses help us to draw attention to certain aspects of conflict and bring the overall meaning of conflict to sharper focus. Each lens has a specific function that bring specific aspects of reality to focus. No one lens can bring everything to focus and when the specific aspect comes to focus the others go into blur. To be effective, more lenses that are integrated and held together in a frame are necessary to see the whole complex nature of conflict. The three lenses are, the presenting situation, the horizon of the future and development of change processes. These are presented as a map at Figure 2.2. (Lederach and Maiese 2009).

Figure 2.2. The big picture of conflict resolution

## The Big Picture of Conflict Resolution



Source: Lederach 2003:35

Inquiry 1 which is presenting issues connects the past and the present. The history of how things were in the past provides the context in which the present episodes come to the surface. The past cannot change what has already happened, it only assists in remembering and recognizing. Change can only come

through recognition, understanding and redressing what happened in the past and creating structures and new ways for paving future interaction (Lederach and Maiese 2009).

Inquiry 2 is the horizon for the future. This is the desired future, of what can be built and constructed. It is not a model for linear change where there is movement from the undesired situation to the desired situation. Whilst the focus is on the future it also points to the present and the range of processes that may emerge.

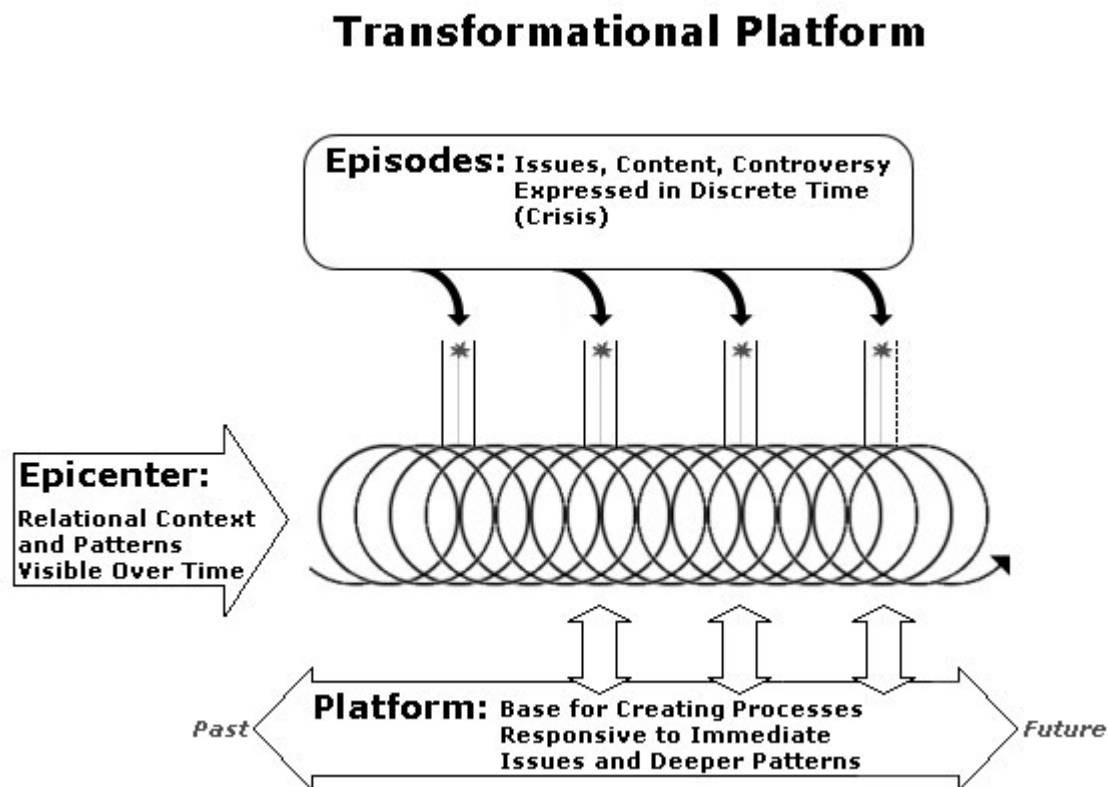
Inquiry 3 represents the development of change processes. This requires that the response to conflict be viewed as the development of change processes capable of dealing with a web of interconnected needs, relationships and patterns. Since the change process should address the immediate problems and the relational and structural patterns a multi-level approach to change must be adopted to address both the short-term solutions and build platforms for promoting long-term social change (Lederach and Maiese 2009).

Lederach (2003:45-46) describes the need to develop transformational platforms that will address the immediate problem, the vision for the future and develop a plan for change processes, A platform for transformation is the building of a base for creating processes at the epicenter of the conflict that respond to immediate issues and also address the longer-term relational and systemic patterns that produce violent conflict. The platform must therefore be short-term responsive and long-term strategic.

Lederach (2003) describes platforms for change as process structures as having a purpose and being adaptable These generate ongoing desired change and at the same time respond creatively to immediate needs. Transformational change processes must be both linear and circular. The term linear implies a rational logical understanding of situations in terms of cause and effect. However, this is not always the case with social reality. In conflict transformation a linear perspective looks at the overall direction of the conflict and the changes that are being sought. The movement from the present to the desired future is not a straight line but a set of dynamic initiatives. The circular perspective looks carefully at how social change develops and underscores the fact that things are connected and are in relationship. Circularity means that processes of change are not unidirectional.

Figure 2.3 presents the idea of a transformational platform. The process structure spiral is the epicenter of the conflict, and the peaks and waves are the episodes

**Figure 2.3. Transformational platform**

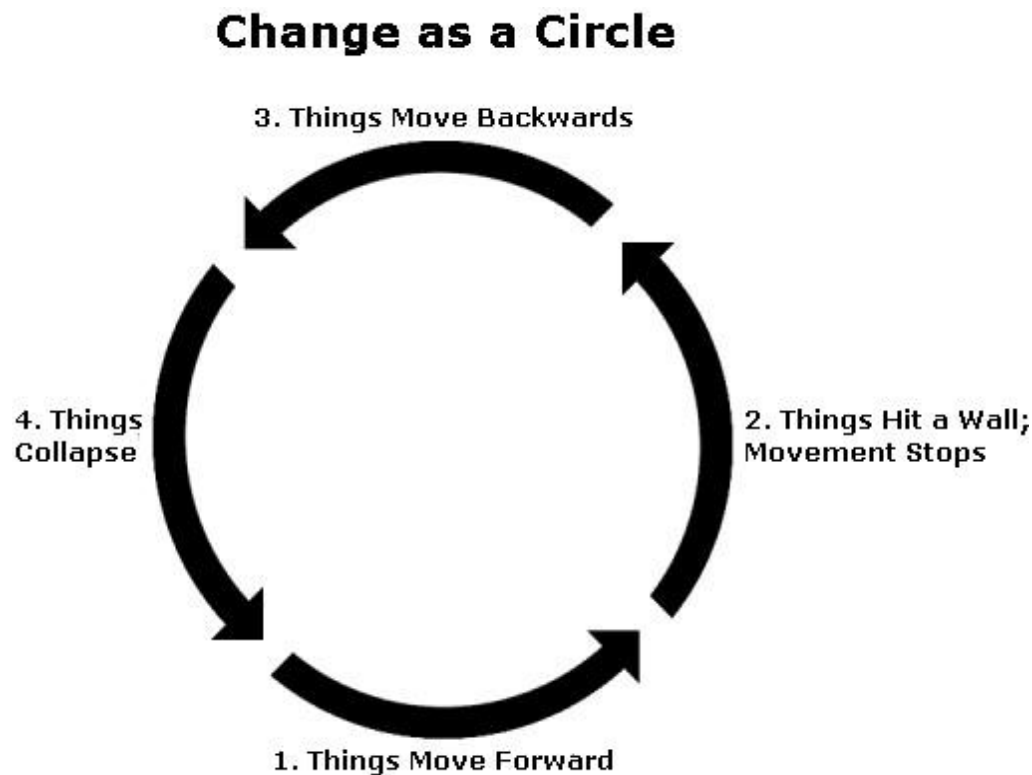


*Source: Lederach 2003*

Lederach and Maiese (2009) observed that given that processes of change are not one directional, four experiences can be identified as common in conflict transformation. Progress can be experienced when what is sought for is in sight and things move forward. There can be impasse, when nothing is happening, and the way forward appears blocked. Going backwards may create more innovative ways of going forward. Reversal can be experienced when change processes seem to be going backwards and what has been achieved is being undone. Lastly. A complete breakdown may be experienced when it appears all is lost and there is a need to start all over again (Lederach and Maiese 2009).

Figure 2.4 below shows Lederach's circle of change

Figure 2.4: Lederach's cycle of change



Source Lederach 2003:42

Lederach's theory assisted in equipping learners at Mzilikazi Secondary School with skills in resolving conflicts non-violently, especially the use of multiple lenses. At the beginning, learners used to concentrate on the immediate situation. Teachers as well reported that, previously, they would look at the immediate problem when dealing with conflicts. After the intervention, both teachers and learners stated that they were now using multiple lenses when resolving conflicts by looking at the presenting situation and the broader context for the future.

## 2.11 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner developed the Ecological Systems Theory in 1979 that broadly conceptualizes how the environment with its multiple interdependent settings affects the development of the child. Bronfenbrenner described the child's ecology as nested levels of the environment, each having an effect

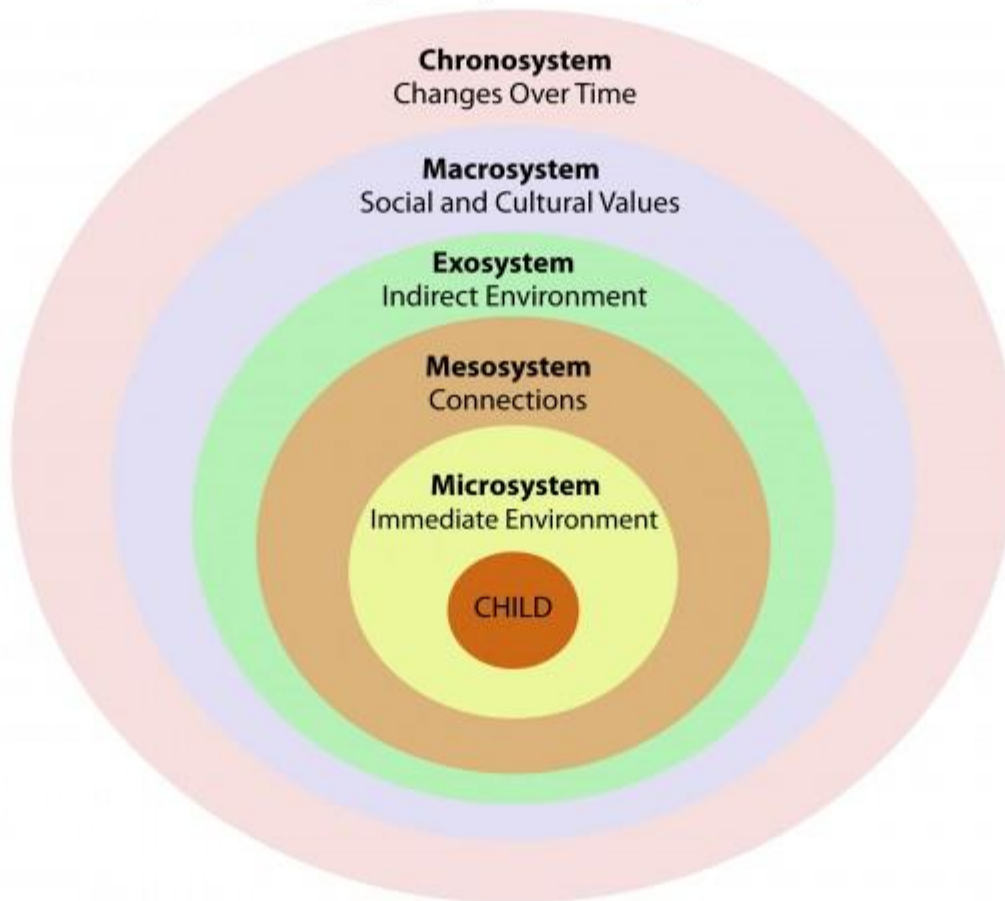
on the development of the child. The interaction of the child's immediate family/community environment and societal landscape stimulates and influences the child's development. Changes or conflicts in any of the layers affects the rest of the layers. The child is not viewed as passive but as a dynamic growing entity that moves into and restructures the environment where he/she lives. The environment also exerts its influence on the child and the interaction is reciprocal meaning that the child can be influenced and influence other people (Ryan 2001:2).

Bronfenbrenner initially proposed 4 levels in his theory which are, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and the macrosystem and later added a fifth level, the chronosystem. The systems are nested around a developing child like a set of concentric circles or a set of Russian dolls (matryoshka dolls) which is a set of wooden dolls of decreasing size placed one inside the other (Bronfenbrenner 1979) see Figure 2.5 below.



Figure 2.5. Nested model of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

### Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory



Source: Shelton 2018

The microsystem is the most immediate environment such as the family and school involving interactions with parents, siblings teachers and school peers. The interactions at this level are very personal and how the child behaves can affect how other people treat him/her in return. Conversely how others treat the child can have negative or positive effect on the child. This relationships at the microsystem impact in two directions which Bronfenbrenner refers to as bi-directional influences and they occur at all the levels of the environment. The bi-directional influences are the strongest at the microsystem level (Ryan 2001:3). At the microsystem the child plays a direct role, has direct experiences and has direct social interaction with others. To illustrate this, at the microsystem, the developing child can have a direct role as a daughter

or sibling, direct experience when enjoying a family meal and direct social interaction of listening to a reading by the mother or teasing a sibling (Neal and Neal 2013:5).

Ryan (2001) observed that the instability and lack of predictability in families creates the most destructive force in the development of children. Children lack the constant mutual interaction with significant adults that is necessary for development. If the relationship in the immediate microsystem breaks down the child is deprived of the tools to explore other parts of his/her environment. Children who are denied affirmation from parents or important adults tend to seek for affirmation in inappropriate places. Ryan (2001) poses a question that given the knowledge of the breakdown occurring in families of learners, should schools make up for the deficiency? In response to the question Henderson (1995) in Ryan (2001) avers that schools and teachers fulfil a secondary role and cannot take up the primary roles that must be played by families. If schools take up this role, they will be reinforcing the denial of the importance of the family role in the upbringing of children by society. The abdication of the family role is caused by conflict between workplace and family life and not between schools and families. The role of schools and teachers should be that of supporting the primary relationship by creating an environment that supports families (Ryan 2001).

The microsystem comprising of home, school and surrounding the community has the most immediate and direct influence on the child. Parents, teachers, siblings, peers and other significant individuals influence how learners think and make meaning on issues of violence and peace and on the acceptable methods of resolving conflict. If violence is used by families, school and wider community to resolve conflicts, learners learn and normalize the use of violence in conflict resolution. If families and immediate communities resolve conflict peacefully, learners will internalize non-violence and model it at school. Simuforosa and Ndlovu (2016:62) noted that a child who grows up in a home that lacks stability and security may seek attention in wrong places or may be violent against other children out of frustration.

The mesosystem includes interactions between the child's microsystems such as school, home, peer groups and church (Bronfenbrenner 1977,515). At this level, microsystems do not function independently but interconnect and influence each other. What happens in one microsystem affects what happens in another microsystem. The interaction between parents and the school are a typical example of the mesosystem such as a meeting between a parent, from a family setting, and a schoolteacher, from the school setting, to discuss the behaviour of the child. Such a meeting would represent social interaction

between a child's family microsystem and school microsystem (Neal and Neal 2013). Simuforosa and Ndlovu (2016:62) stated that if the school and the home impart conflicting teachings to the child, the child is bound to get confused and may lose direction and develop undesirable behaviours lead to violence.

The exosystem does not contain the developing child but impinges upon the immediate settings of their development, influencing delimiting and even determining what goes on there. These include structured or unstructured major institutions of society such as the neighbourhood, mass media, government agencies, communication and transportation facilities and informal social networks (Bronfenbrenner 1977:515)). Educational policies form part of the exosystem and these affect the child's experiences at school (Neal and Neal 2013). Although the child may not be directly involved at this level, the negative and positive forces involved impact on his/her development (Ryan 2001).

"Macrosystems refer to the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture such as the economic, social, educational, legal and political systems of which, micro, meso and exo systems are the concrete manifestations" (Bronfenbrenner 1977:515). They are carriers of information and ideology that explicitly or implicitly give meaning and motivation to particular agencies, social networks, roles, activities and their interrelations. They are the overarching beliefs, values and norms that are reflected in the cultural, religious and socio-economic organization of society. Macrosystems influence the development within and among all other systems and serve as a filter or lens which an individual uses to interpret future experiences (Ettekal and Mahoney 2017:5). Although the macrosystem may appear to be distant, it is critical in the development of a child because a child who is brought up in a culture that condones violence will see nothing wrong with perpetrating violence or in being violated (Espelage 2014). In confirmation Simuforosa and Ndlovu (2016:62) indicate that a child who is brought up in a culture that condones violence as a way of maintaining discipline, will see nothing wrong with inflicting violence on others at school.

The chronosystem refers to history, environment and time as it relates to the child's development. Elements in this system can be external such as the death of a parent, divorce or internal such as the physiological changes that take place as the child grows. The emotional development of children cannot be divorced from these issues. As children grow, they may react differently to environmental changes and transitions of life and socio-historic events. For example, the death or the divorce of a parent. (Ryan 2001). Children who experience traumatic events such as parents divorcing or dying may respond with anger,

anxiety, depression, resentment, confusion and aggression to such events (Gasa 2010:20). The death of parents may stimulate feelings of helplessness in children. Children with anger issues are likely to engage in bully behaviour as compensation for the loss (Simuforosa and Ndlovu 2016:63).

The five levels of the ecological indicate that the child does not develop in a vacuum but is influenced by various factors in the immediate environment, society and culture as a whole. Bronfenbrenner's theory is useful in explaining and understanding how children develop and how the different levels can contribute to violent or peaceful behaviour by learners (Simuforosa and Ndlovu 2016:62).

The Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory helped me understand the different behaviours of learners. As some of them narrated their stories I could notice how the different settings influenced them. One of the significant influences was the Covid-19 pandemic. I interpreted this time as being part of the learners' chronosystems. Some learners reacted with anger and frustration during the lockdown period whilst others saw it as a window of opportunity where they had time to bond with their families. I also saw the linkage between the two theories that informed my study in that some learners (as postulated by Lederach's theory) took the opportunity as a window for growth and positive change in their family relations.

## 2.12 Peace Education

Peace education in the UN falls under the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which is the agency responsible for education and educational policy. Peace education is central to UNESCO's mandate as demonstrated by the preamble of its Constitution that reads, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." UNESCO defines peace education as, "a set of values, attitudes, models of behaviour, and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations" (UNESCO). Therefore, for UNESCO, peace education was at the heart of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World from 2001 to 2010 (Guetta 2013). In addition, in 1989, Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that, "Education shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin."

The late Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations stated that.

Education is the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women. Protecting children from hazardous and exploitative labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and influencing population growth. Education is a path towards international peace and security. (Human Rights Watch, 2001:1).

According to Patra et.al. (2015:2) peace education is a process of acquiring values and knowledge and developing attitudes and skills to live in harmony with oneself and others. In the school set up, peace education is about helping learners understand how to transform conflicts and this is reinforced by people treating each other positively in the classrooms, playground, families and the wider communities. Peace education promotes knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are needed to bring about behaviour change that will enable children to prevent conflict and violence. Harber and Sakade (2009:174) posited that peace education aims at offering opportunities to develop skills and knowledge required to practice conflict resolution, communication and co-operation regarding issues of peace violence conflict and injustice.

Peace education teaches about challenges of achieving peace, developing non-violent skills based on human rights principles, promoting peaceful attitudes, and explaining the root causes of violence, the alternatives to violence, different forms of violence and conflict, and what peace entails. Peace education does not only provide knowledge, but also imparts skills and attitudes necessary to deal with conflicts through non-violent means. Skills such as respect and tolerance are imparted through peace education (Harris 2004). If children are taught these values, they will practice them throughout their lifetimes, and this will result in peaceful societies.

Bar-Tal (2002) notes that the goals of peace education can be adequately met by the educational system through school because schools have the authority, legitimacy, means, and conditions to carry out peace education formally, intentionally, and extensively. This can be done through the formal curriculum or extra curricula programmes. Through peace education, teachers and learners can become change agents. Peace education is condition dependent. For peace education to be effective, the conditions prevailing in society should be considered. These conditions produce specific needs, goals and concerns of society that are to be addressed by the peace education programme. Societies differ in structure, intergroup

relationships, economic equality, and civic culture. These differences pose different needs, goals and concerns that the peace education programme must address. The differences dictate the nature of the programme and make it relevant and functional in addressing the needs, goals, and concerns of a particular society. However, this approach gives peace education a disadvantage because societies view peace education differently. Some issues that are demeaned as controversial or sensitive may be avoided when, in fact, they are critical for peace education Bar-Tal (2002).

Peace education programmes aim at fostering changes in attitudes, values and behaviours that will make societies better and more humane places. The focus of peace education is to reduce or even eliminate some of the social ills in society such as injustice, inequality, prejudice, intolerance, abuse of human rights, destruction of the environment, and violent conflict. Peace education can be achieved by imparting specific values, beliefs, attitudes, skills and behaviours that are in line with a culture of peace. Peace education can be viewed as a form of socialisation because it is concerned with the internalisation of a specific worldview and values (Bar-Tal 2002).

Bar-Tal (2002) posits that the best mode of instruction in peace education is experience. Peace education seeks to have learners internalise peace values, attitudes, and perceptions. Internalisation of values, perceptions, and attitudes requires practice. Learners are encouraged to put into practice principles such as tolerance, co-operation, peaceful conflict resolution, multiculturalism, non-violence, and respect for human rights. John (2018) asserts that civil society programmes tend to employ participatory and experiential pedagogy which is best suited for peace education. John (2018) mentions four such programmes in place in South Africa and these include the Alternative to Violence Project which my research employed in setting up the peace club intervention.

With modernism, by and large, education is achieving discontent rather than peace, although education should be used to create peaceful environments (Agnihotri 2017). Some educational institutions fuel conflicts rather than inculcate values, knowledge, and skills to assist in resolving them. Systems of education can be negatively manipulated to fuel violence such the genocides and civil wars in Mozambique, Somalia, Congo, Sudan, Algeria, Germany and Rwanda. Nonetheless, education should empower by promoting learning to live together and to resolve conflicts peacefully (Power 2014:48).

In his motivation for peace education in South Africa, John (2018) argues that, for peace education to be relevant, it is necessary to look into the societal mirror given that it has been established that violence at schools reflects the violence that exists in society. It should be expected that the prevalence, types, and endemic nature of violence would mean that education would focus on building non-violent and constructive conflict resolution skills.

In the current education system, once a learner masters the prescribed cognitive skills to be covered, it is assumed that the learner has acquired skills that will enable him or her to function effectively as a member of the community. However, it has been proven that, to function effectively in the community, an individual requires peace related skills such as tolerance and acceptance of diversity. Therefore, peace education seeks to provide this missing link to the existing education system, thus making education relevant to real life experiences and creating just and peaceful societies. (Namasasu *et.al.* 2015).

## 2.13 Peaceful schools vs traditional approaches to learning

Harber and Sakade (2009:172) observed that, although the degree of harshness and despotism varies from school to school, in the majority of schools, “power over what is taught and learned, how it is taught and learned, where it is taught and learned, when it is taught and learned, and what the general environment is like is not in the hands of the pupils.” Government officials, teachers and head teachers are the ones who make decisions for learners. This is how formal schools are constructed and it is not conducive to building peaceful schools.

Most schools are authoritarian institutions with the degree of harshness and despotism varying from institution to institution. Education in democracy, critical awareness, and human rights is lacking in such schools. In this environment of relative powerlessness and neglect of human rights, the chances of learners being mistreated violently or being influenced by potentially violent beliefs becomes high (Harber and Sakade 2009).

Historically schools have faced the challenge of education for control with the aim of producing “good” citizens who are politically docile, passive, and conformist as opposed to education for critical consciousness, individual liberation, and participatory democracy. Education for control has dominated the real world of schooling (Harber 2009:173). In order to achieve the goal of peaceful schools, education

should focus on critical thinking, individual emancipation, and participatory democracy. The content and the process of education should promote peace, social justice, respect for human rights and the acceptance of responsibility. Children should learn skills of negotiation, problem solving, critical thinking, and communication that will enable them to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence (Machel 1996).

Learners should be encouraged to weigh and evaluate issues, consider alternatives, voice criticism and be creative. Learners should be developed psychologically and equipped with tools that will enable them to adhere to peace values and cope with challenging real life situations in a peaceful manner (Bar-Tal 2002). The very skills that are required to address violence and conflicts at community and global levels are usually the same skills that learners need to be taught to live peacefully at school (Namasusu *et. al* 2015). Physical and structural violence must be included in peace education because it is only when the root causes of poverty, gender, inequality and discrimination, racism and all kinds of prejudice are addressed that a just society can be achieved (John 2018). Peaceful schools can be achieved by paying attention to what is taught, how it is taught, where it is taught, when it is taught, and the environment. This can be achieved through the use of transformative pedagogies.

## 2.14 Transformative pedagogies

Transformative pedagogies are grounded in the work of scholars and educationists such as Paulo Freire (see section 1.3.1). They empower learners to critically examine themselves, their contexts, beliefs and values, identifying challenges that hinder them from attaining their full potential. They are participative and engage learners as critical thinkers who explore alternative worldviews. According to Meyers (2008:219), the importance of transformative pedagogies is in creating safe spaces for students, to think critically about their experiences, beliefs and biases. Students engage and participate in posing real world problems and addressing societal inequalities by implementing action-oriented solutions.

Transformative pedagogies concern themselves with eliminating harmful, oppressive and violent practices such as gender-based violence (Ngidi and Moletsane (2015). They encourage students to critically examine their assumptions, grapple with social issues, and engage in social action (Meyers 2008:219). Transformative pedagogies promote students' awareness of other perspectives, allow learners to consider different aspects of an argument, and to weigh the merits and limitations of each side before stating their own opinion (Meyers 2008: 221).



Transformative approaches to learning are context sensitive. They consider the learner's context and social reality such as the socio-political dynamics in the classroom and issues that affect the community. Context sensitivity enables the teachers to practice the principle of "do no harm" by being sensitive to issues such as ethnicity, family dynamics and clan relations. Context sensitivity enables the creation of safe learning spaces where learners are free to express themselves without fear. Safe learning environments provide protection physically, emotionally and spiritually. They enable teachers to guide learners in discussing sensitive issues, and help them to understand and reflect on hard issues that often surround them (UNESCO 2017).

Transformative learning is not teacher centred but learner centred. A teacher centred approach assumes that the teacher has all the knowledge that is imparted to a submissive receptive learner who looks up to the teacher to tell him or her what to know and what to think. This way the learner can be manipulated, and manipulation may promote intolerance and/or acceptance of radical views without questioning. Learner centred approaches are transformative, experiential, and driven by active learning, critical thinking, awareness, and meaningful action. Learners are taught to think critically and to be responsive to the vast world of knowledge including of environments outside school such as family, church, peers, non-religious institutions, and the community at large (UNESCO 2017)..

MackRacher (2012) posited that experiential learning is core to transformative learning. She observed that experience is what happens to an individual from birth to death. Experiences slide into the past and are retained in the memory waiting for further attention. Not everything that happened in the past will be remembered, but there are life experiences that the mind makes sense of and gives meaning to. The present experience is the interaction of the past and the present. Experience includes those events that did not directly happen to the individual but occurred around him or her. Some experience is imposed on a person through political, cultural, and social heritage such as values, beliefs, and expectations about roles one can aspire to, as well as acceptable behaviour.

In transformative learning, learners share their experiences and find ways to deal with situations where their past experiences are in conflict with the present. Conflict between the past and the present can cause disorientation and chaotic thinking. Reflection on the experiences and sharing with others can lead to a new way of understanding and dealing with any contradictions and conflict (MacKeracher 2012).

Therefore, transformative learning should include teaching skills, attitudes and behaviours that motivate values of peace and non-violence. The skills and attitudes imparted by education must enable learners to recognise and defuse potential conflicts and how to resolve conflicts non-violently (UNESCO 2008).

## 2.15 Summary

This chapter discussed some key peace studies concepts such as conflict, conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict transformation, violence, peace, peace and non-violence, violence, peace and gender, peace education and transformative approaches to learning. The chapter reviewed the two theories that informed my study which were Lederach's theory on conflict transformation, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The next chapter continues with the review on literature and focuses on school violence.

## 3 Chapter 3: School violence

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the empirical literature that assisted me in answering the first research objective of my study which was to assess the causes, nature, extent, and consequences of violence at a secondary school in Zimbabwe. The chapter discusses and evaluates the relevant literature and empirical studies on school violence. The literature review equipped me with knowledge of previous work already done by other researchers and helped me put my study into context. In addition, it enabled me to identify any knowledge gaps that needed to be addressed.

### 3.2 School violence

According to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011), although governments have put in place strategies to address violence against children, these have proved to be insufficient. Legal frameworks in many states fail to prevent or reduce violence against children and, in states where laws are in place, they are not enforced sufficiently. Measures taken to address violence against children usually focus on symptoms and consequences and ignore the root causes and such strategies are fragmented and not integrated. Further, social and cultural norms condone violence against children making it difficult to eradicate it.

UNESCO (2017:14) defines school violence as physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence and bullying, that is perpetrated and experienced by students, teachers and other members of the school staff. In my study I followed the UNESCO definition and Burton and Leoschut (2013:2) who in defining school violence referred to the definition by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002) that defines violence as;

The intentional use of physical force or power threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.

According to Burton and Leoschut (2013:2-3) school violence is often not a once off incident and does not occur only in the physical environment of the school but can take place on the way to and from school, arriving at school or waiting outside the school grounds. It does not refer to isolated incidents of violence but patterns of violent behaviour. Violence is not synonymous with crime. This is more so especially when referring to school violence where violent behaviour such as bullying in schools may not be regarded as crime but, nonetheless, is violent in nature and result in harm to the victims

Mayeza and Bhana (2017:410-413) noted that there is a dominant notion in society that children are innocent and ungendered. This obscures the fact that children are gendered beings who exercise power through violence. When teachers see learners engaging in violence, they normalise that as children at play and reject the capacity of children to be violent. Terming such behaviour as violence is regarded as too strong. The social conception that regards children as docile, passive and innocent reinforces the notion that children cannot engage in cultures of violence when in fact they can.

### 3.3 Causes of school violence.

School violence has multiple causes such as poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, gang activities, lack of recreational opportunities, and inadequate housing (Burton and Leoschut 2013). Children can also misbehave because they are still learning the difference between right and wrong or because they are upset, discouraged, feeling rejected, feeling powerless, or simply acting their age (Amstutz and Mullet 2015).

Gangsterism is associated with physical violence. The reasons why learners join gangs are varied, and include poverty, social exclusion, lack of jobs and educational opportunities, instability in residential neighbourhoods, and the availability of arms and drugs. Gang members may perceive the gang as family that offers emotional support and protection. Low levels of school achievements, school commitment, association with delinquent peers, and poor parental management may contribute to gangsterism (UNICEF 2014:50).

School violence is a mirror of the violence that takes place in wider society. Pinheiro (2006:111) observed that in communities where the social and physical environment is hostile, it is most likely that the school environment becomes hostile. The levels and patterns of violence at school often reflect the levels and

patterns of violence in the communities. These in turn reflect the prevailing political and socio-economic conditions, social attitudes, cultural traditions, values and laws of the society.

According to Burton and Leoschut (2013:54), schools are a microcosm of broader communities in which they are located. To a large extent, schools are influenced by the community in which they are located and often reflect the prevalence of violence within that community. Social disorganisation, prevalence of crime, exposure to violence, access to illegal substances and firearms, and proximity to criminals by learners affect the levels of school violence. Most learners who experienced violence at school reported that crime was rife in their communities and/or they have witnessed a fight outside the school environment. Maternowska *et.al.* (2018) observed that the way communities and families structure their relationships affect the levels of violence at schools because some of these relationships are structured around violence passed through generations. Burton and Leoschut (2013:56) had also similarly observed the critical role played by role models in influencing violent behaviour. They noted that many young people grow up in communities where violent and aggressive behaviour is modelled by significant others. The violent aggressive behaviour modelled is likely to be imitated and replicated by the young person.

Family structure and circumstances play a role in the learner's risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence. Families are the providers of the primary context in which children learn about behaviours, and what is considered acceptable and unacceptable. The family's criminal record where siblings, relatives or parents have served terms in jail increases the chances of violent victimisation or perpetration of violence. Parental criminality has greater influence on violent victimisation than that of siblings. Therefore, it follows that the violent behaviours and attitudes modelled in the family and community are imitated and replicated by learners at school (Burton and Leoschut 2013:61). Indeed, families can become dangerous places for children because of the prevailing physical, sexual and psychological violence found in them (Pinheiro 2006:47).

Burton and Leoschut (2013:4) observed that learners exposed to violence at a young age often communicate through violence. Once this violent behaviour is acquired at the child's impressionable age, it is difficult to shake off and can be replicated in generations to come. Harris *et.al.* (2014) corroborate this when they observed that learners who were victims of violence or have friends who engaged in violence became more tolerant of violence and were at risk of becoming perpetrators of violence and aggressive behaviour themselves later in life.

The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) in South Africa established that there is a strong correlation between the general level of crime in a province and the level of crime in schools in that province. The Free State in South Africa had the highest level of crime and the highest level of school violence in 2012. In addition, the results of the study revealed that, by the time learners entered secondary school, many would have been exposed to violence either as victims or witnesses in their homes. Close to 50% of the respondents had witnessed a physical fight in their communities and they knew the perpetrators and victims. Slightly more than sixty percent of the learners who had experienced school violence indicated that crime was a problem in their neighbourhood (Burton and Leoschut 2013).

Power (2014:48) observed that a child's education begins at home with parents laying the foundations for human development. At home, children must be given opportunities to learn how to relate to others and how to resolve conflicts non-violently. They must learn that resolving conflicts and disputes violently is unacceptable. When families and communities use violence to resolve conflicts, the message conveyed to the children is that conflicts are resolved violently. This is heightened when children see role models in the community and the media using aggressive and coercive means to achieve their goals to resolve conflicts.

Acceptance of gender-based violence as normal has its roots in long-standing patriarchal societies where women are treated as subservient and as the property of men. The high rate of intimate partner violence and gender-based violence implies that children grow up exposed to such violence which becomes normal to them. Given the high rate of violence at home and in communities, schools have become dangerous violent places (John 2018:4-5). Harmful gender norms and the lower status accorded to women and girls in patriarchal societies fuel gender-based violence. Girls learn to tolerate certain gender-based violence as an unavoidable part of their lives. Unequal power relations between adults and children, gender stereotypes, and roles attributed to boys and girls leave girls very vulnerable to sexual abuse such as rape harassment, coercion and exploitation by teachers and peers. Further, boys and girls who do not conform to the stereotypical definitions of what it means to be a boy or a girl are vulnerable to sexual violence and bullying (Green *et.al.* 2013).

Gendered violence at school is rooted within the discourse of hegemonic masculinities where older and stronger boys are dominant and use violence against girls and weaker boys to assert themselves as figures of power and authority. The big boys use power to enforce control and domination. They feel a sense of

entitlement and girls are particularly vulnerable. They interrupt girls as they play and think they can get what they want through violence. School grounds which are regarded as spaces where learners can unwind and socialise with friends and peers without the supervision of teachers have turned out to be dangerous spaces for girls (Mayeza and Bhana 2017:413-414).

Non-conforming boys are also at risk of being bullied and teased. Boys who are seen playing games that are perceived as girl games are prime victims at the playground. They are labelled as weak, fragile, girly and non-heterosexual. Their perceived feminine behaviour is regarded as crossing the norms of male masculinity and they get punished for being different (Mayeza and Bhana: 2017:416). The gendered nature of violence in schools is further legitimised and normalised by school structures and processes such as allocating male learners with higher status public duties and allocating female learners with domestic private tasks. Authoritarian teaching methods encourage aggressive masculinities and compliant femininities. Gender inequality is considered as natural human behaviour in many African countries and is not regarded as violence (Leach and Humphrey (2007) in Horner *et. al.* 2015).

### 3.4 Nature of school violence.

Pinheiro (2006:111) noted that the public perception of school violence is often focussed on extreme, rare events such as school shootings and kidnapping to the exclusion of more common forms of violence which are condoned and tolerated by society and the law (Pinheiro 2006:111). Attention usually focuses on extreme events, and the more common forms of violence go unnoticed although these can cause the greatest harm to the education experience of children. These common forms of violence tend to be under-reported, as they often involve taboos (UNESCO 2017a:1).

Violence at school can take the form of bullying, corporal punishment, verbal and emotional abuse, intimidation, sexual harassment, assault, gang activity, and the use of weapons (Burton and Leoschut 2013) In collaboration (UNESCO 2017a:1) identifies the manifestations of school violence as including bullying, corporal punishment, verbal and emotional abuse, intimidation, sexual harassment and assault, gang activity and the presence of weapons. Pinheiro (2006) noted that learners can be violent against each other through bullying, fighting, gangsterism, sexual and gender-based violence. Teachers and other

staff members too can be perpetrators of physical violence on learners through corporal punishment, sexual and gender-based violence, and other cruel and humiliating forms of treatment (Pinheiro 2006).

In addition, patterns of violence can be entrenched in school culture and supported by policies and theories about child development and learning (Pinheiro 2006:112). Teachers often use violent methods when correcting learners and controlling misbehaviour by learners (Nkuba *et.al.* 2018). Further, there is evidence demonstrating that teachers can cause conflict at school through unprofessional conduct such as absenteeism, failure to mark books, having sexual relations with learners, drinking alcohol with learners, inappropriate dressing, and corporal punishment (Dube and Dipane 2018). In this way, teachers can contribute to making school environments violent (Horner *et.al.* 2015).

Corporal punishment is any punishment where physical force is used with the intention to cause some form of pain or discomfort, however light. It may involve hitting, kicking, shaking, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair, boxing ears, caning, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding, or forced ingestion of substances such as hot spices (Committee on the Rights of the Child: 2011).

Wineman and James (1967) in Marinescu (2011) defines school corporal punishment as the infliction of pain by a teacher or other educational official on the body of a student as a penalty for doing something which has been disapproved by the punisher. Harris *et. al.* (2014) refer to “power over” as the nature of school violence which is exemplified by the wide use of corporal punishment and the creation of a climate of repression and fear at schools.

Pinheiro (2006) observed that, although many countries had banned corporal punishment by law, corporal punishment continues to be used at schools. The ban has not been effectively enforced and is not supported by prevailing social attitudes. Similarly, Burton and Leoschut (2013) averred that, despite the abolishment of corporal punishment in South Africa, teachers continued to use corporal punishment in disciplining learners. Learners claimed that they had been caned and spanked by their teachers or principals as part of discipline.

Pinheiro (2006:117) observed that the banning of corporal punishment is often not effective because the laws are not effectively enforced and the consequences of non-enforcement can be dire. Dziva (2019) in support, stated that, although constitutional bans on corporal punishment remain a starting point to end



corporal punishment, evidence shows that such bans are not effective in totally eradicating corporal punishment in conservative societies with high traditional and moral overtones. Dziva (2019) argues that the solution can be found by putting more effort in enlightening society on the constitutional provisions against the practice as well as alternative methods of disciplining children without violating their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Bullying is repeated exposure to aggressive behaviour from peers whose intention is to cause injury or discomfort. It includes physical violence, verbal abuse and psychological harm (Global Education Monitoring Report 2016). It is intentional aggressive behaviour by a single person or a group against a person who cannot easily defend himself or herself (Cantone *et. al.* 2015:8).

There is widespread tolerance and approval of bullying at schools and communities. Parents sometimes turn a blind eye to bullying, and may actively endorse systematic abuse, intimidation and bullying until such activities proliferate (Collins 2013). Bullying is enforced by unequal power mechanisms, and this makes it possible for perpetrators to act with impunity. Belief in manhood may lead to acceptance of aggressive behaviour from boys and expectations that girls should defer and be submissive (UNESCO: 2017a).

There are three main role-players in bullying, the perpetrator, the victim, and the bystander. The perpetrator is the strongest among peers and has strong needs for power. The main purpose of bullying is to undermine the social status and personal security of the victim. The perpetrator seeks to enhance his/her self-esteem and social status; hence, bullying normally takes place in front of an audience. Bystanders can support the bully, defend the victim or be passive onlookers. Although bystanders may not take sides, they are important players in the bullying cycle as most bullying happens before an audience (Cantone *et. al.* 2015). The important role played by bystanders is confirmed by a Canadian study that revealed that, in 57% of cases where bystanders intervened, bullying stopped (Pinheiro 2006:123).

Cyberbullying and online aggression is a new form of school violence that has emerged with technological advances in online communication. Burton and Leoschut (2013:3) aver that cyberbullying and online fights include, rude, offensive or insulting messages, cruel and hurtful rumours posted or sent about one, personal or embarrassing secrets posted online or sent online, being threatened with harm, messages posted by others using one's account, nude or sexually explicit images, texts or messages sent without

one's permission. Cyberbullying depends on access to or ownership of gadgets that can access internet or social media. Access to internet is no longer confined to laptops or computers and is now accessible to communities that previously had no access through cell phones and smart phones (Burton and Leoschut 2013). Easy access to the internet and the availability of electronic gadgets such as smart phones has contributed to the commonness of cyberbullying at school. The physical constraints of the school become artificial when dealing with this form of violence because online aggression transcends physical boundaries. It allows perpetrators to extend face-to-face bullying through mobile phones, the internet and social media where harmful action is instant, widespread, and has permanent effects (UNESCO:2017a:10).

Gang violence includes beatings, stabbings and shootings, and tends to be more serious than other forms of school violence, especially if coupled with trafficking of drugs (UNESCO 2009). Learners are recruited into gangsterism by force, intimidation, and threats. Once a learner joins a gang, there is no turning back (UNICEF 2014:50). Children who are members of gangs are more likely to suffer negative health outcomes. They can suffer violent victimisation and death. A study in the United Kingdom revealed that girls who are members of gangs can be at risk of sexual violence and exploitation (UNICEF 2014).

### **3.5 Extent of school violence**

Green *et. al* (2013) highlights that between 500 million and 1.5 billion children experience violence every year and most of the violence takes place at school. Approximately 246 boys and girls are harassed and abused in and around school every year. Burton and Leoschut (2013) in their study in South Africa established that more than 20% of learners experienced violence at school. Of these, 12.2% reported being threatened by someone at school, 6.3% had been assaulted, 4.7% had been sexually assaulted or raped, and 4.5% had been robbed at school. The violence included violence perpetrated by educators and directed at educators. Burton and Leoschut (2013) observed that teachers were aggressors and also victims of violence from learners.

School-related gender-based violence is a result of attitudes and beliefs within broader communities that promote negative gender norms and condone gender-based violence. Globally, some 150 million girls and 73 million boys have experienced sexual violence. Almost 50% of sexual violence against girls is perpetrated against girls below the age of 16 (Green *et.al.* 2013). In South Africa, Burton and Leoschut

(2013), reported that more females were susceptible to violence in general. It was established that 24.3% of female learners were victims of violence as compared to 19.7% of male learners.

Substance abuse is prevalent in schools. Burton and Leoschut (2013) reported that learners in South African schools can easily access alcohol, drugs and weapons. Approximately one tenth of the learners in their study knew someone who sold or dealt in drugs in their school. Forty seven percent knew someone in their school who smoked marijuana, and 12% were personally acquainted with people who used other drugs at their school such as mandrax, tik, ecstasy, heroin, cocaine, whoonga that is or nyaope. More than two thirds of the learners claimed that it would be easy for them to access alcohol in their communities

In some communities, bullying is one of the many processes used to socialise men into violence when used as a central entry point to adolescent masculinity. Adolescent boys are made to undergo rituals as a way of transition to manhood which may entail tests of endurance which the young men have to endure without flinching physically and/or emotionally. This suffering is rewarded by social power of masculine identity and entrenches violence as normal and acceptable (Collins 2013).

The use of corporal punishment in disciplining children is accepted in most African contexts. This is so when beating up or torturing an adult is regarded as inhumane and degrading treatment that calls for criminal punishment for assault or torture (Mushohwe 2022). Similarly, Gershoff (2017) remarks that, if an adult were to be hit by an object which school children are hit by, that would be referred to as assault but when administered to children it is referred to as discipline. Veriava and Power (2017) state that those who advocate for corporal punishment usually state that learners who receive corporal punishment are more hard-working. The advocates aver that banning corporal punishment results in reduced levels of discipline, and that other methods of discipline are less effective. They justify their argument by pointing out that corporal punishment is a significant part of cultural and religious beliefs

Some adults believe that, if children do not fear them, they will disrespect them and behave in a way that is contrary to traditions and customs. Many adults have been taught that learning occurs where there is pain, *“without pain there is no gain”* (Fry *et.al.* 2016). Religiously, there is a prominent belief among Protestant Christians that corporal punishment is a biblical practice linking firm discipline with the child’s spirituality (Gershoff 2010).

### 3.6 Consequences of school violence

Burton and Leoschut (2013:4) stated that the long-term consequences of school violence far outlast the short-term outcomes. Direct and indirect violence experienced by learners at school often results in truancy as learners fear attending school because of the attendant violence leading to school dropouts. School violence often results in decrease in educational performance by victims. Depression and fatigue from violence, can impact negatively on school performance and translate into longer term psycho-social effects later in life. The relationship between violent victimisation and later aggressive behaviour is well-documented. Young victims of violence are at a greater risk of engaging in violent and anti-social behaviour as they get older and those who are bullied at school are at greater risk of becoming bullies. School violence can erode the ability of victims to form healthy, pro-social and trusting relationships with peers and adults especially when violence is experienced from adults who have custody over the child such as teachers. Exposure to violence such as corporal punishment can reinforce the message that violence is an acceptable way of resolving conflict and instilling discipline. UNICEF (2014:31) noted that physical violence can cause injuries such as broken bones, bruises, physical disabilities, head trauma and even death. Direct and indirect prolonged exposure to physical violence during childhood is associated with mental health including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders, psychiatric disorders, suicidal behaviour and self-harm.

School violence affects not only the victims but also those who witness the violence. This creates an atmosphere of fear and apprehension at school which is not conducive to learning. Exposure to violence affects the learners' risk for violence and negatively impacts on the learners' emotional and behavioural development. Learners exposed to school violence are prone to, have poor self-image, depression, poor impulse control, poor cognitive abilities, fighting, cruelty, lying and vandalism (Burton and Leoschut 2013:57).

School violence can result in long-standing physical, emotional and psychological implications for both learners and teachers. Death due to corporal punishment, reduced self-esteem, distress, risk of depression, suicide, reduced school attendance, impaired concentration, teenage pregnancies, transmission of HIV, fear, diminished ability to learn, community disintegration, academic underperformance and school dropouts have been reported as resulting from school violence (Mthanti

and Mncube 2014:73). Violence keeps children out of school and denies them opportunities of bettering their lives and working their way out of poverty. Viewed from this point, violence in schools perpetrates the cycle of poverty which can lead to more violence (Pineiro 2006:153).

Victims of school violence such as corporal punishment are likely to face challenges of building pro-social and trusting relationships with peers and adults. Corporal punishment reinforces in learners that violence is an appropriate method of resolving conflicts or instilling discipline. Children growing up under adverse conditions may find it difficult to trust adults. The relationship between violent victimisation and later aggressive behaviour is well documented. Young victims have a higher risk of engaging in violent behaviour and anti-social behaviour as they get older, and those bullied are more likely to engage in bullying behaviour (Burton and Leoschut 2013:4).

According to Fry *et.al.* (2016), corporal punishment has emotional and psychological consequences. Children who are subjected to corporal punishment often feel anger and shame and are humiliated. This negatively affects their dignity, self confidence and trust in adults and may result in suicidal thoughts, desire for revenge and aggression towards other children. Children can be withdrawn and fearful of trying new things because of corporal punishment. They may be ashamed of themselves due to regular humiliation and may need more time to learn social and academic skills. Their performance at school may deteriorate, and they may have challenges in forming healthy relationships. Loss of interest and resentment of learning may result as many children who are beaten learn to hate the subject or the teacher who administers the corporal punishment, and this may lead to subject or school dropout. Corporal punishment teaches children that violence is normal in resolving issues and for imposing one's view on others (Fry *et. al.* 2016).

Gershoff (2002:540) carried out a meta-analysis to understand the association between parental corporal punishment and 11 childhood behaviours and experiences. The meta-analysis was based on 88 empirical studies. Table 3.1 below shows a summary of the results of the is analysis summarised by Durrant (2005).

**Table 3.1: Summary findings of the meta-analysis of research on developmental outcomes associated with parental corporal punishment.**

	No of studies examining relationship	No of studies confirming relationship
Child victim of physical abuse	10	10
Poorer mental health as a child	12	12
Poorer mental health as an adult	8	8
Impaired parent -child relationship	13	13
Lower moral internalization	15	15
Aggression as children	27	27
Aggression as adults	4	4
Antisocial behaviour as children	13	12
Antisocial behaviour as adults	5	5
Abuse of child or spouse in adulthood	5	5

*Source:* Adapted from Gershoff 2002, as summarised by Durrant (2005: 64).

The meta-analysis indicated only one positive outcome of corporal punishment and that is immediate compliance, with the remaining ten as negative outcomes. Empirical evidence showed that, in most instances, corporal punishment results in negative undesirable constructs, and lower levels of moral internalisation and mental health. However, administering corporal punishment does not necessarily mean that the child will experience negative outcomes, although corporal punishment increases the risk of the manifestation of negative outcomes (Gershoff 2010). Doing away with discipline such as corporal punishment does not result in children over-running parents or authority. Corporal punishment was banned in Sweden in 1979 and this has not resulted in chaos or societal collapse. Instead, Sweden and other Scandinavian countries rank highly in various indicators of well-being (Hove and Harris 2019).

Data on the consequences of school gender-based violence is scarce because victims hesitate to report the violence for fear of being stigmatised, not believed, shamed, or retaliated against (UNESCO 2009).

Boys are less likely to report sexual abuse for fear of being considered weak and helpless. This is perceived to be against cultural beliefs that men are strong and cannot be easily victimised. Reports by boys who are sexually abused by men of a homosexual nature are even less because of cultural stigmatisation of homosexuals (UNICEF 2014:58).

It has been established that sexual assaults and other forms of gender-based violence contribute to girls dropping out of school, poor school performance, early pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and low self-esteem. Gender-based violence has ripple effects on communities as the resultant shame is felt by the family and community where sexual abuse is considered taboo (UNESCO 2009). Children who have been sexually abused are at risk of being re-victimised as children and later on as adults (UNICEF 2014).

According to UNICEF (2014), unlike physical violence where, in some instances, injury can be seen, emotional violence is more subtle as it does not leave any visible, physical consequences. Children who experience emotional violence may grow up feeling that they are deficient and may blame themselves for the negative words and aggressive action that was perpetrated against them. The long-term effects of emotional violence are depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, isolation, estrangement from other people, insecure attachment and difficulty with relationships. Emotional violence also impairs the development of the brain resulting in long-term cognitive, language, and academic challenges.

### 3.7 Conclusion

Article 28(2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that school discipline should be administered in a way that respects the child's human dignity. The Convention requires all state parties to prohibit corporal punishment and all forms of discipline that are humiliating and harmful in the educational context. The convention states that it does not reject the positive concept of discipline and recognises the fact that bringing up children involves interventions to develop and protect them. However, this is different from the use of deliberate punitive force to cause some degree of pain, discomfort or humiliation to the child.

Violence against children is never justifiable, nor is it inevitable. It must be prevented at all costs and not tolerated (Pinheiro 2006:3). Failure to protect children from all forms of violence, including school violence, is an infringement of their rights, and compromises their development and well-being (Green

et.al. 2013). It violates children's fundamental rights, human dignity and psychological integrity, and has a negative impact on children's self-esteem and achievements (Nkuba et.al. 2018). "Children do not lose their human rights by virtue of passing through school gates" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, Comment No.1 2001).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) obligates member states to take all appropriate measures to protect children against all forms of physical and mental violence and obligates member states to ensure that discipline is administered in a manner that is consistent with the child's inherent dignity, and that no child should be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In addition, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Union 1999) submits that state parties are obligated to take specific educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, especially against physical and mental injury or abuse. Zimbabwe is party to the above treaties.

### 3.8 Summary

This chapter reviewed empirical studies relevant to my study. The chapter discussed school violence in answer to the first objective of my study which was to assess the causes, nature, extent, and consequences of violence in a secondary school in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The chapter looked at the broad causes, nature, extent and consequences of school violence whereas the next chapter will continue the discussion and contextualize objective to Zimbabwe.



## 4 Chapter 4: School violence in Zimbabwe

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed empirical studies and findings based on previous research relating in answer to the first objective of my study which was to assess the causes, nature, extent, and consequences of violence in a secondary school in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has a legal framework that protects the rights of the child, and these are enshrined in the Constitution Amendment (No. 20) of 2013 and the Children's Act (2001). The Children's Act domesticated the various international and regional treaties which Zimbabwe is signatory to. Section 19 (2)(c) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013:20) protects children from any form of abuse. The clause protects the child against both structural and direct violence. This is in line with the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Union 1999) which protect the child from violence. Clause (19)(2)(c) of the constitution of Zimbabwe states that, the State must adopt reasonable policies and measures ... to ensure that children are protected from maltreatment, neglect and any form of abuse. In addition, Section 53 protects all citizens, including children, from physical and psychological torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Notwithstanding the above, Chikwiri and Lemmer (2014) averred that in Zimbabwe violence in schools is widespread with both male and female learners experiencing verbal abuse, sexual violence and corporal punishment. Learners were reported to be subjected to violence by teaching and non-teaching staff

### 4.2 Causes of school violence.

Nziramasanga (1999:64) noted that the causes of indiscipline at schools included failure by homes to instil positive values on children, large classes making it difficult for teachers to give individual attention, lack of dialogue between learners, school authorities and parents, lack of communication channels at schools, lack of role models and infiltration of drugs. In addition, some teachers did not lead by example as

evidenced by reports that they indulged in drugs, smoking, drinking alcohol and sexual relations with learners. Namasasu *et. al.* (2015) noted that the main causes of violence in Zimbabwean schools were, shortage of resources, cultural differences, poor communication, intolerance, sport and performance competitiveness, gossip, dictatorship, big class numbers, truancy, identity issues, name calling, theft and sexual abuse.

Matereke (2012) observed that the authoritarianism that pervades the political context in Zimbabwe has permeated the schools and mirrors the prevailing political and social context. The crystallization of intolerance at schools reflects the political conditions that prevail outside school. The schools had become sites which mirrored what happened in the wider community. Simuforsa and Ndlovu (2016:66), in concurrence, with Matereke (2012) posited that violence in schools is influenced by the home environment. They observed that children who come from homes where there are poor role models who display violence and inappropriate behaviour become violent at school. If children are socialised in environments that uphold violence, they carry that violence and model it at school.

Owing to economic hardships in Zimbabwe, the social fibre of the traditional family has been eroded. Family roles and values have shifted, and this has had a negative emotional effect on children, especially in orphaned households where grandparents have been left in charge of the orphaned children. The grandparents may not have the emotional, physical and financial capacity required for the healthy emotional upbringing of orphaned grandchildren, leaving the children vulnerable to violence (Maternowska *et.al.* 2018:28).

Sokwanele (2006) describes how children learn violent behaviour from home and the community as follows

*Most children experience violence first in the home, then in the school. At home many..... witness violence between adults, most frequently perpetrated by their fathers against their mothers. They learn that it is acceptable; it is the privilege of the perpetrator and must be suffered and tolerated by the victims. Not because the perpetrator is right, but because he has the power. A substantial number of girl children experience sexual assault from early ages; they learn to suffer and to keep silent. And almost all children are "disciplined" by physical beating. By the time they reach school they are well socialized to accept beating, pinching, and slapping by teachers, which not*

*infrequently becomes unacceptably abusive, intended to humiliate and rob a child of his dignity rather than to punish. Children learn to become victims of a superior force backed up by the authority of a revered institution.*

Zimbabwe is predominantly a patriarchal society where men hold positions of power. The imbalance in power drives violence against women, with tradition and religion being used to justify the use of violence against women (Maternowska *et.al.* 2018:24). Violence at school by boys against girls is reinforced by the accepted cultural and traditional views of male dominance over women. Religious beliefs that advance the doctrine of male dominance and female submissiveness to men further compound the violence perpetrated by men against women, which subsequently replays at school.

Maternowska *et. al.* (2018:28) asserts that, due to gender socialisation, girls are disadvantaged since boys are given preferential treatment, especially in rural settings. Girls are treated as property, and child marriages are prevalent in both Apostolic indigenous churches and charismatic evangelical groups that mix Christianity with traditional religion. These sects command a following of about one and a half million adherents in Zimbabwe. Child marriage in these sects is justified and legitimised by church doctrine, which requires that girls marry between the ages of 12 and 16 to avoid them engaging in premarital sex. As soon as a girl reaches the age of puberty any man can claim her (Maternowska *et. al.* 2018:28). Such practices are major contributors to gender-based violence against girls who ordinarily should be concentrating on their education. School boys see and learn that such practices are normal and acceptable and replicate gender -based violence at school.

Leach and Humphrey (2007) in Horner *et.al.* (2015) aver that the gendered nature of violence in schools has its roots in unequal and antagonistic gender relations which are legitimised and normalised by school structures and processes such as allocating male learners with higher status public duties and allocating female learners with domestic private tasks. Authoritarian teaching methods encourage aggressive masculinities and compliant femininities. Gender inequalities are therefore considered as natural human behaviour.

Dudu *et al* (2008:74) examined O Level English textbooks in use in Zimbabwe schools focussing on textbooks as basic carriers of sexist content. They noted that women were invisible, and the male perspective was dominant. Where women featured, they were portrayed in subordinate or negative

contexts. The heavy bias towards males was present even in texts written by females. The fact that female writers were no different from their male counterparts demonstrated their compliance with the dominant power relations that have been learnt over years.

Although corporal punishment was abolished in Zimbabwe, it continues to be used in disciplining learners (Chikwiri and Lemmer 2014). Makwanya *et. al.* (2012:1232) in their study on corporal punishment conducted in Bulawayo aver that the acceptance of corporal punishment in Zimbabwe has historical and colonial spill overs. Some colonial practices on corporal punishment still exist as demonstrated by the fact that straps and canes that were used by the colonialists are still being used in independent Zimbabwe. They referred to what Zimbabwean schools are experiencing: “violent hangover.” Horner et al (2015), posit that evidence demonstrates that teachers can stoke violence by being reproducers and normalisers of unequal gender relations, sexual exploitation and use of corporal punishment.

Some parents advocate for corporal punishment by justifying that it has immediate and future benefits, and that its use is encouraged in the Bible. They further argue that corporal punishment has been in existence since time immemorial, has made societies safer places and, since corporal punishment worked for them as they were growing up, it should work for their children as well (Gomba 2015). The justification for the use of corporal punishment is based on cultural and religious grounds. The beliefs and attitudes that parents hold perpetuate the use of physical forms of child discipline. Most parents in the Gwenzi *et. al.* (2021:218) study disagreed with the banning of corporal punishment, arguing that corporal punishment was culturally appropriate and justified in some contexts. The ban was viewed as non-Zimbabwean and would result in higher levels of indiscipline among children. Religious beliefs were also used extensively to justify the use of corporal punishment with parents referring to the Bible in their defence. Parents revealed that they were concerned about losing control over their children, and referred to child rights in a negative way (Gwenzi *et. al.* 2021:218).

Suicide has been reported at schools in Zimbabwe. Masara (2018) reported three cases related to schools in Matabeleland that happened in 2018. In June 2018, a Form 1 learner at Pumula High School, which is less than 10 kilometres from Mzilikazi Secondary School, committed suicide. The learner had not been attending school, and had a misunderstanding with her mother, who beat her for the offence before the learner committed suicide. Two weeks earlier, a Form 4 boy from Mzingwane Secondary School in Matabeleland hanged himself at the school premises fearing disciplinary action over allegations of theft.

A month before that, a Form 4 boy from Mbuyazwe High School, in the same province, hanged himself after quarrelling with his mother for chiding him after he bullied his younger brother (Masara 2018).

Bullying is one of the most common forms of physical violence which is often tolerated and accepted (Makwanise 2021). The causes of bullying at school are reported by Simuforosa and Ndlovu (2016) as multi-faceted. Lack of rules targeting bullying can promote bullying because without rules against bullying, learners continue to be violent against each other. Some poor achieving learners fail to accept that they are poor performers and instead take it out on high academic achievers through bullying. Peer pressure has been cited as a cause for bullying too. From their study, Simuforosa and Ndlovu (2016:67) reported that 84% of participants indicated that bullying behaviour always takes place within peer context. Ncube et. al. (2015:7) in their study on bullying in Nkayi, Zimbabwe, also noted that peer pressure was the major cause of bullying at schools. Ganga (2018) also noted that school culture, previous abuse at home, issues of jealousy about each other, and socio-economic status are causes of bullying in Zimbabwean schools.

Research has demonstrated that most schools globally have a culture of welcoming new learners through acts of violence such as beatings, taking away their food and pocket money, and generally making new learners uncomfortable. New learners end up absenting themselves from school or going hungry because of this type of bullying. In day schools (such as Mzilikazi High School), bullying is exacerbated by the fact that bullies can follow their victims outside school fences to bully them. Regrettably, many teachers do not regard bullying as a real threat to the general running of schools (Gudyanga *et al.* 2014:66).

The media can contribute to physical bullying too. Learners can bully each other as a result of watching violent episodes on television, such as wrestling or playing video games (Simuforosa and Ndlovu 2016:64). Media violence can contribute to school violence as violent learners imitate aggression that they see on TV, movies or video games. Such exposure to violent media provides an opportunity for observational learning (Carroll 2014 in Simuforosa and Ndlovu 2016).

Mukwenha *et. al.* (2022:2) observed that the use of illicit substances among youths, including school going children in Zimbabwe, increased dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was exacerbated by the easy availability and affordability of illicit substances for the youths. The commonly used substances included glue, broncleer, mangemba, cane sprit, marijuana, codeine, and methamphetamine.

In their study Sibanda and Mpofu (2017:123) noticed that in some cases of drug and alcohol abuse, learners were sent by family members to sell these to other learners at school. In addition, some learners came from homes that operated shebeens that is, illegally selling alcohol from home, and in such cases the parents or guardians did not see anything wrong with the consumption of alcohol by learners. Community members were not good role models for learners either in behaviour or language. Therefore, there was lack of co-operation in the use of positive behaviour modelling. Teachers and parents were not equipped with skills in positive discipline. This was due to financial constraints that made it difficult to hold workshops and training sessions on alternative positive methods of discipline. Most schools placed emphasis on rewarding academic performance at the expense of rewarding and reinforcing good behaviour as well.

### 4.3 Nature of school violence

Violence at schools in Zimbabwe manifests itself through bullying, fighting, threatening, harassment, theft, drug abuse, illicit sexual activities amongst others. Physical bullying is prevalent in schools in Zimbabwe. Tshabalala (2015), states that bullying at school can be either physical (beatings, fighting), verbal (swearing, threatening) or social (ignoring, exclusion. Boys are more likely to bully others physically while girls mainly bully others socially and psychologically. Simuforsa and Ndlovu (2016:65) noted that boys are more likely to experience physical bullying and girls are targets of indirect forms of bullying such as social exclusion. Viewed differently, Makwanise (2021) observed that, contrary to traditional beliefs, bullying cuts across gender and some girls were perpetrators of bullying. Girls were mainly bullied by other girls on allegations of having a love affair with an older girl's boyfriend.

Makwanise (2021) noted that most of the bullying was done in secret places especially toilets and out of sight of the school authorities. At the toilets, the bullies would ask other learners to pay to use the toilets and the bullies would use the money to buy drugs (Makwanise 2021). In 2018, it was reported that at Marist Brothers school 16 boys bullied 30 junior learners for four hours from 2200hrs to 0200hrs. Twenty three of the bullied learners sustained injuries of varying degrees from the beatings. The attackers were drunk and forced their victims to drink water from the toilet bowls, eat bath soap, wash clothes, and bark like dogs, while other victims were yoked like cattle, rammed onto walls, choked, kicked, punched and beaten with sticks and belts (Ncube 2018).

Simuforosa and Ndlovu (2016:60), reported that in 2015 at Milton High School in Bulawayo, 10 Form 1 learners were beaten by Form 4 and Form 6 boys to the extent that the ten boys had to be hospitalised. In addition, Bakari (2018) reported that a primary school learner in, Bulawayo, died due to a brain tumour that developed after she was accidentally stabbed in the eye by another learner whilst playing in the playground.

Corporal punishment has been used to discipline children in Zimbabwe from time immemorial. Historically, corporal punishment was legally permitted in Zimbabwe until it was outlawed in 2014 as discussed in the next paragraph below. The 1980 Lancaster House constitution did not have any provisions to protect children from physical violence such as corporal punishment. Instead, the Lancaster House Constitution tolerated the use of corporal punishment for juveniles at schools and in the wider community. Therefore, corporal punishment became a normal way of disciplining children at school and at home. The practice was also supported by laws such as the Children's Act of 1987, the Education Act of 1987, the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act of 2004 and the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act (Chapter 9:07) of 2016. In the education sector, the use of corporal punishment was legalised by the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act of 2004 where a Head of a school could administer moderate corporal punishment to male learners for disciplinary purposes. However, in practise, every teacher administered "moderate" corporal punishment on learners, females included (Dziva 2019). This can be validated by a study carried out by Chikwiri and Lemmer (2014) where it was revealed that, in Marondera and Harare, girls were beaten daily in front of classmates with ropes, rulers and shoes. Girls were beaten on the buttocks, legs, head, back and hands. Caning was the most common form of punishment used by teachers on learners. Chiramba and Harris (2020) observed in their study in three Primary school in Harare that almost all the teachers admitted that they used corporal punishment to discipline learners to make sure that they behaved well. The teachers submitted that corporal punishment and manual labour were effective discipline tools.

In 2014, corporal punishment was outlawed through a high court ruling which declared Section 69(2c) of the Education Act of 1987 unconstitutional. Section 69(2c) provided that the Minister of education could make regulations which were necessary or convenient to be prescribed and these included.

*discipline in schools and the exercise of disciplinary powers over pupils attending schools, including the administration of corporal punishment and the suspension and expulsion of such pupils in*

*respect of their attendance and conduct in schools, and in public places when not accompanied by their parents or by adult persons into whose custody they have been entrusted by their parents.*

The court further observed that Section 53 of the Zimbabwe constitution outlawed infliction of corporal punishment on children by parents, guardians or by those *in loco parentis*. The court observed that this was more so since the right not to be tortured is an absolute right. The ruling was referred to the Constitutional Court for confirmation. In 2015, the court made the same remarks, declaring that the caning of juvenile offenders with a rattan cane is not consistent with the values of the Constitution (Sloth-Nielsen 2018:252). The Constitutional Court confirmation is still awaited.

In 2017, a case of a teacher who had used a thick rubber pipe to assault a seven-year-old learner because the learner's mother had failed to sign her reading homework was brought before the courts of law. The learner had sustained deep red bruises on her back and was traumatized to the extent that she refused to go to school the following day. When this came to light, other learners also came forward saying they, too, had been assaulted. In their application to the Courts, the applicants quoted the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment 20) of 2013, domestic and regional case law, and international treaties to which Zimbabwe is a signatory. The court ruled once again that corporal punishment was unlawful and referred the ruling to the Constitutional Court for confirmation once again (Sloth-Nielsen 2018:253). In the ruling, Justice Mangota stated that,

Corporal punishment is violence against children, and I do not believe that children should be subjected to any form of violence. I further believe that corporal punishment is physical abuse of children. It amounts to deliberately hurting a child, which causes injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts. In my opinion, there is no excuse for physically abusing a child. It causes serious and everlasting harm and in some cases death (Nemukuyu 2017).

The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No 20 of 2013 Section 81 (1) (e) provides for the protection of children from all forms of abuse. Chapter 2 Section 19 (1) also obligates the state to adopt policies and measures to ensure that child rights are upheld. Mushohwe (2018:7) noted that, although the High Court of Zimbabwe had declared corporal punishment unconstitutional. confirmation by the Constitutional Court is still awaited for the declaration to have force.



Mushohwe (2022:10) asserts that corporal punishment reveals a violent society, and that Zimbabwe should not be a violent society; hence, corporal punishment should not be tolerated in a human rights era where Zimbabwe is part of the global community. Mushohwe (2022:9) observes that the ban on corporal punishment will not be well received by the Zimbabwean community, especially the parents and those in the educational sector. The reason for the outcry will be premised on the belief that the ban will promote unruly behaviour among children, and those in authority will be disempowered as they will not be able to discipline children when they misbehave. To ensure that the ban is effective, Mushohwe (2022) advocates that public awareness campaigns be carried out to educate all concerned that discipline is not synonymous with corporal punishment. Also, those who have oversight or custody of the children do have alternative methods of discipline. Society must be made aware that children's mental and physical maturity limitations require to be nurtured, guided, and protected so that they become responsible citizens who abhor violence in all its forms and respect others' human rights.

Drug abuse is reported to be prevalent in Zimbabwean schools. Mukwenha *et. al.* (2022) reported that included in the list of drugs abused by learners are the locally manufactured drugs such as *musombodia*, a colourless, highly intoxicating drink made from ethanol and emblems powder. Methamphetamine a highly intoxicating and addictive drug referred to as crystal meth or, locally, as "*mutoriro*" is also easily accessed by learners. This drug affects the central nervous system and can leave users in a deep stupor.

#### 4.4 Extent of school violence

A National Baseline Survey on Life Experiences (NBSLEA), which was part of a multi-country Violence against Children Survey initiative, was conducted in 2011. For the first time, research provided national statistics that described the magnitude and nature of abuse experienced by children in Zimbabwe. The study revealed that 47% of females and 54% males in Zimbabwe reported that they had experienced physical violence from a teacher during childhood. Two percent females and six percent of males had experienced physical violence from a school head. (ZIMSTATS 2012).

Birdthistle *et.al.* (2010:1078) carried out a study on child abuse in Harare. The study revealed that sexual abuse is likely to take place at the child's home (34%), at a neighbour's home (15%), at an urban open space (12%) and at a relative's home (8%) most often by trusted adults. Sixty four percent of the abuse

had taken place once, 30 percent up to five times, seven percent up to 10 or more times. Other sites mentioned where abuse took place were, shops, a friend's home, a stranger's home, a motor vehicle, office, and at church.

According to the NBSLEA of 2011, 75 percent of females and 25 percent of males aged 18-24, and 60 percent of females and 12 percent of males aged between 13 and 17, had their first incidence of sexual abuse perpetrated by a boyfriend or girlfriend, meaning it was someone with whom they were in a relationship (ZIMSTATS 2012). In collaboration, Rumble *et.al.* (2015), in their study revealed that 32.5% females and 8.9% males reported having experienced more than one incident of sexual violence before reaching the age of 18. Three out of four females and one out of four males of those who had experienced sexual violence indicated that the first incident of violence was perpetrated by either a boyfriend or girlfriend.

In another study, nearly 30% of adolescent girls between the ages of 15-19 reported that they had experienced emotional violence by a partner. The figure of 30% if compared to national data in eight other countries in East and Southern Africa, shows that Zimbabwe has the highest prevalence estimate in the region (Maternowska *et. al.* 2018:22). UNICEF (2014) reports on a survey carried out in Kenya, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe on violence against children. The survey revealed that, in Zimbabwe, emotional violence was more prevalent in males than females, with 38% of males reporting that they had experienced emotional abuse in childhood, compared with 29% of females. Boys reported that they were mainly humiliated by teachers or male figures such as uncles. Girls reported being humiliated mainly by mothers and aunts.

Peer pressure is a significant driver of risky sexual behaviour among boys and girls. Use of pornographic material through the Internet and social media fuels sexual abuse. In addition, parents avoid discussing sexual matters with their children because it is considered taboo, leaving children without proper guidance (Fry *et. al.* 2016:21).

#### 4.5 Consequences of school violence.

Bullying can cause physical and psychological damage to victims. Learners who are chronic victims of bullying experience more physical and psychological damage than their peers and tend not to outgrow

their roles as victims. The chronic victims of bullying have an increased risk of depression, low self-esteem and other health problems including schizophrenia and death. It is reported that, in Bulawayo, a learner was beaten to death by other learners on suspicion of theft (Mapolisa and Tshabalala 2015). Ganga (2018:66) observed that bullying can cause learner victims to be hopeless, fearful, depressed and less involved in schoolwork. As victims grow older and perpetrators leave the school, victims may also become perpetrators leading to a culture and cycle of violence at school (Ganga 2018:66).

Perpetrators of violence can be negatively affected by the violence that they perpetrate. Bullies tend to be absent from school and are more likely to drop out of school than other learners. Young bullies have a propensity of developing future problems with violence and delinquency. They are more likely to develop anti-social behaviour such as fighting, drunkenness, theft, truancy, and to be arrested earlier in life than their peers (Mapolisa and Tshabalala 2015). The academic performance of bullies tends to be poor as they lack concentration while mapping out more bullying tactics on their victims. Bullies may be lonely as it may be difficult for them to make friends, and they may drop out of school (Ganga 2018:68).

Mukwenha *et.al.* (2022:2) highlighted that partaking in illicit drugs can lead to reckless, risky sexual behaviour, cardiovascular and neurological diseases, addiction, stress, anxiety, depression, suicide, and psychosis. Learners who partake in illicit drugs are more likely to drop out of school or to be in conflict with the law.

## 4.6 Summary

This chapter discussed school violence in Zimbabwe. The discussion looked at the nature, the causes, the extent, and the consequences of school violence in Zimbabwe. The next chapter discusses approaches to school discipline, retributive and restorative approaches, and restorative interventions.

## 5 Chapter 5: Approaches to school discipline

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and reviews the relevant literature and empirical studies on the different approaches to school discipline. The chapter discusses restorative justice methods as alternative approaches to discipline. The concepts of discipline and punishment, retributive and restorative justice are analysed. Restorative interventions that can be put in place at schools to reduce violence are detailed. The chapter assisted me in answering the objectives of this study.

### 5.2 Stakeholders

As alluded to earlier (see sections 3.3 and 4.2), violence in schools reflects the violence that takes place in communities where learners live. In this regard, Mayeza and Bhana (2017:418-419) emphasised the importance of involving the community in fighting the scourge of school violence. Since schools cannot do it alone, the community and parents have to be involved in planning and implementing programmes aimed at creating an environment where learners embrace the ideas of non-violence, inclusivity, tolerance, equality and social cohesion. Similarly, Burton and Leoschut (2013:68) pointed out that the safety of children at school is directly linked to the family and community and it is unreasonable to expect schools to take sole responsibility in dealing with school violence that has deep societal origins. Any strategy to make schools a safe place must extend beyond the school environment. Home support is critical because any efforts to reduce violence at school must be complemented by the home environment. Learners from families where parents and caregivers are caught up in a cycle of violence at home may not get any support at home following an experience of violence at school.

### 5.3 Concept of discipline and punishment

Discipline and punishment are usually mistakenly regarded as synonymous. Marinescu (2011:21) states that the etymology of punishment shows that the word derives from the Greek *poine* and Latin *poena* which means revenge. Therefore, the underlying meaning of punishment is associated with the idea of

penalty and penance. Simango and Mafa (2022:115) state that discipline is extracted from the Latin word, *disciplina* which entails teaching and giving guidance although often it is used as a synonym of control and punishment.

Discipline aims at stopping the undesired behaviour and teaching the desired appropriate behaviour thus motivating healthier decision-making capabilities in the misbehaving learner (Mullet 2014). Punishment, on the other hand, serves to restrain a child temporarily but does not teach the child self-discipline. It can make the learner obey instructions and rules when the enforcer is present or nearby but does not guarantee that the misbehaviour will not be repeated in the absence of the enforcer. It can teach compliance in the short term, but it does not teach the meaning behind the rules. Discipline involves teaching children rules about life and socializing them into an acceptable way of doing things. Socialization includes helping children control their impulses and to develop social skills for interaction with others around them (Amstutz and Mullet 2015).

Discipline should be looked at in a holistic manner where the aim is to develop the child's self-discipline and making her or him a responsible citizen. If punishment does take place, it should be a result of natural consequences of bad behaviour. To give detention to a child who damaged property does not mean that the child will respect the property of others. Instead making the child fix the damaged property or work to pay for the damages will make the child realise that bad behaviour has consequences (Reyneke 2015). Manual work as a method of discipline can have negative results. Poor performing learners can prefer manual work rather than difficult academic work. Manual work can also interfere with the learning process, and, at times, it hardens offenders. Detention where a learner spends extra time in a certain area or room for a certain period may expose learners to unscrupulous teachers (Mugabe and Maposa 2013).

Bodine *et al* (1994:20) summarises the difference between discipline and punishment in a table presented below as Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Punishment vs discipline**

Punishment	Discipline
Expresses power of an authority usually causes pain to the recipient; is based upon retribution	Is based on logical and natural consequences that embody the reality of a social order (rules

or revenge is concerned with what happened (the past).	that one must learn and accept to function adequately and productively in society); concerned with what is happening now (present).
Is arbitrary- probably applied inconsistently and unconditionally; does not accept or acknowledge exceptions or mitigating circumstances.	Is consistent- accepts that the behaving individual is doing the best he or she can do for now.
Is imposed by an authority (done to someone), with responsibility assumed by one administering the punishment and the behaving individual avoiding responsibility.	Comes from within, with responsibility assumed by the behaving individual and the behaving individual desiring responsibility; presumes that conscience is internal.
Closes options for the individual, who must pay for a behaviour that has already occurred.	Opens options for the individual who can choose a new behaviour.
As a teaching process usually reinforces a failure identity; especially negative and short-term, without sustained personal involvement of either teacher or learner.	As a teaching process, is active and involves close, sustained, personal involvement of both teacher and learner and emphasises developing ways to act that will result in more successful behaviour.
Is characterized by open or concealed anger; is a poor model for the expectation of quality.	Is friendly and supportive; provides a model of quality behaviour.
Is easy and expedient.	Is difficult and time consuming.
Focuses on strategies intended to control behaviour of learner.	Focuses on the learner's behaviour and consequences of that behaviour.
Rarely results in positive changes in behaviour; may increase subversiveness or result in temporary suppression of behaviour; at best, produces compliance.	Usually results in a change in behaviour that is more successful, acceptable, and responsible; develops the capacity for self-evaluation of behaviour.

Source: Bodine *et.al.*1994:20

Discipline has a place in the development of children. Article 28(2) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) does not dismiss the role of school discipline in child education. Instead, it submits that member states are required to “take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s dignity and in conformity with the present convention” (United Nations 1989). However, any action that hurts a child physically and emotionally is a violation of the child’s right and is not discipline (Durrant and Stewart-Tufescu 2017).

Discipline has long and short-term goals. In the short-term, it stops the undesired behaviour and explains why it is inappropriate. In the long-term, it helps children take responsibility of the harm and hurt those results from their misbehaviour, and to be self-disciplined (Amstutz and Mullet 2015). Punishment can have negative effects such as anger by the one being punished and shifts the focus from the misbehaviour to the enforcer of the punishment. The punished learner may blame the teacher rather than take responsibility for the misbehaviour and take out the resulting frustration on other learners or passively resist the assigned work. However, some learners are not prepared to face the harm they have caused or take responsibility. When this happens, punishment may seem necessary to restrict more opportunities for causing harm. In this event there may be room for punishment to be used as a transition to the use of more positive alternatives. In such instances, punishment can be viewed as the beginning of a discipline process moving towards a healthier option of discipline that replaces the punishment measure (Amstutz and Mullet 2015).

## 5.4 Traditional approaches to school discipline

Teske (2011) stated that zero tolerance policies to school violence are the traditional approaches used to reduce school violence. These policies have their roots in the ‘Broken Window Theory’ which argues that communities must get tough with minor offences to deter the commitment of serious offences. Zero tolerance approaches assume that removing disruptive students deters other students from engaging in disruptive behaviour and maintains classroom safety. These approaches argue that failure to intervene in this way allows the cycle of violence to gain a solid hold in schools and communities (Skiba 2014).

However, zero tolerance policies in response to school violence are highly destructive as they are punitive and victimise children by responding to violence with violence (Committee on the Rights of the Child

2011). Ironically, Skiba (2014) observes that zero tolerance policies have created a school-to-prison pipeline. Suspensions, expulsions and arrests have turned learners in conflict to criminal offenders. Learners suspended at late elementary school are more likely to receive office referrals and suspensions at middle school than those who have not been suspended. This indicates that suspensions may act as a reward rather than punishment for some students. Similarly, Mullet (2014) states that school suspensions and withdrawal of privileges mirrors a criminal justice system that looks and feels retributive. Although the misbehaviour may stop, this is temporary and long-term change is unlikely.

Cremin and Guilherme (2016: 1131-1132) noted that installing CCTV cameras in strategic places at schools has been used especially in developed countries as a way of controlling and monitoring the behaviour of learners. However, this creates negative peace at schools, besides making learners feel marginalized and criminalized. Such strategies reflect authoritative power at the expense of dialogue and collaboration within the school environment.

Ncube *et. al.* (2015:7) in their study in Nkayi, Zimbabwe, noted that the strategies that the schools used to deal with misbehaviour were corporal punishment, manual work, inviting parents to the school, counselling and guidance as well as improving the classroom environment. They observed that corporal punishment and manual work inflict pain, and there is a possibility that such strategies harden the offender who then later on takes revenge by being violent to the victims of the initial violence.

Makwanise (2021) noted that measures put in place by the two schools of his study in Bulawayo Zimbabwe were not effective. Learners who were bullied were required to report to either the teacher or prefect resulting in the bully being punished. In some serious cases, parents and guardians were called to the school to dialogue on the misbehaviour of the bully and, in extreme cases, the bully was expelled from school. Challenges were observed with calling of parents and guardians as some bullies hired and paid adults to represent them as parents or guardians, thus keeping the real parents or guardians in the dark with regards to their misbehaviour. Most learners did not report the bullying for fear of reprisals by the bully afterwards. Suggestion boxes where learners could report abuse anonymously were not working well either because there was no time when the bullied learners could use the suggestion boxes without being seen by other learners (Makwanise 2021).



Practitioners in mental services and social services have questioned the effectiveness of the traditional approaches to discipline that are used in schools. They argue that zero tolerance approaches can be harmful to learners and may result in unsafe environments in schools. In addition, the results of compliance from using these approaches are temporary (Teske 2011:89) hence, restorative approaches to school violence have gained ground as being more effective in reducing school violence and creating safe schools.

## 5.5 Discipline methods used in Zimbabwe schools

Based on their study, Mugabe and Maposa (2013) observed that methods of curbing indiscipline in Zimbabwean schools varied depending on the offence. They grouped the methods as preventive, corrective and punitive. Punishment used to deal with indiscipline included manual work, detention, corporal punishment, exclusion and expulsion. Manual work was a preferred method of punishment by most teachers. Exclusion and expulsion were seen as the last resort for curbing indiscipline. Schools crafted preventive codes of conduct, school rules, set up prefect systems, and disciplinary committees to deal with discipline issues. School rules were provided before enrolment, and both parents and learners were required to sign contracts of compliance before enrolment. Corrective measures used to curb misconduct included reprimands, supervision, counselling, and rewarding good behaviour. Reprimands were used mainly to restrain learners from acts of misconduct. Schools used registers, teachers on duty, homework diaries, and parental supervision of homework to curb truancy, bunking of lessons, and not doing homework. Counselling was often used in serious cases such as drug abuse and pregnancy. Since schools did not employ qualified counsellors, the role of counsellor is usually taken up by senior teachers (Mugabe and Maposa 2013).

The prefect system in Mugabe and Maposa's study was considered a responsible approach for the maintenance of appropriate behaviour by learners. This is a good system as it trains learners in democratic processes and taking responsibility and ownership of the school disciplinary processes. Prefects were selected from well behaved learners who were delegated authority among others to deal with minor cases of indiscipline and checking on attendance. It was noted that the prefect system was an effective way of involving learners in the administration of the school (Mugabe and Maposa 2013).

Disciplinary committees were another structure used to curb undesirable behaviour at schools. The composition of disciplinary committees varied and some included senior teachers, teachers, deputy Heads, heads of departments, sports directors, and parents. Disciplinary committees normally administered fair and democratic administration of discipline (Mugabe and Maposa 2013).

Apprehension has been raised around factors that constrain the use of positive discipline practices at school. A study was carried out in Mzilikazi District secondary schools by Sibanda and Mpofu (2017), to explore factors that constrain the use of positive methods in disciplining learners in 10 secondary schools. The findings of their study were that resistance or lack of response by some parents when invited to school led to communication breakdown. Failure by teachers, parents, and community members to model positive behaviour to learners was a stumbling block, such as teachers consuming alcohol in full view for learners during lunch breaks. Some members of the community were bribed by learners to come and stand in as parents or guardians when schools sent requests for parents to visit the school to discuss learners' misbehaviour (Sibanda and Mpofu 2017).

Mugabe and Maposa (2013) noted that schools faced challenges in administering positive discipline due to occasional lack of parental support, some parents believed that disciplining learners was the business of the school. Due to large enrolments at schools, the disciplinary committees were at times overwhelmed, which delayed the conclusion of cases (Mugabe and Maposa 2013). Teachers were reluctant to do guidance and counselling as they perceived this to be an extra load and continued to use negative methods of disciplining learners (Sibanda and Mpofu 2017).

In 2018, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) issued Circular No. P35 on discipline in schools, suspensions, and exclusions. The circular states that enforcement and administration of proper school discipline is a prerequisite to successful learning as lack of discipline is not conducive to meaningful academic, moral and physical education. The circular states that clearly defined communication lines and transparent school rules that are formulated and executed with input from teachers and learners are a hallmark of a well-disciplined school. This creates a conducive environment which enables the free flow of information in all directions (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2018:1).

The MoPSE's circular P35 (2018:2) considered suspension of learners not as a non-progressive form of discipline but as a measure to facilitate investigations without the interference from the offending learner;

with the appropriate course of action decided thereafter. The circular indicates that learners can be excluded from school if such action was deemed to be in the best interest of either the child, school or parents. The excluded learner can apply for readmission to any other registered school. Expulsion from school is defined in the MoPSE's circular P35 (2018:3) as the removal of a learner from the school system on account of a misconduct of a serious nature. Once expelled, the learner cannot be admitted to any school within 12 months, and readmission is subject to the approval of the Secretary for education (MoPSE 2018).

On corporal punishment, the MoPSE circular P35 (2018:6) states that the administration of corporal punishment at school is against the provision of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment 20) of 2013, Sections 81, 51 and 53. No Head of school is allowed to administer corporal punishment as was the previous norm. Heads of schools are enjoined to cultivate a school climate where learners can develop internal discipline which does not emanate from fear of punishment. A school ethos which promoted self-discipline among learners and supported by positive disciplinary and proactive measures is encouraged, as opposed to situations where learners avoid misdemeanours for fear of physical pain. Counselling sessions in consultation with the parents are encouraged as these would result in more responsible and maturing learners. The circular stresses that no other forms of physical dehumanizing and undignified forms of punishment are to be administered by school authorities as discipline. The circular still subsists.

## 5.6 Retributive/Restorative Justice

The legal justice system worldwide largely works on a retributive foundation where offenders are alleged to have committed offences against the state. The offender is usually tried by the state and, if found guilty, is punished through a fine or imprisonment. The victim is largely excluded from the process, and the assumption is that the punishment imposed on the offender will rehabilitate the offender. Restorative justice, on the other hand, focuses on both the offender and the victim. It seeks to build a sense of self-worth and personal responsibility among offenders and victims (Harris 2014). In schools, restorative justice addresses the problem of school violence in a holistic manner by improving the school environment and taking into consideration the needs of all stakeholders (Armenta *et. al.* 2018)

Zehr (2015:40), one of the founding developers and advocates for restorative justice, defines restorative justice as, “A process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offence to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible.” Restorative justice allows for participatory decision making and helps in building and restoring relationships (Armenta *et. al.* 2018). Restorative justice focuses on needs and obligations rather than making sure that offenders get what they deserve. It puts emphasis on collaborative and co-operative problem solving. It promotes values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches for being in community. These approaches validate the experiences and needs of everyone within the community, particularly those who have been marginalized, oppressed, or harmed. These approaches allow individuals to act and respond in ways that are healing rather than alienating or coercive (Amstutz and Mullet 2015).

Restorative justice approaches provide alternative frameworks to thinking about wrongdoing. The approaches are premised on the assumption that human beings are interconnected in a web of relationships (*ubuntu*). Crime (wrongdoing) is viewed as a violation of people and interpersonal relationships. Violations create obligations, and the central obligation is to put right the wrongs and prevent re-occurrence (Zehr 2015). African societies have restorative mechanisms of resolving conflict which encourage good interpersonal relationships and the rebuilding of impaired relationships. Regrettably, these mechanisms have been lost due to urbanization (Hove and Harris 2018).

In the worldview of restorative justice, crime or wrongdoing damages relationships, and damaged relationships are a cause and effect of crime. This worldview emphasises making amends and putting right, and implies the need for healing for victims, offenders and the community (Zehr 2015:18). Putting right means that the harm and its causes are addressed Zehr (2015:21) posits that restorative justice has three pillars which are:

- Harms and needs. This is firstly for victims, then offenders and communities
- Obligations (to put right), by the offenders and also communities
- Engagement of stakeholders by those who have an interest in the offence and its resolution, such as victims, offenders, and community members.

Restorative justice has a higher view of human nature than retributive justice. It separates the person from the undesirable behaviour, and puts emphasis on the fact that the offender can turn away from the bad behaviour while still taking responsibility for the wrong done. The focus is on the fact that the offender has some goodness and remains a good person despite the wrong committed (Harris 2014).

## 5.7 Restorative/positive discipline

Discipline is necessary for the development of children and, the Convention on the Rights of the Child acknowledges this, and enjoins state parties through Article 20 of the Convention to “take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity ...”

Advocates of human and child rights argue that child discipline must be primarily about teaching and guiding children about what is right and wrong, what is expected of them, and how they can control their behaviour (Mushohwe 2022). School discipline must involve self-control guided by moral and social principles to overcome selfish emotions and desires. A disciplined learner will do what is right, not out of fear but because they believe that the behaviour is better and will not harm other people. Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate that mindset rather than using authoritarian methods of discipline. (Mugabe and Maposa 2013).

According to Amstutz and Mullet (2015), restorative discipline aims at preventing and stopping misbehaviour, and teaches more life-giving responses. It helps misbehaving learners to deal with the harm and hurt that they have caused to others and the school community. Restorative discipline does not only focus on the misbehaving learner but on everyone that has been affected by the misbehaviour including the larger educational community. The key goals of restorative discipline are: to understand the harm; to develop empathy for both the harmed and the harmer; to listen and respond to the needs of the person harmed and the person who harmed; to encourage accountability and responsibility through personal reflection within a collaborative planning process; to reintegrate the harmer (and if necessary, the harmed) into the community (Amstutz and Mullet 2015).

According to Naker and Sekitoleko (2009) positive discipline is concerned with guiding children's behaviour by paying attention to their emotional and psychological needs. Children are assisted to take

responsibility and make good decisions and understand that those decisions are in their best interest. With positive discipline, children learn self-discipline without fear. Children are given guidelines on what is acceptable behaviour and are supported as they learn to live according to those guidelines. Positive discipline includes non-violent consequences for poor behaviour. It replaces experiences of humiliation with considering the effects of one's behaviour; identifying alternative and preferred behaviours; demonstrating understanding of why a preferred behaviour is important; making amends for harm done to others or the environment.

Durrant and Stewart-Tufescu (2017) note that discipline is a process of optimising children's understanding and fostering their evolving capacities to actualise their rights. Rights-based approaches are restorative. Using a rights-based approach to discipline, five principles emerge:

- Non-violence. That is protecting children from all forms of violence. Any action that hurts a child physically and emotionally is a violation of the child's right and is not discipline. The starting point for rights-based discipline is the elimination of all acts that humiliate, scare, or inflict pain on the child.
- Respect for children's evolving capacities. Children are continuously acquiring skills and understanding, and their level of understanding must be respected by those who teach them.
- Respect for children's individuality. Every child's individuality must be respected. Simplistic solutions of "one size fits all" without taking into account the reasons for the conflict, the context, the relationship history, the child's temperament, the child's age and abilities are not ideal. Rights-based discipline seeks to respond to challenges through problem solving and not punishment. It aims at building the child's unique strengths and creating a safe environment for trial and error, with adults providing mentorship and encouragement rather than punishment for failure.
- Engagement of children's participation. The rights-based approach to discipline engages the child as an active participant in the learning process. Discipline imposed from above assumes that the child has no agency in their learning; instead the agent is the adult who administers the punishment.

- Respect for the dignity of children. What is normally viewed as discipline such as beatings, isolating children in time-out rooms, forcing them to stand in corners, and school suspensions and expulsions humiliates children and strips them of their dignity. Restorative practice approaches are based on mutual respect and dignity as they prioritise dialogue, relationships interdependence and social responsibility. Positive discipline may require the misbehaving learner to write essays, make apologies, do chores in the classroom or any activity that will make the learner to stop, think, reflect and demonstrate their intention for positive change in the future. Although positive discipline does not reward poor behaviour, it provides children with an opportunity when they have done wrong, to grow through their mistakes and to realise that appropriate behaviour can bring them positive experiences and opportunities (Naker and Sekitoleko 2009).

Children need discipline that teaches self-control, understanding that there are consequences to wrong behaviour, and that there are always alternatives. Discipline should emphasise positive reinforcing of good behaviour, and positive/negative reprimanding of bad behaviour without the use of violence. This must be accompanied by addressing the root causes of such unwanted behaviour such as family situations and poverty. Myths that extol violence such as, “*I am what I am today because of corporal punishment*” must be debunked (Mushohwe 2022). Positive discipline puts the child at the centre, and always seeks the best interest of the child. It rejects violence as a tool for teaching in all its forms. It aims at long-term outcomes and not immediate compliance. Positive discipline leads to what Naker and Sekitoleko (2009) refer to as a “good school.” A good school ensures that child rights are respected and valued as stakeholders are supported in growing their skills as future leaders and thinkers. A good school enables learners to be compassionate, responsible, creative and thoughtful as it educates the whole child providing cognitive, social and ethical development. A good school has zero tolerance for corporal punishment. Mistakes are opportunities for learning, not for humiliation and punishment (Naker and Sekitoleko 2009).

## **5.8 Restorative justice methods as alternative approaches to school discipline**

Restorative justice approaches to school violence are empathy-based approaches offering a fresh perspective to school discipline. They focus on the harm done to relationships, provide an opportunity to understand the relational nature of misbehaviour, mend relationships, and to make restitution where

necessary (UNICEF 2014:60). Restorative justice approaches seek healthy outcomes by giving voice and power to those harmed by the offence, healing and repairing relationships, encouraging accountability, reintegrating the offender, and creating caring climates (Mullet 2014:1,3).

Hove and Harris (2018) emphasize that restorative justice approaches are the most suitable approaches to reduce violence in schools because, although violence is not inevitable, it is a choice. There are always alternatives to violence. Learners can be equipped with skills to realise that there are non-violent alternatives that are superior to violence when resolving conflict. These approaches aim at changing the way individuals and groups think and behave through co-operative learning where the experiences and insights of learners are given prominence (Hove and Harris 2018).

Children have basic physical, emotional and psychological needs that need to be met. These needs include: the need to belong; to be accepted by people who matter in their lives; to feel emotionally and physically secure; to be respected by their peers. If these needs are met, children are more likely to be self-respecting and to contribute positively to their communities. If these needs are not met, children are more likely to misbehave as they seek to meet these needs by themselves. When teachers understand the needs of learners, they will find it easier to devise creative and effective non-violent responses to guide undesirable behaviour by learners. This results in better behaviour by learners, increased teacher satisfaction, improved classroom learning, better school reputation, and greater contribution by learners to their communities and the nation (Naker and Sekitoleko 2009).

#### 5.8.1 Indigenous knowledge systems as restorative approaches to discipline and reducing violence.

According to Kaya and Padayachee (2013), Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are community-based knowledge systems that have been used for centuries for sustainable livelihood and social cohesion. IKS includes values, practices and skills of specific cultural groups. Some IKS promote a culture of non-violence and can co-exist with modern systems to promote non-violence. Tradition and modernity are not contrary to each other but can nurture each other for peace through values and practices of sharing, co-operation, empathy and tolerance. Namasasu *et. al.* (2015) aver that peace education should harness relevant cultural or traditional methods to complement western methods of conflict resolution, prevention and



management. The word 'relevant' is important because not all traditional and cultural conflict resolution methods are non-violent. Also, Mertens (2008) affirms that not all indigenous knowledge and practices are transformational, some indigenous practices can serve to further oppress the oppressed.

In their study on building a culture of non-violence in early childhood development, Kaya and Padayachee (2013) observed that, in African countries, a culture of violence that is prevalent in homes, schools, neighbourhoods and playgrounds is inculcated in children in early childhood development. It is therefore, critical that initiatives to develop and inspire a culture of peace begin from the formative early childhood years through the use of rich IKS such as *ubuntu*. This implies that efforts to reduce school violence cannot be relegated to schools alone. Home and the community have a role to play.

Using cultural tools such as non-violent folklore, traditional dances, drama, songs, proverbs and indigenous games, a culture of non-violence through *ubuntu* can be instilled in children from an early stage. IKS are consistent with *ubuntu*, with the realization that every person's humanness is tied up with the well-being of others in the community. *Ubuntu* emphasises values and principles of equality, respect for human dignity, cultural diversity, and sharing of resources. *Ubuntu* rejects a society that is founded on exploitation and violence (Kaya and Padayachee 2013).

Simango and Mafa (2022:116) state that, in Zimbabwe, folktales narrated by the elderly to the young encourage qualities such as giving and caring for one another. It has been argued that conflict resolution methods used in African societies have strong elements of restorative justice. Offenders are encouraged to take responsibility for their misbehaviour by apologising and paying restitution where necessary. The community is expected to forgive the offender and reintegrate her or him back into the community (Harris 2014).

In 1999 a Commission of inquiry into the educational system of Zimbabwe was set up. The commission amongst others, consulted the citizens about their educational needs and areas of concern. In its report the commission dedicated a whole chapter on Ubuntu (holistic education). The aims of holistic education are stated as the development of the whole person, physically, mentally, spiritually and socially. The African culture emphasises the need for the whole community to be involved in education with the aim being to induct learners into cultural Ubuntu norms that guide relationships, behaviours and survival skills.

The school is an extension of the home and should be devoted to teaching learners what it means to have Ubuntu. Ubuntu was defined as denoting.

A good human being, a well behaved and morally upright person, characterized by qualities such as responsibility, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, hard work, integrity, a cooperative spirit, solidarity, hospitality, devotion to family and the welfare of the community (Nziramasanga, 1999:61-62).

The commission report noted that the situation that existed at that time was different, with the unity of the family unit under threat and weakened. The effects of living in a global village left citizens out of control of external influences and without any cultural identity or sound values. Citizens interviewed, were concerned about the loss of human, cultural and religious values noting the lack of role models in teachers, leaders and family members. Interestingly parents expected schools to have all the remedies to the prevailing indiscipline. They felt that the school should inculcate positive relationships such as, respect, courtesy, good manners, self-discipline and responsibility (Nziramasanga 1999:61-62).

Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014:5-6) in reference to the observations made by the Nziramasanga Commissions noted that the absence of a coherent philosophy of education in Zimbabwe manifests itself in the production of intolerant and corrupt citizens who lack moral focus and respect for other people. They noted that Zimbabweans have a high intolerance level regarding differing views resulting in denial of others of their human rights to make independent decisions on social, economic, political and cultural issues. Diversity of thinking and opinion is not appreciated, instead it has become a curse. Citizens do not dialogue, instead they dehumanise each other. Teachers and learners also dehumanize each other. In light of the above, Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014:6) averred that the adoption of Ubuntu as a philosophical foundation of Zimbabwe's educational system could restore respect for others by learners.

### 5.8.2 Peace/talking circles as a restorative approach to reduce violence.

Peace circles have been used to resolve conflicts in indigenous cultures for thousands of years. They focus on listening to each other using a "talking piece" which is a meaningful object that is used to allow only

the person holding the piece to reflect or talk about the issue under consideration (Zehr 2015). Peace circles provide space for deep listening and for people to be heard through structured dialogue.

Talking circles are premised on the understanding that human beings desire to be connected to each other and that this connection is challenged whenever there is conflict. They provide safe spaces for interaction and reconnection where people come together to dialogue and engage on difficult and sensitive issues. Circles encourage integration by emphasising collective accountability and stimulate equal opportunity and direct participation by all. All voices and contributions are heard and valued. When conflicting parties come into contact through talking circles, hostility is dispelled as all participants are humanised (Hamlin and Darling 2012). Participants are encouraged to abide by a set of values that emphasise respect, value of each other, integrity and the importance of speaking from the heart (Zehr 2015:52).

Pranis *et. al.* (2003) state that peace circles work on the premises that people need each other and desire to be connected to others in a good way. Everyone has core values that define what connecting in a good way means. To be connected in a good way and to act from values may not be easy, especially in conflict situations. Values can be buried under painful experiences or overshadowed by values imposed by others such as influential institutions and systems. However, given safe spaces, people are able to rediscover their core values and to uncover their deep-seated desire to positively connect with others.

Based on these premises, talking circles present a radical shift of how people respond to hurt, and create social order by calling for a paradigm shift from coercion to healing, from individual-only accountability to inclusive accountability, from justice as getting even, to justice as getting well (Pranis *et.al.* 2003:10).

Peace circles use “power with” and not “power over.” Power over is shown in the criminal justice system which relies on threats of punishment to prevent offences and executions of punishment to change harmful behaviour. Criminal justice systems depends on external control to maintain social order. It is the power of the state over individuals. On the other hand, “power with” is the power of the people and communities to connect and to deal with harms, and to address the root causes, prevent re-occurrence of these and, in turn, to seek to explore ways of healing and rebuilding relationships. For peace circles, healthy relationships are key to good behaviour and public safety (Pranis, Stuart and Wedge 2003).

The starting point in peace circles is that the whole community has been hurt by the harm, and the community may have to take responsibility for the conflict to some extent. The dialogue looks at the context and the root causes of the conflict, and addresses broader levels of harm. Peace circles allow emotional and even spiritual aspects of the conflict to come to the fore. Everyone is given an equal voice and, by slowing down the rhythm, people think more before reacting, thus allowing for reflection on the issues under consideration. The more people are involved, the greater the chance that the solution to the conflict will be sustainable (Fellegi and Szego 2013). Restorative peace-making circles as proactive preventive approaches can prevent and reduce violence and strengthen relations in schools. They can provide a platform for dialogue where learners get a chance to take individual and collective responsibility to resolve conflicts collectively and non-violently (Barnes 2015:38). Peace circles act as safe spaces to discuss difficult issues that affect students. Instead of using sanctions that cast students out of campus, peace circles provide understanding and reintegration to build community. Communicating and being exposed to diverse views fosters tolerance, and the realisation of the overall goal diffuses bitterness and creates peace (Hamlin and Darling 2012).

### 5.8.3 Peer mediation

Peer mediation involves a third party, the mediator, who assists those in conflict to resolve their conflicts peacefully. Peer mediation combines that needs of disputing parties instead of compromising the needs. This methods helps learners deal with their conflicts without aggression or coercion. Through peer mediation, learners gain power and freedom from adult authority and dictating behaviour. The mediator's role throughout the process remains proactive crating a conducive environment that fosters mutual problem solving. The mediator facilitates communication between the disputing parties and the disputing parties are responsible for finding solutions to their problems. The mediator manages the process, is impartial, does not take sides and does not participate in the actual problem solving (Bodine *et. al.* 1994:4, 171-172).

Peer mediators normally work in pairs under the overall supervision of a teacher to handle conflicts that take place outside the classroom (Chiramba and Harris (2020). The results of a study by Chiramba and Harris in 2016 indicated that after the introduction of mediations in the schools of study, teachers reported less playground conflicts and when these occurred they were less likely to be violent.

#### 5.8.4 School peace clubs

A Peace club is a voluntary infrastructure for peace devoted to empowering its members with skills and knowledge in the area of peace and conflict resolution. Peace clubs can help promote positive attitudinal change among learners, trigger social change and ensure peaceful learning environments in schools. Learners can find platforms or forums to share their viewpoints and experience, and this can assist in curbing school violence and create a culture of peace in schools (Irene 2016:183).

Peace clubs are made up of learners who meet voluntarily with objectives to understand the meanings of conflict and violence and that conflict is inevitable while violence is a choice. They learn and practice basic communication skills which are central to the resolution of conflict. They support each other in dealing with conflict and violence issues which they may be facing and find ways to contribute towards a more peaceful school environment. Peace club members are learner-led although teachers often provide adult presence at club meetings. Peace clubs follow a curriculum, such as that developed by the Mennonite Central Committee in Zambia (Irene 2016:182).

School peace clubs are a relatively recent peace infrastructure, originating in Zambia and are now operating in several African countries. They aim at motivating learners to become peace builders in their schools, and to equip them with the skills to do so effectively. The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a faith-based civil society organisation has been an important promoter and funder of peace clubs, and has produced a range of curricula with a strong experiential and participatory emphasis (Mennonite Central Committee, n.d.). Juma (2019) outlines the history of school peace clubs in Africa and provides an overview of their operation in a number of countries. Irene (2016) described an action research project with peace clubs in Nigerian schools. Irene observed that violence at schools required a cutting edge approach which peace clubs can provide by promoting peaceful governance at schools. Irene noted that peace clubs promoted attitudinal and social change among learners and equipped learners with conflict resolution skills. The curriculum of peace clubs emphasised on interpersonal conflict/violence rather than structural violence. Gulliksen (2015) had earlier examined the nature and extent to which children who had been involved in peace clubs in northern Uganda subsequently engaged in peace building activities and the challenges they faced.

In Southern Africa, peace clubs started in Zambia in 2006 with the support of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in response to an increased number of conflicts in schools. Peace clubs do not teach learners particular problem-solving techniques but, rather, help learners to develop new ways of thinking about peace, conflict and violence, and to develop skills to address and prevent conflict non-violently. Learners are taught how to be critical and creative thinkers so that they are equipped to deal with the constantly changing nature of conflicts and violence (Mennonite Central Committee 2012). Peace clubs provide safe space for learners to discuss a wide range of issues that concern them. In peace clubs learners are encouraged to come together to discuss and find nonviolent means of addressing various challenges that they face at school and out of school. Peace clubs are spaces where learners from different cultural or religious background mobilize action for peace (UNESCO 2017).

Peace clubs are usually an extra-curriculum activity in schools with 25 to 50 members. They provide a platform where learners can be equipped with skills, share experiences, teach each other, and apply the peace knowledge gained in their daily lives. Learners are expected to share the knowledge gained with non-peace club members, their parents and friends back in their communities (Alty 2013).

Peace clubs are led by learners with teachers serving as coaches. During meetings, learners discuss conflict related challenges encountered at the school, and develop solutions. Learners support each other, build better relationships with themselves, their peers, teachers, parents, and the broader community. Drama, discussions and other creative methods are used for learning during the meetings (John 2018).

#### 5.8.5 Peace Clubs in Zimbabwe

In 2015 the Quakers successfully started a pilot Peace Club with Samathonga Primary School which is less than 20 kilometres from Mzilikazi High School. In 2016, their aim was to establish Peace Clubs more widely. They found out that there were already some schools who had agreed in principle to set up Peace Clubs, though they were struggling because of lack of funding and support. These were schools run by the Brethren in Christ Church (BICC), which like the Mennonites and Quakers, strongly identify with peace initiatives. The Quakers were able to establish an active network of eight primary schools, led locally by a member of BICC's social agency. They supplied all the schools with a Peace Club manual called *Creating the Peaceable School*. The teachers running the Peace Clubs were trained in conflict resolution skills by

Alternatives to Violence Zimbabwe (Rowe2021). A newsletter from Friends of Hlekweni (2018) states that in 2018 at least 12 schools run by BICC had flourishing peace clubs who met on a weekly basis . The peace clubs varied in size from 25 to 60 members with a mix of activities such as, singing, dancing, games, and dialogue on understanding the root causes of conflict and how to resolve disagreements peacefully. The teachers are reported to have indicated that peace clubs learners had a high sense of self-esteem and improved interpersonal skills particularly in peer mediation. The learners acquired new vocabulary and showed increased self-confidence. Less bullying was reported especially at the playgrounds.

In 2018, twenty five secondary schools were inducted into running peace clubs in a district south of Bulawayo. These teachers were trained in AVP, and some have progressed through the three levels to become fully fledged AVP trainers. In 2019 a peace clubs conference was held and one of the Head teachers said the learners in her peace club had taught her a valuable lesson. She stated.

*They have developed communication skills which have made them able to approach me with their views, concerns and queries. All of them know me for my black rod with which I would step out of my office and brandish to threaten for discipline. Now I have stopped that after they made me see that I was being violent.*

A senior teacher reported that the *transformation of bullies who joined the peace club has been a major win. This was one of our biggest problems. We now have many teachers who would like some training so that they are more confident as facilitators* (Rowe 2021)

I have co- facilitated AVP workshops for teachers at all the three AVP workshop levels.

In addition, several schools had started peace clubs facilitated by research by graduate peace building students, and the Mennonites. However, on searching the internet for peace clubs in Zimbabwe not much information was available

## 5.9 Summary

This chapter reviewed current approaches used at schools to reduce violence. The difference between punishment and discipline was analysed. Restorative justice and restorative approaches to reducing

school violence were discussed. This assisted me when considering, together with my study participants, the interventions to be put in place at the school to reduce violence, and to build a culture of peace. The scholarly literature reviewed reveals that punitive punishment is ineffective in dealing with conflict and violence at school; instead, restorative approaches have been proven to be effective in building peaceful schools. The next chapter focuses on research methodology.



## 6 Chapter 6 Research Methods

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research approach, design and data collection methods that were used in my study. The chapter details how the study was designed and the methods that were used to collect data. The population and sample data analysis, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations are discussed, each of these being directed at meeting the specific objectives of the research.

The transformative worldview/paradigm was used in this study. Creswell (2013) defines a worldview as a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study. The concept of transformative worldviews came about when scholars realised that traditional research did not adequately address issues of power and social justice, discrimination and oppression. They identified a need for an action agenda that addresses issues that could positively change lives and prevent the further marginalising of participants. The transformative worldview calls for researchers to collaborate with the participants to give them a voice and to raise their consciousness to improve their lives. The framework centres on the experiences of the marginalised, and analyses power differentials that cause the marginalisation.

Transformative paradigms have a potential to bring about changes at individual and societal levels. They confront social oppression at whatever level it occurs, address issues of power, discrimination and oppression, and redress inequities. Since transformative research focuses on the experiences of the marginalised, findings from such research inform intervening action for change (Mertens 2008). The transformative researcher does not simply involve participants in the research process but also focuses on social justice. The researcher becomes conscious of the power relations, systemic oppressive behaviours and actions – even if the participants do not realise these – and may actually be instrumental in reinforcing them as internalised oppression (Hurtado 2015:288). There is evidence from studies indicating that social change at individual and societal levels can take place when researchers use the transformative paradigm (Mertens 2008).

There are four philosophical assumptions that are essential for a transformative paradigm: axiology (the nature of ethics and values), ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), and methodology (the nature of systematic inquiry). Transformative paradigm axiology holds that ethical research must promote social justice and further human rights. The researcher must respect the culture of the communities under study and recognise the strengths and resilience of the communities while, at the same time, addressing inequality that may be prevailing in the community (Mertens 2017:22). Transformative ontology holds that there are multiple beliefs of what reality is. Lincoln and Guba (1986) had earlier asserted that there is no single reality on which an inquiry can converge instead there are multiple socially constructed realities that are related and influence each other. These pieces are influenced by the nature of the immediate context and cannot be studied independently of each other. On transformative epistemology, Mertens (2017:22) stated that transformative researchers must be conscious of the power of their cultural lenses and how these influence the research participants. As researchers enter the community, they must respectfully build relationships that recognise the knowledge that participants bring to the context. Transformative methodological assumptions do not prescribe any specific methodological approach. Instead, they ensure that the voices of the marginalised in society are meaningfully brought into the research planning and implementation. Part of the design should incorporate pathways for action for personal and societal transformation.

## 6.2 Research approach

Research methods texts differ in the meaning they ascribe to terms such as research paradigms, research approach and research design. In my study, I followed the lead of one of the main South African research methods texts (Mouton 2001) and one of the arguably premier texts worldwide, (Cresswell 2009) to determine the research approach for my study. The research approach was Action Research (AR). Some scholars differentiate between Participatory Action Research (PAR) and AR. Kaye (2017) observed that, since participation is present in both, the difference can be attributed to the degree of the focus on the participatory nature of the study. In my study the two terms are used interchangeably.

### 6.2.1 Action research

Action research has existed for generations, especially in pluralistic societies who fostered a spirit of consultation to problem solving. Lewin is credited with developing a formal meaning of action research. Lewin argued that it was not sufficient to carry out research for the sake of producing books, but instead advocated for research leading to social action for change (Kaye 2017:5-6). Exploratory research alone is not sufficient when the aim is social change and transformation. “Research begins the process of contextualising the problem: action research develops and tests possible solutions stemming from the information gathered by exploratory research” (Kaye 2017:2). Research should lead to progress and advancement in the resolution of societal problems and move out of the world of generating words. The complexity of human problems compels research to be based on principle, not only pragmatism. Proposed solutions should take into account the views of the people involved (Kaye 2017:3).

McCandless and Bangura (2007) noted that peace researchers ask questions differently from other researchers because they are interested in more than research, and not in research for the sake of research. Peace researchers are interested in research for the sake of action that can propel social change (McCandless and Bangura 2007). Action researchers start by asking the question “How can we improve this situation?” (Bradbury 2015:1). The emphasis is both research and action. There must be a balance between the two. Kaye (2017:8) stressed the importance of balancing the two because, without the balance, the researcher may be overly concerned with research for obtaining data without action, or action without sound methodology.

There are many definitions of action research, with the commonality in definition being that action research is taking action to improve practice. Bradbury (2015) defines action research as a democratic and participative approach to knowledge creation working with and towards knowledge in action. It brings together action and reflection, theory and practise in the quest to find practical solutions to issues of pressing concerns. It directs attention to issues of human flourishing. The action researcher is concerned with practical and emancipatory action that will make a difference by minimising suffering and bringing about social justice. Bradbury *et.al.* (2019:23) observed that action research is transformative social learning with a change agenda that shapes the world with others in a more desired direction. Taking the same stance, Cresswell (2013:25-26) places action research within the transformative framework in

qualitative research where research is informed by action. The basic tenet of a transformative framework is the acknowledgement that knowledge is not neutral and that it reflects the power and social relations in a society.

Studies that involve participants in the research process who are committed to social change and have elements of social learning are often referred to as action research (Moore 2004:146). Action research as an approach improves practice for change and the researcher learns and shares new knowledge with those who may benefit from it (Koshy *et. al.* 2010:9). Action research belongs to a family of living inquiry that seeks to link practice and ideas for human flourishing. It is participative and engages with participants who would otherwise be subjects or recipients of interventions. In action research participants are viewed as co-researchers and not merely subjects of study. Action research is not about “changing others” but effecting change “with others” (Reason and Bradbury, 2008:1). It is an inquiry that is completed with “others” and not “on” or “to” others. The researcher and participants who are co-researchers, work together to address key problems in their setting which can create positive change on a small or big scale (Cresswell, 2013:26). Action research can be applied at all levels of society wherever groups collaborate. At the localised level, researchers can engage with groups or individuals to identify a problem and test possible interventions, resulting in both the researcher and participants gaining knowledge on the peaceful resolution of problems (Kaye 2017:2).

## 6.2.2 Comparison of action research and traditional research

Moore (2004:148) summarises the difference between PAR and traditional research in Table 6.1 below.

**Table 6.2: A comparison of characteristics of traditional social science research and participatory action research**

	Traditional Research	Participatory Action Research
Epistemology.	Researchers create knowledge after researching, subjects and analysis of data	Shared collaborative approaches to knowledge production. Research for the purpose of change – changing perceptions,

		understandings, and creating action.
Principles emphasised.	Objectivity, reproducible results, hypothesis testing, validity and generalisability.	Participatory, life- enhancing, equitable, empowerment, and action oriented (Stringer1996). Conscientisation (Freire 1970) and transferability (Hall 1992).
Tensions and dichotomies.	Subjectivity and rigour. Science and Social Science	Rigour and social action, Generalisability. Academic status.
Methods.	A range of methods are used including surveys, interviews, focus groups, ethnography, case studies etc.	A wider array of methods is used including surveys, interviews, focus groups, ethnography, case studies, film, autobiography, documentary, drama, story-telling, photo novels, oral history, community meetings.
Relationships and naming	Distance between researcher and researched. Named subjects or research participants	Active involvement of participants in design and dissemination of results. Named participants, community collaborators and co-researchers.
Level of participation	Subjects participate in research project but rarely in writing, analysis or formulation of research questions.	Participants create research questions, design the study, analyse and interpret, implement and disseminate new knowledge.
Power and relationships	Power-oriented: seeking truth, objectivity, universal laws and knowledge (Joyappa and Martin 1996).	Empower oriented. Conscious attempts to balance power

Control	Researcher has control of research process, research question and research findings.	Community (includes participants and researcher) has control of research process, research question and research findings.
Decision making Individual/	Individual or team of researchers make decisions about direction of research	Group activity: usually a large group. Collaborative approach to problem-solving and research direction
Goals	Create new knowledge, seek truth via the objective researcher	Democratisation of knowledge creation, and social change (Stoecker and Bonarich 1992) action and implementation

Source: Moore (2004).

### 6.2.3 Action research in education

In discussing action research in education, Bradbury *et. al.* (2019:7-8) intimate that action research in education seeks to make situations such as classrooms or the whole school better by responding to the continuous need for development or change. Bradbury *et. al.* (2019:23-24) offer what they call an action research starter recipe that can be used in an education setting. The recipe is a generic orientation to get started with action research and as such may differ on application depending on the context. The starter recipe is at Table 6.2 below.

**Table 6.2 Action research starter recipe**

Action Research A Starter Recipe
1) Look and listen. Learn about the school you are in by listening for the varied stories that inform the culture. Talk with “leaders” and especially to a diverse variety of students.

- 2) Articulate the action research question with those who have a stake in the matter at hand. What is the purpose of your efforts together? What is the shared goal? What is distinct?
- 3) Develop a stakeholder network map. Who needs to be involved? Who can become involved? Who has influence in the system, given your intentions?
- 4) Design for a participative process that is clear about the degree of participation appropriate along the path from research question to notable results.
- 5) Consider what facts and evidence are needed and design a process for gathering those. Quantitative (e.g. survey) and qualitative (e.g. interview) data collection methods will help support data gathering.
- 6) Plan to analyse and discuss the data together with stakeholders, taking care that different stakeholders' perspectives are invited.
- 7) Develop an action plan with those able to make change happen.
- 8) Review and reflect on what you're learning and how to move forward. Use the quality choice-points (discussed later) as you evaluate your work.

Source: Bradbury *et.al.* (2019:7-8)

#### 6.2.4 The key role of reflection in action research

Mertler (2009:12) defines reflection as an act of critically exploring what you are doing, why you decided to do it, and what the effects have been. Action research allows for reflection based on interpretations of participants' experiences (Koshy *et. al.* 2010), and experience provides grounds for reflection (Bradbury 2019:23). Kaye (2017:7) noted that reflection as a stage in PAR deserves special mention. Although reflection takes place throughout the research process, it is important because, without reflection, the new cycle would merely repeat the former plan without modification or demonstration of new learning having taken place. The reflection stage is the one that fosters new learning as reflections are used to build the next cycle of the process. Reflection provides an opportunity to pause, interpret and create meaning, which results in new learning which is then built into the next cycle of the process.

Ferrell (2016:6-9) argued that one framework for reflection was to visualise the researcher looking at himself/herself through a mirror, microscope or binoculars. This model was developed by Pine (Pine 2009 in Ferrell 2016:8). Using a mirror, the researcher reflects on own beliefs, values, assumptions and biases

so as to learn more about the problem and about oneself. Through a microscope, the researcher reflects on interpersonal experiences and explores contributions made towards outcomes in specific contexts. This type of reflection argues that people can arrive at new and different knowledge in group settings than they can as individuals. Through binoculars, the researcher looks at larger issues and how the study impacts the broader community. In the education sector, participants could look at the implications of PAR for the broader education system. At every stage of action research, the researcher reflects before, during and after the action. The participants, who are co-researchers, also reflect on their beliefs, how they view others and how they understand the problem under investigation. All the three levels impact on each other. Reflection at the intra-personal level will likely impact on how the researcher approaches interpersonal relationships and global issues. Using this framework in the education field, Ferrell (2016:8-9) summarised its use on PAR in a table. Table 6.3 below refers:

**Table 6.3: Reflection in participatory action research**

Name of reflection	Type of reflection
Mirror	Intra-personal/first-person: each participant critically studies his/her own beliefs, assumptions, biases, experiences, and personal histories
Microscope	Inter-personal/second person: participants evaluate their individual contributions to the PAR group, and critiques the group's processes, experiences, and assumptions
Binoculars	Global/third person: individuals and the whole group consider their work in the larger context of education reform

*Source:* Ferrell (2016:8)

### 6.2.5 The centrality of participation in action research

As demonstrated by the various definitions of participatory action research, it becomes apparent that participation is at the centre of this research design. Kaye (2017:4) states that central to action research



is collaboration and participation by the people who are experiencing the problem. Without active participation, solutions to problems can be imposed and these are often unworkable (Kaye 2017:11). Participation demands that participants see the need for change and are willing to play an active role in the research process for change (Meyer 2000:8).

The key principle in action research is that participants are not only regarded as sources of information, but also play a key role in decision-making throughout the research process. The action researcher becomes a catalyst and facilitator instead of a controller (Harris 2017:141-143). The researcher works as a facilitator for change, consulting participants on the action process and how it should be evaluated. Throughout the research process, findings are referred back to participants for validation. This makes the research outcomes more meaningful as they are rooted in day-to-day practice and reality (Koshy *et.al.* 2010:11).

In action research, all participants are involved in data collection, data analysis, planning, implementation of action, validating evidence and critical reflection before applying the findings to improve their own practice (Koshy *et. al.* 2010:2). Action researchers engage with, as opposed to merely understanding, challenges regarding the issues being researched. Together with the stakeholders, the researchers define the problem, plan, and carry out research, interpret the results, design intervention action, and evaluate the outcomes. The stakeholders or participants become co-researchers. The research belongs to the stakeholders and thus builds problem-solving skills and learning competences in the group or community. Action research is the co-creation of knowledge “with” and not “on” the people (Bradbury 2015). Research that does not involve the people in developing a solution is bound to fail because whatever is proposed should be done “with” and not “to” those involved (Kaye 2017:2).

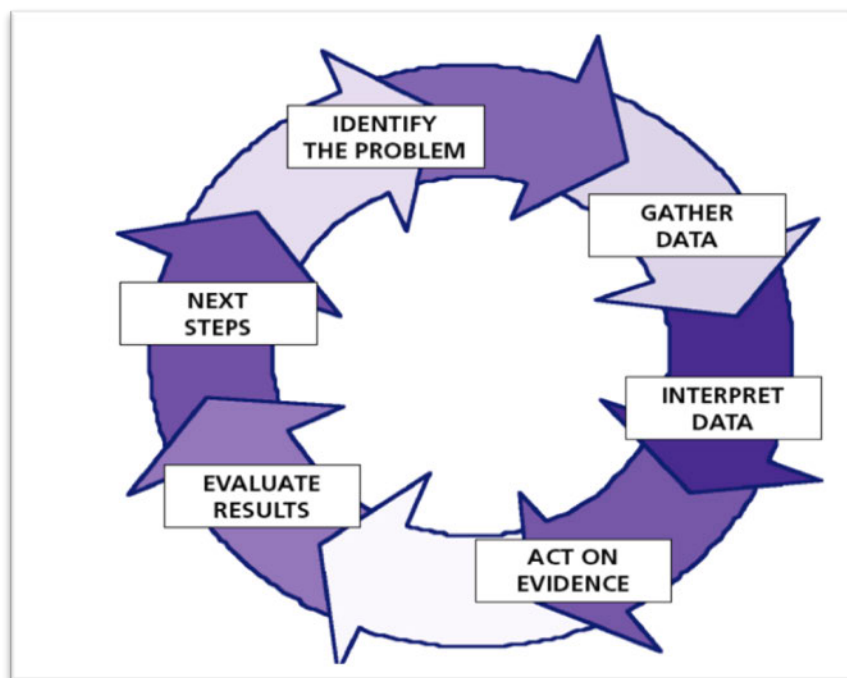
## 6.2.6 The participatory action research cycle

Action research is often described as cyclical and not linear. It is cyclical because the researchers are looking for unknown answers to a problem through steps and stages that are repeated as new knowledge is gained from practice. This assumes there is time available to the researcher to go through more than one cycle which is often not the case (Harris 2017: 267). Different scholars describe the steps differently but there is agreement that action research combines theory and practice and repeats certain steps or

stages (Kaye 2017:6). The stages and steps may not be neat cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting; they may overlap. The situation is more likely to be fluid, open and responsive (Koshy *et. al.* 2010). The cycles are knowledge-producing and thus bring in new knowledge (Chivasa 2019). With each cycle more is learnt, and greater credibility is added to the findings (Mertler 2009:25).

According to Adebayo (2017:65) action research can be broken down into five phases or stages, which are illustrated below:

**Figure 6.1. The action research process**



*Adapted from Adebayo (2017:66)*

- Stage 1: Problem identification. The success of action research depends on identifying the problem that needs to be addressed. The problem is identified when there is an acknowledgement that things could be done better. Identification of the problem assists in coming up with research objectives (Adebayo, 2017:66).

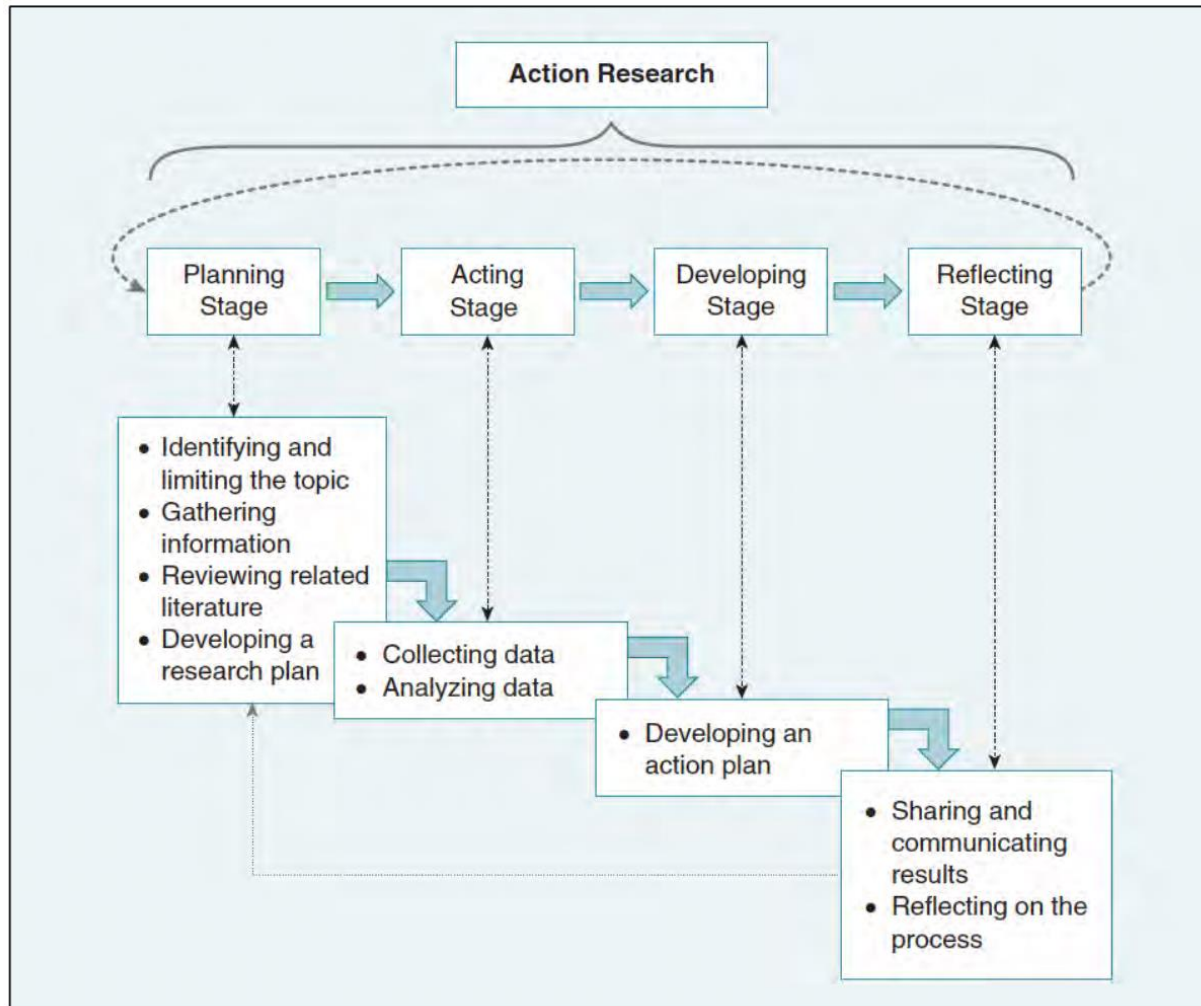
- Step 2: Data gathering. The data gathering assists in designing an appropriate intervention that will be a vehicle for the desired change. To attain the aims of the study, appropriate data collection instruments and techniques must be used (Adebayo, 2017:67).
- Step 3. Data interpretation. Data is analysed so as to arrive at a reasonable conclusion that will guide the direction of the study. During data analysis, the researcher is able to identify the major “story” narrated by the data and this allows the researcher to understand the issues under investigation and helps in developing the intervention . (Adebayo, 2017:68).
- Step 4. The intervention. The intervention addresses the primary aim of action research, which is taking action for change (Adebayo, 2017:69).
- Step 5. Evaluation. Evaluation involves determining whether the intervention put in place to address the problem had any meaningful impact. The evaluation also raises questions of what should come next, such as the need for further investigations(Adebayo, 2017:70).

Mertler (2021:5) similarly asserts that action research is a cyclical process with each cycle consisting of four stages which are:

- The planning stage
- The acting stage
- The development stage, and
- The reflecting stage.

Figure 6.2 below shows the four stages and the specific activities that take place at each stage.

**Figure 6.2: The four stages and specific activities of a single cycle of action research**



Source: Mertler (2020:5).

The planning stage entails the initial identification of the limited topic, deciding on what the study will be about, initial information gathering, reviewing related literature, and developing a research plan. Research objectives are developed. Data collection methods are identified, and these include, but are not limited to, focus group discussions, interviews, observations and surveys. The acting stage involves collecting and analysing data to provide answers to the research objectives. Any approach to data collection and analysis is appropriate in action research, although many researchers opt for a mixed methods construct based on the assumption that qualitative and quantitative methods will

comprehensively answer the research objectives. Researchers often use thematic analysis and coding for analysing qualitative data and descriptive statistics for analysing quantitative data. The developing stage involves developing an action plan. This is the action part and the goal of the research. The action plan is developed for current change and practice as well as for future cycles of action. The logic is that, usually a problem is never solved after a single cycle of action research, although improvements to the problem may take place with one cycle. The reflecting stage is sharing and communicating results. This involves reflecting on the context and results of the study, and also the action research process. The action of reflection leads directly into the next cycle by providing the foundation for the nature of the next stage of investigating the same problem or the next problem that needs to be investigated. This is how one cycle of action research leads to the next (Mertler 2021:5-6).

#### 6.2.7 Validity and reliability in action research

According to Mertler (2021:7-8), techniques that can be used to ensure rigour in action research are repeating the cycle, prolonged engagement with persistent observation, triangulation of data, member checking, and participant de-briefing. Most action researchers believe that one cycle of action research is not enough to ensure quality and credibility. They contend that rigour can be enhanced by repeated cycles of investigation into the same problem or question, with the earlier cycles informing how the latter cycles are conducted as more is learned. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation can enhance rigour by allowing participants enough time to explore and understand the problem and to share their experiences. It should be noted that spending more time in the setting does not necessarily translate into meaningful engagement with participants. It is not about the quantity of time spent but the quality of time spent in the engagements. Triangulation of data enhances rigour because using multiple sources of data allows the action researcher to verify the accuracy of data. The credibility of findings depends on the accuracy of the data. The use of a mixed methods approach in action research is useful in this regard. Through member checking, rigour is enhanced by allowing participants to verify various aspects of the research process. The researcher takes the data and interpretations of the study back to the participants so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative. This also gives the participants an opportunity to further explain or expand on the information they provided. Participant de-briefing is similar to member checking but, in this case, participants are allowed to provide insights into the conduct

of the action research. The focus, unlike in member checking, is on participants' feelings and emotions rather than factual information provided previously (Mertler 2020:7-8).

#### 6.2.8 Challenges of action research

Harris (2017:142-143) highlights that there are challenges that face an action researcher especially in academic circles. The academic researcher may face challenges with the proposal for an action research project because she/he may not be able to produce a detailed plan at the beginning since it is not clear at the start how the action research will proceed, especially where participants are strongly involved in the planning and implementation of the intervention. Academic research has a time frame that poses a challenge because action research requires careful exploration before the intervention is planned and implemented. Action research projects cannot be completed within short time frames; this results in most academic action research projects ending with only one cycle. Action researchers face more challenges than other researchers because of the commitment of action research to participation and collaboration. It is difficult to involve others in using collected data to plan, implement and evaluate an intervention. However, if the researcher plays the role of catalyst and facilitator, they can tap into the wisdom and energy of the participants in helping to get out of undesirable situations.

#### 6.2.9 Distinctive benefits of action research

Kaye (2017:3) stated that the use of action research in peace-building research contributes to peaceful solutions to social problems at community level as it provides a systematic way of collecting data and to the development and testing of an intervention with participants. In the process, the researcher and participants gain knowledge of how to resolve problems peacefully. Harris (2017:139) stated that the most obvious benefit of action research is that some peace is built immediately, although this may be for a small number of people. This is achieved by the researcher together with the participants exploring the problem, devising and implementing an intervention and evaluating its outcome (Harris 2017:139). The participation of participants at all the stages of my research made it possible for them to own the process and the implementation of the intervention which, in this case, was the introduction of a peace club at Mzilikazi High School.

## 6.3 Research design

Mouton (2001: 55) defines a research design as a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting research. Following Creswell (2013:71), research design is a plan detailing methods of data collection and analysis. The main decision involved is deciding on which design is best suited for the topic under consideration, based on the nature of the research problem, the issues under consideration, the experiences of the researcher, and the audience of the study.

Creswell (2009) purports that there are three types of research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The three types do not oppose each other but, rather, are a continuum with qualitative and quantitative designs at the different ends of the continuum and mixed methods in the middle (Cresswell 2009). A mixed methods research design with a strong leaning towards qualitative data was used in my study.

### 6.3.1 Qualitative research

I chose a qualitative design in the main because my study sought to explore and understand the causes, nature, extent and consequences of violence at Mzilikazi High School. Cresswell (2013:47-48) stated that qualitative research is appropriate when a problem or issue needs to be explored, where variables cannot be easily measured or identified, and silenced voices heard. Qualitative research provides a comprehensive understanding of the issue under study as the researcher interacts directly with the people involved in their contexts and allows them to tell their stories without encumbrance. This minimises the power relations between the researcher and participants. To further minimise the power relations, the researcher can collaborate with the participants as co-researchers in qualitative research.

Cresswell (2013:20) argues that, ontologically, qualitative researchers embrace the idea of multiple realities. The researcher, those studied, and readers of a qualitative study have different realities; hence, reference to multiple realities. The qualitative researcher focuses on meaning and reporting on the differing realities. Epistemologically, the qualitative researcher tries to get as close as possible to the participants and gains knowledge through the subjective views of participants. It then becomes important that the research is carried out in the field where the participants live. Axiologically, the qualitative researcher acknowledges the impact of his or her values on the study and makes these known.

Methodologically, qualitative research is inductive and emerging. It is often referred to as a “bottom up” approach to knowing.

Creswell (2013:45-47) describes several key characteristics of a qualitative design, the most important of which for the purposes of this study are:

- The research is carried out in a natural setting where participants experience the issue or problem. The information is gathered by interacting with the affected people, observing their behaviour and conversing with them directly within their context.
- Research data is collected from multiple sources such as interviews, observations and documents.
- The meaning given by participants regarding the issue under study is important throughout the study. The researcher focusses on learning the meaning that the participants hold, and not what the researcher brings to the study or what the writers of literature say.
- Qualitative research has an emergent design. The initial plan cannot be tightly prescribed. Some or all the phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field to collect data. Questions may change, and methods of collecting data may change.

### 6.3.2 Quantitative research

Quantitative research mainly uses tests and surveys to collect data, and relies on probability theory to test statistical hypotheses to answer the research objectives. Quantitative research follows a deductive approach. A deductive approach works from the general to the specific and is sometimes referred to as a “top-down” approach. Quantitative research seeks to maximise objectivity, replicability and generalisability of findings. This approach assumes that the researcher will set aside his or her experiences, perceptions and biases to achieve objectivity during the study and when drawing conclusions at the end of the study (Harwell 2011:149).

The advantage of quantitative data is the advantage that numbers have over words as a measure of quality. Quantification opens up possibilities of statistical analysis from simple averages to complex formulas and mathematical models (Babbie and Mouton 2012:26).



### 6.3.3 Mixed methods research

Mixed research designs provide an opportunity for collecting, triangulating and analysing data gathered from various sources for a deeper understanding of the issues under study. This improves the quality of the research as different approaches have different strengths and weaknesses (Green *et. al.* 2015). The use of qualitative and quantitative designs provide a better understanding of the research problem that neither alone can provide (Cresswell 2006:9).

Mixed research methods help to improve the quality of the research because both qualitative and quantitative designs have strengths and weaknesses. The strength of each offsets the weaknesses of the other. Quantitative research is weak in providing in-depth understanding of the context, meaning and setting of a study, whereas qualitative research seeks meaning. Qualitative research cannot be generalised whereas the findings from quantitative research can be generalised (Creswell 2014).

## 6.4 Population and sampling

Babbie and Mouton (2012:116) define a population as a group of people about whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions. Creswell (1998) defines a research population as the exhaustive list of all the elements, items, or objects under study. It is a set of people or entities to which findings are to be generalised. Creswell (2007) defines a sample as a subgroup of a target population to be studied. Gentles *et. al.* (2015) observed that, whereas quantitative research requires large sample sizes to produce statistically precise quantitative estimates, qualitative research uses smaller samples because qualitative research seeks to acquire data for understanding the complexity, depth, variation, or context of the issue under study. Marshall (1996) had earlier noted that an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is that which will answer the research question adequately.

A stratified, purposive, non-probability sample was used in my study. Cresswell (2013:155) noted that, in qualitative research, a decision must be made on who should be selected as participants of the study. I deliberately identified Form Two learners to be my participants. The reason was that these learners were familiar with the school environment, having been at the school for more than a year. In addition, since the intended intervention to be put in place to reduce violence at the school would be over 24 months, I had a measure of assurance that the participants would be available for the duration of my study.

Participant learners were recruited through the school system. Mzilikazi High School had approximately 1550 learners with 355 learners in Form Two (Government of Zimbabwe 2017). Hornberger and Bangu (2020) state that the inclusion and exclusion criteria create an ideal pool of participants resulting in beneficial data for the study. Too narrow criteria can lead to a sample size that produces insignificant amounts of data, while too broad criteria can lead to clouded data. In my study, the initial sample of participants was made up of 24 Form Two students (aged 13 to 15 years), that is, 12 girls and 12 boys, and four teachers. Marshall (1996:523) purported that qualitative research samples are generally small, and in practice the size of the sample unfolds as the study proceeds as new categories and new themes emerge. In my study, four senior learners were added into the sample after realising that Form Two participants who were now Form Three were having challenges in mediating in conflicts that involved senior learners. The four senior peace club members held positions of influence: that of head boy, deputy head girl, and prefect in 2021 (see section 8.3.5). Four teachers formed part of the sample. The four were senior teachers at the school and were purposively selected because of their long experience at the school. During the study, learners graduated to Form Three in 2020 and to Form Four in 2021/2022. During the Covid-19 period, five learners were unable to fully participate in the activities of the peace club which were conducted virtually because they did not have smart phones (see section 8.3.4). Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, I could not interact with 15 parents as initially indicated in my research proposal.

The commonly used standard for determining when a sufficient sample size has been reached in qualitative research is saturation. Data saturation refers to informational redundancy where additional data collection contributes little or nothing new to the study. Saturation is used as a guide or indicator that sufficient data has been collected. In broad terms, saturation in qualitative research is used as an indicator for discontinuing data collection and/or analysis (Saunders *et. al.* 2018). However, saturation is not the same as repetition of stories or events in the data as a claim that, 'nothing new happened' (Anderson 2017:4).

Three people with skills and experience in peace building and conflict transformation were identified to be an advisory group that would apprise me during the research process. The three would assist me as I reflected on the work I had done, giving me advice as necessary. Two members of the advisory group were doctoral graduates in peace building from the Durban University of Technology, and the other member, a Masters graduate, was a seasoned peace builder running an organization in building peace

among widows and single mothers. The two doctoral graduates who are qualified AVP facilitators were co-facilitators when I conducted conflict resolution workshops with teacher and learner participants (see sections 8.5 and 8.6).

## 6.5 Validity and Reliability

In quantitative research, validity refers to whether the final product truly portrays what it claims to portray. It determines whether the research measures what it was intended to measure. Reliability refers to the extent to which the results are repeatable (Grossoehme 2014:3). Validity refers to whether the means of measurement are accurate and whether they are measuring what they are supposed to measure (Golafshani 2003:599). There is no validity without reliability, and reliability is a consequence of validity.

Whereas the terms validity and reliability are treated separately in quantitative research, that is not so in qualitative research. In qualitative research, reliability and validity are conceptualised as trustworthiness (Golafshani 2003:601). Lincoln and Guba (1986) identified techniques that can be used to establish trustworthiness in research. These are premised on the four aspects of trustworthiness *viz.*: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility can be established through prolonged engagements with the phenomenon or participants, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member checks. Transferability can be established through thick descriptive data. Dependability can be established through inquiry audits, and conformability can be established through conformability audits, audit trails, triangulation and reflexivity.

### 6.5.1 Triangulation

Reliability and validity of the information collected is one of the challenging factors in conducting peace and conflict resolution research. Some of the challenges are researcher bias, poor methods, and unreliable data. Triangulation is one of the ways to overcome these challenges (McCandless and Bangura 2007:130). Triangulation validates the narrative because the researcher relies on multiple forms of evidence obtained rather than a single incident (Creswell and Miller 2000).

### 6.5.2 Reflexivity

Reflexivity relates to how the researcher is conscious of the biases, values and experience she or he brings to the study. The researcher details their past experiences with the phenomenon, and then is self-conscious of how these experiences shape the findings, conclusions and interpretations of the study (Reason and Bradbury, 2008:216). Reflexivity requires a self-critical attitude on the part of the researcher regarding how pre-conceptions affect the research. The researcher must maintain a sense of awareness and openness to the study and unfolding results (Thomas *et. al.* 2011). In my study, I used reflexivity and reflection on my own perspectives by maintaining a reflection journal documenting events on the field as they happened. Thereafter, I took time for personal reflection to uncover biases or assumptions that I may have taken for granted. My advisory group assisted me by keeping a check on me and advising me when they noticed biases on my part regarding the research process.

## 6.6 The data collection process

McCandless and Bangura (2007) stated that, researchers have at their disposal numerous methods for collecting data about the social world. The method that the researcher chooses depends on its appropriateness, as each method offers its own respective benefits and challenges. My study used a participatory action research approach and a mixed research design where both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. A summary of the data collection methods that were used to address the study objectives is at Table 6.4 below:

**Table 6.4: Data collection plan to address study objectives**

Objective	Data collection method	Number of participants
To assess the causes, nature, extent and consequences of violence at a school in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe	Learners quantitative survey	274
	Teachers quantitative survey	20
	Learners' focus group discussion	19 learners
	Learners' interviews	6
	Teachers' interviews	4

	AVP (Basic and Advanced workshops on conflict resolution for teachers	4
	AVP (Basic) workshop on conflict resolution for learners	22
To document the current approaches to dealing with violence at the school and to assess their effectiveness	Learner interviews	6
	Teacher interviews	4
	Peace club meetings	Average of 22 learners
	AVP (Basic and Advanced) workshops on conflict resolution for teachers	4
	AVP (Basic) workshop on conflict resolution for learners	22
Using a participatory action research approach, to plan and implement an action programme over a 24-month period aimed at building a culture of peace at the school	Peace club meetings	Average 22
	AVP (Basic) workshop on conflict resolution for learners	22
	AVP (Basic and Advanced workshops on conflict resolution for teachers	4

### 6.6.1 First school visit

My first visit to the school was on 22nd May 2019 where I met the Headmaster of the school to request permission to do my research. I had with me the gatekeeper's letter from the Ministry of Primary and

Secondary Education authorising me to do my research at the school. I outlined to the Headmaster the purpose of my visit and detailed the aims and objective of my research and how I intended to carry out my study. The Headmaster referred me to his deputy who was going to assist me throughout my research. The Deputy Headmistress introduced me to a senior teacher who oversaw the guidance and counselling department. I collaborated with the two teachers throughout my study and received full assistance from both.

I began collecting data by administering a quantitative survey to learners and teachers (see section 6.6.2). This was followed by two focus group discussions (see section 6.6.4) and interviews (see section 6.6.5) with learners. I further conducted interviews with teachers (see section 6.6.6). The survey, focus group discussions and interviews provided data to assess the causes, extent nature and consequences of violence at Mzilikazi High School. Research instruments for the surveys, focus group discussions and interviews are at Appendices 1 to 5. In addition, I collected data during three workshops that were conducted for learners and teachers on conflict resolution (see sections 8.6 and 8.9), and during peace club meetings (see sections 8.3.2.,8.3.4., and 8.8).

Cresswell (2014:47-48) observed that qualitative research is ideal where a problem or issue needs to be explored. I was able to identify beliefs, values and attitudes of participants regarding school violence during extensive dialogue with participants. I was able to provide a safe space for learners to tell their stories and experiences on the causes, nature, extent and consequences of violence at their school, and on how we could collaborate to reduce violence at school.

### 6.6.2 Quantitative surveys

On the 24 May 2019, I met Form Two learners at a special assembly called by the Deputy Headmistress. The purpose of the meeting was to explain my research to all Form Two learners, administer a questionnaire and recruit participants to my study. The aim of the questionnaire was to assess the causes, nature and extent of school violence at the school or on the way to and from school. The school had 355 Form Two learners. I was given an opportunity to address the learners and to explain my research to them. During my explanation, I indicated that participation in the survey and later in the study was voluntary and those who volunteered to be participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without

penalty. I stated that they were free not to answer any questions on the questionnaire that they were not comfortable with answering. I explained to them about issues of confidentiality and anonymity. After my address I asked whether there were any questions or clarifications they wanted made or answered. There being no questions, the questionnaire (Appendix 1) was distributed. There were 312 questionnaires distributed as some learners declined to participate in the survey. After completion 274 (87%) questionnaires were handed back.

After the survey, I requested 24 volunteers to be participants in my study. Many hands went up. The Deputy Headmistress then proposed that two learners, one boy and one girl from each class volunteer for participation. Given that there were 10 classes represented, the total came to 20. The Deputy Headmistress then randomly chose four more learners who had volunteered, two boys and two girls. The total of 24 learners comprising of 12 boys and 12 girls were to be participants in my study aimed at reducing violence and creating a culture of peace at Mzilikazi High School. The decision to limit the number of learner participants to 24 was to ensure that there was meaningful interaction with and among the participants. The small group would enable all participants to share and be involved in all the activities of the intervention. After the rest of the learners were dismissed from assembly, I had a brief meeting with the 24 volunteers and explained to them once again what my research entailed and what their involvement would be during the study. Initially some thought that my research would involve them going out camping, others thought this could be a gateway for them to get to Durban since I was a student at the Durban University of Technology. I dispelled the misunderstandings and gave more details about my research. The learners still showed interest in the research. We then agreed that our next meeting would be on 10th July 2019. I explained that on that day we would hold focus group discussions and what these were.

On 27th May 2019, I administered a questionnaire to 20 teachers on the nature, causes, extent and consequences of violence at Mzilikazi High School (see Appendix 2). At first, the teachers seemed reluctant to fill in the questionnaire and sought clarification on the purpose of my study. After further explanations, they completed the questionnaire and answered all the questions. The return rate was 100 percent.

### 6.6.3 Pilot testing

Prior to the surveys, I conducted a pilot study with 10 teachers and 30 learners from various schools who were attending conflict resolution workshops conducted by the peace-building organisation, Alternatives to Violence Project Zimbabwe (AVPZ), where I am a facilitator. The aim of the pilot study was to detect any flaws in the questionnaire and to rectify these before administering to study participants. The purpose of the pilot study was to enhance the validity and reliability of the measurement instrument which was the questionnaire. Heale and Twycross (2015) state that, in quantitative research, validity refers to the extent to which the concept is accurately measured. They further state that reliability is the accuracy of the research instrument, that is the extent to which a research instrument consistently produces the same results if used in the same situations on repeated occasions. Input from the pilot study was incorporated into the research instruments, thus enhancing the reliability and validity of my study.

### 6.6.4 Focus group discussions

On 10th July 2019, I conducted two focus group discussions (see Appendix 3) with 19 volunteer learners out of the 24 learner participants. One group had nine participants and the other ten participants. The focus group discussions were conducted after the end of the academic lessons for an hour each. I was assisted in conducting the focus group discussions by Mandlenkosi Moyo and Ntombizakhe Moyo-Nyoni (both PhD graduates in peace building from the Durban University of Technology) and members of my Advisory group, and Thando Gwinji (a Masters student in peacebuilding). Discussions were recorded and notes taken after getting permission from participants. During the focus group sessions, learners interacted with each other on the topics provided, expressing both individual and collective views as they built on each other's views. I collected a spate of data, some of it in the vernacular which I translated to English when transcribing. The focus group discussions provided a diversity of opinions, demonstrating a multiplicity of realities regarding violence that participants experienced or witnessed at school. Dilshad (2013) noted that focus group discussions allow for dynamic interaction between participants. The elements of synergy and interaction between the participants play a significant role in generating data.



### 6.6.5 Interviews with learners

After the focus group discussions, I asked for volunteers for individual interviews and 13 learners volunteered, eight girls and five boys. The interviews were scheduled for 16th July 2019. However, when I got to the school, I found that the Form Two learners had dismissed early since it was examination time. The senior teacher I conversed with promised to remind the learners of the interviews and I was to return to the school the following day. I was disappointed about the missed appointments for the interviews, and I realised that during research things would not always go according to plan. I learnt that I had to exercise a great deal of patience with those I work with and be prepared to adjust my work plan as necessary. However, not all was lost as I had the opportunity to have an informal discussion with the Deputy Headmistress, which turned out to be one of the many informal discussions I would have with her (see section 6.6.7).

On 17th July 2019, I returned to Mzilikazi High School to conduct interviews. Six learners out of the 13 that had earlier volunteered for the interviews turned up. The interviews on average took 20 minutes each and I conducted three that day, returning the following day, 18th July, for the balance. The interviews sought to solicit the interviewees' experiences and knowledge in answer to the research objectives. I observed that the learners I interviewed were more relaxed than during the focus group discussions and provided more specific details especially with regards to bullying and drug abuse. Further, interviews helped me to follow up on issues that needed further clarification from the focus group discussions held previously.

### 6.6.6 Interviews with teachers

On 24th July 2019, I held interviews with four teachers who had participated in the quantitative survey. The teachers were interviewed in the staff room which gave a relaxed atmosphere. Open-ended questions were used to allow participants to freely express themselves and engage with issues broadly using their own words and expressions. Soon after the interviews I translated the vernacular to English and transcribed the data.

### 6.6.7 Observations

Observations are commonly used in qualitative research. They take place in the setting of the study. Data obtained from observations represents first hand encounters with the phenomenon rather than second hand information obtained from documents or participants through interviews. In my study, I had the opportunity to observe learners at Mzilikazi Secondary School during my visits to the school. I observed the graffiti that was painted on the walls, especially the girls' toilet which I frequently visited for observation. The graffiti gave an indication of the violence prevailing at school such as threatening and power dynamics.

On 16th July 2019, as I conversed with the Deputy Headmistress at the school grounds, a learner approached the Deputy Head to register her concerns about the proliferation of graffiti on the school walls and the abuse of drugs by other learners. The learner offered to clean up the graffiti with her friends. The Deputy Headmistress welcomed the offer, thanked the girl, and invited her and her friends to visit her office so that they could discuss how to go about the cleaning. The girl also expressed her concern on the drug abuse that involved some learners. She showed us and the Deputy Headmistress a tree outside the school where some learners smoked marijuana after school. The girl appeared concerned that such practices were taking place at the school. As I reflected on this incident later, I realised that, in the midst of all the violence at Mzilikazi High School, there was a ray of hope for creating a peaceful environment. There were learners who abhorred the violence that was prevailing and wished for a peaceful learning environment. This learner and her friends were demonstrating the true spirit of *ubuntu* (see section 1.4.2) and were saying 'no' to violence at school. This motivated me to press on with my study. Later, the Deputy Headmistress advised me that the girl did visit her office with her friends and that some A- level learners also approached her with a similar request.

During one of my visits, as I waited outside the office of the Deputy Headmistress, I observed learners coming out of an examination room. As they mingled in the corridors, a strong scent engulfed the area. I was advised later that the scent was that of marijuana, meaning that some learners were smoking marijuana in the corridors. When I highlighted this to the Deputy Headmistress, she was not surprised as they had caught many learners partaking of drugs within the school premises. The proliferation of drug

abuse was to be confirmed later during my data collection by the peace club members and school authorities.

## 6.7 Data analysis

### 6.7.1 Qualitative data analysis

In qualitative research, the researcher carries out inductive data analysis. Qualitative researchers build their patterns, categories and themes from the bottom up into more abstract units of information. This process involves working backward and forward from the themes to the database until the researcher establishes a broad set of themes. The researcher looks back at the data to establish whether more evidence is required to support the themes, and this may involve interacting with the participants to allow them to shape the themes that are emerging (Cresswell 2014:45).

Ontologically the qualitative researcher embraces the idea of multiple realities and aims at reporting these. The researcher presents evidence of the multiple realities in themes using the actual words by different participants demonstrating their different perspectives (Cresswell 2014:20).

The qualitative data collected in my study was analysed using thematic analysis. I used the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke (2006:87) which are depicted at Table 6.5 below:

**Table 6.5 Phases of thematic analysis**

1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme

4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

*Source:* Braun and Clarke (2006:87)

Data analysis was done throughout the research process. As I noticed patterns of meaning relating to my research objectives, I coded these as and when they emerged. At the end of the data collection, I started analysing the data by reading through my scripts and getting to understand the data better. I realised that I had collected much data which, however, I managed to go through. I read through my transcripts, coding on the margins of the scripts. Babbie and Mouton (2012:387) aver that the key process in qualitative data analysis is coding, classifying or categorizing individual pieces of data (Babbie and Mouton 2012:387). I identified major and minor categories which I merged into themes. I identified themes which kept on emerging from the various data sources and focussed on understanding their meaning. Braun and Clarke (2006:82) assert that a theme captures something important about the data that relates to the research question and represents some patterned response or meaning within the data set. A theme may be given more space in some data items and less or none in others, meaning that the researcher's judgement may be necessary in deciding on themes.

I found the use of direct quotations helpful in the process of bringing the different views and realities to the fore. I used thick, rich descriptions to bring into focus the views, values and beliefs of participants. Creswell and Miller (2000:128) underline that the purpose of thick, rich description is that it creates truthful statements that give the reader the feeling that they have experienced or could experience the event that is being described in the study. In addition, such description allows the reader to decide the

applicability of the findings to other settings – that is, transferability. The themes that I identified addressed the objectives of my study which were: to assess the causes, nature, extent, and consequences of violence in a secondary school in Zimbabwe; to document and assess the effectiveness of the current approaches to dealing with violence at the school; by using a participatory action research approach, to plan and implement a programme of action over a 24-month period aimed at building a culture of peace at the school; and to evaluate the short-term outcomes of the programme.

### 6.7.2 Quantitative data analysis

In discussing quantitative data analysis, Bangura *et.al.* (2007:142) identify four measurement scales: nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio. A nominal scale represents the lowest measurement; it classifies subjects into two or more categories and members of a category have common characteristics. Data indicates the type or number of subjects. An ordinal scale classifies subjects and ranks them in terms of degrees to which they possess the characteristics of interest from the highest to the lowest. Intervals within the ranks are not equal. An interval scale has the qualities of the nominal and interval scales and, in addition, it has predetermined equal intervals. A ratio scale represents the highest scale and has more precise measurements, with a true zero point. A statistic at the lower measurement can be applied at the higher level, but not *vice versa*.

Seven out of 11 questions in the learner's questionnaire (Appendix 1) were analysed using the nominal scales, and four were analysed using the ordinal scale. One question on the teacher's questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was analysed using the nominal scale and two using the ordinal scale. The balance of five questions were open ended. The analysed data was presented in tables and charts (see Figures 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4, and Tables 7.1 and 7.2). This enabled me to present quantitative data in a more meaningful way allowing for deeper understanding of the research problem.

## 6.8 Building validity and reliability/trustworthiness

My first effort to help ensure trustworthiness was the use of multiple sources of data. I used methodological triangulation where both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in data collection and analysis. Data was collected quantitatively through a survey, and qualitatively through

interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. Data analysis was done through descriptive statistics and narrative.

The objectivity and trustworthiness of the data was enhanced through pre-testing, thick, descriptive data, and verbatim statements from participants, reflexivity and member checks. I reflected continually on the effects of my views, beliefs, and values on the study. Credibility was achieved through prolonged engagements with participants over 24 months, data collection until saturation, member checks with participants and my advisory group, and triangulation. My prolonged engagement with the participants (in excess of 24 months) included building trust with participants and learning more about the culture of the school; all this allowed me to validate my findings and check for misinformation. Transferability was achieved using thick descriptions and purposive sampling (see section 6.4) which drew participants who were familiar with a typical school environment. Conformability was ensured by using triangulation, reflexivity, tape recordings and discussion and recordings over WhatsApp. Representativeness was achieved through recordings of interviews and focus group discussions to allow for re-visitations. I used rich, thick verbatim extracts, from participants which I used to come up with research findings and developing themes.

## 6.9 Ethical considerations

Mertens (2017:20) posits that researchers are in a privileged position with social power to define realities and make impactful judgements on others. Considering this, researchers have an ethical responsibility of ensuring that their personal perceptions do not obscure or distort the research. Therefore, researchers must examine their values, beliefs and assumptions to go beyond the cultural lens that they bring to the research. The participants' views of the researcher are equally important in determining the quality of the relationships that are developed, and the quality of the data that is collected.

The Belmont report of 1979 elaborates three fundamental principles that should guide research where human beings are subjects. Babbie and Mouton (2012:63) summarised the three principles as follows:

1. Respect for Persons – Participation must be completely voluntary and based on full understanding of what is involved. Moreover, special caution must be taken to protect minors and those lacking complete autonomy (for example, prisoners)
2. Beneficence – Subjects must not be harmed by the research and, ideally,

should benefit from it

3. Justice – The burdens and benefits of research should be shared fairly within the society.

I respected the participants' values, beliefs and norms, and protected the participants' confidentiality using pseudonyms and not their real identities. Participants were advised at the beginning what the study involved and what the objectives were. I advised them that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point if they so wished, and to decline to respond to questions they felt uncomfortable with responding to without penalty.

My study was given ethical clearance by the Durban University of Technology. I obtained written gatekeeper permission from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the school authorities of my research school. Informed consent was sought from participants at the beginning of the study. Since participant learners were between the ages of 14 and 17, informed consent was sought from their parents/guardians through the school system (Appendices 7-10 refer).

When I started my research, I was conscious of the fact that the age differences between me and the participants could distort the data collected. There was a high possibility that participants would view me as an adult and thus try and give me the "correct" answers. From the beginning I started building trust with the participants and they realised that I was not out to judge or accuse them of misbehaviour but, instead, wanted to work with them to create a peaceful environment at their school. I was also cognisant of the fact that the values and beliefs of my community and my upbringing where children were said to be seen and not heard could affect my research. Having grown up in a society where the use of corporal punishment in disciplining children was accepted as normal, I was conscious that this background could affect my interpretation of the data collected. Therefore, I regularly reflected on my work to see whether my background and history did not affect my study. My advisory group also assisted me to keep a check on my objectivity.

I endeavoured to do good and prevent harm, and to ensure that the benefits of the study to the participants outweighed the risks (beneficence). My study assisted the participants greatly during the Covid-19 lockdowns to deal with the traumatic experiences they encountered. The training in creative conflict resolution by AVPZ was of great help to the learners. Justice was upheld by treating all participants

equally and equitably. I listened to the voices of learners, and I complied with the Durban University of Technology's Research Ethics and Guidelines.

## 6.10 Covid-19

By the time the Covid-19 pandemic set in, I had conducted the quantitative survey (see section 6.6.2), focus group discussions (see section 6.6.4) and interviews (see sections 6.6.5 and 6.6.6). Working together with participant learners, we had planned and implemented the peace club. As we were in the middle of our peace club learning, the Covid-19 pandemic struck, and schools were closed for prolonged periods. This affected the data collection process of my study. However, in conjunction with participants we became creative and continued conducting peace clubs virtually. The disadvantage with the lack of physical contact with the school was that I could not carry out any observations and the learners could not put to practice at the school setting what they were learning from the virtual platform.

## 6.11 Evaluation

Mertens (2008) defined evaluation as a systematic method of determining the merit, worth or value of a programme to inform decision making. The evaluation of my study was carried out in a participatory manner with the research participants actively involved. I conducted one focus group discussion and four interviews with participants. The focus group guide and the interview guide are at Appendix 15 and 16 respectively. The evaluation was meant to answer the last research objective of my study. The participants were given an opportunity to participate in the evaluation as they were the people affected by the study. The outcomes of the evaluation are discussed at Chapter 9.

Harris (2017:142) asserts that action research aims to change the way people think, feel and behave, but these changes can occur or become known years and even decades after the action research. Harris submits that, with this observation, it becomes a challenge for researchers carrying out action research for academic purposes to observe the changes because academic research is subject to time constraints. Evaluation for academic research is done soon after the end of the intervention, long before the long-term impacts can be determined.



## 6.12 Summary

This chapter has discussed the research approach and research design of my study. It detailed how data was collected, the methods used, and how data was analysed and interpreted. The next step is to report the first stage of the action research cycle – exploration – which begins in chapter 7.

## 7 Exploration

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter commences with the demographic profile of the quantitative study learner participants. All Form two learners were selected to participate in the survey. Two hundred and seventy four learners returned the questionnaire and of these 24 volunteered to participate in my research as co-researchers. The chapter details the qualitative study which entailed conducting focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. The chapter presents and analyses the quantitative and qualitative data. The data is analysed under the research themes, nature of school violence, causes of school violence extent of school violence, consequences of school violence, current approaches to dealing with violence at school and their effectiveness. The findings are based on interactions with the participants for a period in excess of 24 months that is from July 2019 to June 2022, and meets the first two objectives of the study which were

- To assess the causes, nature, extent, and consequences of violence in a secondary school in Zimbabwe.
- To document the current approaches to dealing with violence at the school and to assess their effectiveness.

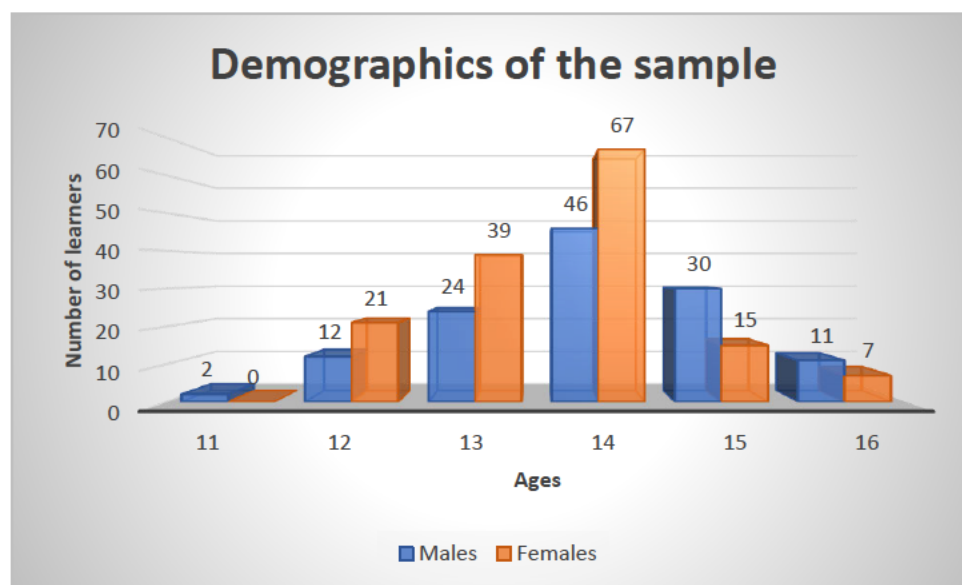
### 7.2. Quantitative study demographics

The population for the quantitative study was made up of all Form two learners all teachers. Of the 20 teachers who participated in the survey, 14 were female and six males. Three hundred and twelve questionnaires were distributed to learners and 274 learners (125 males and 149 females) returned the questionnaire representing 88 % response rate. All the 20 questionnaires distributed to teachers were returned representing a 100% response rate. None of the returned questionnaires were spoilt. The high response rate was most likely a reflection that both teacher and learner participants were motivated to and willing to complete the questionnaire. Fincham (2008) posits that a response rate of approximately 60% should be the goal of researchers. He further states that lack of response from the sample which is

referred to as nonresponse bias is a deadly blow to the reliability and validity of the survey. If a survey achieves a 30% response rate the nonresponse bias is 70% (Fincham 2008) In the case of my study, the response rate of 100% and 88% exceed the 60% goal mentioned by Fincham.

The demographics of the 274 learners who responded to the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) are depicted at Table 7.1 below.

**Figure 7.1: Demographics of learners who participated in the survey**

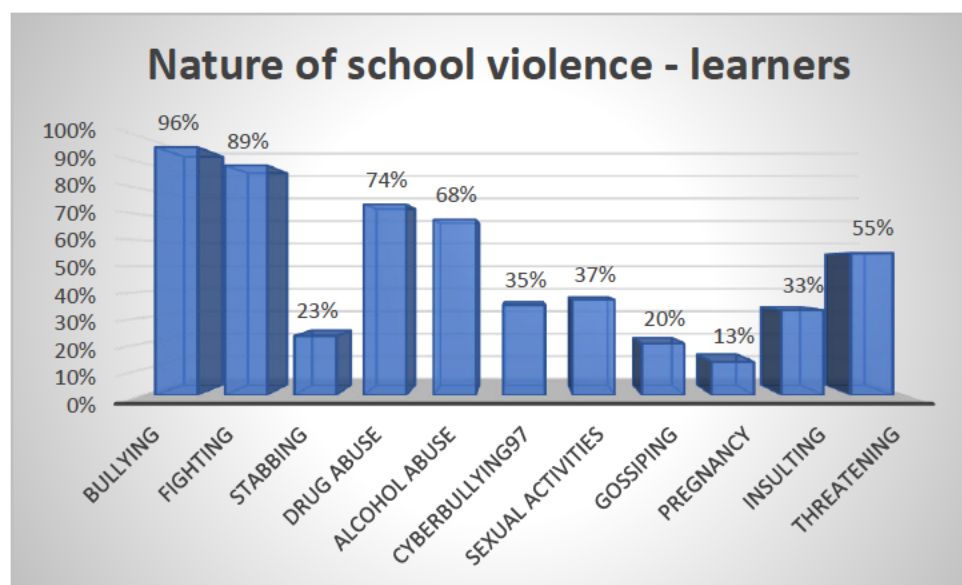


### 7.3. Theme one: Nature of school violence

#### 7.3.1. Nature of school violence from quantitative data

The results from the quantitative survey administered to learners indicated that bullying, closely followed by fighting and drug abuse were most prevalent at the school. Two hundred and sixty three learners (96%) said bullying was prevalent at school making bullying the highest rated form of violence at the school, followed by fighting with 245 (89%) responses and drug abuse with 203 (74%) responses. The results of the learners' survey are indicated at Figure 7.2 below.

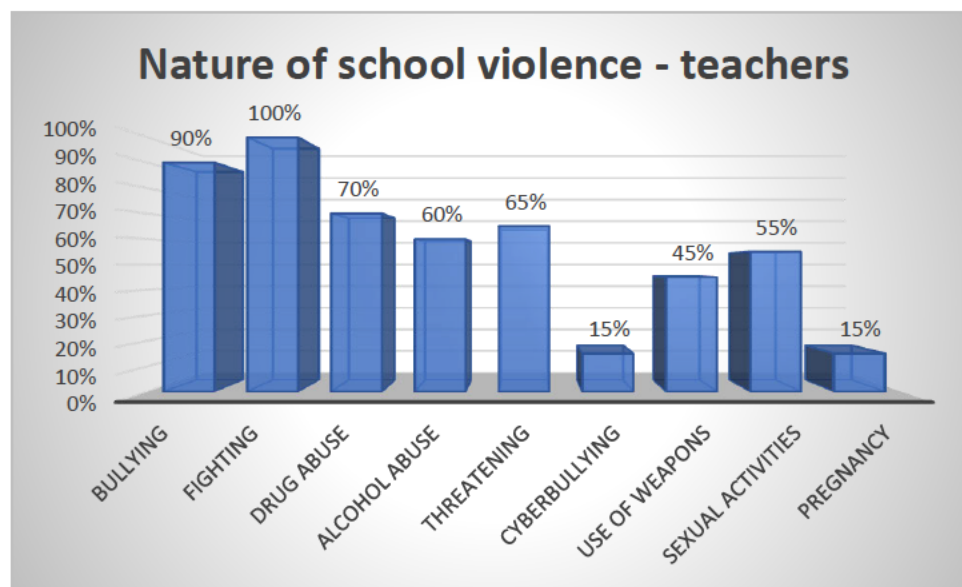
**Figure 7.2: Nature of school violence from learner survey results**



The responses by teachers from the quantitative survey portrayed a similar picture with fighting topping the list with 100% responses followed by bullying with 90% responses and drug abuse with 70% responses. Whereas 35% percent of learners indicated the existence of cyberbullying 15% of the teachers indicated the existence of cyberbullying. This may be so because cyberbullying is not a visible form of violence and

learners may not be reporting cases to authorities. Figure 7.3 below depicts the responses from the teachers.

**Figure 7.3 Nature of school violence from teachers' survey results**



In response to question 1 on the teachers' survey (Appendix 2) on what they would include as forms of violence at school, teachers listed, fighting, bullying, threatening corporal punishment, non-payment of school fees, insults, absenteeism, and discrimination. One teacher responded that, *"Violence at school is any activity that leads to destruction of property and disturbs the peace and social activities at school."*

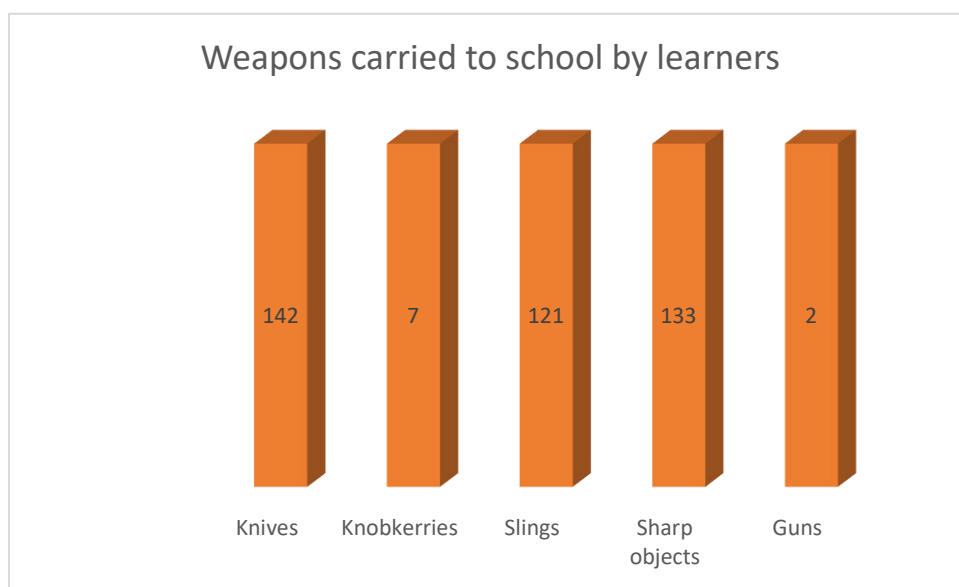
Question two on the teachers' questionnaire (Appendix 2) asked teachers to describe one typical example of a violent incident at school. Responses from teachers were grouped under; bullying including cyberbullying (75%), fighting (60%) and threatening (50%). In describing the gravity of threatening one teacher said,

*School children bring weapons to school to scare and threaten others. One-time learners were engaged in a fight and one of them was seriously injured and he lost two teeth. Police had to be called as there was a use of sharp weapons- knives.*

In response to question three (Appendix 1) of the learners' questionnaire, learners confirmed that weapons were brought to school by some learners. The most common weapons seen were knives (142 responses), sharp objects (133 responses) and slings (121 responses). Two learners indicated that guns were brought to school too. The low response rate may have been because such weapons can be well concealed by learners. The presence of weapons at schools in general is confirmed by Burton and Leoschut (2013) in their study on South African schools.

Figure 7.4 below indicates the responses to question three of the questionnaire on whether they had seen the listed weapons being used or carried at school by learners.

**Figure 7.4: Weapons carried by learners to school**



### 7.3.2. Nature of school violence from qualitative data

During the focus group discussions with learners conducted on 10 July 2019, (see section 6.6.4) learners revealed that they had experienced or witnessed physical and emotional violence at school or on the way to school. They stated that there was a lot of bullying and fighting especially at the playgrounds and corridors. Some learners bullied and threatened others demanding lunch provisions or money. The bullying and threatening was mainly by the seniors who bullied junior learners especially during school

closure. School closures were associated with a lot of violence including wild parties that were thrown by learners across the city. The wild parties that were commonly referred to as “vuzu” parties were characterized by indulgences in alcohol, illicit drugs and wild sexual activities. The “vuzu” parties most frequented by the Mzilikazi High School learners were said to be at Magwegwe and Entumbane suburbs. Transport was offered from the city centre and learners were given codes by transporters for identification to avoid recognition by law enforcement authorities. The organizers of these parties were learners themselves or adults who took advantage of learners to test new drugs or to make money from patrons who were willing to pay for sexual indulgence with learners.

Learners highlighted that drug abuse was prevalent at school. Those who did not partake of the illicit drugs were labelled as old fashioned and at times unknowingly forced to partake in drugs through purchasing samosas or scones laced with marijuana sold at school by other learners. Learners showed me two trees one inside the school and the other outside the school where some learners partook in illicit drugs. The drug mainly abused by learners was marijuana.

During focus group discussions, learners confirmed what was reported during the quantitative study that some learners brought weapons to school to use during fights. The reasons given for bringing weapons to school were to intimidate, threaten bully others and for popularity and showing off ones power. Learners narrated an incident where a learner was seriously injured and lost two teeth during a fight. Police had to be called in due to the seriousness of the matter. One teacher stated that the proliferation of weapons at school was a reflection of what learners witnessed and learnt from the communities they lived in. Some parents encouraged their children to carry weapons such as knives under the guise of self-protection.

On corporal punishment the learners indicated that teachers did use corporal punishment to discipline them. The Deputy Headmistress during an interview also confirmed that although corporal punishment had been banned teachers at times used it. She said *“kambe sengikutshelile umumo esikhangelane lawo do you think we can survive without the stick?”* meaning given what we are faced with, do you think we can survive without the stick?” She elaborated to say she differentiated between *“ukutshaya lokulaya”* beating and disciplining. By this she meant that they used corporal punishment in moderation to correct learners and not to harm them. She added that when administering corporal punishment, they took into account the gender and condition of the learner and usually the corporal punishment administered was on the hands and buttocks. She stated that there were instances where teacher could not enter the

classrooms for certain classes (especially seven to ten streams) without a 'stick' for the purposes of bringing order.

The Deputy Headmistress advised at the interview that drug and alcohol abuse were present at school and there were instances when learners were brought to her office on the pretext of being sick when in fact they were under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs. It became difficult to distinguish between genuine sickness cases and those resulting from drug abuse. Some classrooms were said to be smoking zones especially classes seven to ten. Classes seven to ten viewed themselves as not intelligent hence they engaged in wayward behaviour. They said *"lapha akufundwa. Nxa ufuna ukufunda hamba ku stream one, yikho okulamanesi lamadokotela khona"* meaning here we do not learn. if you want to learn, go to class one where there are nurses and doctors. The Deputy Headmistress narrated an incident when they searched learners for drugs and confiscated some from learners' school satchels. During the search they noticed a 'learner' whom they could not identify. The 'learner' was smartly dressed in proper uniform and when asked to identify himself and his class he could not. It turned out that the so-called learner was an intruder who came to school wearing the Mzilikazi High School uniform to sell drugs to learners. This was evidence of how the wider community can influence the violence levels at schools where members from the wider community use learners for their selfish gain.

The teachers during interviews advised that learners engaged in sexual activities at the school premises. This behaviour was prevalent amongst Form four to six learners. Learners engaged in unprotected sex in in toilets. An incident where 12 learners were caught in the toilets engaging in sexual activities and partaking in illicit drugs was narrated. *"Then you say we have children at school. These are adults in small bodies"* said one teacher. The abuse of drugs included prefects. A senior teacher advised that they had to demote a prefect and send him for punishment after the prefect was caught abusing drugs. She showed me a dug-up place and said *"imagine it was a prefect who had to dig up this whole place as punishment. If prefects can engage in such behaviour what will other learners do.?"*



## 7.4 Theme two: Extent of school violence.

### 7.1.1 Extent of school violence from quantitative data

In response to Question 4 of the survey (see Appendix 2) teachers agreed that violence was prevalent at the school except for two teachers who indicated that violence was not an issue of concern at the school. *“it is not of concern at all and we have many encouraging clubs such as guidance and counselling and Scripture Union that teach the rewards of good behaviour,”* said one of the teachers. The other said, *“violence is not serious here.”*

Question 2 of the teachers’ survey (see Appendix 2) sought to establish the frequency of violence at school and the results showed that .100% of teachers reported that fighting occurred on a daily basis followed by bullying (80%), threatening (75%), smoking cigarettes (50%), drug abuse (25%), use of weapons (15%) and alcohol abuse (10%). Sex and cyberbullying were not reported as occurring on a daily basis. Reports on these on a weekly and monthly basis remained low an indication that these may not be prevalent or may not be coming to the attention of the teachers Table 7.1 below summarizes the survey result

**Table 7.1 Frequency of violence from quantitative study for teachers**

Type of violence	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Bullying		16 (80%)	3 (15%)	
Fighting		20 (100%)		
Sex	6 (30%)			2 (10%)
Drug abuse		5 (25%)	12 (60%)	1 (5%)

Smoking cigarettes		10 (50%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)
Alcohol abuse		2 (10%)	7 (35%)	3 (15%)
Threatening		15 (75%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)
Cyberbullying	8 (40%)		5 (25%)	1 (5%)
Use of weapons	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	7 (35%)	

#### 7.4.1. Extent of school violence from qualitative data

During focus group discussions, learners indicated that bullying and fighting were prevalent at the school. Bullies used blackmailing tactics such as *“if you do not do as I say I will beat you up”*. Bullies demanded money from other learners to buy food, cigarettes, drugs and alcohol. Cyberbullying was said to take place especially between boys and girls, with boys proposing love to girls through social media and threatening girls with violence if they turned them down. Bullying vandalism, writing graffiti on school walls, insulting, alcohol, and drug abuse were reported to be prevalent. Girls reported that they were frequently emotionally abused through name calling, exclusion and gossip. One girl stated that she is always humiliated because of her long uniform which other girls refer to as *“siculumendo”*, meaning I am looking for marriage hence the long skirt which is taken as a sign of modesty. Out of the 19 learners who participated in focus group discussion 13 (68%) reported that they had experienced violence at school in the past three months in the forms of beatings, bullying, pinching, pulling, insults, threatening, personal property stolen, gossiping or corporal punishment.

An interview with the Deputy Headmistress confirmed what learners highlighted during focus group discussions. She advised that bullying and fighting were prevalent at the school. She showed me a sharp okapi knife, a catapult, a sharpened scissors, and a strip made from a car tyre which weapons were confiscated from learners. Learner brought these weapons at school and used them on other learners.

Fighting and bullying was reported by the teachers during interviews (see section 6.6.6) to occur on a daily, basis especially at the playgrounds and corridors. At focus group discussion (see section 6.6.4), all the 19 learners reported that they had been bullied or had seen someone being bullied in the last three months. During three visits to the school, I observed the disciplinary committee in session or parents discussing with school authorities' cases of fighting or bullying at school and outside school. In one incident learners were fighting outside the school gate and one fell of a vendor stall and destroyed it. The vendor was demanding compensation from the parents of the fighting learners. The vendor was advised to deal with the compensation issue outside the school. The two learners were given manual work as punishment.

The Deputy Headmistress emphasized that the level of violence at school made it unsafe for teachers because learners did not respect teachers. Some learners called teachers by first names which was unheard of and this was an indication that discipline at school had gone down. Learners wrongly associated the issue of child rights with disrespect and believed that their rights were licence for them to do as they pleased.

Question eight of the learners' questionnaire (see Appendix 1) asked learners how safe they felt at different school locations. This was to establish the extent of violence at school and the locations where this violence took place. The Table 7.2. below depicts their responses.

**Table 7.2 Rating of safety at school by location**

Location	Very safe	Safe	Somewhat safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe
Classroom	199	62	7	6	0
Playground	24	53	34	35	128
Corridors	35	91	46	57	45
Library	152	64	41	11	6
Toilet	25	32	20	64	133
On the way to school	87	67	55	39	26

From the above results the classroom was indicated as the safest of all locations mentioned with 73% of learners reporting that they felt very safe in the classroom followed by the library with 55%. The reason for the safety in the two locations was the presence of the teachers or other school staff. The most unsafe place reported was the toilets, with 49% learners reporting the location as very unsafe followed by the playground with 47%. The reason for the prevalence of violence at the toilets and playground was mainly due to their secluded location away from the eyes of authorities.

From data collected indications were that violence was prevalent at the school especially in places where there was limited presence of school authorities. The violence in the toilets was evidenced by the graffiti that was pasted on the walls that I witnessed during my visits to the school and had occasion to make observations in the girls' toilet.

## 7.5. Theme three: Causes of school violence

### 7.5.1. Causes of school violence from quantitative data

In response to Question 3 of the quantitative study a teacher responded, *"students also always fight during break time as a way of exerting power over others. They fight for the attention of teachers and put each other down through insults."* Another stated that certain events at school are fertile ground for learners to be violent against each other, or to engage in undesirable behaviour, *"alcohol and cigarette smoking are most common when there are activities at school or even towards closing day where most kids especially Form three and Form four boys tend to be hyper and way too excited and this leads to high violence rates"*. Another teacher gave typical causes of violence as *"boys threaten girls who turn down their love proposals, very often boys will threaten girls with violence through social media if the girls turn down their love proposals."* Boys believed girls had to accept their proposals. It was their masculine right.

In the learner questionnaire there was no question to solicit the causes of violence as I considered this to be too difficult a question for them to answer.

### 7.5.2. Causes of school violence from qualitative data

The four teachers I interviewed (see section 6.6.6), and subsequent discussions with the Deputy Headmistress revealed that violence at school emanated mainly from home and the wider community.

Learners tended to copy the violence that was taking place in the community and homes and did the same at school. The senior master related an incident where a learner was asked to bring his parent to school after an incident of misconduct. The parent came holding the son by the collar and shouting obscenities about the son and the mother of the learner who had left them and relocated to South Africa. The senior master remarked “*what does the child learn from such a parent and what does such a child go through at home?*” He also narrated an incident where a learner would come to school drunk. When the school followed up with the parents, they found out that the learner lived with his grandmother who ran a shebeen and who did not take her grandson’s misconduct too seriously. This confirms Burton and Leoschut (2013:54) who stated that schools are a microcosm of broader communities in which they are located. Power (2014:48) also observed that child education begins at home with parents laying the foundation.

During focus group discussions on 10 July 2019 and at the AVP workshop on 2 December 2019 learners indicated that the causes of violence at school were related to power issues. Learners bullied threatened and fought with each other to demonstrate their physical power. Boys fought over girlfriends and girls fought over boyfriends. The fight over boyfriends by girls led to gossiping and slander. Often one form of violence became a cause for the next thus creating a cycle of violence.

## 7.6. Theme four: Consequences of school violence

### 7.6.1. Consequences of school violence - quantitative data

In response to question four of the teachers’ survey (Appendix 2), teachers highlighted some of the consequences of school violence as, school dropout, toxic school environments, low school pass rates injuries from fights and tarnishing of the school image.

### 7.6.2 Consequences of school violence - qualitative data

Drug and alcohol abuse were said by teachers to deprive learners of a future because learners who engaged in these did not perform well academically, and some dropped out of school. Learners at the focus group discussions indicated that violence at school resulted in fear, school dropouts, pregnancies theft, suicide, imprisonment and suffering. Learners highlighted that as a result of violence that they had

experienced or witnessed they felt pain, hurt, despair and anger and looked for opportunities to revenge. Learners believed that revenge was a good way to settle conflicts and the offended party got vindicated. On being asked whether the one on the receiving end would not seek revenge as well, learners agreed that would be the case. This indicates that victims of school violence may end up being perpetrators and thus resulting in a cycle of violence.

## **7.7. Theme five: Current approaches to dealing with violence at school and their effectiveness**

I held a meeting with the Deputy Headmistress and three senior teachers was on 17 September 2019. They briefed me on the measures and strategies that were in place to reduce violence at the school. The school is guided by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Secretary's Circular P35 (MoPSE,2018), the Mzilikazi High School discipline rules and regulations and is assisted by the school prefect system in ensuring that discipline prevails.

### **7.7.1. Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Circular P35**

In 2018 The Secretary of Education in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education issued a circular No P35 on discipline in schools, suspensions and exclusions. The circular stated that enforcement and administration of proper school discipline was a prerequisite to successful learning as lack of discipline was not conducive to meaningful academic, moral and physical education. The circular stated that clearly defined communication lines and transparent school rules that are formulated and executed with input from teachers and learners were a hallmark of a well-disciplined school. This created a conducive environment which enabled free flow of information in all directions (MoPSE 2018).

Suspensions of learners was to be considered as non-progressive and was to be used as a measure that is put in place to facilitate investigations without interference from the offending learner and the appropriate course of action decided thereafter. The circular indicated that learners could be excluded from school if such action was deemed to be in the best interest of either the child, school or parents. The excluded learner could apply for re admission to any other registered school other than the school of exclusion. Expulsion from school was defined as the removal of a learner from the school system on account of a misconduct of a serious nature. Once expelled, a learner could not be admitted to any school

except after the expiry of 12 months and with the approval of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education( MoPSE 2018).

The circular banned the use of corporal punishment at school as it was against the provision of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment 20) of 2013 Sections 81, 51 and 53. No Head of school was allowed to administer corporal punishment as was the previous norm. Heads of schools were enjoined to cultivate a school climate where learners could develop internal discipline which did not emanate from fear of punishment. A school ethos which promoted self-discipline among learners and supported by positive disciplinary and proactive measures were encouraged as opposed to where learners avoided misbehaving out of fear of physical pain. Counselling sessions in consultation with the parents were encouraged as these would produce more responsible and maturing learners. The circular stressed that no other forms of physical dehumanizing and undignified forms of punishment were to be administered by school authorities as discipline (MoPSE 2018).

#### 7.7.2. School rules and regulations

The main objectives of the rules and regulations at Mzilikazi High School are stated as;

- To mould responsible, well-disciplined and self-respecting cadres by inculcating in them a sense of self control and self-appraisal.
- To create an environment which is conducive to learning by maintaining discipline during all school activities.

The rules and regulations are to be observed at all times and breaking any of them is deemed as an act of misconduct and appropriate disciplinary procedures are taken against the offenders. A caution was put to the effect that those who deemed the rules as too strict were free to transfer to those schools where there is laxity. The rules are highlighted at Table 7.3 below.

**Table 7.3: Mzilikazi High School rules and regulations**

Offence	Disciplinary action
Learners to be punctual for lessons and any other school activities.	Lateness without satisfactory explanation is punishable.
Lingering outside school premises, loitering and noise making anywhere in the school during lessons is prohibited.	Stern measures will be taken against culprits.

Buying at the tuck shop to be done only during stipulated times.	Not stated.
Learners should attend all lessons. Absenteeism, truancy will be dealt with accordingly.	Not stated.
Learners to wear complete school uniform at all times.	Not stated.
Make-up fancy hairstyles, ornaments or paraphernalia of a similar nature are not permitted.	Not stated.
Learners to be smart and presentable at all times.	Not stated.
Fighting and bullying are serious offences.	Harsh punishment.
Dangerous weapons should not be brought to school. Such weapons will be confiscated.	Hurting other people with such weapons is a serious offence that may be referred to the police.
Pornographic material, drug and alcohol abuse are strictly forbidden.	Expulsion and referral to the police.
Offences of a sexual nature.	Expulsion and referral to the police.
Smoking is prohibited.	Offenders will be severely punished.
Use of vulgar language should be avoided at all times.	Offenders will be punished.
Learners should respect all property. Stealing, vandalism, graffiti not tolerated.	Punishable by replacement and/or renovation of damaged items. Offences may be referred to the police.
Learners should keep classrooms and environment clean all the time. No eating in classrooms and all litter should be thrown into litter bins.	Not stated.
All learners should participate in sporting activities. Medical cases for exclusion to be accompanied by doctor's letter.	Not stated.
Learners to show respect and courtesy to all members of staff, prefects and visitors at all times	Not stated
Learners are not to bring to school unauthorized visitors.	Not. stated

Source; Mzilikazi High School rules and regulations



It was however noted that, the school rules and regulations were not written in the vernacular languages for the benefit of parents who did not understand English. This is despite the fact that both parents and new learners were required to understand and agree that they would abide by the rules. It is very likely that some parents and learners agreed with the rules and regulations to get a place at the school. In addition, parents and learners did not participate in coming up with the rules and regulations. Involvement by all concerned and affected by the rules and regulation would give ownership to all stakeholders.

#### 7.7.3. School prefect system

In addition, to circular P35 and the school rules and regulations a prefect system was in place to assist with curbing indiscipline at the school. The process of maintaining discipline at the school began at the level of prefects who were responsible for monitoring that learners respected the school rules. In the event that prefects could not deal with a case of misbehaviour, they were required to upgrade it to the senior teachers who could also elevate the matter to the Deputy Headmistress who chaired the school disciplinary committee. The Deputy Headmistress could finalize the matter and mete out the necessary punishment or call the disciplinary committee to meet and resolve the issue. The disciplinary committee was made up of senior teachers, chaired by the Deputy Headmistress and parents of the offending learners and other interested parties as necessary. The disciplinary committee is mandated to finalize matter of indiscipline brought before them and mete out any punishment, as necessary except in cases of expulsion and exclusion which must be authorized by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Possible punishment meted out include manual work such as digging and slashing grass.

I sought to understand more on the punishment where learners are supposed to carry out manual work such as slashing of grass and digging. My main concern was loss of learning whilst the offending learner was serving punishment. I was advised that there were two sessions of lessons where some learners came to school in the morning and some in the afternoon. Learners rotated between afternoon and morning lessons. For learners starting school in the morning, punishment was served in the afternoon, and for

those who started school in the afternoon, punishment was served in the morning. I then enquired on whether those who served their punishment before lessons started were attentive during the lessons as they would most likely be tired. The teacher who earlier on had supported corporal punishment averred that *“anywhere such students are poor performers in the first place.”* The Deputy Headmistress however countered advising that she had directed that those whose punishment fell during their turn to attend afternoon lesson serve their punishment when their turn to attend morning lessons came so that they could serve their punishment in the afternoon.

Teachers noted that the banning of corporal punishment had escalated violence at school as some learners did not respond to dialogue or counselling. The removal of corporal punishment left a vacuum that was supposed to be replaced with positive discipline which some learners did not respond to. The Deputy Headmistress confirmed that they did use corporal punishment at the school although they were trying to move away from that form of punishment in favour of other “positive” forms of punishment. However, some of the alternative forms of punishment they were using were in sharp contrast to non-violence such as making offending learners dig pits so deep that you could not see the offending learner whilst he was inside the pit. One learner at the AVP workshop expressed his view on the ineffectiveness of corporal punishment by stating that *“one well known form of disciplining us children is beating, but one wonders is beating a necessity all the time. Kids have managed to be resistant to beating that is why even when adults beat us we repeat the same thing again. Which raises the question that comes up again - Is always beating us a necessity?”*

## 7.8. Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of my study under five themes which were; nature of violence; causes of violence; extent of violence; consequences of violence, and the current approaches to dealing with violence at school and their effectiveness.

Data gathered reveals that violence is rampant at Mzilikazi High School. Learners bully each other and in the words of the Deputy Headmistress *“Hardly a day passes without learners fighting in the playgrounds and corridors.”* Learners punch, kick, slap and verbally abuse each other. Learners fight over money issues, jealousy, dating partners, peer pressure and sometimes under the influence of alcohol and illicit drugs.

The use of weapons by learners appears to be on the increase with the Deputy Headmistress confiscating weapons such as knives, slings and sharp objects from learners on a regular basis. The use of weapons is exacerbated by drug abuse by learners. The fact that drug abuse takes place at the school premises as well is an indication that the drug abuse has gone out of control. The police have been called to the school when learners have been caught in possession of illicit drugs and when fights have resulted in serious injury. This is an indication that the violence has reached the level of crime. In addition, teachers continue to use corporal punishment on misbehaving learners even though the use of corporal punishment has been banned in the country. The justification for the use of corporal punishment is that some learners do not respond to restorative methods of discipline. The use of corporal punishment escalates the violence and confirms to learners that the use of violence to resolve conflict is justified and appropriate.

Pinheiro (2006:111) underscore that violence at school is a mirror of the violence that prevails in wider society. This was confirmed by my study. Both teachers and learners testified that they experienced and witnessed violence in its various forms, direct, structural, and cultural on a regular basis at home and in the community. This affects learners who in turn bring their pain, fear, anger and frustrations to school and unfortunately let these out on each other in the form of violence. The indulgence by learners in illicit drugs is partly as a way of escaping the violent experiences that learners face on a regular basis. However, instead of escaping their painful experiences and finding solace in the illicit drugs, learners find themselves engaging in more violence. Learners have to be taught ways of dealing with problems and conflicts in their lives in positive and constructive ways. This can only be achieved if peace education is made a priority at schools.

The next chapter describes the peace club intervention that was set up at Mzilikazi High School to reduce violence and create a culture of peace at the school. The intervention was a peace infrastructure to introduce peace education at the school through teaching and equipping learners with skills on how to resolve conflicts non-violently. The intervention was planned and implemented together with the participants after analysing data that was collected through surveys, focus group discussions and interviews.



## 8 Chapter 8: Planning and Implementing the Intervention

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter details how I and the participants planned and implemented an intervention (peace club) to reduce violence at Mzilikazi High School with the aim of creating a culture of peace at the school. This was in answer to the third objective of my study which was using a participatory action research approach, to plan and implement a programme of action over 24 months aimed at building a culture of peace at the school. Three workshops in conflict resolution and transformation were conducted, one was attended by 22 learners and two by four teachers.

### 8.2 Planning the intervention

After conducting focus group discussions (see section 6.6.4) and individual interviews (see section 6.6.5 and 6.6.6.) I held a meeting with participant learners on 22nd July 2019. The meeting was to discuss what had emerged from the surveys, focus group discussions and the interviews, and to decide what action I and the learner participants could jointly take to reduce violence at the school. The data collected enabled us to identify the causes, nature and extent of violence prevailing at the school. The choice of the intervention to apply was to be informed by this analysis. Lederach (2003:21) asserts that to reduce violence, the underlying patterns and causes must be addressed. Therefore, it was necessary that we looked at the underlying causes of violence at the school before deciding on which intervention to set up. We summarised the root causes of the violence as:

- External – These were what learners learnt from the home environment, the values, beliefs, practices and stereotypes, and what they did when not at school. The issues that came up included the stereotypical beliefs about the roles of boys and girls, mainly that girls had to be submissive to boys and that boys had to prove that they were boys by showing off their physical strength through fights and bossing girls. Learners indicated that they had witnessed violence in their communities such as domestic violence, thefts and street fights and that these occurred regularly.

- Internal – These were what they encountered at school such as differences among learners, intolerance, and power issues. Teacher-authoritarian methods of disciplining learners such as corporal punishment were also mentioned.

The meeting identified the nature of the school violence to include bullying, fighting, threatening, gossiping, theft, vandalism, drug and alcohol abuse. These were said to be very prevalent and affected all learners, perpetrators and victims included. The meeting brainstormed on the actions that participants could take to reduce the violence and to create a better climate for learning. It was unanimously agreed that we form what was referred to at that time as a group that would tackle the violence mentioned and ameliorate the situation. The group that was being proposed was in essence a peace club. Bradbury (2015) stated that, in action research, the researcher together with stakeholders, defines the problem, plans and carries out the research. Participants become co-researchers. This was the beginning of a process where learner participants from Mzilikazi High School were partnering with me as co-researchers in planning and implementing an intervention to reduce school violence.

### 8.2.1 Membership

The initial number of the learner participants was twenty four, 12 boys and 12 girls. For a peace club to run efficiently and effectively Alty (2013) proffers that a peace club could have 25 to 50 members. Peace clubs run by AVPKZN in 2018 (see section 8.5.), excluding the class based peace clubs, averaged 28 members, and their meetings varied greatly in terms of frequency, time of day and duration. There was certainly no single size to fit all. Table 8.1 below depicts the number of peace club members per school at the 2018 AVPKZN peace clubs.

**Table 8.1: Membership of AVPKZN peace clubs**

	Grades	Meeting frequency and time	Size of peace club	Size of school
Primary school 1s (PS1)	Grades 5-7	Once a week for an hour during cleaning period	20	590

Primary school 2 (PS2)	Grades 6 and 7	Class based, each class having a lesson once a month during the reading period	400	1837
Primary school 3 (PS3)	Grade 6	Once a week after school for 30 minutes	20	300
Secondary school 1 (SS1)	Grade 11	Break times and after school	30-40	900
Secondary school 2 (SS2)	Grades 10 and 11	Twice a week during sports period	14	325
Secondary school 3 (SS3)	Grades 8-12	Twice a week after school	50	1400

Source: Moyo 2022

Working with my co-researchers, we agreed that the membership of our peace club would not exceed 30. Subsequently, three members joined the club, making the total number 27, twelve boys and 15 girls. In November 2020, an additional four members joined the peace club (see section 8.3.5), bringing the number to 31, fourteen boys and 17 girls. Although 31 members exceeded the initial agreed number of 30, we observed that five peace club members had erratic attendance. Peace club meetings were conducted once a week for an hour after school at the school premises. This was in line with Alty (2013) who stated that peace clubs can meet weekly for an hour preferably with support from an outside co-ordinator.

### 8.2.2 Curriculum

The peace club curriculum was guided in the main by the *Creating a Peaceable School* manual by Bodine *et.al.* (1994) (see section 8.2.2.1). I cannot ignore the fact that being an AVP facilitator and having facilitated many AVP workshops, what is taught at AVP workshops (see section 8.6) influenced the curriculum of the Mzilikazi Peace Club. I also had occasion in 2018 to explore the peace club curriculum used by AVPKZN for their peace clubs. This was when I conducted an end-of-project evaluation for AVPKZN peace clubs in 2019 (see section 8.5). AVPKZN used the peace club curriculum for South African secondary

schools developed by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) of Zambia. The peace club curriculum has four main sections,

- Section One: Conflict.
- Section Two: Violence.
- Section Three: Gender-based conflict.
- Section Four: Journey to reconciliation (MCC 2012b:11-12).

#### 8.2.2.1 Creating peaceable school manual

The Programme Guide and the Student Manual *Creating the peaceable schools* by Bodine *et. al* (1994) represent a comprehensive approach to teaching conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation and group problem solving. Through these, learners are able to recognise, manage and resolve conflicts peacefully. The *Creating a peaceable school* programme is premised on the belief that learners should not only be taught non-violent skills of resolving conflicts but must be enabled to put into practice what they have learnt at home, school and in the wider community. The focus of the programme is the implementation of a non-coercive discipline system that aims at teaching learners self-discipline and responsibility. It offers a framework for collaboration among educators, parents and learners to move away from simply recognising the problems that emanate from living in a diverse violent climate to contributing to living peacefully in diverse communities. Learners are challenged to believe and act on the understanding that non-violent, pluralistic communities are a realistic goal. This can be achieved if learners can live this in their contexts at school and outside school (Bodine *et.al*. 1994).

Bodine *et. al*. (1994: 2-3) aver that 'peaceable' means being inclined or disposed to peace and promoting calm. Peace is a state where everyone exercises his or her responsibilities to ensure that all individuals fully enjoy all their rights. It is a state where everyone can survive and thrive without being hampered by conflict, prejudice, hatred, antagonism or injustice. It is not static but a continuous process that espouses non-violence, compassion, trust, fairness, co-operation, respect and tolerance. Peace does not mean the absence of conflict; instead, it means that, when conflict occurs, people recognise, manage and resolve the conflict peacefully. Responsibility and co-operation are at the core of peaceable schools, and all other skills are built on these. Acceptable behaviour must be viewed as the responsibility of learners who must



co-operate with others to create a peaceable learning environment (Bodine *et.al.* 1994: 6). Peaceful schools are achieved when learners and teachers can focus on their core business which is learning without being distracted by violence. The skills that teachers and learners acquire in the process not only benefit the schools but also their homes and the wider community (Bodine *et.al.* 1994).

The Programme Guide is used by the peace club coach who normally is a volunteer teacher at the school who becomes the matron or patron of the peace club. The Programme Guide presents an overview of principles in conflict resolution, together with detailed instructions for conducting activities to help learners develop skills and gain knowledge to use non-violent methods of resolving conflicts. The strategies of mediation, negotiation and group problem solving are central to the creation of peaceable schools. These help learners to resolve differences without aggression or coercion.

The Programme Guide has six sections addressing six skills areas which are:

- Section One – Building a peaceable climate.
- Section Two – Understanding conflict.
- Section Three – Understanding peace and peace-making.
- Section Four – Mediation.
- Section Five – Negotiation.
- Section six – Group problem solving.

Section One deals with managing behaviour without coercion, and includes rights and responsibilities, and punishment versus discipline. A table on rights and responsibilities is provided in the manual, as presented below in Table 8.2. The table was used as a reference point at several peace club meetings.

**Table 8.2.: Rights and responsibilities**

<i>My Rights</i>	<i>My Responsibilities</i>
I have the right to be happy and to be treated with compassion in this school. This means that no one will laugh at me or hurt my feelings.	I have the responsibility to treat others with compassion: This means that I will not laugh at others, tease others, or try to hurt the feelings of others.

<p>I have the right to be myself in this school. This means that no one will treat me unfairly because I am...</p> <p>black or white</p> <p>fat or thin</p> <p>tall or short</p> <p>boy or girl</p> <p>adult or child</p>	<p>I have the responsibility of respecting others as individuals and not to treat them unfairly because they are...</p> <p>black or white</p> <p>fat or thin</p> <p>tall or short</p> <p>boy or girl</p> <p>adult or child</p>
<p>I have the right to be safe in this school: This means that no one will...</p> <p>hit me</p> <p>kick me</p> <p>push me</p> <p>pinch me</p> <p>threaten me</p> <p>hurt me.</p>	<p>I have the responsibility to make the school safe by not..</p> <p>hitting anyone</p> <p>kicking anyone</p> <p>pushing anyone</p> <p>pinching anyone</p> <p>threatening anyone</p> <p>hurting anyone.</p>
<p>I have the right to have my property safe in this school.</p>	<p>I have the responsibility not to take or destroy the property of others.</p>
<p>I have the right to hear and to be heard in this school: This means that no one will...</p> <p>yell</p> <p>scream</p> <p>shout</p> <p>make loud noises</p> <p>or otherwise disturb me.</p>	<p>I have the responsibility to help maintain a calm and quiet school: This means that I will not ...</p> <p>yell</p> <p>scream</p> <p>shout</p> <p>make loud noises</p> <p>or otherwise disturb others.</p>
<p>I have the right to learn about myself and others in this school: This means that I will be free to express my feelings and opinions without being interrupted or punished.</p>	<p>I have the responsibility to learn about myself and others in this school” This means that I will be able free to express my feelings and opinions without being interrupted or punished, and I will not interrupt</p>

	or punish others who express their feelings and opinions.
I have the right to be helped to learn self-control in this school: This means that no one will silently stand by while I abuse my rights.	I have the responsibility to learn self-control in this school: This means that I will strive to exercise my rights without denying the same rights to others, and I will expect to be corrected when I abuse the rights of others as they shall be corrected if my rights are abused.
I have the right to expect that all these rights will be mine in all circumstances so long as I am exercising full responsibilities.	I have the responsibility to protect my rights and the rights of others by exercising my full responsibilities in all circumstances.

Source: Bodine *et.al.* 1994:18

The Programme Guide comes with a Student Manual that summaries important concepts such as rights and responsibilities, conflict, peace, peace-making, problem-solving, negotiation, mediation and co-operation, and has forms and worksheets that learners use to reinforce what they have learnt. The Student Manual serves as a workbook for learners (Bodine *et. al.* 1994:1-2).

I used the *Creating peaceable schools* manual to guide the peace club curriculum. The content of the curriculum was customised to include topics such as anger management, *Ubuntu*, tribalism/racism, and relationships. As one of the foundations of my study, *ubuntu* had to be taught. This assumed that, if learners embraced the tenets of *ubuntu* (see section 1.4.2), then this would lead to behaviour change. I noted that learners would casually refer to each other during the peace club meetings as “*ulobuntu*”, meaning what the other person would have done demonstrated *ubuntu*.

## 8.3 Implementation of the Peace Club

### 8.3.1 Pedagogies used for the Peace Club

The peace club used transformative pedagogies (see section 2.15). The learning was experiential and participative with learners sharing their feelings, concerns, and experiences, and drawing lessons from these. Dialogue, conversation, storytelling, dances and music brought up real issues that learners

experienced or faced at home, school and in the community. Principles and concepts such as conflict, violence, non-violence, and peace were not introduced to learners through academic definitions and theories. Instead, learners were assisted to come up with their own thinking of what these were, and to develop skills of thinking about these concepts that would enable them to live non-violently at school and in the wider community.

Issues of conflict and violence would come up and, as a collective, peace club members discussed and brainstormed to identify possible non-violent solutions. Brainstorming and discussions enabled peace club members to critically examine issues of violence that they had normalised such as bullying, fighting and gender stereotypes. They then devised alternative, non-violent solutions that could be used to counter these. Meyers (2008) avers that transformative pedagogies help learners to think critically and to engage with their experiences, beliefs, and biases, and to implement action-oriented solutions.

Peace club members had fun doing role plays and debriefing them. Role plays have the advantage of portraying real life situations. Bar-Tal (2002) states that, for peace education to be effective, it must consider the conditions that prevail in society, with the best mode of instruction being experience.

Role plays depicting events at school, home and community were played out and debriefed, with lessons drawn and members reflecting on how the conflict could have been resolved peacefully.

### 8.3.2 Peace club meetings

It was agreed that peace club meetings would be held once a week for an hour after formal learning. The days would vary and depended on the school timetable. Attendance at peace clubs averaged 22 members per meeting out of a possible 24, 27 and 31 members (see section 8.2.1) This reflected a healthy positive and encouraging attendance record which indicated that peace club members saw value and benefit in attending. All participants at the meetings sat in a circle to symbolize that everyone was equal and that all contributions were valued. When talking, peace club members remained seated unless they were making an illustration or doing an exercise that required them to stand. I borrowed the idea of sitting during the meeting proceedings, instead of standing from the AVP philosophy where participants and facilitators, are regarded as both learners and teachers. No one in their own right is deemed as possessing all the knowledge.

At the beginning of each meeting there was a prayer, and an ice breaker in the form of a song, a short poem from anyone who would have written one during the week, a dance or a short, fun activity. The songs, dances or games were those that children play in a typical Zimbabwean setting. Dancing was a favourite ice breaker with learners showing off their dancing skills. Icebreakers were fun and usually had lessons to be learnt relating to the topic of the day. Figure 8.1 shows a meeting in progress

**Figure 8.1: Peace club meeting in progress**



The first meeting of the peace club was held on 27th July 2019. At this meeting, ground rules for meetings were agreed. Participants also came up with the aims of the peace club and discussed their expectations. Table 8.3 depicts the aims, ground rules, and expectations suggested at this meeting. In addition, participants drew up a list of issues they wanted discussed during their meetings. These included drug abuse, bullying, gossiping, tribalism, career guidance, solutions for violence at school, how to be influential, dating, and building relationships.

**Table 8.3: Aims, ground rules and expectations of Mzilikazi High School peace club**

Aims	Ground rules	Expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To stop bullying and fighting</li> <li>▪ To bring peace at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To speak loudly so that everyone can hear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ End of school bullying and fights</li> <li>▪ Comfort each other</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To make us learn and pass</li> <li>▪ To make us happy</li> <li>▪ To make us build friendships</li> <li>▪ To stop vandalism of school property</li> <li>▪ To stop bullying and fighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One person to speak at a time</li> <li>▪ To listen to each other</li> <li>▪ To love one another</li> <li>▪ Not judge others</li> <li>▪ Sharing</li> <li>▪ To respect each other</li> <li>▪ Punctuality</li> <li>▪ No teasing</li> <li>▪ No fighting</li> <li>▪ Not to laugh at others</li> <li>▪ No name calling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tell others about peace</li> <li>▪ To be loved</li> <li>▪ Have badges and uniforms for identification</li> <li>▪ Go out camping</li> <li>▪ Play sports</li> </ul>
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The next meeting was held on 5th August 2019, when I reiterated the aims and objectives of my study and assured the participants about confidentiality and anonymity. I reminded them that they were free to withdraw from the study or any activity they were not comfortable to be part of without penalty. The topic of the meeting was understanding conflict. The activity at the meeting involved learners drawing a picture of what came to their mind when they thought of conflict. Thereafter, peace club members who were free to share their drawings with brief narratives explaining what the drawings were about were allowed to do so. The whole group discussed how the conflicts shared could have been resolved, non-violently. The pictures drawn included school fights, domestic violence, gender-based violence, police brutality, and war. The variety of pictures helped to illustrate that conflict could be found in various settings and that conflict was inevitable. The lesson was guided by the *Creating peaceable schools* Programme Guide (Bodine *et.al.*1994:60-62). The exercise enabled learners to discuss and understand the concepts of conflict, without delving into theoretical definitions. This was the last meeting held for the term as schools closed on 9th August 2019. Participants indicated that they were looking forward to continuing with the peace club the following term and emphasised that one of their goals was to spread the message of peace at school through sharing and influencing non peace club members for peace.

The first meeting of the second term was held on 14th September 2019. The meeting was a continuation of the previous meeting on understanding conflict. The concept of violence was introduced through a

brainstorm, with the different forms of violence – direct, structural and cultural – being identified without reference to scholastic definitions. During the discussions and brainstorm, the difference between violence and conflict became clear to peace club members. One of them exclaimed, *“To me, violence and conflict were the same difference (sic); learning does not end for sure.”*

The meeting of 20th September 2019 discussed the concepts of violence and non-violence with examples given on violence that occurs at school and at home. Peace club members brainstormed on the two concepts by coming up with words that exemplified what violence and non-violence were to them. Words such as fighting, killing, insulting, beating, and bullying were proffered as denoting violence and words such as love, happiness, goodness, respect, calm and praying as denoting non-violence. The different ways of responding to conflict were discussed and the broad framework drawn from the *Creating peaceable schools* Programme Guide on soft, hard and principled responses (Bodine *et.al.* 1994, 80-81). On 3rd October 2019, the topic on understanding violence and non-violence continued. The activity was public speaking, and learners were to speak on promoting the use of non-violence at school. Learners were divided into three groups to prepare prior to the meeting and to choose one member to present their argument. The debates were lively and some of the arguments in support for the use of non-violence were: *“So that we can all be happy at school,” “To stop bullies from bullying others,” “To drive away fear,”* and *“So that we can live peacefully with each other.”*

On 9th and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019, the topic for discussion was “Understanding peace and peace-making.” The *Creating Peaceable Schools* manual (Bodine *et.al.* 1994) was used as a guide. Peace club members were asked to identify peace symbols that they were aware of, such as those listed in *Creating Peaceable Schools* manual, which were a dove, peace pipes, olive branches, and peace treaties. Learners came up with imaginative symbols such as a rainbow, the V finger sign, the sunset, and a handshake. In addition, learners were asked to draw pictures and write words that came to their minds when thinking of peace and peace making. Those who were free to share their drawings and/or words were allowed to do so. Pictures of peace making included people sharing food, shaking hands playing sport and signing agreements.

The meetings of 6th and 13th November 2019, dealt with the topic of rights and responsibilities. Table 8.2 was used as the foundation of the discussions. The topic was of great interest and saw sound learning. The comments from most members were summed up by one, Nhlanhla, who said,

*I did not realise that you cannot just claim your rights without taking responsibility. At home there is always this argument that rights teach us to disrespect our elders. It now makes sense that if we do not recognise that there are responsibilities as well, we miss it and get carried away with our right.*

The discussions on rights and responsibilities got peace club members thinking deeply and critically about their actions and behaviours, and how these affected themselves and others. Before closing the meeting, members were asked to add to the rights and responsibilities they thought they had at school to those at Table 8.2. The additions on responsibilities included: *“Keeping the school clean”, “Obeying school rules,” “Being kind to others,” “Listening to teachers and not making noise at assembly.”* The rights included the rights to not to be forced to do what they did not want to do and the right to peaceful learning. The meeting was unanimous that, if the whole school community carried out their responsibilities well, violence would be reduced at school. Peace club members realised that they had a big role to play in creating a peaceful environment at school. Some highlighted that, previously, they thought it was the role of teachers and other members of staff to create a harmonious school environment, but after the two meetings they realised that peace was a group effort that involved everyone at school, both learners and teachers.

The topic of 27th November 2019 was *Ubuntu*. As indicated at section 1.4.2., *ubuntu* philosophy motivated me to carry out this study. I believed that, if learners embraced the *ubuntu* philosophy and practiced its principles, the result would be behaviour change leading to more peaceful schools. During this meeting, I did a short presentation on what *Ubuntu* is. Thereafter, we had a discussion on how the principles can be applied at personal and school level. The saying *“umuntu ngu muntu ngabantu”* (I am because we are) seemed to stick in the minds of peace club members. One remarked, *“I have always heard people saying this and I never really knew what it meant.”* At many meetings and interactions with peace club members, I could hear them using the saying among themselves. When mobilising others through the WhatsApp platform for the conflict resolution workshop (AVP, see section 8.6), the President of the peace club, in urging peace club members to spread the word about the workshop said, *“Please inform those abangela data lama phones (those who have no data or phones) if you can, about the workshop remember umuntu ngu muntu ngabantu.”*



The meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> was the last meeting in 2019. Schools closed for the third term in December 2019 and reopened in January 2020. The first meeting in the new year was held on 29th January 2020. The peace club learners had graduated to Form Three. This was the year when I had anticipated to see peace club members influencing non-peace club learners more actively. This was not going to happen as anticipated, since the Covid-19 pandemic set in before the end of the first term (see section 8.3.3.). The topic for the meetings of 29th January 2020 and 10th February 2020, was “Anger and anger management”. The main resource used was the South African manual (see section 8.2.2.) used by the AVPKZN peace clubs (Smith 2019). At both meetings, participants explored what anger was, bottled-up anger, and how to deal with anger. Questions posed during the meetings were:

- What things make you angry?
- What do you do when you are angry?
- What can you do when you are angry so as not to hurt others and yourself?

Based on the discussions, I realised that learners carried a great deal of anger from school and from home. Things that made learners angry included: not being listened to by parents and friends, being bullied, being forced to do things they did not like to do, being teased, and being shouted at. They pointed out that, when they were angry, they became sad, sulked, became frustrated, shouted, walked away, kept quiet, or fought back. Peace club members realised the need to deal with anger positively in order for them to be “happy.”

On 17th February 2020 and 9th March 2020, the peace club met, and the topic was ‘Mediation.’ Learners were exposed to mediation as an alternative dispute-resolution mechanism. The *Creating peaceable schools* Programme Guide (Bodine *et. al.* 1994, 171-212) was used as a resource manual. To foster mediation, the Programme Guide offers six steps to be followed by learners in mediation. These are:

- Step One: Agreeing to participate, and to accept the ground rules
- Step Two: Gathering points of view
- Step Three: Focusing on interests
- Step Four: Creating win-win options
- Step Five: Establishing criteria to evaluate options and evaluate options
- Step Six: Creating an agreement.

The six steps were taught and reinforced through roleplays and discussions during the two meetings.

The meeting of 9th March 2020 was the last meeting of the first term since schools had to close on 24th March 2020 after the outbreak of Covid-19 (see section 8.3.3). No physical meetings were held during the second term. The peace club met virtually (see section 8.3.4) for the second term.

For the third term, peace club members continued to meet virtual and in addition held two physical meetings and attended a two-day AVP basic workshop. Table 8.4 shows the activities of the peace club from 2019 to the end of 2020. I have included in the table, the AVP training for teachers from 6th to 7th September 2019 and 15 to 16 September 2021. Although these were not direct activities of the peace club, the four teachers who attended the AVP workshops were critical peace club stakeholders who closely observed the activities of the club. One of the teachers was directly involved as the matron of the peace club, two were senior teachers, and the fourth was the Deputy Headmistress.

**Table 8.4. Summary record of attendance and activities of the peace club, 2019 to 2020**

Date of meeting	Attendance	Activity
22 July 2019	23	Planning the intervention
27 July 2019	26	Planning of intervention -ground rules, aims of the intervention and expectations
5 August 2019	21	Topic – Understanding conflict
	School vacation	
6-7 September 2019	21	AVP Basic workshop for teachers
14 September 2019	23	Topic - Understanding conflict
20 September 2019	15	Topic - Violence and non-violence
3 October 2019	20	Topic - Violence and non-violence
9 October 2019	23	Topic - understanding peace and peace making
25 October 2019	18	Topic - Understanding peace and peace making
6 November 2019	22	Rights and responsibilities

13 November 2019	20	Rights and responsibilities.
27 November 2019	24	Topic – <i>Ubuntu</i> .
	School vacation	
29 January 2020	19	Topic - Anger management.
10 February 2020	21	Topic - Anger management.
17 February 2020	23	Topic – Mediation.
9 March 2020	22	Topic – Mediation.
24 March 2020	Covid 19 Lockdown: schools close	
	Average 14	Peace club meets virtually (see Table 8.5).
15 -16 September 2020	4	AVP advanced workshop for teachers
19 November 2020	26	First physical meeting and introducing the four new members from Form Five.  Celebrating getting first physical meeting.
25 November 2020	15	Discussion How to deal with violence at Mzilikazi High School
1-2 December	22	AVP basic workshop.

### 8.3.3 Enter Covid-19

On 30th January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) a public health emergency of international concern. Thousands of people had been infected and many recorded dead from the disease. In Zimbabwe, the first case was recorded on 20th March 2020, triggering the indefinite closure of schools and other institutions of learning on 24th March 2020 (Ribeiro, 2020:3). The pandemic disrupted approximately 1576 billion learners (globally), 297 million (in Africa), and 4.6 million (in Zimbabwe). Developing countries adopted innovative methods to continue learning, whereas developing countries such as Zimbabwe were caught unprepared for alternative forms of learning (Mandikiana, 2020:290-291). In Zimbabwe, some schools started lessons through e-learning

but schools in low income areas (such as Mzilikazi High School) could not, due to a lack of equipment and support structures. Such a situation was bound to increase inequalities in education outcomes. Limited access to formal and informal learning deprived learners of their right to education and engagement with their peers and teachers. The prolonged closure of schools was likely to cause learners emotional unrest and anxiety (Ribeiro 2020:15). The protection of children and educational facilities and necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the disease became of utmost importance while minimizing disruption and protecting learners and staff from discrimination (Bender 2020).

Schools were scheduled to open on 5th May 2020 for the second term, but the school authorities announced that this was not possible since it was not safe for learners to go back to school. Later it was announced that schools would be opened in phases, with learners in Form Three going back to school on 26th October 2020. In aggregate, schools closed for approximately seven months in 2020. and four months in 2021 from May to September 2021 (MoPSE 2020).

In 2022, schools were scheduled to open for the first term on 10th January 2022. The date was moved again as it was deemed unsafe for schools to open since cases of Covid-19 infections were on the rise. However, classes that were due for examinations were allowed to resume on 3rd January 2022 under strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols (MoPSE 2022). The peace club members were now in Form Four and due to sit for their Ordinary Level examinations; they returned to school for the purposes of preparing for examinations only. This meant that the peace club still could not meet physically. The schools did not close due to Covid-19 thereafter, and gradually schools opened for extra-mural activities.

#### 8.3.4 Virtual peace club meetings

During the Covid-19-induced school closures, peace club members formed a WhatsApp group and conducted their meetings virtually. I provided them with internet data for the meetings. The platform was formed on 27th July 2020, and it provided an effective and safe alternative to meet while protecting learners from physical contact. Mandikiana (2020) in support of virtual learning stated that, during emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the education sector must evolve and embrace other forms of learning such as e-learning. However, Mandikiana (2020) noted that such methods widen the gap between the haves and have-nots. This was true of the Mzilikazi peace club, as five members could not

participate because they had no access to smart phones. Three peace club members were allowed to use their parents' smart phones meaning that, when arranging for meetings they had to seek permission from their parents and in most instances, they were availed the phones.

New ground rules were added to the list to ensure that the WhatsApp platform was not abused. The platform was to be used solely for discussing peace club related issues from 0800 to 1600hrs to allow for peaceful family time. Voice notes were discouraged as they consumed more data than written notes. The fact that conversations on the platform were automatically recorded in writing assisted me with collecting thick descriptive data as discussions were available in written form. I had to transcribe the data as soon as possible after meetings to avoid being overwhelmed with data.

The virtual meetings conducted during the school closures are depicted at Table 8.5 below.

**Table 8.5 Virtual peace club meeting attendance and activities in 2020**

<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Activity</b>
30 July 2020	23	First virtual meeting. Discussion on: How has life been like during lockdown?
31 July 2020	19	Discussion: How they had coped with the lockdown. Ways of reducing anxiety and fear during lockdown.
3 August 2020	3	Discussion: As peace club how can we build a peaceful Mzilikazi High School when schools reopen?
14 August 2020	19	Understanding conflict
17 August 2020	17	Co-operation/teamwork
19 August 2020	5	Meeting cancelled due to poor attendance.
29 August 2020	15	Discussion: What can the peace club do to build peace at Mzilikazi High School?

26 October 2020	Schools open	
December 2020	Schools close for vacation	
10 December 2020		Virtual peace club meeting to evaluate AVP basic workshop.

The first virtual meeting was held on 30th July 2020. I asked peace club members how they were coping during lockdown. From their responses, I observed that learners were anxious, uncertain and fearful of what was happening around them. They were anxious about their studies. Sihle said,

*Oooh I think Covid-19 has affected our schooling a lot because we were not yet done with the syllabus. And again, it was just the beginning of our new standard and for that we have to repeat next year so that we can cover the syllabus.*

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education later introduced online learning. Regrettably, not all learners could access this facility because some learners did not have smart phones. *“Some of us have no access to internet as I had to go to the rural areas and when I go back to school, I won’t know anything.”* For those with smart phones it was costly to buy data. The few who could afford data still faced challenges. *“Even though we do online learning, it is a disadvantage because teachers do not fully explain; they just give us work, and we write without understanding the topic.”*

Uncertainty as to when the lockdown would end and schooling would resume was a concern to learners. This was aggravated by the fact that they were not able to meet and socialize with their schoolmates and friends. *“Lockdown is boring as we miss going to school to learn and socialise with friends. And the boring part is that we do not know when all this will end.”* New Covid-19 protocols such as social distancing made the situation worse, *“I love to hug my friends but now I must be two metres away from them.”* Mandikiana (2020:304) confirms this finding stating that, although e-learning was used in Zimbabwe during lock-down, learners appreciated competition, friendships and contact.

At the end of the meeting, peace club members were in high spirits that they were able to meet and communicate with each other effectively. Mmeli summed up the mood, *“[The] first time is not always*

*good, but we did it."* This propelled them to agree to meet again the following day. They indicated that they still had data remaining on their phones and they would use it then.

On 31st July 2020, the discussion of the previous day continued, and included sharing on how they could deal with issues they faced so as to gain inner peace. Learners seemed to have learnt the importance of listening. *"I think we should listen to each other and if the police say we should stay at home we must listen and we must follow all the rules to be safe; otherwise, if we do not listen this can cause violence. We must follow all the rules so that we can be safe."* The need to follow Covid-19 protocols appeared to be of paramount importance to peace club members. *"We can find peace by communicating and staying alert. Avoid close contact with anyone with flue-like symptoms. If you develop a fever, cough or difficulty in breathing, seek medical help. Practice social distancing even at home."* Peace club members noted that it can be difficult to social distance with family members *"It is extremely difficult to stay away from your family members,"* said Mmeli. This became more difficult where family members and community did not believe that Covid 19 was real. *"It is difficult in my community because they say Covid-19 affects white people only and not black people. So, no one is following the rules, yet I know that this disease is affecting everyone black and white."*

Peace club members assisted each other on how to deal with specific situations that others faced and showed empathy towards each other. Nhlanhla shared a situation that he was facing at home saying,

*If one of my family members has symptoms of Covid-19 and does not want to seek medical help, how can I handle the issue without causing quarrels. Reporting my family member for treatment is obviously going to cause drama in the house no matter how polite I may be and once this comes to the attention of the authorities, they will take everyone at home to be quarantined. And quarantine centres are starving people.*

Peace club members encouraged Nhlanhla to dialogue with the family member and convince the sick member to go for testing and treatment. *"Talk to them nicely in an understandable way, because for you to be safe you have to do everything you need to do."* Nhlanhla was in despair, and his last comment was, *"It is hard to get peace in Africa."* At the next meeting, Nhlanhla gave feedback that he and other family members talked to the sick family member who subsequently sought medical help. He thanked the Club members, expressing appreciation for the help he got from his colleagues.

The next virtual meeting was held on 3rd August 2020. The topic was, “The Mzilikazi High School I would like to see.” To set their minds thinking, the day before the meeting, I posted the following on the platform:

Imagine a school where your classmates peacefully resolve disagreements. A classroom where you work together trusting, helping each other and sharing. A school where you speak, listen, and play nicely with each other in the playground. A playground where there is no bullying, no fighting, where you respect each other, and accept that you are different. A headmaster’s office where you can express yourself without being rude or being humiliated. If this is the Mzilikazi High School that we want, what can we do?

Regrettably, only three members of the peace club attended the meeting and agreed to cancel it. The rest came up later with excuses as to why they could not attend. They promised to post their views on the platform, which some of them did. *“We can build a peaceful Mzilikazi if we all work together and show respect to the teachers”; “Let us go class by class and tell them about peace.” “We should say no to bullying. If we stop bullying, we will learn well.”*

I reflected on the sudden drop in attendance and the lack of enthusiasm by peace club members on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August. I wondered whether I had moved too fast for them in bringing up school issues while they were battling with immediate issues relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. I decided to ask the members what they would like to discuss at our next meetings. The responses included, “Can we do conflict again?” and “How to work well with others.”

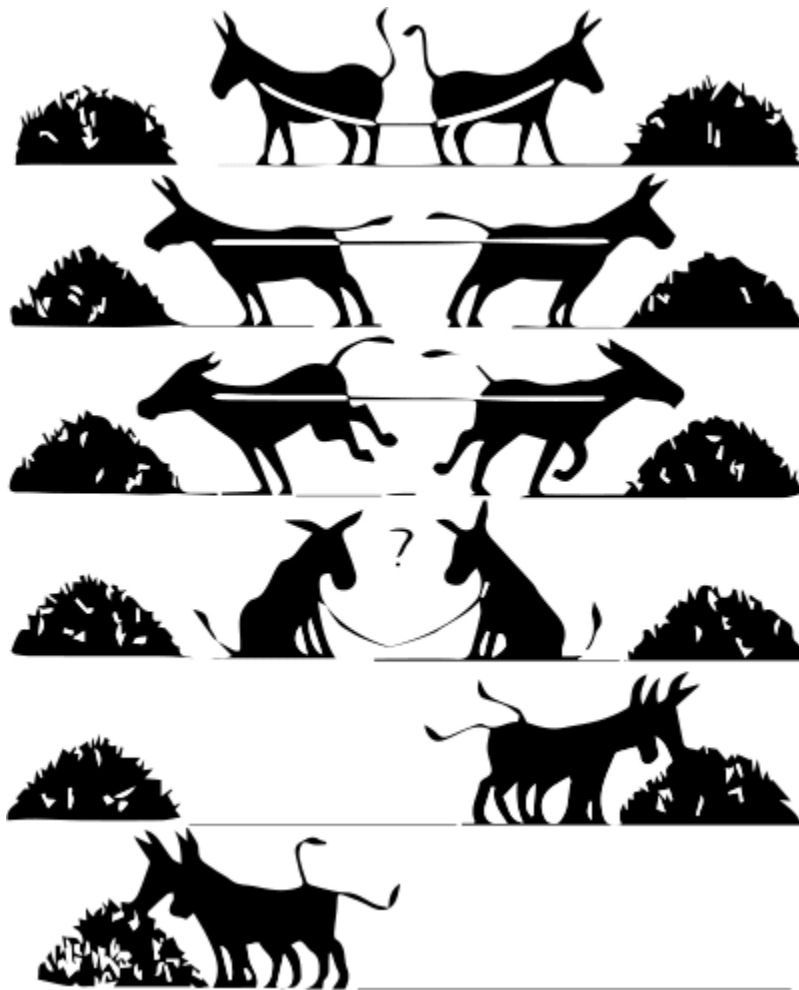
The next meeting was held on 14th August 2020 with the topic of conflict. At this meeting, it was agreed that we would look at real incidents of conflict at school and come up with ways of how to deal with them non-violently. Sihle narrated a typical classroom example, *“In class when a teacher divides us into groups and, when one group gives a false answer, then we all start laughing and then, afterwards, we do not get along and there will be some kind of conflict.”* The meeting noted that a small incident or act such as that narrated by Sihle could escalate to a big conflict; hence the need to be careful that our actions do not offend others and result in conflict. Minnie gave another example, *“When the [class] monitor is giving notes from the teacher, he or she first writes with his or her friends without letting the whole class know; then, when the teacher asks if the whole class wrote the notes, that causes conflict among students.”*



Dumo retorted, *“Even when the prefects tell us what to do, at times we are rude and, in the library, if the Upper Sixes refuse you taking a book, we shout and yell without asking why.”* Other similar examples were given and, in summary, learners identified the causes as a lack of teamwork, a lack of respect, intolerance, and poor communication. They proffered that, if they dialogued with each other, this could reduce conflict at school. *“We should talk sense with each other and solve problems in a good manner and not by quarrels,”* said another member. The meeting agreed that the next meeting would be on teamwork.

On 17th August 2020, the meeting discussed co-operation and teamwork. The lesson was guided by the *Creating a Peaceable Schools* manual (Bodine *et.al.* 1994,44-46). I posted Figure 8.2 below on the platform, and asked peace club members to describe the story illustrated and what lesson could be drawn from the illustration.

Figure 8.2 Co-operation exercise



Source: Bodine et.al. 1994

Themba said, “Two animals are tied together and they want to eat grass but the problem is that they are both going in different directions that’s causing them not to reach the grass but when they go in the same direction they reach the grass.” I asked what made them both reach the grass. The responses included, “They discussed about how they can both eat the grass”; “They found a solution then started eating together”; “They were united.” On being asked about the application of the illustration, the responses were, “Nxa sidonselana (If we pull in different directions) we won’t achieve”; We should do the same [as the donkeys],”; “Co-operation helps peace building. Today I have learnt that, sometimes, we just have to admit that we are wrong and work together.”

The next meeting was held on 19th August 2020. The meeting was poorly attended with only five peace club members in attendance. Nozie who had faithfully attended all virtual meetings, did not take kindly to peace club members who received data and failed to attend meetings. She wrote the following on the platform,

*I think we should meet twice a week and you should choose people who really want to be peace club members. Not to waste your money buying people bundles because some of the people are always absent yet you buy them data. These people are not serious about peace club.*

I realized that not all was lost and there were some peace club members who were committed to building peace. I took the opportunity to get the defaulting peace club members to reflect on their actions, take responsibility, and come up with a way forward. I reiterated the purposes of the peace club and its benefits to the school and individual peace club members while addressing the issue of defaulting in attendance. The next meeting was attended by all who had indicated they would attend and received data including those who were frequently absent.

I proposed that we have a review of our meetings to consider:

- Stopping meeting online, and wait until schools open when we would have physical meetings
- Meet virtually once a week
- Meet virtually once a month
- Recruit more members from Forms Two and Five when schools opened.

Thandi proposed and it was agreed that we take a break for two weeks then meet to map the way forward. At the end of two weeks, Thandi and Nkosazana reminded us that it was time to meet and review the way forward. Peace club members deliberated on the date for the next meeting without agreement. Finally, a date was proposed and Nozie had this to say, *“That [one proposed date] would be far guys. Remember, its been more than two weeks without peace club. So, I suggest we choose an earlier date.”* The debate on the date of the meeting continued with Nozie at one point saying, *“We will keep on saying tomorrow, next week, Wednesday, and we will end up not achieving our goals as [the] peace club, so that is why I am suggesting that we do it now.”*

After long deliberations over the next day, peace club members agreed on a date, and said that those who would not be present could follow what was discussed on the platform and add or comment if they so wished. The meeting was held on 29th August 2020. At the meeting, peace club members reminded each other of what they had covered in previous meetings. They readied themselves for school opening as there were indications that school would open soon. Schools opened on 26th October 2020. They agreed that when schools opened, they would talk to each other about living peacefully with each other, intervene and mediate in conflicts as far as it was possible, and demonstrate that they had changed and were now pursuing peaceful lives.

### 8.3.5 Re-configuration of the peace club

In November 2020, I realised that the peace club members were uneasy with taking the lead to spread the message of non-violence to their seniors. They were able to do so with their peers and juniors. I discussed the matter with the Deputy Headmistress and the senior teacher responsible for guidance and counselling. We agreed to invite four Form Five learners to join the peace club. Four senior learners, two girls and two boys, volunteered to join the peace club. Two of the senior learners were junior councillors in the local municipality. In his words, one of the junior councillors described the duties of junior councillors as, *"We do a lot of stuff, basically we advocate for children's rights, and we also are a bridge between the people and the senior council."* Of the four senior learners, one became the Head boy, the other Deputy Head girl and two prefects in 2022.

The inclusion of the four gave new impetus to the peace club because of the support of these influential members who themselves had the mandate to maintain peace at school because of their positions. At first, the four seemed to struggle with the concept that everyone in the peace club was equal and all viewpoints were important regardless of rank. It was fortunate that, less than a month after they joined the peace club, they underwent training with other peace club members in conflict resolution at the AVP basic workshop (see section 8.6.). After the AVP training, the four new peace club members began to embrace the concept of equality and servant leadership.

On 19th November 2020, we held our first physical meeting since the closure of schools in March 2020. I had arranged with the school authorities for an AVP basic course to be conducted in December 2020 at

the school premises. This meeting was to confirm the workshop with peace club members, and to meet and dialogue after a long period without meeting physically. The meeting was fruitful, and learners shared their experiences of being back at school. They were in high spirits that they were back to school and happy that the long awaited AVP workshop training was going to take place. Twenty two confirmed that they would attend the AVP workshop.

Peace club members undertook to arrange a meeting by themselves on 25th November 2020 before the AVP workshop. It was a big achievement for peace club members to organise this meeting because they did not all attend school at the same times because of the staggered learning arrangements resulting from Covid-19 protocols to allow for social distancing. Peace club members decided on the topic for their meeting. The report-back after the meeting was that the meeting was a great success and members were looking forward to the AVP training. They recorded the proceedings of the meeting, which they forwarded to me. At the meeting, they discussed some undesirable behaviours that were taking place at the school and came up with how these could be dealt with. These included:

- Disrespecting teachers

They highlighted that learners usually refer to teachers by nicknames such as “Scavenger,” “Fire fire” and “Khandelibomvu” (red head). Peace club members agreed that the practice must stop as it has the potential to create conflict with the teachers in the event that teachers got to know of these names. They said that teachers could in retaliation use violence against learners. Members committed themselves to desist from disrespecting teachers through giving them nicknames and to encourage other learners to shun such practices.

- Judging people by class stream

It was highlighted that learners judged other learners in some classes as poor performers. Peace club members agreed that this was wrong. They noted that everyone was important and that some learners may be good academically while others excel in sports. They agreed that no one should judge others and committed to desist from judging others and to live by example.

- Bullying

Peace club members noted that there was a lot of bullying at school. They highlighted that some boys had the tendency of touching girls’ bodies without the girls’ consent and other uncomfortable touches. The members agreed that such practices had to be stopped and they

agreed that they would talk to the boys who were involved in this practice to change their behaviour.

The next activity of the peace club was the AVP Basic workshop training that was held on 1 to 2 December 2020.

## 8.4 Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)

The Alternatives to Violence Project workshops were conducted to equip learners and teachers with skills and knowledge in the non-violent resolution of conflict, with the intention of reducing school violence at Mzilikazi High School. Teachers attended basic and advanced AVP workshops, while learners attended the basic workshop.

### 8.4.1 AVP history

The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) is a global conflict transformation programme run by volunteers (Tomlinson, 2007:1). It is dedicated to reducing the level of violence in society by equipping participants with skills to resolve conflict non-violently. Quakers began the programme in 1975 in a New York state prison to help prison inmates handle their conflicts non-violently. The programme continued in prisons for several years and, with time, it was realised that the violence present in prisons was a reflection of the violence prevailing in the wider community. The programme then expanded outside the prison context and into many countries. (AVP Basic Manual, 2002: A-2, A-4). AVP can be found in the five continents and is present in Zimbabwe. AVP workshops were used in transitional justice in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide, with former child soldiers in Liberia, and with training of election monitors in Kenya (John 2016).

### 8.4.2 AVP philosophy

In AVP, power seeps up, it does not trickle down, building from the grassroots up. This is derived from approaches by Gandhi (see section 2.4.) and Martin Luther King Jr (2.4.). Hierarchy is avoided at all costs, and the focus is on community, acknowledging and encouraging each other as the group grows and develops (AVP Facilitators Manual:2013:5). AVP workshops run on five central themes or pillars: affirmation, communication, co-operation, community building, and creative conflict transformation.

Central to AVP is the notion of transforming power which recognises that everyone has power to shape a situation in a negative direction towards a violent outcome or in a positive direction towards resolving conflicts. Transforming power builds on non-violence. One has to believe that there is something good about their opponent and try and reach out for that goodness. Transforming power rests on the assumption that violence and destructive solutions are not the way to resolve conflicts. There are always different, alternative ways of resolving conflict available other than violent means (AVP Basic Manual: 2002). The central values of transforming power are respect for self, caring for others, thinking before reacting, asking for a nonviolent path, and expecting the best from others (Lamb and Snodgrass (2017).

Transforming power emphasises that non-violence is not passivity but respects the worth of everyone and actively seeks justice for all. It is not martyrdom and does not seek suffering. Commitment to non-violence may involve suffering. However, transforming power recognises the risk of suffering in both violent and non-violent lifestyles. In non-violence, the choice is not between suffering and security, but between destructive and life-affirming actions and responses. Transforming power is not submissiveness or about letting others take advantage of anyone. It emphasises that everyone is worthy of respect and has rights which must be asserted (AVP Basic Manual 2002: B2-B3).

In South Africa, AVP has translated transforming power as *Ubuntu*. The two concepts are similar when dealing with issues of conflict, violence and conflict resolution. The lifestyle of non-violence in transforming power is premised on five key aspects: respect for self; caring for others; expecting the best from others; thinking before reacting, and finally, asking for a non-violent path. Some of the guiding principles to transforming power are: seeking to resolve conflicts by reaching common ground; reaching for something in others that seeks to do good for self and others; listening to where the other person is coming from before responding; basing ones position on truth, and being prepared to change ones position (AVP Basic Manual 2002: B11).

### 8.4.3 AVP pedagogy

AVP is a participatory learning programme that empowers and equips participants with skills to resolve conflicts non-violently (John 2016). It is a non-violent pedagogical approach (Lamb and Snodgrass 2017). The programme teaches through experiential learning with minimum lectures. Participants bring and

learn from their own experiences, both past and present, in a workshop context (Tomlinson, 2007). The learning is mainly through a series of structured experiences or exercises such as brainstorming, journal writing, reflection and listening, with role plays being a key focus. Role plays help participants discover new ways of dealing with conflict non-violently, and to practice new behaviour by participating in and observing role plays (AVP Facilitators Training Manual 2013:3). The AVP programme involves participatory pedagogy and critical reflection that fosters deep experiential learning (John 2016).

AVP uses life experiences of participants as a learning resource to deal constructively with issues of violence. To achieve this, AVP has evolved a process and a set of learning activities for the three workshops. The process functions provided the facilitators stick to it. Facilitators guide or hold space for participants to explore their own learning rather than telling or lecturing them as to what they have to learn. Facilitators have training manuals for each workshop level. The manuals have become an organic part of the AVP experience, are clear, well written, and in a constant state of evolution and updating with creative ideas (AVP Facilitators Training Manual 2013:3 - 4)

#### **8.4.4 AVP workshops**

AVP workshops which run for two to three days are conducted in schools, communities, universities and prisons to equip participants with alternatives to violence when resolving conflict (John 2016). Attendance at AVP workshops is voluntary. This is a fundamental requirement because the programme is about personal growth, and people cannot grow if this is imposed on them. Both the workshop facilitators and participants are volunteers. AVP workshops are said to be a process that allows participants to experience the way of non-violence. Every workshop is a journey and is unique. Participants do not experience the workshop all in the same way as each participant is unique and has particular experiences (AVP Basic Manual 2002: A-6).

Methodologically, AVP offers three progressive levels of training which are: Basic, Advanced, and Training for facilitators (John 2015). The basic workshop focuses on developing skills in affirmation of self and others, communication, and active listening, co-operation, community and trust building, and creative conflict transformation. (AVP Basic Manual 2002). The advanced workshop builds on what was learnt at the basic workshop, and focuses on community building, consensus, setting goals, and group decision. In



addition, participants get to focus on a topic of choice that they agree on through consensus in response to their expressed group needs. Topics discussed at the advanced workshop include forgiveness, anger, stereotyping, fear, communication, power and powerlessness (AVP Advanced Manual 2005). The training of facilitators level equips participants with participatory facilitation skills and experience in facilitating a basic workshop (John 2015).

#### 8.4.5 Alternatives to Violence Project Zimbabwe (AVPZ)

The Alternatives to Violence Project in Zimbabwe (AVPZ) was initiated by three members of the Bulawayo Quaker Meeting teaming up with four Zimbabwean graduates in peace studies from Durban University of Technology, who are also trained in AVP, and who came together to start the programme in Zimbabwe. AVP (Namibia) and AVP (KZN) assisted in the setting up of the programme and provided mentorship at the first basic workshop in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The programme was officially launched in 2016 as the Bulawayo AVP Network and is now an officially registered Trust under the name Alternatives to Violence Project Zimbabwe (AVPZ 2018).

In order to empower individuals, communities and institutions with knowledge and skills in peacebuilding, in 2018, AVPZ trained 309 participants in basic, advanced and training for facilitators workshops (AVPZ, 2018). In 2021, a total of 257 participants in the three workshops were trained (AVPZ 2021). Participants ranged in age from 16 to 70, drawn from communities, schools, churches and community-based organisations, 75% of them being female (AVPZ 2018). I was part facilitating team for some of the workshops.

AVPZ workshops target teachers, youths, and church groups who are believed to have a higher multiplier effect in communities in addition to programming for service providers, people with disabilities, and those working in correctional services. Focus on teachers is intended to empower teachers with ideas and skills that would enable them to start peace clubs at their schools and to promote a culture of peace thereat (AVPZ, 2021). School learners and teachers are viewed as strategic in running peace clubs at their respective schools and in taking the AVP philosophy forward. Positive outcomes and the impact of the programme have been reported by schools requesting further training to advanced level. There have also

been individual testimonies from participants who have experienced the benefits of AVP training in their personal lives (AVPZ 2018).

A basic workshop funded by Durban University of Technology for a PhD student was conducted in 2020 in Beit Bridge. This was good opportunity to build upon, expand geographically, and to strengthen AVP (AVPZ 2021). In December 2020, AVPZ was able to conduct a basic workshop exclusively for peace club learners at Mzilikazi High School (see section 8.6). Further, AVPZ agreed to accommodate four teachers who were part of my study to attend the basic and advanced workshops that the organisation was conducting for teachers under its programme (see section 8.9).

Valuable insights were gained from the 2016 Africa regional gathering to which AVPZ sent one delegate, and at the Southern African gathering (conference) in 2017 where three facilitators attended (AVPZ 2018); I was one of those three facilitator who attended the Southern African gathering (see section 8.4.6).

In the peacebuilding space in Zimbabwe, although AVP is a relatively new programme it has already generated much interest within communities. As AVPZ continues to network with other players, it is believed that peace for individuals and communities has a chance to succeed (AVPZ 2018). At the end of 2021, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, AVPZ reported a successful year of training. The organisation presented 18 workshops planned for the year, with two being a basic workshop for teachers. The workshops were conducted under strict WHO guidelines (AVPZ 2021). The advanced workshop attended by the four Mzilikazi Secondary School teachers (see section 8.6) was the first workshop to be conducted under Covid-19 restrictions.

#### **8.4.6 My personal experience with AVP**

I was certified as an AVP facilitator in 2017 after undergoing training at the three levels of AVP and completing the required apprenticeship of facilitating three workshops under the coaching of experienced facilitators. I have facilitated workshops in Zimbabwe for, community members, churches, schools, women's organisations, people with disabilities, people with albinism, sexually abused young women, women-only and men-only groups, and the Rotarians. I facilitated workshops in South Africa in 2018 for PhD and Masters students at the Durban University of Technology at the advanced and training of

facilitators levels. In 2018 and 2019, I facilitated two basic workshops for peace club learners in Pietermaritzburg.

I attended the AVP Southern African gathering in Durban, South Africa, from 15th-18th June 2017. The theme of the conference was “Nurturing Peace in our Communities.” At the conference, I co-presented with two other Zimbabwean facilitators on our experiences with transforming power and *ubuntu*. At the conference, the 17th of June was devoted to sharing experiences with facilitators working with schools, youths and prisons. This was in remembrance of the 1976 Soweto youth uprisings. The focus of the day was on learners. Learners from peace clubs from various schools joined us and we visited the Mandela Memorial site where we had a guided tour through museum exhibitions and the memorial site. Thereafter, we had a joint session with the learners reflecting on the lessons learnt from the visit to the Mandela Memorial site. Learners shared their experiences in peace clubs and how peace clubs had benefited them.

In 2021, I participated in the virtual AVP International gathering, leading a session on peace clubs that I facilitated virtually with an AVP facilitator from Namibia.

## 8.5 Pietermaritzburg peace clubs evaluation

In 2012, MCC introduced school peace clubs in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. AVPKZN was also involved in similar peacebuilding initiatives. In 2016, MCC funded AVPKZN to set up school peace clubs, beginning with four clubs inherited from their earlier initiative. The plan was to build up the number of schools with peace clubs to 34. The title of the project was “*Creating peaceful schools through peace clubs and AVP*” (AVPKZN 2015).

In 2019 I was invited by AV(KZN) to carry out an end of project evaluation for the peace club project. I accepted the invitation and in March 2019 I carried out a end of project evaluation with my supervisor Professor Harris. The decision by AVPKZN to invite me for the evaluation was influenced by my experience as an AVP facilitator and this study. At the time of the evaluation there were 15 functioning peace clubs, 13 operating in schools and two with non-governmental organizations. Six other clubs had begun but had stopped, mostly because there was no teacher willing to assist. Of the 13 schools based peace clubs five were in primary schools and eight were in secondary schools. Three primary schools and four secondary

schools were selected for the evaluation as 'typical' by the facilitators from the 13 school based peace clubs. On being asked to rate the performance of the selected peace clubs; the facilitators rated one peace club as strong, four as mixed and one as weak. Regrettably, at the end of the evaluation one peace club was not included in the study because a learner committed suicide the day before the planned visit to the school (AVPKZN 2018).

The evaluation covered a three year period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019 and was based on the intended outcomes of the project, which were summarised as follows:

- *Peace club learners will become peace agents and role models:* they relate respectfully to others; resolve conflicts nonviolently; act as mediators; recruit other learners into the peace club; play a positive leadership role in the school and school structures; engage positively with their parents, families, other learners, and people in the community; and share their knowledge and understanding of peace and conflict issues with others.
- *The teachers supporting the peace clubs will become peace agents and role models:* they champion peace clubs and AVP, model nonviolent forms of discipline, constructive conflict resolution and respectful relationships in the school, and communicate their knowledge and understanding of peace and conflict issues to others.
- *There will be growth of peace identity and community:* AVP and peace clubs will become better known among stakeholders in participating schools and surrounding schools; participating schools will network and support each other; a suitable set of additional AVP/peace clubs media and materials will be developed and piloted; and the AVP network and facilitator commitment grows (AVPKZN:2015).

In terms of long-term impact, it was the intention that schools with peace clubs would have developed safer, more harmonious school environments characterized by respectful relationships and lower levels of violence. Conflict would be dealt with nonviolently and a "peace approach" would characterize the functioning of school structures and contribute to increased school safety and security. Learners and teachers would be happier and more productive, and the parent/broader community would begin to experience the fruits of all this (AVPKZN 2015:5).

The data collection for the evaluation was conducted from 10 March 2019 to 22 March 2019. Data was collected from three sources; the AVP facilitators' files, supplemented with data provided by the AVP coordinator; interviews and focus group discussions with 76 learners, in six school groups; interviews with five principals and seven teachers associated with peace clubs; interviews with four peace club facilitators and the peace club coordinator; observation and informal discussions (Moyo 2022).

The questions asked during the interviews were designed to assist in determining the extent to which the intended outcomes were met. Given that the interviews were conducted quite early in the school year, the responses largely referred to the experiences of 2018 and previous years. Very little quantitative data was available, and no school kept an 'incident book' in which instances of indiscipline would be recorded. The evaluation examined the outcomes for learners and teachers, specifically, whether peace clubs had resulted in them becoming peace agents and role models and whether the schools in which the peace clubs were based had become less conflictual and less violent (Moyo 2022).

The outcomes identified are summarised below:

#### Outcome 1. Peace club learners are peace agents and role models

Learners had a lot of anger and frustration, reflecting the intensity of violence in their communities. They experienced violence in their homes and communities on a regular basis. At every school, learners reported that they were affected by this violence. Homes and wider communities did not model peaceful methods of resolving conflicts, instead they taught learners that violence was normal and justified. Most learners brought the violence they had learnt from home and communities to school and vented it on others through fighting, bullying, insults and harassment. As a result of growing up in violent communities, most learners learnt that conflicts can only be resolved through violence or threat of violence. Before the introduction of peace clubs learners only knew that in conflict they must retaliate. Through participation as members of peace clubs, learners had learnt that they could resolve conflicts non-violently and that there are alternatives to violence (Moyo 2022).

At almost all schools, learners reported that peace clubs provided them with a safe space where they could share their experiences without fear of being judged or ridiculed. At peace club meetings they shared their stories of anger, violence, drugs and alcohol that are rife in their homes and communities

and got assistance from other peace club members. For most learners, there was no alternative place for such sharing. At home, their parents did not pay attention to their concerns whereas at the peace club such issues were listened to, and assistance given where necessary (Moyo 2022).

Peace club members learnt to resolve conflicts non-violently and practice this at school and at home. The importance of dialogue in resolving conflicts was mentioned by learners at all the schools. They stated that they had realized that violence such as fighting did not solve anything, instead it resulted in more violence and anger. In addition, peace club members became peer mediators at school and mediated in disputes at home. At one school, six peace club members performed monitoring duties to intervene in conflict situations and prevent them from escalating to physical violence. Their interventions reduced drug taking and fighting (Moyo 2022).

Outcome 2. The teachers supporting the peace clubs are peace agents and role models

Teachers benefited personally from peace clubs. They championed peace clubs and AVP. Some teachers were positively influenced by the content of the peace club curriculum. One teacher explained that she had stopped shouting at learners and was instead talking to them to understand their behaviour. A Principal at one of the schools had a very positive attitude towards AVP and stated that the philosophy on nonviolence resonated with that of his school (Moyo 2022)..

Outcome 3. Growth of peace identity in schools and the community

It was reported that the schools were more harmonious as a result of peace clubs. The behaviour of peace club members positively influenced the whole school environment. Teachers saw behavioural change starting with peace club members as they changed their mindsets regarding conflict and violence. This change was more noticeable when peace club members were previously learners with behavioural difficulties (Moyo 2022).

The evaluation led to the conclusion that peace clubs were a significant peace infrastructure. They dealt with issues which were not discussed or examined elsewhere and their use of experiential and participatory learning which is not used at schools and elsewhere contributed to them being attractive to learners (Moyo 2022).

## 8.6 AVP basic workshop training for learners

Learners attended a basic AVP workshop on 1st and 2nd December 2020. This was 11 months (less provision for school holidays) after the inception of the peace club. The initial plan was that the AVP workshop would be conducted earlier than December 2020; however, the onset of Covid-19 and its accompanying protocols and regulations, compounded by the tight school calendar made this impossible. The workshop was conducted at the school premises with 22 learners attending.

The workshop programme of activities is outlined at Table 8.6 below. These are grouped under the five pillars/themes of AVP, which are: affirmation, communication, co-operation, community building, and creative conflict resolution.

**Table 8.6: Summary of AVP basic workshop activities**

Session	Activities	Purpose
Affirmation	Adjective name game. Reflection: What I am proud of about myself. Brainstorm on violence and non-violence	To build self-esteem, self-confidence and positive self -identity. Participants start the process of affirming themselves. To develop skills to engage with issues of violence and seek non-violent ways for their resolution.

Communication	Concentric circles- Active listening; <i>“A time I was not in control of my anger and it hurt me and/or others,”</i> and <i>“A part of me or my life that I want to work on this year.”</i>	To equip participants with active listening skills. Improvement in communication skills.
Co-operation/group problem solving	Co-operative construction	To equip participants with skills necessary for group problem solving such as verbal and non-verbal communication, sharing and empathy. To demonstrate the importance of co-operation in solving group problems. Building team spirit. To sensitise participants on productive and obtrusive behaviour when solving group problems.
Community Building	Trust walk.	To engender the spirit of trust and community building as a key component in group problem solving. To understand the importance of trust in building relationships. To build trust in one another and to feel safe and secure with others.
Creative conflict transformation	“I” messages. Transforming power. Role plays.	To equip participants with skills to resolve conflicts non-violently and to be aware that there are always alternatives. Ability to express one’s feelings as a means of transforming conflicts by arousing empathy in the other party.



		<p>Ability to focus on the problem or issue at stake rather than attack the offender.</p> <p>To reinforce the skills of mediation and negotiation already learnt at the peace club.</p>
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### 8.6.1 Session one - Affirmation

At the beginning of the workshop, participants were asked to introduce themselves and state their expectations and fears. A brief talk on the history and philosophy of AVP was presented. Emphasis was placed on the experiential nature of the workshop, and that it was not a talk show, neither was it therapy. The workshop was said to be fun aimed at developing skills to find non-violent ways of dealing with conflict. Before the start of the agenda of the day, participants came up with a boundary agreement – that is, ground rules to guide the proceedings of the two workshop days. The boundary agreement included the following:

- We must listen to each other and give each other chances to speak
- Respect each other and the facilitators
- No noise
- We must be punctual
- Everyone must clean up at the end of each day
- Confidentiality on personal issues
- We must not laugh at each other
- No teasing or put downs
- We must speak audibly.

The activities of session one were aimed at self-affirmation. The two exercises they did under affirmation were the affirmation exercise and the adjective name game. During the affirmation exercise, learners

were asked to think about one thing that they are proud of about themselves and share with the group. Some learners looked surprised that they could identify something good in themselves that they could share with others. Some of the responses were amazing such as, *"I am proud that I do not participate in gossip during break time where most of my classmates will be gossiping," "I am proud that I have never bunked school since I came to Mzilikazi," "I am proud that I have a big smile. When I smile everyone smiles too."* The adjective name game required learners to give themselves positive affirming adjective names beginning with the first letter of their names. Participants gave themselves names such as, Thando (love), Perfect, Noble, Smiling, and Sweet.

This Affirmation session assisted participants to dispel perceived negative thoughts they had about themselves and to develop a positive sense about self. They realised that they had positive qualities, and this boosted their self-confidence and self-esteem, and helped them build positive self-identity. Nelson *et. al.* (2014:11) assert that self-affirmation bolsters one's self-image and protects people from later threatening information. Self-affirmation may be associated with sustained happiness and meaning. People who affirm themselves may be less susceptible to threats in their day to day lives and thus can insulate themselves from anticipated declines in well-being (Nelson *et.al.* 2014, 11).

Included under session one was the brainstorm on violence/non-violence. The concepts of violence and non-violence were not new to the participants as these had been discussed at peace club meetings. However, at the AVP workshops, peace club members appeared to have gained deeper understanding of the concepts and were able to relate them to situations at the school. They engaged with issues of direct, structural and cultural violence that prevailed at school and in the wider community. Participants were asked to identify the causes of violence at Mzilikazi High School. They stated some of the causes as: race for power, hatred, gossip, inferiority complex, peer pressure, masculinity, drug abuse, girl and boy relations, competition, and jealousy. Participants indicated that violence at school affected their studies as they failed to concentrate on their work. They indicated that, even if they reported to school authorities, they did not see much change in the behaviour of the offending learners. Some participants highlighted that, when they spoke to their parents about their encounters with violence at school, the parents did not pay much attention and some parents encouraged the learners to retaliate.

Drug abuse was discussed at length, with learners stating the main cause of drug abuse as peer pressure and the desire for popularity. Drugs mentioned that learners partook in were marijuana, glue and bronco.

Learners highlighted that although they were not aware of its use at Mzilikazi High School they were aware that young people were now partaking of a deadly drug crystal methamphetamine (*mutoriro*) which had powerful euphoric effects and could leave the users in a semi-conscious state that learners referred to as “sticking.” Those partaking of “*mutoriro*” could go for 72 hours or more without sleeping. However, peace club members abhorred the use of illicit drugs, with one participant revealing that, before joining the peace club, he used to smoke marijuana. He had since stopped and confessed that he used to feel miserable once the drug started to wear off.

At the close of the brainstorm, participants were asked about what could be done to address the violence prevailing at school. The unanimous response was that there was need for learners to be educated on the negative consequences of violence to themselves, their families and other learners. Participants agreed that the peace club had the responsibility to lead by example despite the challenges that they currently faced, the main one being that some seasoned bullies threatened them when they tried to intervene in conflicts, especially those of fighting and bullying.

#### 8.6.2 Session two - Communication

Session two focused on active communication with the concentric circles exercise being the highlight. The exercise was aimed at equipping learners with active listening skills. Active listening is important in preventing and resolving conflicts by reducing misunderstandings in communication Merritt (2021:115) avers that effective listening is active. The active listener considers the message and creates time to craft a meaningful response. Merritt (2021:116) identified six skills to be acquired by an active listener which are: paying attention, withholding judgement, reflecting, clarifying, summarising and sharing.

For the concentric circles exercise participants sat in pairs. The paired participants were given two topics to talk about in turns for two minutes each. When listening the participant was not supposed to talk to or interrupt the speaker. Thereafter, the listener had to repeat back what was said by the speaker. The two topics were: “*A time I was not in control of my anger and it hurt me and/or others,*” and “*A part of me or my life that I want to work on this year.*” The exercise was fun and engaging. On debriefing the exercise, Zenzo commented, “*Eish, it was hard to listen without commenting, but now I realise that, by not interrupting, I gave the other person space to say their stuff.*” Tinashe said “*two minutes was too long to*

*talk. That means people talk too much because they are interrupted as they try to express themselves."*

Most participants stated that normally they are not listened to either at home or at school. They felt great and honoured to have someone listening to them without interruption. Sipho summarised the general feeling saying, *"It was great to be listened to. When I am with my friends, I can never finish a sentence without them interrupting, and that always makes me angry."*

### 8.6.3 Session three – Co-operation, group problem-solving

The session was highlighted by the co-operative construction exercise (Broken squares). Participants were put into groups and each given three pieces of a puzzle. The requirement was that each participant makes a square from the pieces. However, the pieces given to each participant could not make the square unless participants exchanged and shared pieces amongst themselves. The purpose of the activity was for participants to experience aspects of co-operation in solving group problems, and to sensitize participants to some of their productive and/or obstructive behaviours in group problem resolution. Important issues that are elicited by this exercise as necessary for co-operation include: the power of communication, observation, and taking care of the needs of others (AVP Basic Manual 2002: E9-E10). After the exercise, participants shared what they learnt from the exercise, and how they could apply this to their daily lives. *"We all like hoarding things, but I have learnt that you can be a loser by hoarding instead of giving when you are working as a team,"* Sihle said.

### 8.6.4 Session Four: Community building

This session built on the last session with the emphasis being on building trust for community building. The highlight of the session was the trust walk. In this exercise participants were paired, and one blindfolded. The blindfolded participant was led around safely by the partner who took care that the blindfolded participant was not harmed. After a few minutes the roles were reversed. During the debriefing session, the blindfolded participants said they felt very uncomfortable despite assurances that they were being safely led and no harm would befall them. Those leading said they felt a great responsibility was on their shoulders to ensure the safety of the blindfolded colleague. The issue of being responsible in order to build trust was noted by most participants. In addition, the activity demonstrated how people can build trust in each other and care for each other

### 8.6.5 Session five - Creative conflict transformation

The session on creative conflict transformation was central to the workshop. The areas of focus were transforming power, “I” messages, root causes of violence, and role plays. Role plays were the culmination of everything that was learnt over the two days.

Transforming power was the key talking point of the workshop. Transforming power is discussed in detail at section 8.4.2. The transforming power discussion caught the attention of all participants: *“I did not think I had power to change a bad situation to a good one,”* was a reaction from Nozie. The highlight of the transforming power talk was respect for self, and the fact that there are always alternatives. *“I did not realise that when I am being naughty, I am disrespecting myself,”* said Simo. Nhlanhla said, *“This business of looking for alternatives is sure hard, but I will try it out.”*

The “I” messages were a totally new concept to the learners where one has to express their feeling, show the need, and suggest a way forward. In many African societies, children are not encouraged to express their feelings freely. Learners asked whether it was safe to use “I” messages with adults. They were assured that it was safe as long as they chose the words they used since “I” messages were not a licence to use rude words when expressing one’s feelings. On the second day of the workshop, we started with a discussion on “Insights from yesterday.” Each learner was to tell what their insights were. One learner said, *“I practised using ‘I’ messages with my mom yesterday. My mom always wants me to help her with housework as soon as I get home. If I don’t, she shouts at me. The problem is that I will be tired and I must do my homework. So, I decided to test the ‘I’ messages, and my mom allowed me to rest, do my homework, then help with washing the dishes after supper.”* The ability to express one’s feelings as a means of transforming a conflict by arousing empathy from the other party and the ability to solve a problem rather than attack the person by focusing on the behaviour and not the person were new to learners.

The main aim of role plays was to assist participants to discover new, creative ways of resolving conflicts and to reinforce the fact that there are always alternatives. During role plays, participants were asked to role play typical conflict situations at school and to demonstrate how these could be resolved non-violently. The peace club members had covered mediation and negotiating at a peace club meeting. The

learning was reinforced in this session and participants demonstrated that they had grasped the use of negotiation and mediation in resolving conflicts. Further, the role plays used concepts learnt from transforming power such as seeking a non-violent path, expecting the best, thinking before reacting, and respect for self and others. Learning obtained from active listening and “I” messages ran like a thread through the role plays.

After the role plays, participants asked to do affirmation posters. Participants were asked to prepare their posters by writing their names on a folded blank paper and artistically decorate the poster. The posters were laid on a table and participants were asked to write on every poster except theirs, affirming the person whose name appeared outside the poster. No negative comments were allowed, only positive comments of affirmation. The learners successfully did this exercise. This activity demonstrated that in addition to self-affirmation, learners had to affirm others as part of the peacebuilding process. At the end of the workshop each learner took the affirmation poster home with handouts on transforming power and “I” messages. Ordinarily, the affirmation posters and handouts would have been given to the participant at the graduation ceremony of the AVP workshop together with their certificates of attendance. The certificates were not handed to the participants at the end of the workshop because it was agreed that participants would graduate at a special assembly witnessed by the whole school community and receive their certificates then. This would create visibility of the peace club at school and raise awareness on the importance of peaceful living among learners. However, this was not possible as the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic set in and the Covid-19 regulations limited the conduct of school assemblies. The peace club members had to graduate at a special peace club meeting after the relaxation of the Covid-19 restrictions on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2021.

When schools opened in for the first term in 2021, I arranged for an AVP graduation ceremony for peace club members. Present at the graduation was the peace club matron (see Figure 8.3 below).

**Figure 8.3: AVP graduation for learners**



## 8.7 Evaluation of the basic workshop by learners

Schools closed soon after the AVP graduation. In order to carry out an evaluation of the AVP workshop, participants were asked to evaluate the AVP workshop on 10th December 2020 at a meeting held virtually. A second evaluation of the workshop was carried out at the end of the study (see section 9.3). The results of the evaluation of 10 December 2020 are presented below under six themes:

### *Theme One: Peace begins with us*

Peace club learners agreed that, unless they demonstrate change in behaviour and attitude, it would be difficult for them to influence other learners. *“You cannot spread peace when you do not have it yourself. What you tell others should match your actions,”* said Themba. Looking at self-introspection, Sizo added that they should make peace with their past so that their past did not affect their future. Sizo had revealed at an earlier meeting that he used to be a bully and enjoyed seeing his victims running away from him.

### *Theme Two: Stop violence at school*

One of the outstanding sessions that learners spoke about was the brainstorm on violence and non-violence. During the brainstorm, learners came up with innovative ways of how violence could be reduced at school. A learner recalled days at Primary school where learners caught fighting would be required to

recite two poems each on love and care in front of everyone in class. He suggested that this could be introduced and, this time, the poems could be recited at assembly. It was the general consensus that something had to be done about bullying. Minnie said, *“We should campaign around classes and tell people how bad it is to do violence and tell them the best thing to avoid violence is to make peace with each other.”* Tinashe proposed,

*We must start anti-bullying initiatives, although we can start small. We can have an anti-bullying campaign for the whole month. Put up awareness posters at strategic points. Go class-by-class, talking to other others (and) letting them know what they can do if confronted by a bully. Of course, we will meet resistance (from other learners) but we must do it.*

Regrettably, learners could not put this initiative into action because of limited time resulting from the shortened school term because of Covid-19 lockdowns, and the fact that peace club members were all due to write examinations and had to give more time to preparing for them.

#### *Theme Four: Use of social media to spread the word of peace*

Nhlanhla came up with an innovative way of building peace, *“Let us have a Facebook page which can be seen worldwide (to show) what Mzilikazi is doing, and maybe we can get support. Let us use our social media groups to talk about peace.”* I was amazed at the level of creativity among the learners. Yet, as with Tinashe’s ideas, time did not allow for Nhlanhla’s idea to be implemented. The responses were very ambitious and encouraging, proving that the AVP workshop and peace club meetings had transformed learners in their thinking about peace and violence at school.

#### *Theme Five: Individual growth*

Although it was still early days, peace club members spoke about how they viewed themselves differently since the workshop. They indicated that they realised that they all were valuable and important regardless of what other people thought. They showed confidence in who they were and had a sense of self-identity.

#### *Theme Six: Peaceful resolution of conflicts*

Learners showed positive internalisation of non-violent values, they believed in themselves, trusted their judgements, and committed themselves to practice new ways of resolving conflicts as they realised the benefits of non-violence. *“I learnt to resolve conflicts without using violence, especially when someone wants to fight,”* said Chipso.



The sessions on “I” messages and communication were transformational, and learners indicated that they were already practising what was learnt with both positive and negative results. I encouraged them to keep going. Daisy said, *“You cannot take back what you have said, so you should think before you talk; good communication prevents fights and misunderstandings.”*

## 8.8 Peace club meetings in 2021

**Table 8.7: Peace club meetings**

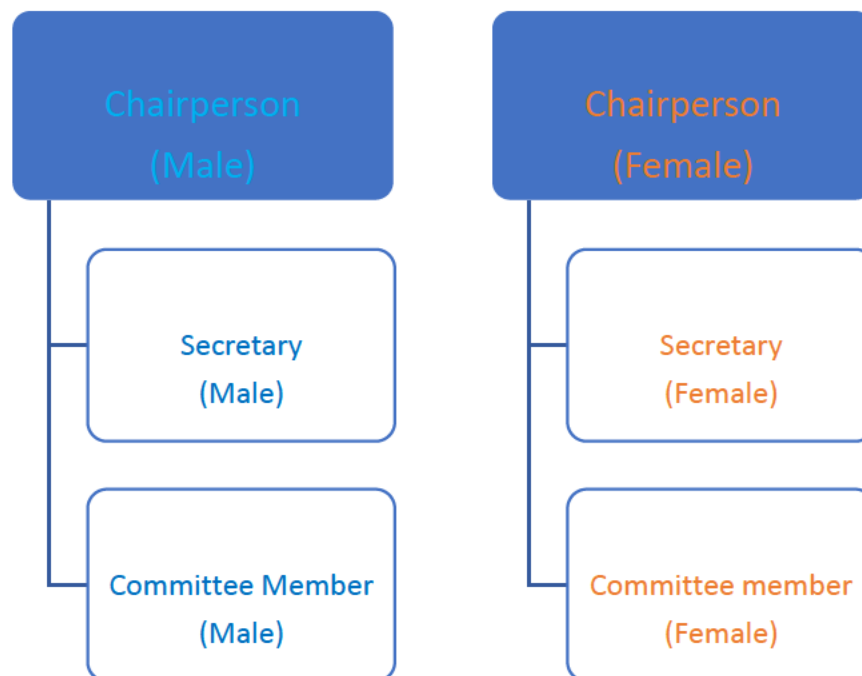
Date	Attendance	Activity
27th January 2021	17	Selecting peace club committee.
15 February 2021	2	No meeting, no food
5th March 2021	15	Tatenda starts conversation on virtual platform on <i>“how is everyone doing”</i> . Thereafter 14 joined in conversation that ended up in encouraging each other to <i>“keep going”</i> .
17 March 2021	18	Peaceful living.
19 April 2021	22	Graduation ceremony
	Second lockdown May 2021	
13th July 2021	17	How they had been affected by the lockdown
10th August 2021	16	What can we do so as not to lose our peace because of Covid-19?
	School reopen in September 2021	Discussions continued on virtual platform on a ad hoc basis.

As a result of the escalating number of infections due to the Covid-19 pandemic, schools did not open in January 2021. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education announced a new school calendar that would see schools opening for examination classes (which included peace club members) on 15th March

2021 for the first term (Mashudu and Ndlovu 2021). Before schools opened, peace club members discussed issues such as drug abuse and bullying on the WhatsApp platform, and how they were preparing for examinations. When schools opened, the window of opening was short (Mashudu and Ndlovu 2021).

A physical meeting was held on 27th January 2021 to select a committee to oversee the running of the peace club. This was to ensure that the peace club would be able to be fully led and driven by learners with the assistance and coaching by the matron. To ensure gender balance for each position, two learners were chosen, one female and the other male. The peace club committee comprised of two chairpersons, two secretaries and two committee members. Deliberately, the chairpersons and secretaries were Form Threes, while the committee members, who would act as advisors, were Form Fives. The reason behind this was that the Form Threes had been in the peace club since its inception, and the co-opting of the four Form Fives was to assist in influencing the seniors at the school for peace. The structure of the peace club committee is depicted at Figure 8.4 below.

Figure 8.4: Structure of the peace club committee



Source: Author

A record of attendance and the activities of the peace club were to be kept by the secretaries. With the new impetus, peace club members started to practice what they had learnt at the peace club meetings and at the AVP workshop. At the playground they mediated in conflicts and prevented them from escalating to violence. The Form Five peace club members could intervene when bullies in Forms Five and Six started fights, threatened or bullied other learners at the playground.

After the selection of the Committee, I asked the peace club learners to arrange a meeting by themselves and advise the matron of their plans. They set a date of 15 February 2021. When I enquired later how the meeting progressed, I was advised by one of the secretaries that the meeting did not take place. *“We didn’t have the meeting. Some refused to come saying there was no food. Then others didn’t manage because of schoolwork.”* The secretary said, *“I have realised ukuthi nxa lingekho (if you are not there) it’s hard for people to meet.”* I asked the peace club members how they planned to conduct meetings when there was no provision of refreshments from an external source. They discussed the issue among themselves and agreed that they would bring their packed lunches to meeting and share. thereafter they managed to meet on their own.

#### 8.8.1 Second Covid-19 lockdown

Unlike in the first lockdown, during the second lockdown learners saw a lot of violence around them and some within their families. They had close relatives who died of Covid-19 complications. For some, the second lockdown provided a window for growth which some attributed to what they learnt from the peace club or the AVP workshop. At a meeting held virtually on 13 July 2021 there were encouraging testimonies of how the training helped some to cope, although others had overwhelming experiences which they described as insurmountable. Tinashe had this to say,

*Well for me, this lockdown isn’t actually that bad from the first one in the sense that I have grown mentally as compared to last year. The first one was really depressing for me, and it was very tough to cope with the new situation, but one thing I learnt that was important to me and still is, is that you have to look at the bright side of things even though things are bad. That means you have to look for a greater reason than reality to have a better mindset. I had to change routine; I had to improve more and act more if I had to be a better person, so I read and still read a lot of books on growth and self-development.*

Failure to attend lessons was a concern for learners. The closure of schools meant that they would be behind with their lessons, and most of them could not afford private lessons, which learners from wealthier backgrounds could do. Sithembiso said, *"To me, lockdown is okay. I'm just worrying that we are not going to school, and we will be expected to write exams. My parents cannot afford to pay for private lessons."*

During the second phase of the pandemic, peace club members lost their loved ones and neighbours, and some also tested positive for Covid-19. The affected learners were traumatised by these losses. *"The worst part is that I lost my grandfather because of Covid and some of my relatives tested positive,"* said Themba. Busi stated, *"I lost an aunt during lockdown and my dad tested positive for Covid. It was hard seeing people battle with Covid and some passing away."* Daniel, who had previously denied the reality of Covid-19, had this to say after losing a close uncle to the pandemic, *"It has been educative. I did not believe that Covid was real, but yooh, after my uncle's death last month I believe. I realised that many people are like Thomas of the Bible who always believe after seeing."* Such reports cast a cloud of gloom at the meeting and Hope volunteered to pray before we could move on with our meeting.

Although none of the learners reported experiencing violence during lockdown, many reported witnessing acts of violence at home and in the community: *"Violence is more when people are always at home; eish, it's hard."* Sihle stated that violence was prevalent in her community and a day did not pass without a report of some form of violence taking place *"People are always fighting and threatening each other; I wish we could go back to school"* she said.

The above responses highlighted the lack of peace, and the fear and uncertainty experienced by learners during the lockdown periods. Ruby complained that, since they were spending all the time at home, they needed snacks, but these were scarce since the income of parents had been negatively affected by lockdown. In response, Zenzo said, *"Guys, let's eat mangoes. This is mango season and almost all families have mango trees, or you can easily get some from neighbours."* I was impressed by this suggestion because that was indeed the mango season and, during the mango season, mangoes are so abundant that they are available at no cost. Peace club members had learnt to look for alternatives when faced with difficult situations. They had also learnt to positively encourage each other

At the next meeting on 10 August 2021 the discussion topic was, “What can we do so as not to lose our peace because of Covid-19?” Learners came up with creative responses on how they would deal with challenges that they faced during lockdowns. Tinashe, who lost his aunt to the pandemic, encouraged others saying, “*We break, we hurt, we fall, but we have to heal, and healing is the right direction to spirituality.*” I soon realised that Tinashe was a deep thinker.

At the end of the meeting participants all agreed that the situation arising from the pandemic, the lockdowns and closure of schools should not be allowed to pull anyone down. Instead, it was agreed that everyone would endeavour to find meaningful non-violent ways of staying occupied the first available alternative being spending more time doing schoolwork.

School reopened in September 2021. Regrettably all peace club members were preparing for their final examinations, so it was difficult for them to hold physical meetings. Discussions on the virtual platform continued on an *ad hoc* basis. This proved to be a good opportunity for peace club members to keep in touch with each other and discuss issues of peace and encourage each other. They discussed issues of recruiting new members to the peace club for continuity. This discussion did not bear much fruit as the school calendar had been disrupted by the lockdowns and it became difficult for peace club members to mobilise the recruitment.

## 8.9 AVP basic and advanced workshops training intervention for teachers

A basic AVP workshop for teachers in and around Bulawayo was conducted from 6th to 7th September 2019 by AVPZ. The participant teachers already had peace clubs running in their schools or intended to introduce these in their schools. AVPZ has been conducting AVP workshops for teachers and learners since 2017. Four teachers from Mzilikazi High School attended the training. These were the Deputy Headmistress, two senior teachers, and the teacher responsible for guidance and counselling, who is the matron of the Mzilikazi peace club. The outline of the activities of the workshop is at Table 8.6

A year after the four teachers attended the basic workshop, they attended the advanced AVP workshop on 15th and 16th September 2020. The advanced workshop programme is at Table 8.8 below.

**Table 8.8 Outline of AVP advanced activities**

Session	Activity	Purpose
Community building	Community building exercise	To build team spirit and community amongst participants.
Individual goals and group goals	Participants individually set personal short and long term goals and collectively discuss the importance of group goals	To highlight the importance of personal and group goals.
Focus topic	Participants choose a topic that will be the focus for the two days by consensus. The topic to answer the question, What are the hindrances to non-violence? These include fear, anger, unforgiveness, power, powerlessness etc.	Participants to appreciate the process of consensus. Participants to come up with a topic that is meaningful to their contexts.
Experiencing the focus topic	Speak out-	Participants get a measure of healing through empathising.
Resolutions Summary, reflection and reaffirmation	Sharing	To enable participants to reflect and act on what they learnt, as they leave the workshop.

The topic that was chosen for the workshop was fear and anger. Teachers engaged with the topic relating issues at personal level and broader community level including the school environment. Issues such as the use of corporal punishment kept on emerging and were jointly addressed with teachers giving specific examples during discussions. The issue of unruly learners was also discussed with a resolution that urgent measures were needed to bring sanity at schools especially post Covid-19. The increase in learner violence and misbehaviour was reported by all teachers from the different schools.

One of the activities that stood out was *Speak out*. In *Speak out* participants brainstorm a list of oppressed groups which are usual targets of violence and abuse such as women, orphans, the disabled e.t.c.

Participants are then requested to volunteer to represent any of the groups and speak out on their behalf. Thereafter other participants are asked to comment on their thoughts and feelings and not what was said. At the workshop one of the groups that aroused a lot of empathy from the teachers was that of an orphaned learner who had no one to turn to in times of distress either at school or at home.

An evaluation by all teachers at the workshop was carried out soon after the workshop. Some of the responses were, *"The workshop was very ideal and healing, "Enlightening and useful. Some of these issues are not taken seriously hence all this violence", "motivated and healed," "Happy now that I am able to deal with fear and anger."*

On 17th September, after the advanced workshop, I met the Mzilikazi teachers to review how the basic workshop had impacted them, their attitudes and behaviour at school. The teachers were unanimous that the basic AVP workshop had given them new lenses to view situations at the school, and how to deal with misbehaving learners. However, two of the teachers still felt that corporal punishment was effective in disciplining the learners as long as the punishment administered was not severe, such as small slaps on the hand.

The teachers brought to my attention a case of a learner who is now deceased, who could not respond to either dialogue or corporal punishment. The late learner was an orphan who was very violent and disruptive at school. The guardians were called several times to the school. The parents subsequently asked that the learner be transferred to another school nearer to where they lived; this was granted. Sadly, the learner was murdered while involved in some criminal activities in the community. I recall the Deputy Headmistress saying, *"If only we had refused that the learner transfers to another school maybe he would be alive today."* This made me realise that teachers are at a loss as to how to deal with misbehaving learners in cases like this where the teachers admitted that corporal punishment and positive methods of discipline do not seem to be yielding the required results. The deep feelings of concern expressed by the Deputy Headmistress left me with a feeling of collective responsibility that something has to be done to inculcate discipline and good behaviour in learners and the youth through restorative means.

## 8.10 Summary

This chapter detailed the planning and implementation of an intervention at Mzilikazi High School in response to the third objective of my study, which was to use a participatory action research approach to plan and implement a programme of action aimed at building a culture of peace at the school. The intervention, planned and implemented together with learners, was a peace club.



## 9 Chapter 9: Outcome evaluation

### 9.1 Introduction

This chapter details the short term outcomes of my study and thus meets the study's fourth research objective. The outcomes are discussed under peace club outcomes and outcomes from the AVP training for learners and teachers. The "*Ubuntu* building peace in schools" manual is discussed as an outcome as it was a direct product of my involvement in this study.

Taylor et. al. (2005) stated that evaluation is a process of assessing the effectiveness of a piece of work, a project or programme. Therefore, outcome evaluation means measuring the degree to which the objectives of an intervention were achieved. According to Meyer (2000: 9), action research arises from a different epistemological background, meaning that it cannot be evaluated using the same criteria as other research approaches. The challenge is that systematic reviews often place studies in a hierarchy of evidence in relation to the 'gold standard' Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT). Saxena *et.al.* (2012:198-199) stated that in RCT participants are assigned to a study and control group. The groups are treated in a similar way except for the intervention they receive, the control group may not receive any intervention. RCT design gives the confidence that the differences in outcome between the two groups were actually caused by the intervention. Meyer (2000:9) contends that RCT is not appropriate for action research which uses more qualitative methods. The success of action research is not whether change can be positively demonstrated but what was learnt from the experience of trying to change practice.

Still taking the same view Harris (2014:6-7) observed that the most powerful way of measuring impact is to have an experimental group that is given the training and a control group who do not receive the training but who are otherwise similar. If the attitudes and/or behaviour of the experimental group after the training are significantly different from that of the control group, then this represents the impact made by the training. However, Harris noted that despite the methodological strength of this type of study, practically and ethically it may not be possible or equitable to select only a sample of those in a school or prison and provide training to them but not to others, simply for the purposes of research. Harris (2014:7)

indicated that as an alternative method in such instances participants' attitudes or behaviour can be measured before and after the training.

For my study, I used Lederach's theory of Conflict Transformation as a framework for the final evaluation. Lederach observed that conflict has impact at four levels: the personal, relational, structural and cultural (see section 2.10). Given this observation I evaluated my study at these four levels.

## 9.2 Peace club outcomes

At the end of my study, I conducted a focus group discussion with eight peace club members who had since graduated from school as well as individual interviews with four teachers to evaluate the short-term outcomes of the intervention. The focus group guide is at Appendix 12 and the interview guides are at Appendix 13 and 14. The focus group discussions and interviews sought to elicit responses on how membership of the peace club had changed the participants' attitudes and behaviours on issues of violence and peace at school. Participants were asked what they thought worked well and how things could have been done better. This was not the first time that evaluations were carried out. Evaluations were conducted at the end of the AVP workshops (see section 8.7)

To start off the focus group discussions, I asked the peace club members, after they had been members for more than 12 months, what in their view was a peace club. The responses indicated that the participants were clear on the purpose of a peace club. *"A peace club is where people learn how to build peace with others."* Some of the responses were, *"It is a platform where we talked about ways of spreading peace in our homes, schools and wherever we might go"; "It was a place where we could freely talk about anything without being given that 'church look'"; "It was fun mingled with learning"; "It helped me deal with stuff."*

During the evaluation process, participants thought deeply and critically about the issues raised. I allowed them to reflect and relate to their experiences prior to and after their membership in the peace club. I used their stories to develop emerging themes, which are detailed as outcomes below. The narratives from the participants pointed to personal changes in attitude and behaviour, and the desire and action taken to influence others for change at school and outside school. Using the Lederach framework, I noted

that change in the participants was at two levels: the personal and the relational. Participants referred mostly to changes at the personal level.

#### 9.2.1 Outcome 1: Peace club members found the peace club a safe place to share and learn

The peace club provided a safe space where learners could share their experiences and assist each other to deal with issues concerning them without fear of being judged. They advised each other on how to deal with conflict by looking for non-violent alternatives. This provided peace club members with inner peace and a measure of control over their circumstances. The peace club provided emotional healing for some members. Most participants reported that they had suffered some form of violence such as verbal abuse or threatening, and some had been bullied at home and at school resulting in pain, anger, fear and frustration. One peace club member described the peace club as a place to turn to in times of distress, a place where she could speak out and have someone listen to her as she poured out her heart on whatever was troubling her. Similarly, another member said the peace club had provided her with comfort at a time when her parents could not pay her fees and she was stressed by the possibility of being chased away from school. She said after narrating her story at a peace club meeting, peace club members prayed and comforted her. Although fellow peace club members could not assist her financially, they provided psychological and emotional support.

During Covid-19 induced school closures and lockdowns, peace club members shared their hurts, frustrations, vulnerabilities and fears at the virtual peace club meetings. They advised and comforted each other and gained hope that things would change for the better in future. *“Let’s believe that this will pass. It’s just a test,”* said Daisy who was usually quiet during peace club meetings.

#### 9.2.2 Outcome 2: Peace club members resolved conflicts non-violently.

Learners brought much anger with them to school from home and the wider community. Although they did not articulate it in this way, this anger manifested itself in different forms of violence such as bullying and fighting. The peace club equipped its members with skills and knowledge in dealing constructively with their anger and conflicts. Peace club members admitted that it was difficult at times to practise non-

violent methods of resolving conflicts, but they persisted in unlearning the violence that they had practised or seen being practised at school and at home.

Before joining the peace club, learners had accepted that conflicts were resolved violently. Non-violent ways of resolving conflict were seen as a sign of weakness. Peace club members reported that through the peace club, they had learned and practised alternative ways of handling conflicts, and this gave them inner peace. One peace club member said, *"If you use violence on someone, you can hardly sleep at night because the incident will keep on replaying in your mind."* Alternative ways of resolving conflicts, especially dialogue and seeking to understand the opponent, were said to have worked well for many of them. One peace club member who earlier had professed that he had a few fights while attending the peace club said, *"I always thought I was dealing with my problems by fighting all the time. After joining the peace club, I did not fight all the time. My friends at the peace club helped and encouraged me with how I can avoid fights."* The admission by the peace club member that he had been involved in fights while attending the peace club showed his honesty and his commitment to transformation; he was 'work in progress.'

### 9.2.3 Outcome 3: Peace club members acted as peer mediators at school and elsewhere.

Peace club members were reported to be peer mediators in the classroom and playground. Incidents of fighting and bullying in the playground and classrooms decreased when peace club members were present. The non-violent conflict resolution skills obtained from peace club learning were used in the playground through peer mediation and exemplary behaviour. Peace club members tried to resolve conflicts through dialogue and mediation, both at school and at home. *"Fights were prevented if we quickly jumped in and talked to those who were about to fight, especially the juniors,"* said Enzo.

The 2021 outgoing head boy who was a member of the peace club had this to say,

*I used to think that you must let people solve their problems the way they wanted. As a Head boy, I would come across learners fighting and, at times, ignore the situation. The peace club taught me that it is wise to solve issues without anyone getting hurt. I left the incoming head boy and his squad with a policy of 'intervene before someone gets hurt.' I learnt that violence is not a way to*

*solve problems; it only makes matters worse, and that we should think before speaking harsh words. We should think how the person who is receiving the words will feel.*

Zenzo narrated a story of how he tried to engage a youth whom he found stealing from a shop outside school.

*I found one guy stealing at this shop, so I approached him and told him that it was wrong and how it made others feel. The next day, there was a gang waiting for me at the corner. I tried to tell them about the situation, but it seemed the boy was stealing for them, (on their behalf) and he did not want to steal any more. They were angry with me, so I ran away.*

Nkosazana tried to engage a young girl to stop dating older men. Nkosazana felt she did not succeed in persuading the young girl. *"I have seen many of my age group getting involved with sugar daddies just for food. I tried to speak to a girl who was involved with an older man and was told it was none of my business."* Similarly, Mercy reported that she had tried to use her newly learnt mediation skills with little success. *"People do not understand when you tell them to stop bad things, and it hurts a lot knowing much is happening and you cannot do anything, Even if you try people do not listen."* I encouraged Nkosazana and Mercy not to give up and that their intervention may have resulted in behaviour change by the affected persons although the initial indications showed otherwise.

#### 9.2.4 Outcome 4: Peace club members showed personal growth.

Peace club members demonstrated personal growth. They respected themselves and others. They reported that they had learned to be polite and grateful. Words such as, thank you, sorry and please which they previously hardly used were now used all the time. They narrated how they had noticed that, when they started using these words, some non-peace club members started using them as well. *"I never used to apologise to anyone, even when I was wrong. I would try and cover up my mistakes and become defensive. I am now able to say sorry and move on. It is so easy and usually ends the conflict quickly"* said Mmeli.

A former Form Six peace club member detailed how she used to be judgemental and looked down on other people, she said,

*The peace club changed the way I now look at people. I used to look down on other people; I used to judge other people. But now I have learned that I should not judge others before I know them. We are all from different backgrounds. So, who am I to judge that person when I do not know them? When you get to know someone, you then realise that your judgements were wrong.*

All the members of the peace club reported that they had gained confidence in themselves and improved self-esteem and were able to take charge of their situations non-violently. They spoke of having an identity that they derived from being members of the peace club.

#### **9.2.5 Outcome 5 Teachers acknowledged the role played by the peace club**

Teachers testified that peace club learners were exhibiting exemplary behaviour. It was reported that at assembly, peace club members brought order telling other learners to keep quiet and not make noise. The teachers observed that there had been positive changes of learner behaviour in the playground, albeit small especially after the entry of senior learners into the peace club. Teachers expressed their wish that the peace club continues at the school and that AVP training be extended to non-peace club members as well.

### **9.3 AVP basic training – outcomes for learners**

#### **9.3.1 Outcome 1: Participants developed self-identity and self-worth**

Participants highlighted that the affirmation exercise and the adjective name game (see section 8.6.1) made them realise who they were, and this boosted their self-confidence. The exercises enabled them to replace negative thoughts they had about themselves with positive ones. They realised that they had strengths which they could build on to achieve their goals while working on their weaknesses. The exercises gave them a sense of self-worth and self-value and some form of identity. Participants highlighted that the affirmation exercises taught them to respect themselves and others as everyone had value, *“Since I now realise that I have value and many good points, every morning I look at myself in the mirror and say, ‘Go girl.’ I do not worry that others will judge me,”* said Ruby

### 9.3.2 Outcome 2: Participants learned coping mechanisms for use during traumatic experiences.

Peace club members reported that training in AVP assisted them during Covid-19 to cope with the trauma they experienced, especially when schools closed for long periods and they were confined at home. Minnie said,

*Lockdown has not been cool to adjust to because day in and day out we hear that our lives are in danger, people are dying from homes and it's not a good thing to stay indoors to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The bad thing is that it has disturbed some of us because we hear that thousands are dying. So, some of us end up with anxiety, and the churches have been closed too. As for AVP, it has brought a huge impact in my life as it has changed the way I look at things, and this is helping me a lot during this hard time.*

Mmeli stated that he practiced the skills he learned from 'transforming power' to cope during lockdown especially that of seeking a non-violent path when he was faced with a conflict situation. He said,

*Well mina (I), for me this lockdown has been very hard because we have had to miss a lot of schoolwork because schools closed and, on the other hand, there is a deadly second wave of the pandemic which attacks mostly us the youth. So, it has been hard to cope with this lockdown because, last year, we missed a full year of education, and it seems like it's going to happen again this year. I tell myself I must expect the best and look for non-violent ways of surviving.*

### 9.3.3 Outcome 3: Peace club members became active listeners.

All participants indicated that the exercise on active listening was a turning point in their communication skills. They indicated that, normally, they wanted to be heard rather than to listen because it was a sign of power to talk and not listen to others. *"I always wanted to have the last word, and the more I talked and rubbished what others said, the more I felt good about myself,"* was the response from Minnie. Nkosazana said, *"I never used to listen to what other people were saying even if I was wrong; I always thought I was right. But I have learned that I should listen to others and not to always hear my own voice."*

Mercy stated that good communication had improved her relationship with her parents. Previously, she never listened to her parents when they tried to correct her. *“AVP helped me communicate with my parents, and now I understand them better and this has improved our relationship. I used to pretend I was listening to them when they corrected me when I was not I tried to apply what I learned from AVP, which is, listening to understand and not listening to respond, and it worked.”*

Active listening can be learned and practised. To actively listen, emotional neutrality must be maintained (Merritt 2021: 118). Peace club members highlighted that listening was the most difficult part of the exercise where they had to listen and not interrupt, especially where they wanted to be in control of the flow of the conversation. *“I used not to listen to anyone especially when things seemed to be against me. Now I listen to understand what the other person will be saying,”* said Tinashe. Merritt (2021) observed that the emotional state of the listener can cloud listening by bringing in negative emotions. Thinking while listening is important and should focus on understanding the message.

Mercy stated that, previously, she had not been aware that non-verbal communication mattered. She said she used to listen to her young sister while watching television or reading a book and this made her sister angry. She would show disinterest in the conversation by bodily gestures. She attested that, since learning about active listening, she gave time to communicate with her sister and avoided negative non-verbal communication, and this improved their relationship. Merritt (2021:118) states that some of the characteristics of active listening are: being aware of the physical self, leaning forward, eye contact, keeping as still as possible, and an occasional nod.

#### 9.3.4 Outcome 4: Participants were able to see alternatives.

Participants demonstrated the ability to search within themselves for solutions and to develop creative ways to resolve conflicts non-violently. The session on ‘transforming power’ greatly impacted them, and they all indicated that they were practising its values and tools. These were: respect for self, caring for others, expecting the best from others, thinking before reacting, and asking for a non-violent path. The aspect most commented on was thinking before reacting. The views of the participants were summed up by Mmeli who said, *“I used to react without thinking if I was provoked. I was a fighter and would fight about anything as long as I believed I was wronged. Now, I step back and think or walk away from a bad*



*situation until I can think straight. Eish, its hard but it works.”* Through thinking before reacting and asking for a non-violent path, peace club members were able to come up with creative non-violent alternatives to resolving conflicts which in most cases was dialogue.

Creative ways of resolving conflict were used at home as well. The concepts that ‘there are always alternatives’, and ‘violence is a choice’ seem to have stuck in the minds of learners. Daisy narrated how she resolved a situation at home where her parents used to fight in her presence which situation caused her a lot of distress. She said that,

*The peace club and AVP helped me. I managed to solve a conflict between my parents. My parents fought and always did not understand each other. After AVP and learning about ‘I’ messages, I managed to talk to them and told them that it was not good to fight especially in front of me. There are alternatives to fighting. At first, I did not have the courage (to talk to my parents) because I thought they would say I am too young to understand anything. With time, I got the courage, and I am happy it worked. We are now happy, and I hope it continues like that.*

Participants demonstrated that they now viewed violence with a different lens. They no longer glorified violence but abhorred it *“AVP helped me to view fights differently. In the old days if I saw a fight break out I would crank out my laughter. But now I find it very unnecessary for people to fight and I try by all means to stop people from fighting. “Ruby said, “well for me AVP has been super helpful. I say thank you, I don’t want to lie to you but there were times when I would lose my temper and try to lash out at someone, but I now use the “I” messages and it is very very very effective. I can express my feelings to someone without making them more angry or hurt their feelings, thank you so much.”*

## 9.4 AVP basic and advanced training – outcomes for teachers

### 9.4.1 Outcome 1: Increased conceptual and practical awareness by teachers on issues of peace and violence.

Teachers reported that they gained deeper understanding on issues of peace and violence and how these affected the school environment. *“The brainstorm on violence brought up some forms of violence that I*

*had not thought of such as humiliating learners in front of others through harsh punishment like standing and facing the wall,”* said a teacher. Another said, *“I was astounded by the various forms of violence especially what was referred to as violence from the structure.”* A teacher mentioned that he realized when doing the exercise on, ‘How I resolved a conflict non-violently’ that he had on several occasions resolved conflicts non-violently both at home and at school and that this worked better than resolving conflicts violently.

#### 9.4.2 Outcome 2: Enhanced knowledge and appreciation by teachers on the need to affirm learners.

Teachers highlighted that, before attending AVP, they hardly affirmed misbehaving learners. Instead, they viewed and spoke to misbehaving learners negatively. Affirmation was reserved for well-behaved learners. After the AVP workshop, teachers reported that they tried affirming misbehaving learners and realised positive changes in behaviour. *“Negative comments to learners become self-fulfilling prophecies,”* said one teacher.

#### 9.4.3 Outcome 3: Teachers’ had their communication skills enhanced

Teachers stated that they realised that active listening was important in peaceful resolution of conflict. They reported that they were now practising active learning skills they acquired at the basic AVP workshop. Listening actively to learners assisted them in sensing the authenticity or otherwise of the learner’s account of events. They reported that listening to understand as opposed to listening to respond and to condemn encouraged learners to exhibit good behaviour. However, they admitted that, given the large number of learners per class, it was difficult to practise active listening with every issue that the learners brought to their attention. Nevertheless, the teachers were now able to listen actively to issues that were important, especially those involving violence. Teachers who engaged in active listening saw a reduction in their use of corporal punishment. *“I now have a different perspective regarding corporal punishment. We do not have to beat up children but listen to why they do what they do. You get better results that way. After all, after beating them up at times, you have a guilty conscience,”* one teacher remarked.

#### 9.4.4 Outcome 4: Teachers gained personal growth

Teachers reported that AVP training benefitted them at a personal level. They gained and enhanced their knowledge and skills on conflict resolution. All participants agreed that after attending the two AVP workshops they always looked for non-violent alternatives to resolving conflicts both at home and at school. They professed that they were trying to live non-violent lifestyles and to be role models to learners. One teacher summed it up as *“you cannot be a non-violent teacher if you are living a violent private life. I have made it a point that I try not to be a perpetrator of violence at school and at home”*.

All teachers reported that the session on anger management during the AVP advanced workshop equipped them with skills to deal with anger. “I” messages and transforming power were also mentioned as having assisted participant teachers to deal with a lot of issues such as anger, *“previously I was not able to express my feelings when I was wronged and would act before thinking. Now I am able to retreat from a situation till I am calm and then I express myself through “I” messages”* said a participant teacher.

#### 9.4.5 Outcome 5: Teachers enhanced their skills for cooperation and trust building with learners.

Teachers noted the importance of trust and cooperation with learners to create a peaceful environment at school. They admitted that it can be difficult to trust and cooperate with misbehaving learners, *“some of these learners are very deceitful but we try.”* Teachers believed that if more learners and teachers underwent training in conflict resolution skills there would be significant reduction in violence, more cooperation and trust building. *“I wish all teachers and staff at Mzilikazi go through AVP then we will all be on the same wave- length. We have been enlightened and for effectiveness the knowledge and skills we have obtained must be shared with everyone.”*

#### 9.4.6 Outcome 6: Teachers became empathetic, caring and understanding to learners especially the vulnerable.

The empathy exercise during the advanced AVP workshop (see section 8.9) brought the experiences of vulnerable children to the fore. The challenges of a child living with albinism and an orphaned child were role played. During evaluation teachers admitted that often they did not give much attention to the plight of vulnerable learners. However, since attending the advanced AVP workshop they make efforts to empathise with vulnerable learners. The advanced AVP workshop “*gave me new eyes to understand and empathise with orphans and disabled learners*” a teacher summed up her experience.

#### 9.4.7 Outcome 7. Teachers gained increased ability to jointly resolve problems with learners.

The matron of the peace club who is also in charge of the guidance and counselling department stated that increasingly they were able to resolve issues of indiscipline by learners by allowing learners to be part of problem solving. Through the use of “I” messages, learners were able to see beyond their misbehaviour and how the misbehaviour impacted on them and others. The misbehaving learner were requested to proffer the way forward setting targets that could be monitored periodically. The matron reported that in most cases this resulted in positive behaviour change by the offending learners. The teacher reported that she was now aware of the need to get to the root causes of violence and/or conflict. She highlighted that whenever cases of misbehaviour are referred to her she digs deeper to find out the root causes and tries to address these.

### 9.5 A new peace club manual

In September 2020, I was approached by the British Quakers (specifically the Friends of Hlekweni and Quaker Peace and Social Witness) to produce a peace club manual to be used in schools in Zimbabwe and, possibly, in South Africa. I accepted the opportunity as I saw it as a chance to enhance my study which had been hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic and, at the same time, to contribute towards enriching the curriculum used by peace clubs in Zimbabwe.

Friends of Hlekweni support peace clubs (see section 5.8.5) which use an American manual, *“Creating peaceable schools”* by Bodine *et. al.* (1994; see section 8.2.2.1). The need to develop a peace club manual was premised on the supposition that, notwithstanding the fact that the Creating Peaceable Schools manual was good, the time had come to produce an African manual with an African outlook, written by Zimbabwean experts with input from local teachers and experts in conflict resolution. Although the manual was informed by theory and peace research, it is simple to understand, practical, and reflects the prevailing school contexts and the challenges that may be encountered when setting up and running school peace clubs. The writing of the manual easily related to my study. I had spent more than 24 months on my research, and gained many insights on the workings, scope and learning needs of peace clubs. I had evaluated the peace club end of project evaluation for AVPKZN (see section 8.5). This enhanced my knowledge on peace clubs and their curriculum outside Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, I had facilitated AVP training workshops for teachers preparing them to set up peace clubs at their schools. I was thus ready and prepared to write a peace club manual for schools.

I started working on producing the manual with Mandlenkosi Moyo a doctorate graduate in peacebuilding from the Durban University of Technology. Don Rowe from the Friends of Hlekweni who has vast experience in editing educational textbooks, and has worked in education for human rights, values education, education for citizenship, and moral education was part of the team, although based in the United Kingdom. The project involved data gathering and acquiring a good understanding of how peace clubs work, the pedagogies they employ, the activities they do, and any evidence of their impact in bringing peace to schools. Data was gathered from ten teachers from six schools, including two teachers from Mzilikazi High School and 28 learners from two school peace clubs, including Mzilikazi High School peace club. The peace club manual that was developed called *“Ubuntu: Building peace in schools,”* was informed and underpinned by the worldview of ubuntu (see section 1.4.2).

The peace club manual is in three parts with seven chapters. Each chapter is made up of units which can be covered in one or more peace club meetings, depending on the understanding by learners and/or any emerging issues that may require additional meetings. Each unit states the objectives of the lesson, and these are meant to guide the focus of the peace club meeting. After the objectives, there is an introduction to assist the facilitator to appreciate what can be included in the lesson. The introduction is a guide and not necessarily an exhaustive list of content. There are suggested activities offered for each lesson to

reinforce the learning. Learners and facilitators are encouraged to come up with other creative, meaningful activities as they see necessary. Activities can be done at the beginning, the middle or at the end of the lesson (Moyo *et. al.* unpublished).

Part One of the manual has one chapter that details the setting up of a peace club. The objectives of peace clubs and their administration are covered. The objectives are a guide to what can be achieved by peace clubs. Brief explanations of *Ubuntu* philosophy, transformative pedagogies, experiential learning, sustainability and scaling up of peace clubs, and how to use the manual are discussed. Part Two of the manual, “Education about Peace,” contains four chapters. These are provide learners with empowering knowledge and understanding of foundational peace building concepts. The material is written in simple language for the understanding of all peace club members and facilitators. The content of Part Two by chapter is shown below (Moyo *et. al.* unpublished).

Chapter Two – Peace building concepts.

Chapter Three – Assertion.

Chapter Four – Human rights and responsibilities.

Chapter Five – Nation building (Citizenship training.

The chapters are in sequential order, but the order can be changed depending on the prevailing needs. However, it is advised that the lessons in chapter two be conducted at the beginning as these introduce learners to critical peace building concepts. Lessons in Part Two include conflict and its causes; different forms of violence, their causes and consequences; non-violence; peace, peace and ubuntu, and justice/injustice. Part Three, “Education for Peace,” is made up of two chapters, one on communication and the other on resolving and transforming conflicts. These chapters offer training in conflict resolution skills. Topics covered include active listening, anger management, problem solving, relationship building, conflict transformation, violence prevention, peer mediation, reconciliation, and healing (Moyo *et.al.* unpublished).

Care was taken to ensure that the manual was gender sensitive. Dudu *et.al.* (2008:74-75) in arguing for gender sensitivity in writing school textbooks noted that there are two important aspects that writers

have to take note of and avoid when designing material for use in schools. These are the invisibility of female characters in texts and the negative portrayal of female characters. They further noted that females are usually represented from a male perspective and underrepresented and where they appear they are serving men (Dudu *et.al.* 2008:74-75). In writing the *Ubuntu: building peace in schools* manual, a deliberate effort was made to balance the good and bad roles played by males and females in illustrations.

### 9.5.1 Pedagogies of “*Ubuntu: Building peace in schools*”

“*Ubuntu: Building Peace in Schools*” advocates the use of experiential and experimental learning for peace clubs. Experiential and experimental learning allows learners to internalise peace values, attitudes and perceptions, and internalisation requires practice. Presentations and lectures are discouraged and recommended for use only in brief introductions and summaries. Learners are encouraged to develop new ways of thinking about and understanding conflict and violence without having them recite the curriculum. Learners are empowered to be critical and creative thinkers who are able to express their views and ideas freely and confidently. This is achieved by involving them in learning through doing, sharing, experimenting and experiencing. Learning methods recommended for use are brainstorming, discussions, debates, talking circles, problem solving, storytelling, games and role plays. Reflection is built into every experience and activity where learners reflect on their own experiences and develop creative responses to conflict. Small group discussions with report-backs give all members a chance to participate and contribute. The report-backs allow the merging of ideas, giving a bigger, broader picture and a wide range of solutions. Learners are encouraged to practise what they learn in peace clubs such as tolerance, co-operation and respect for human rights in an environment where they see themselves as change agents such as in the classroom, their friendship groups, and the whole school community (Moyo *et.al.* unpublished).

### 9.5.2 Differences between *Creating peaceable schools* manual and *Ubuntu building peace in schools* manual.

Whereas the *Creating peaceable schools* manual was written against an American school background, the *Ubuntu: building peace in schools* manual positions itself in an African setting. The ubuntu philosophy that

underlines the manual is an African philosophy which is identifiable with many societies and communities, especially in Southern Africa.

Central to the *Creating peaceable schools* manual is the creation of a co-operative school context which can be achieved through the institution of a rights and responsibilities approach to discipline and the use of co-operative learning. The ideas presented are best applied on a school-wide basis (Bodine *et.al.* 1994:1). The *Creating peaceable schools* manual is classroom-based, whereas the *Ubuntu: building peace in schools* is designed for peace clubs that are run by volunteer learners as part of extra-curriculum activities.

Although the *Creating peaceable schools* manual covers rights and responsibilities, the *Ubuntu building peace in schools* manual further dedicates a whole chapter to human rights. An entire lesson is given to the definition of a right. Covenants and conventions on human rights are also included in the curriculum. This was after observing, during data collection, that learners, especially at senior level, were aware of the covenants and conventions and were keen to engage in discussing these. The *Ubuntu Building Peace in Schools* manual compares the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Rights to those contained in the Zimbabwe Bill of Rights (see Appendix 15). This is a totally new approach and gives the manual a Zimbabwe outlook. This comparison can be done elsewhere with the Zimbabwe Bill of Rights being replaced by those of the country using the manual. The chapter on human rights, while teaching factual knowledge, also presents a dramatic story that illustrates why human rights are important, especially in the protection of minorities and the vulnerable. The story is understandable by and relevant for all age groups. A chapter on nation building covers citizenship training which is not covered by the *Creating Peaceable Schools Manual*. The chapter covers topics such as patriotism, national resources, and contentious issues such as xenophobia, stereotypes, racism and tribalism (Moyo *et.al.* unpublished).

The writing of the *Ubuntu building peace in schools* has been completed and the manual awaits publication.

## 9.6 Summary

This chapter outlined the outcomes evaluation of the peace club intervention set up at Mzilikazi High School, the aim of which was to build a culture of peace at the school. I used Lederach's theory of Conflict



Transformation as a framework for evaluating the short term outcomes of the peace club and AVP training that was done for participant teachers and learners. The chapter covered the evaluation of the outcomes of the peace club and the AVP training workshops for learners and teachers. From the discussed outcomes, the indications are that the peace club did result in positive outcomes at both personal and relational levels. It is my observation that, had the programme not been disrupted by Covid-19 induced school closures, peace club members could have made more impact at the school. The closure of schools meant that peace club members had limited opportunities to practice what they were learning at school and with their peers. Notwithstanding the above, the peace club resulted in positive personal changes to the members and how they viewed and responded to conflict and problematic issues in their lives. The next chapter focuses on my reflections, conclusions, and recommendations.

## 10 Chapter 10: Conclusion

### 10.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by reflecting on the research process, drawing conclusions and making recommendations. In this chapter I reflect on my role as a researcher, discuss the challenges I faced during the research journey, and the limitations of my study. I describe what went well and what did not. I endeavoured to make sense of the research experience by bringing theory and practice together, with the main theorists being Lederach and Bronfenbrenner. Conclusions were drawn based on what was learnt from the experience and contextualised within the literature review of the study. Based on the conclusions, I make recommendations that may benefit future researchers and peace practitioners on what needs to be known about the topic.

The overall aim of the study was to build a culture of peace at a secondary school in Zimbabwe. The objectives were:

- To assess the causes, nature, extent, and consequences of violence in a secondary school in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
- To document the current approaches to dealing with violence at the school, and to assess their effectiveness
- To plan and implement a programme of action over a 24-month period aimed at building a culture of peace at the school using a participatory action research approach
- To evaluate the short-term outcome of the programme.

### 10.2 Findings

#### 10.2.1 Research objective 1: To assess the causes, nature, extent, and consequences of violence in a secondary school in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

In order to respond to the first objective of my study, I collected data through multiple sources and methods for the purposes of triangulation. I administered a questionnaire to learners and teachers (see

section 6.6.2), conducted two focus group discussions with learners (see section 6.6.4), semi-structured interviews with six learners (see section 6.6.5), and semi structured interviews with four teachers (see section 6.6.6).

The findings of my study on the causes of violence at Mzilikazi High School are detailed in section 7.5. To note is that the home and community environments contribute to the violence at school. As highlighted in section 1.2., violence is pervasive in Zimbabwe, dating back to the pre-colonial era (Nyere 2016). Learners at Mzilikazi High School were born and have lived their lifetime in a violent society; hence, to most of them violence is a normal way of resolving conflict. The violence in communities was exacerbated by the Covid-19 lockdowns because families had to spend long periods of time confined together at home (see section 8.3.3). Therefore, it is not surprising that learners brought all these experiences of violence to school and modelled them there.

The study confirmed the observations made by Burton and Leoschut (2013) and Harris (2018) that violence at school reflected the violence in wider society. Similarly, Bronfenbrenner (1979) in his Ecological Systems Theory (see section 2.11) posited that the development of the child is affected by the world around them including social relationships. The microsystem that is made up of contexts such as home and school influence the behaviour of the child (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Learners learnt from the outside school that the only way to resolve conflict was through violence, and that acts of indiscipline are normal and acceptable (see section 7.5.2).

The violence at Mzilikazi High School cut across the multifaceted nested systems described by Bronfenbrenner (1979); see section 2.11. At the micro-level, violence was witnessed by learners within their families, at school and in the wider community. At the meso-level, there were interactions with parents on issues of violence and school rules and regulations. At the exo-level, violence in the form of cyberbullying manifested itself through social media networks. At the macro-level, societal values, beliefs and norms affected attitudes and behaviours of learners towards violence. Finally, at the chrono-level, changes in the environment of learners especially the Covid-19 pandemic influenced the peaceful wellbeing of learners.

The study revealed that violence in all its forms was prevalent in Mzilikazi High School. Galtung (1996), in his definition of violence, developed the concepts of direct, structural and cultural violence (see section 2.2). My study found out that violence in all these forms, existed at Mzilikazi High School. Direct violence

included corporal punishment, bullying, fighting, threatening, use of weapons, illicit sexual activities, and drug abuse (see section 7.3). Structural violence manifested itself in the authoritarian nature of school rules (see section 7.7.2) which could not be questioned by learners and parents. Cultural violence manifested itself through gender violence where boys justified gender based violence on cultural norms .

The findings of this study indicated that violence at Mzilikazi High School happened at school and outside of school. Learners fought outside school, indulged in drugs under a tree outside school and attended wild parties hosted out of school. At school, the violence took place mainly at the toilets and playgrounds. Learners highlighted these two locations were very unsafe (see Table 7.2).

The consequences of violence highlighted can be summarised as affecting the learners' potential and development (see section 7.6). This is against the background that at the focus group discussions 68% of learners said they had experienced violence at school (see section 7.4).

#### 10.2.2 Research objective 2: To document the current approaches to dealing with violence at the school and to assess their effectiveness

In answer to objective two, which was to document the current approaches to dealing with violence at the school and to assess their effectiveness, I observed that the approaches used to deal with violence at school, were crafted at national level by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and at local level by the school. I had discussions with the Deputy Head who gave me the school regulations (see section 7.7.2) and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education circular P35 (see section 7.7.1), which sets out how discipline should be administered at school.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Circular P35 provides a restorative framework for the administration of discipline at schools in Zimbabwe. The framework protects learners from harmful retributive forms of punishment. The banning of the use of corporal punishment in 2014 (see section 4.3.2) for disciplining learners at school further protects learners from being subjected to humiliating and degrading punishment. However, this study noted that teachers at Mzilikazi High School continued to use corporal punishment with the justification that some learners did not respond to positive forms of

discipline (see section 7.3.2.). Learners were said to have “gone wild” especially after Covid-19 lockdowns, and the only language they understood was corporal punishment. Teachers found themselves in a difficult position of enforcing Covid-19 protocols against the background of learners who disobeyed the rules. In my discussion with the teachers, I could sense a feeling of helplessness and frustration, coupled with some anger, on their part. They ordinarily detested the use of corporal punishment but had no effective alternatives (see section 7.7.2). Harris (2019) averred that the reason teachers continue to use punitive methods to discipline learners is that they have not been taught alternative restorative approaches. This study confirms this finding. Teachers who were trained in AVP where alternative methods of discipline were taught reported that they had tried using restorative methods with positive outcomes (see section 9.4.3). This points to a compelling need for teachers to be capacitated with knowledge and skills on restorative, non-violent methods of discipline.

The Mzilikazi High School rules and regulations are discussed in section 7.7.2. This study noted that there was no evidence indicating the involvement of parents and learners in crafting the school rules and regulations. The rules crafted by the school authorities had a rider that if the parents or learners were not happy with the rules, they were free to look for enrolment elsewhere. The authoritarian non-participatory nature of the school rules may have created a climate of rejection or being viewed with suspicion by those who were supposed to abide by them. A participatory approach where those who are affected by the decision making – in this case the rules – are involved ensures ownership and better compliance.

The study found that the prefect system (see section 7.7.3) played an important part in maintaining order and discipline; hence, it was a vital cog in efforts to reduce violence among learners. After the reconfiguration of the peace club to include Form Fives who were soon appointed as prefects, Head boy and Deputy Head girl (see section 8.3.5), the peace club had greater influence in resolving and/or de-escalating physical violence, especially at the playground. The Head boy passed what he learnt at the peace club to the incoming head boy – that is, the need to prevent violence before it starts (see section 9.2.4). The school prefect system is an effective way of reducing violence provided prefects are equipped with skills and knowledge to do so.

### 10.2.3 Research objective 3: To plan and implement a programme of action over a 24-month period aimed at building a culture of peace at the school using a participatory action research approach

The third objective of my study was to plan and implement a programme of action over a 24-month period aimed at building a culture of peace at the school. In answer to this objective, together with the participants, I planned, developed and implemented an intervention to reduce violence at Mzilikazi High School (see chapter 8). The intervention was a peace club whose aim was to reduce violence and build peace at the school. To compliment the peace club and capacitate the members in conflict resolution skills, peace club members attended a conflict resolution workshop conducted by AVPZ (see section 8.6).

The peace club was a transformational platform in terms of Lederach's Conflict Transformation theory(see Figure 2.3). Lederach's transformation framework with its three components each representing a point of inquiry were used in the development of the peace club: The three components were,

- The presenting situation
- The horizon of the preferred future, and
- The development of change processes to link the two.

At the presenting situation, which is the first point of inquiry, the participants and I interrogated the immediate problem needing resolution – in this case, the violence at Mzilikazi High School. This was done through focus group discussions (see section 6.6.4), interviews (see section 6.6.5) and our meeting of 22nd July 2019 (see section 8.2). At the second point of inquiry, which is the horizon for the future, together with the participants, we looked at the Mzilikazi High School peace image that we wanted to create. This process was not linear but pointed to the future and back to the immediate situation and the change processes that emerged. Transformation depends on the ability to understand how the past impacts on the present. The third point of inquiry which was the development of change processes to link the first and second inquiries, was the setting up of a peace club and the conducting of AVP workshops. Change processes, according to Lederach, must not only promote short-term solutions but build platforms capable of sustaining long-term change. Therefore, the peace club was the transformational platform created and complemented by training workshops by AVPZ in non-violent conflict resolution. It is the hope that the Mzilikazi peace club will continue beyond my research and as an indication that it will do so, the

peace club continues in 2022 with new members, one old member and the same matron. The new peace club have proudly renamed the peace club Mgandane peace club (see section 1.3).

Lederach (2003) asserts that transformational platforms provide space where participants can air their concerns and find solutions. This was so with the Mzilikazi peace club (see section). In addition, the activities of the peace club were designed to facilitate, the building of right relationships through the radical respect for human rights and non-violence as a way of life (Lederach and Maise 2009). Similarly, Harris (2018) intimated that peace was a way of life committed to non-violent resolution of conflict and a commitment to personal and social justice.

The use of participatory action research enabled learners to actively participate in the study, and allowed them to come up with creative, non-violent ways of resolving conflicts. Through experiential learning, they discovered how to transform conflicts and look for non-violent alternatives. Conflict transformation was at the centre of peace club learning for constructive change that went beyond resolving specific problems to building healthy relationships. According to Lederach (2003), conflict transformation offers a theoretical framework to reduce violence because it is an antithesis to violence. Peace club members through their own admission realized that their attitudes and behaviours had changed as they related to their school peers and family members an indication that transformation had taken place.

My research started many discussions among teachers and learners, which helped them to think in terms of peace rather than the ongoing violence. The study contributed to the participants' knowledge and improvement of their conflict handling skills. The focus on thinking about peace by both teachers and learners indicated that Mzilikazi High school had started the process of building peace at the school.

#### **10.2.4 Research objective 4: To evaluate the short-term outcome of the programme**

The overall evaluation of the programme was carried out through focus group discussions and interviews (see Chapter 9). Previously, evaluations were carried out after the AVP workshops with teachers and learners.

The change in behaviour of peace club members is an indication that the peace club had positive outcomes. Learners reported that the peace club made them change some of their undesirable behaviours which they previously saw as normal. The peace club provided a safe platform for them to

engage and share their experiences freely without being condemned. Peace club members were able to build trust in each other and to confide in each other. The peace club was a sanctuary for them during trying times such as the Covid-19 lockdowns (see section 8.3.4.).

The peace club equipped members with skills and knowledge of how to resolve conflicts non-violently at home and at school (see section 9.2.2). They were able to mediate in conflicts between other learners in the playground (see section 9.2.3). They no longer initiated violent resolution of conflicts but instead were peace makers who always looked for alternative non-violent ways of resolving conflict. Peace club members were transformed in their thinking regarding issues of violence and peace and, by their exemplary behaviour, were able to influence those outside the peace club (see section 9.2.5). They became ambassadors of peace. Peace club members showed personal transformation, developed a positive self-identity (see section 9.3.1), improved communication skills, and were active listeners (see section 9.3.3) who were able to work as a team.

Teachers saw value in the peace club. They noticed that peace club members had transformed and were confident in implementing what they learnt at the peace club. The report that peace club members were able to reduce the noise at assembly illustrate that the peace club members had internalised what they had been learning (see section.9.2.5).

Salomon (2013) stated that research has shown that short peace education interventions have positive effects on attitudes and feelings, stereotypes and willingness for contact. However, these positive effects are eroded after a short time. Social surroundings, significant others, the media and the over-riding political atmosphere can erode the positive effects of peace education. Still, the eroded effects can be restored by post-programme interventions. The central characteristic of the restoring interventions is reflection. The positive changes resulting from peace education, where the views of the other side are heard and empathised with, and one's views expressed and challenged, cannot be totally erased. They may be suppressed but can be restored and revived. The fact that the positive changes cannot be erased totally gives me hope that the peace club members will continue to be influential wherever they are after graduating from school.



### 10.3 Limitations and hindrances

My study was limited in that I carried out my research in one school and the results may not be generalised easily to other schools.

My research was significantly hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic which led to prolonged school closures and non-activity by peace club members at school. Although the peace club managed to meet virtually during this time, members could not put into practice what they learnt in the school environment. The virtual peace club meetings helped the members to deal with personal issues at home and in their personal lives, but limited implementation at school. When schools finally returned to a semblance of normality at the end of 2021, learners were preparing for their examinations and, naturally, gave more attention to their studies than to the peace club.

The small size of the sample meant that the peace club members could not be effective in many spaces at school. Table 7.3 highlights the places that were deemed unsafe during the quantitative survey. Although the toilets were rated as very unsafe during the quantitative study, no action was taken by the peace club members to attend to these as they were preoccupied at the playground and numbers did not allow them to be in many places.

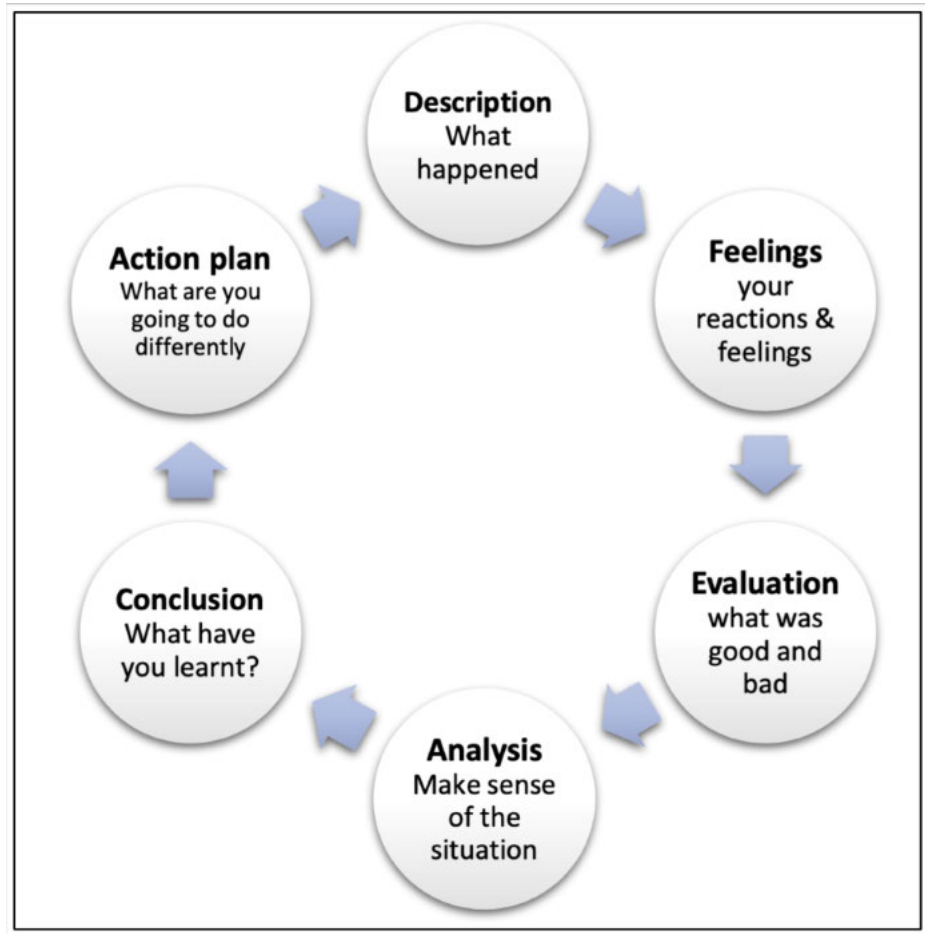
### 10.4 Reflections

In 1988, Gibbs came up with a reflective cycle that had six distinct stages in structuring reflection on learning experiences. The framework is cyclic and lends itself well to experiences that are repeated although it can also be used for single experiences. The cycle allows for learning from what went well and what did not during the research process. At each stage there are guiding questions to assist in the reflection. The six stages in Gibbs' reflexive cycle are listed below and are also depicted in Figure 10.1.

- The description stage describes the experience and builds up the background to better understand the experience.
- The feeling stage presents the thoughts about the experience, how the writer was feeling and thinking at the time, and how other people were feeling.
- Evaluation refers to good and bad experiences, what worked well and what did not.

- Analysis is making sense of the experience, bringing theory and practice to make sense of what happened. How did the experience compare to literature and research theories or models to help make sense of this?
- The conclusion draws general and specific judgements of what was learnt from the experience, both good and bad. The conclusion looks at what was learnt, how things can be done better or differently, and what skills are needed to handle the situation better
- The action plan sums up everything that needs to be known to improve the situation. It covers how things could be done differently if the situation arose again (Gibbs 1988: 49).

Figure 10.1 Gibbs' reflective cycle



Source: Gibbs (1988:49)

When I look back from 2018 when I decided to carry out this study, I realise that my study has transformed me and changed the way I deal with different situations that I come across. The rigour necessary to carry out a PhD research could not leave me the same. I have become reflective and mindful of how I relate to other people and how I deal with different situations. I now value and see the importance of relationships, at work, home and in communities as I interact with other people. The study has challenged me to strive to live a non-violent lifestyle. The testimonies of positive change and their benefits by the participants spur me on in my pursuit for non-violent living.

This was the first time for me to carry out research using participatory action research. The idea of using a totally new research design initially created fears in my mind on whether I would master the skills of

action research. At the beginning, I found it difficult to consider participant learners as co-researchers. As I progressed with my research and when we set up the peace club, I realised the wealth of knowledge that I was learning from my co-researchers and appreciated participatory action research as a research approach. The age difference between me and them was not an issue as we interacted and conversed. I found myself picking up their language and our conversations and ideas flowed.

The exploratory nature of my research provided an opportunity for me to learn more about the causes, nature, extent and consequences of school violence. From the rich, thick descriptions of real life experiences on violence obtained from teachers and learners, it became clear to me that what I had read in the media about the prevalence of indiscipline at schools, drug abuse and wild parties thrown by learners was true. Previously I thought the media was sensational in their description of these incidents but, having had primary evidence on these happenings, I feel compelled to contribute towards their resolution even after the conclusion of my study.

The idea of researching on school violence raised different responses from stakeholders. I recall my first meeting with the Headmaster of Mzilikazi High School and him questioning me on why I chose the school for my research. He asked whether it was because I perceived the school as more violent than others. Later, when I requested teachers to participate in my quantitative survey, the teachers who had volunteered to participate were apprehensive in completing the questionnaire, querying the motive of my study. They took time in filling in the questionnaire, scrutinising the questions for any hidden agendas. I felt disheartened and thought that was the end of my study as I felt I would not get any assistance from the school authorities. However, as I built relationships and trust I got full support throughout my study from both members of staff and learners.

Earlier, at some point of the research, I felt that there was not going to be any change in attitude or behaviour as the learner participants would argue and get angry with each other during peace club meetings. At times, I thought I had hit a brick wall or was going backwards. Then Lederach's change circle (see Figure 2.4) kept me going. Things started moving and peace club members began to work together with more co-operation and tolerance. Lederach (2003) averred that change was not linear, and I realised that this was what was happening. As things appeared to be working well, Covid-19 struck, and schools closed indefinitely. This time, I was convinced that my study had come to an end as reports were not indicating any possible date when schools would open. I was in despair and lost all hope. However, as

Lederach (2003) observed, when nothing is happening and the way forward appears blocked and you reach an impasse, going backwards may create more innovative ways of going forward (see section 2.11). When you hit a brick wall it is time to step back and reflect. As I reflected on the stalemate created by Covid-19, I recognised an option of conducting peace club meetings virtually. I got in touch with peace club members telephonically and presented the option to them. They agreed, and we formed a WhatsApp group and our peace club meetings continued virtually (see section 8.3.4). The virtual option came with the advantage that our communication was automatically recorded. Although during this period not much action took place at the school environment, I observed positive growth in learners in terms of empathy and compassion towards each other and personal growth, in terms of self-esteem and confidence, the ability to deal positively with adversity and to focus on developing personal goals among others. The peace club members were able to encourage each other on the virtual platform. When some members indicated despair with regards to unpreparedness for the examinations, others spurred them on with encouragement, *"We can do it; let's read and do what we can"* were some of the encouragements shared on the platform.

The Covid-19 pandemic was the biggest challenge I faced during my study. The completion of my study was delayed because of school closure resulting from lockdowns. The school closures reduced the number of days that learners attended school, which, in turn, reduced the time available for them to practice at school what they had learnt at the peace club and to influence other learners. When school reopened after the first lockdown, school attendance was staggered to allow for social distancing in the classroom. This meant that peace club members were not at school all at the same time, making it difficult for them to meet and collectively implement what they had learnt. However, they later managed to hold two physical meetings and attend AVP training (see section 8.6) when lockdown regulations were relaxed. When schools reopened after the second Covid-19 induced school closure, peace club members who were now in Form Four and Form Six were preparing for their examinations. The demand for catching up with their studies in readiness for the examination meant that peace club meetings were not priority. Although peace club members continued to meet virtually, the positives of physical meetings were lost.

The virtual platform had its challenges. I would provide data for learners, and some would not attend the meetings despite receiving the data and would later give excuses such as *"my battery was dead"*, *"we did not have electricity"*, or *"I thought the meeting was the next day."* Some would attend and leave before the end of the meeting to save on the internet data for personal use after the meeting. At first this

frustrated and annoyed me, leaving me wondering whether my study was achieving its objectives of developing responsible citizens or not. As stated at section ... this became a learning window for peace club members to learn from this bad experience and change the undesirable behaviour.

During my study I learnt a lot about myself. At times, I became impatient when learners did not turn up at the appointed times or would come late with excuses that did not sound plausible to me. I learnt to be patient with them and to communicate the importance of punctuality and how being late affected others. With time, they were punctual for meetings and those who occasionally came late were reminded by their peers on the importance of time keeping. I learnt the critical role played by patience when dealing with learners. I also learnt that learners could effectively influence each other for good.

In July 2020, I was appointed Commissioner in the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission. This gave me an opportunity to extend my involvement in reducing violence experienced by children at national level. One of the key thematic areas that the Commission is mandated with is to promote, protect and enforce the rights of the child. As I engage with the Commission's mandate of promoting and protecting the rights of the child, what I have been learning during my interaction with the participants of my study is of immense assistance to me and, by extension, the Commission. I learnt from my study that children are generally not listened to and their rights such the right to human dignity and freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are not respected. This frustrates and angers children with the possibility of them engaging in violence as compensation. If one takes time to listen to their frustrations, fears and anger, trust is built, and communication becomes easy. I have learnt that children are capable of thinking critically and able to come up with constructive ways of solving their problems. If communities and institutions that interact with children could take time to respect the rights of children, violence against and by children can be greatly reduced.

There are things I could have done better during my research process. I could have continuously encouraged peace club members to recruit new members in the lower Forms to ensure continuity of the peace club. The peace club continues at Mzilikazi High School, albeit with new members and only one old member who returned to school for Form Five. In addition, I should have involved more teachers, especially for AVP training, to ensure that a base was set for structural reform at the school.

Although various scholars such as Alty (2013) and Juma (2019) recommend that peace clubs should be held for an hour once a week, I found that peace club meetings were short and left participants with a

feeling of not having completed the business of the day. The meeting would start with a prayer then an icebreaker or an activity and, by the time members were in serious discussion or reflection, the hour would be over. In most cases we over-ran the hour or had to continue the discussions at the following meeting. I appreciate that after one hour, learners could lose concentration, and to address this, peace club could meet twice a week to fully exhaust the weekly lesson.

The research process has been long and included sacrifices such as foregoing time with family and friends. However, of more importance is that I have a sense of accomplishment. It is because of this study that I was able to do the end of project evaluation for AVPKZN (see section 8.5). It is also because of this study that I co-authored *“Ubuntu: Building peace in schools* (see section 9.5). The study enlightened and enriched me as a peacebuilder, a scholar and an AVP facilitator. I am now a better AVP facilitator who is able to merge theory and practice. I have learnt much about children and am already using the knowledge and skill I have got as I interact with young people both at work and at home. I can boldly and categorically state that this study was worth it.

## 10.5 Sustainability and scaling up

Sustainability of peace building interventions may involve setting up some sort of ongoing infrastructure. I attest that the challenge with peace clubs is member mobility. Members inevitably leave due to transfers to other schools or eventual graduation. Similarly, teachers who are patrons or matrons of the peace clubs can be transferred to others school or proceed on retirement. Such movements affect the sustainability of peace clubs. To mitigate such losses of members through movements, peace clubs should constantly recruit new members and ensure that all levels (grades or forms) are represented. Matrons and patrons could involve other teachers in the peace club so that there is wider ownership and, in the event of either the patron or matron leaving the school, there is a quick and able replacement.

Resources remain a critical factor in the effective running of peace clubs, and these are usually not easily available. Motivating the matrons and patrons of peace clubs is a challenge as most of them coach peace clubs on a voluntary basis. The added workload of peace clubs can be too heavy without any form of recognition. Strong external local partners such as Alternative to Violence Project and other like-minded peace organisations can render support to peace clubs in terms of training and refresher workshops. Such organisations may play a pivotal role in the sustainability of peace clubs.

Since one of the benefits of a peace club is to mould future responsible citizens, consideration can be given to involving community members as matrons or patrons of peace clubs. Community members usually do not experience much movement as teachers and are normally willing to take up such roles provided, they are properly engaged, and their roles clearly defined and explained.

Scaling up peace interventions can be in terms of size or an increase in the number of interventions. Peace clubs can be scaled up by establishing more than one peace club at the same school by age groups or grades. Alternatively, the number of peace club members can be increased preferably not to exceed Alty's (2013) recommended number of 50. The new Mzilikazi peace club started with 35 members.

Scaling up can involve planting peace clubs in other schools. This can be done by inviting other schools to come and witness the activities of an operating peace club and hear testimonies of success and impact. With more schools having peace clubs, peace festivals can be organised where peace clubs can share their experiences and have fun. Schools without peace clubs can be invited to attend the festivals and be encouraged to start peace clubs at their schools. Sports for peace can be organised between schools including those without peace clubs. Interschool activities can reduce interschool rival violence, resulting in more peace among learners across schools. The former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, said, *"sports have the power to change the world"* (de Fraguier, 2018).

The question that may arise from the above is whether small projects such as peace clubs bring about change, or whether what is necessary is systemic change. Rogers (2003) avers that, once 20 percent of a population accept an idea, the idea is unstoppable. This gives hope that small peace infrastructures such as peace clubs and scaling up in one school and/or to other schools has the potential of creating peaceful schools.

## 10.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of my study, I offer six recommendations. I am mindful that I may have to take up some of these recommendations myself if I want them to happen.

- The prevalence of violence at school indicates an immediate need for peace builders to develop innovative interventions to prevent and interrupt cycles of violence by getting to the root causes of violent scourges such as bullying, fighting, alcohol and drug abuse at schools. Transformational



platforms should be put in place where learners feel safe to discuss peace building issues that concern them, and to come up with constructive non-violent ways of resolution.

- Schools are force-multipliers for social change and should go beyond teaching learners academic subjects but equip them with social skills that will enable them to live non-violent lifestyles.
- It was the finding of my study that teachers are overloaded with work and big classes. As a result, it becomes difficult for them to commit to coaching peace clubs. I am grateful to the matron of the Mzilikazi High School peace club for her dedication to being the matron of the club and for working tirelessly to ensure that the peace club continued to operate. Further research could explore how peace clubs can be officially recognised in schools so that the time matrons and patrons spend on peace clubs can be considered when determining their workloads.
- Teachers must be equipped with skills and knowledge of restorative methods of administering discipline. Although the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, in its Circular P35, advocates for restorative discipline methods, this should be accompanied by the necessary training for teachers on alternative methods
- Learners and parents should be educated on non-violent methods of resolving conflict. Awareness seminars and workshops such as AVP can assist in the education efforts. Another challenge facing school peace clubs is that learners may have a change in behaviour, but they have to go back to homes and communities that normalise and perpetrate violence. A peace club member who relocated to a farming community soon after writing his final examinations averred that the farming community looked at him as if he had lost his mind whenever he advocated for non-violence. In addition, community peace clubs can be set up to complement school peace clubs.
- The drawing up of a school code of conduct and regulations should not be the preserve of school authorities alone. Learners, parents and guardians should be consulted and allowed to give their input. Participation by those directly and indirectly affected by the school code of conduct and regulations will result in ownership and better compliance when the code of conduct and school regulations become shared values by the whole school community and not an imposition by school authorities.

## 10.7 Conclusions

My study confirmed that violence is widespread at Mzilikazi High School. The use of violence to resolve conflicts was a daily occurrence among learners. Learners fought in the corridors, playgrounds, classrooms, toilets and outside school premises. At times weapons such as knives, sharpened scissors, catapults, slings and bricks were used. The study confirmed what scholars such as Burton and Leoschut (2013) observed that violence at the school mirrored the violence that prevailed in the community. Learners modelled what they saw at home and in the wider community where conflicts were largely resolved through the use of violence. The use of violence in resolving conflict was the only way learners had learnt to resolve conflict. Violence was present at home and at school.

Notwithstanding the above, my study concluded that learners can be taught non-violent conflict resolution skills. The ideal pedagogies that can be used in equipping learners with non-violent skills are transformative pedagogies. There is a difference between gaining knowledge and understanding and practising what has been learnt. Learners should be educated for peace and not educated about peace. Education about peace relates more to knowledge of curriculum content, while education for peace is about experiential learning leading to behaviour and attitude change. Although factual learning is important, it cannot on its own lead to behaviour and attitude change. In school, not much attention is given to teaching learners skills in peaceful conflict resolution. Attention is focused on academic subjects that are examinable. Infrastructures of peace such as peace clubs can be effective vehicles of teaching and equipping learners with non-violent conflict resolution skills. When learners start practising non-violence skills, violence at school can be reduced and a culture of peace built.

On the whole, I believe my study has contributed to the learners' knowledge and skills improvement in the non-violent resolution of conflict which, if practiced, have great potential for reducing school violence. In carrying out my study I promoted the vision of UNESCO in the first line of its constitution which reads, *"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."*

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## 12 Appendices

## Appendix 1: Learners quantitative survey questionnaire



Dear student.

Greetings to you.

My name is Dorothy Moyo. I am a PhD student at the Durban University of Technology, and I am inviting you to participate in my survey. The purpose of my survey is to gain an understanding on the nature and extent of school violence at your school for the past year. The survey takes approximately 15 minutes. Your answers will be treated with the greatest confidence and you do not have to put your name on the questionnaire. Thank you for participating in my survey.

Form-----Gender-----Age-----

1.How safe do you feel at school?

Very safe	Safe	Usually, safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe
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2. Have you witnessed or heard about any of the following happening at school during the last year?

Fighting	Yes	No
Stabbing	Yes	No

Gossiping	Yes	No
Bullying	Yes	No
Cyberbullying	Yes	No
Insulting	Yes	No
Threatening	Yes	No
Drug abuse	Yes	No
Alcohol abuse	Yes	No
Sex among students	Yes	No
Pregnancy	Yes	No

3. As far as you know do students carry any of the following to school for use against others

Knives	Yes	No
Knobkerries	Yes	No
Slings	Yes	No
Sharp objects	Yes	No
Guns	Yes	No

4. How would you describe your school?

There are many bullies at my school	Yes	No
-------------------------------------	-----	----

I was bullied at school by another student.	Yes	No
I have seen other students being bullied.	Yes	No
Some students are afraid of me.	Yes	No
I have beaten up some students.	Yes	No
The buildings at school have been vandalized by students.	Yes	No

5. In the last year how many times have you stayed at home because you were afraid you would not be safe at school?

Never	Once or twice	Three to five times	Six to ten times	More than ten times
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6. Have you committed acts of violence at school or on your way to and from school?

Yes	No
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7. How safe do you feel in the following places?

Classroom	Very safe	Safe	Somewhat safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe
Playground	Very safe	Safe	Somewhat safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe
Corridors	Very safe	Safe	Somewhat safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe
Library.	Very safe	Safe	Somewhat safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe
Toilet	Very safe	Safe	Somewhat safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe
Way to and from school	Very safe	Safe	Somewhat safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe

8. Do other students say things that hurt your feelings?

Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time
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9. Are there gangs in the school who act aggressively to other students?

Yes	No
-----	----

10. Has anyone forcefully taken or destroyed your property?

Yes	No
-----	----

11. Has anyone used a cell phone or internet to insult you or post things that hurt you?

## Appendix 2: Teachers; quantitative survey questionnaire



Dear Teacher.

Greetings to you.

My name is Dorothy Moyo. I am a PhD student at the Durban University of Technology, and I am inviting you to participate in my survey. The purpose of my survey is to gain an understanding on the nature and extent of school violence at your school for the past year. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes.

Your answers will be treated with the greatest confidence and you do not have to put your name on the questionnaire. Thank you for participating in my survey.

1. What things would you include under the term “school violence”?

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2. Which of these do you consider as most common at your school? How often do they occur?

Nature	Never	Per week	Per month	Per year
Bullying				
Fighting				
Corporal punishment				
Drug abuse				
Alcohol abuse				
Threatening				
Cyber bullying				
Use of weapons				
Other				

3. Following 2 above can you please briefly outline a typical example.

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4. In your opinion how serious is the problem of violence at the school?

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5. How do teachers or school staff address issues of indiscipline by students?

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6. How safe do you feel when you are with students at school?

Very safe	Safe	Somewhat safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe
-----------	------	---------------	--------	-------------

7. Have there been any incidences of violence between teachers and students within the last year?

Yes	No
-----	----

8. Following 7 above if there have been such incidences briefly state their nature.

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### Appendix 3: Learners focus group discussion guide.



1. In your understanding, what does school violence mean?
2. Describe any incidents that you consider violent that have taken place at school.
3. What causes these violent events?
4. How often do these violent incidents happen?
5. How does violence affect learners and teachers?
6. How does the school deal with violent behaviour?
7. What can be done to prevent violence at school?

### Appendix 4: Learners interview guide-



1. What do you understand is violence at school?

2. Have you ever experienced or witnessed violence at school? If you have can you describe what happened?

- How often has this happened?
- What impact have such events had on you and on others?

3. Have you ever witnessed violence being inflicted on others? If you have can you describe what happened?

- How often has this happened?
- What impact has this had on you and others?

4. Have you ever been violent to other learners? If yes give details of those events?

- What caused you to be violent against other learners?

5. What do you think causes learners to be violent to each other?

6. Have you witnessed violence outside school?

- Have you experienced or perpetrated violence outside school?

7. Do you feel safe at school or on your way to and from school? If you feel unsafe give details of what makes you feel unsafe.

8. What action does the school take when there is violence at school?

- Are the measures taken by the school effective?

9. What do you think can be done to make the school a safe place for all?

## Appendix 5: Teachers interview guide



1. What is your understanding of school violence?
2. What is the nature of violence experienced at school?
3. What causes violence at school?
4. What is the impact of school violence on learners, teachers and the functioning of the school?
5. What action does the school take against the perpetrators of violence?
  - How effective are these measures in reducing and deterring violence?
  - Is there more that the school must do to reduce violence?
6. Are victims of violence assisted in any way?
  - If so how?
  - If not, how do they cope with the impact of violence?
7. Is there a relationship between school violence and the wider society?

## Appendix 6: Participant letter of information



### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the Research Study:** Educating secondary school learners on non-violence using a transformative approach to reduce violence in a Zimbabwean school.

**Principal researcher:** Dorothy Moyo; BSc Sociology, MSc Peace Leadership and Conflict Resolution.

**Supervisor:** Professor Geoffrey Harris; B Com, DipEd, MEC PhD.

**Co- Supervisor:** Dr Sylvia; BS, MS PhD.

**Dear Participant,**

Greetings to you.

I am a doctorate candidate in peacebuilding from Durban University of Technology (DUT) in Durban. I am conducting research on school violence in Zimbabwean schools. My research activities focus on reducing school violence and creating a culture of peace at one school.

The purpose of the study is to explore the nature, causes and consequences of school violence at Mzilikazi High School. The study will document current approaches to dealing with conflict and

violence at the school and assess their effectiveness. Thereafter, in conjunction with participants, I will design, implement and evaluate an intervention programme that will be put in place to reduce violence and create a culture of peace at Mzilikazi High School.

The study will focus on learner to learner, learners to teachers, and teachers to learners' violence. School violence will encompass physical, psychological and emotional violence perpetrated at school and on the way to and from school.

Twenty-four Form two learners, 15 parents/guardians four teachers and five School Development Association members will participate in the study. Participation will be in the form of completing questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and dialogues. Interviews which will last for 45 minutes will be held at school outside school activities or at your home.

Participation in this study is voluntarily and you are free to withdraw from participating at any time should you wish to, without any penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed through the use of acronyms. Access to data will be limited to study personnel and information collected will be locked in a safe place and destroyed after five years. You will be told about the concepts of anonymity and confidentiality which will be applied to this study and if participants would like to be named, then they will be named as agreed.

There will be no remuneration for participants and no form of inducement will be offered for participation in this study. Snacks will be provided to the participants where necessary. Participants are not allowed to cover any costs of my study.

This is a very low risk study and there are no expected discomforts to you. Should there be any study related injury, psychologist skills will assist the researcher in remediating the situation.

My contact phone number is +263775389211 and my email address is [dorothyhopemoyo@gmail.com](mailto:dorothyhopemoyo@gmail.com) .Any questions and concerns can be directed to my supervisor Professor G.T. Harris (+277313735141) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on

(+27731 373 2375). Complaints can be reported to Dr Linda Ninganiso, Director, Research and Postgraduate Support on +2771 373 2577.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy Moyo.

Appendix 7: Parents/guardians of learners letter of information.



## LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the Research Study:** Educating secondary school learners on non-violence using a transformative approach to reduce violence in a Zimbabwean school.

**Principal researcher:** Dorothy Moyo; BSc Sociology, MSc Peace Leadership and Conflict Resolution.

**Supervisor:** Professor Geoffrey Harris; B Com, DipEd, MEC PhD.

**Co- Supervisor:** Dr Sylvia; BS, MS PhD.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Greetings to you.

I am a doctorate candidate in peacebuilding from Durban University of Technology (DUT) in Durban. I am conducting research on school violence in Zimbabwean schools. My research activities focus on reducing school violence and creating a culture of peace at one school.

The purpose of the study is to explore the nature, causes and consequences of school violence at Mzilikazi High School. The study will document current approaches to dealing with conflict and violence at the school and assess their effectiveness. Thereafter, in conjunction with participants, I will design, implement and evaluate an intervention programme that will be put in place to reduce violence and create a culture of peace at Mzilikazi High School.

The study will focus on learner to learner, learners to teachers, and teachers to learners violence. School violence will encompass physical, psychological and emotional violence perpetrated at school and on the way to and from school.

Twenty-five Form 2 learners, 15 parents/guardians 4 teachers and 5 School Development Association members will participate in the study. Participation will be in the form of completing questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and dialogues. Interviews which will last for 45 minutes will be held at school outside school activities or at your home.

Participation in this study is voluntarily and participants are free to withdraw from participating at any time. should they wish to, without any penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed through the use of acronyms. Access to data will be limited to study personnel and information collected will be locked in a safe place and destroyed after five years. Participants will be told about the concepts of anonymity and confidentiality which will be applied to this study and if participants would like to be named, then they will be named as agreed.

There will be no remuneration for participants and no form of inducement will be offered for participation in this study. Snacks will be provided to the participants where necessary. Participants are not allowed to cover any costs of my study.

This is a very low risk study and there are no expected discomforts to participants. Should there be any study related injury, psychologist skills will assist the researcher in remediating the situation.

My contact phone number is +263775389211 and my email address is [dorothyhopemoyo@gmail.com](mailto:dorothyhopemoyo@gmail.com) .Any questions and concerns can be directed to my supervisor Professor G.T. Harris (+277313735141) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on (+27731 373 2375). Complaints can be reported to Dr Linda Ninganiso, Director, Research and Postgraduate Support on +2771 373 2577.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy Moyo.



## Appendix 8: Assent form for learners



### ASSENT FORM

Statement of Agreement to take part in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: \_\_\_\_\_,
- I understand what the study is about and that my parents have given consent for me to be included.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be kept a secret.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my assent to take part 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.

**Full Name of Participant**

**Date**

**Time**

**Signature / Right Thumbprint**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ 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**

#### Appendix 9: Parental Consent



#### PARENTAL CONSENT

**Statement of Agreement for your child to participate in the Research Study:**

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the 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 participant 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 computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent of my child's participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to allow my child to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during this research which may relate to my child's participation will be made available to me.

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

I, \_\_\_\_\_ 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**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date**

**Signature**

#### Appendix 10: Consent form



Statement of Agreement for your participation in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the 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 computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent of participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to take part in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during this research which may relate to participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant    Date                      Time                      Signature / Right Thumbprint

I, \_\_\_\_\_ 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

\_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)    Date                                      Signature**

## Appendix 11: Letter to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education done



Provincial Education Director

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education,

Bulawayo.

Dear Sir/Madam

### **REF: Request to do PhD Research at Mzilikazi High School**

My name is Dorothy Moyo. I am currently studying for a PhD in Peace Building at the Durban University of Technology. As part of my study, I would like to conduct my research at Mzilikazi High School. The title of my study is “Educating secondary school learners on non-violence using a transformative approach to reduce violence in a Zimbabwean secondary school”.

My study intends to establish the nature, causes and consequences of school violence in your school. Thereafter, together with the students and teachers I intend to develop, implement and evaluate an intervention programme to reduce violence at Mzilikazi High School. The study is motivated by national and global concerns about the challenges posed by school violence to learners, teachers and wider society.

I will use focus group discussions, interviews, observations and questionnaires to collect data. I will endeavour not to interrupt school activities during my research period. I will be guided by the code of ethics of Durban University of Technology when conducting the study such as

voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity. The information obtained during my research and a copy of the final thesis will be made available to the Ministry of Higher Education.

I am looking forward to being granted permission to work with the students and teachers at your school.

Should you have any queries regarding the above kindly contact my supervisor Professor G.T. Harris (+2731 201 4027).

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Moyo. Cell Number: 0775398211 Email address: [dorothyhopemoyo@gmail.com](mailto:dorothyhopemoyo@gmail.com)

#### Appendix 12: Learners' outcome evaluation focus group guide



1. You have been peace club members for more than 24 months. From your experiences and knowledge what would you say a peace club is?
2. Thinking back over the time you have been a peace club member, what would you say have been the most helpful things you have learned or experienced (probe why)?

3. Do you think that you deal better now with your own conflicts, at school and outside school (If so please give examples)?

4. Do you think that you deal better now with other people's conflicts, at school and outside school (If so please give examples)?

5. It is still early days, but do you think the peace has had positive outcomes for the school? If so please explain.

6. Can you think of any outcomes of the PC beyond the school? If yes, explain.

7. Regarding the AVP workshop you attended what stood out for you during the training?

8. Did the AVP training help you deal with conflicts and any problematic issues you faced? If so please explain how.



### Appendix 13: Learners outcome evaluation interview guide



1. Thinking back over the time you have been a peace club member, what can you have learnt about building peace at school and elsewhere?
2. Have you practised what you learnt and if so give details. If not why have you not practised what you learnt.
3. It is still early days, but do you think the peace club has had positive outcomes for the school? If yes, explain.
4. Can you think of any outcomes of the peace club beyond the school? If yes, explain.
5. Has training in AVP helped you in any way? If so how?
6. Have you applied what you learnt at AVP at school, home or in your personal life. Please give details.

## Appendix 14: Teachers outcome evaluation interview guide



Start by saying that we are evaluating the peace club project so that they can see how things have been going and how they might be improved.

1. It is still early days, but do you think the peace club has had positive outcomes for the school? If yes, explain.
2. Did you have any particular hopes or expectations about what the peace might achieve? If yes, what were these? Have they been met?
3. It is still early days, but do you think the peace club has had positive (or negative) outcomes for the school? If yes, explain.
4. During the intervention what in your opinion was done well and what could have been done better?
5. Are there any benefits that you realised from attending the AVP training both for your self as an individual and as a teacher. If any please explain.

## Appendix 15: Comparison of UDHR and Zimbabwe Bill of rights



### Comparison of Rights in UDHR and the Zimbabwe Constitution

Rights contained in the UDHR	Rights contained in the Zimbabwe Bill of Rights
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Right to life.</li> <li>2. Freedom from torture.</li> <li>3. Freedom from slavery.</li> <li>4. Right to liberty and security.</li> <li>5. Right to a fair trial.</li> <li>6. Right to an effective remedy if a human right is violated.</li> <li>7. Freedom from discrimination; right to equality.</li> <li>8. Right to be recognised as a person; right to nationality.</li> <li>9. Right to privacy and family life.</li> <li>10. Right to marry.</li> <li>11. Right to own property.</li> <li>12. Right to movement of persons.</li> <li>13. Right to asylum.</li> <li>14. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion.</li> <li>15. Freedom of expression.</li> <li>16. Freedom of assembly and association.</li> <li>17. Right to food, drink and housing.</li> <li>18. Right to health care.</li> <li>19. Right to education.</li> <li>20. Right to employment.</li> <li>21. Right to rest and leisure.</li> <li>22. Right to social protection.</li> <li>23. Right to political participation.</li> <li>24. Right to take part in cultural life.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Right to life.</li> <li>2. Right to personal liberty.</li> <li>3. Rights of arrested and detained persons.</li> <li>4. Right to human dignity.</li> <li>5. Right to personal security.</li> <li>6. Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.</li> <li>7. Freedom from slavery and servitude.</li> <li>8. Freedom from forced labour.</li> <li>9. Equality and non-discrimination.</li> <li>10. Right to privacy.</li> <li>11. Freedom to demonstrate or petition.</li> <li>12. Freedom of assembly and association.</li> <li>13. Freedom of conscience.</li> <li>14. Freedom of expression and of media.</li> <li>15. Access to information.</li> <li>16. Language and culture.</li> <li>17. Freedom of profession, trade or occupation.</li> <li>18. Labour rights.</li> <li>19. Freedom of movement and residence.</li> <li>20. Political Rights.</li> <li>21. Right to Administrative Justice.</li> <li>22. Right to a fair hearing.</li> <li>23. Rights of an accused person.</li> <li>24. Property rights.</li> <li>25. Rights to agricultural land.</li> <li>26. Environmental rights.</li> <li>27. Freedom from arbitrary eviction.</li> <li>28. Right to education.</li> </ol>

<p>25. Prohibition of destruction of human rights.</p> <p>26. Right to a social order that recognises human rights.</p> <p>27. Responsibilities and duties of the individual.</p>	<p>29. Right to health care.</p> <p>30. Right to food and water.</p> <p>31. Marriage rights.</p>
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