



# **Promoting Youth Peacebuilding Through Social Entrepreneurship in Mbare, Zimbabwe**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy in Public Administration – Peace Studies  
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Durban University of Technology

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Supervisor: Dr Sylvia Kaye

## Declaration

### **Promoting Youth Peacebuilding Through Social Entrepreneurship in Mbare, Zimbabwe**

I, **Gilbert Tinashe Zvaita**, declare that the research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated and acknowledged, is my original research. This thesis, submitted for the Ph.D. in Public Management – Peace Studies, has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other university worldwide.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 4/8/2023

**Gilbert Tinashe Zvaita**

I hereby approve the final submission of the following thesis.

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Date: 4/8/2024

**Dr Sylvia B. Kaye**

## **Abstract**

The interest of this study is premised on the urgency for new contextual practices that interact with young people and allow them to be part of the solution in addressing the patterns of violent conflicts that disrupt peace within their communities. Hence, the study promoted the role of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool that has much to offer towards promoting youth agency and positive participation in building peace in the context of Mbare, Zimbabwe. The aim was to contribute to youth violence prevention mechanisms in Mbare, which is a hub of complex violent youth activities that involve electoral and political trends, drug abuse, and various socioeconomic issues tied to the political economy of informal business. These factors have disenfranchised youth from participating positively in the broader community as they have gained a reputation as violent and problematic. The study addressed this gap, with the drive to contribute towards Zimbabwe's still budding peacebuilding frontlines and invest in ideas that help to promote and shape sustainable measures that channel young people to participate positively in promoting peacebuilding within their communities. This study employed practical and alternative strategies for engaging youth in peacebuilding. It utilised action research to explore social entrepreneurship and peace innovation lenses to reflect on ideas and practical steps that can harness the potential of youth peacebuilding in the local urban community of Mbare. The synergistic integration of qualitative stakeholder interaction with quantitative outcomes to guide action/intervention design was crucial in identifying how social entrepreneurship tools can attract and facilitate youth agency in peacebuilding practice. The findings revealed how social entrepreneurship offers practical educational tools to promote youth's role in peacebuilding by building capacity for different peace ventures. The study responds to the UNSC Resolution 2250 global policy recommendation to engage and promote local youth peacebuilding strategies. It established how social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool helped create an interactive platform for the participation of youth from different political orientations and encouraged innovative and actionable knowledge.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my dearest daughter. Here is to a brighter and better future.

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>ANOVA</b>   | Analysis of variance   |
| <b>AT</b>      | Action Team  |
| <b>AU</b>      | African Union  |
| <b>BTSE</b>    | Behaviour theory of social entrepreneurship                      |
| <b>CAR</b>     | Central African Republic   |
| <b>DRC</b>     | Democratic Republic of the Congo                                 |
| <b>DUT</b>     | Durban University of Technology                                  |
| <b>FGD</b>     | Focus Group Discussion   |
| <b>GGA</b>     | Good Governance Africa   |
| <b>MDC-T</b>   | Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai                        |
| <b>NGOs</b>    | Non-Governmental Organisations                                   |
| <b>NYS</b>     | National Youth Service   |
| <b>OECD</b>    | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development            |
| <b>PI</b>      | Peace Innovations  |
| <b>PVO</b>     | Private Voluntary Organisation                                   |
| <b>SCT</b>     | Systemic Conflict Transformation                                 |
| <b>SE</b>      | Social Entrepreneurship  |
| <b>SESN</b>    | Sustainable Economic Support Networks                            |
| <b>SPSS</b>    | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences                      |
| <b>UKZN</b>    | University of KwaZulu-Natal                                      |
| <b>UN</b>      | United Nations   |
| <b>UNESCO</b>  | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| <b>UNSC</b>    | United Nations Security Council                                  |
| <b>WHO</b>     | World Health Organization  |
| <b>ZANU</b>    | Zimbabwe African National Union                                  |
| <b>ZAPU</b>    | Zimbabwe African People's Union                                  |
| <b>ZANU-PF</b> | Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front                  |

|               |                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>ZCA</b>    | Zimbabwe Constitutional Assembly |
| <b>ZHRC</b>   | Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission |
| <b>ZINASU</b> | Zimbabwe National Students Union |
| <b>ZPM</b>    | Zimbabwe People's Militia        |
| <b>ZUM</b>    | Zimbabwe Unity Movement          |

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction and Study Orientation

### 1.1. Introduction

This study sought to promote youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship in Mbare, Zimbabwe. The involvement of youth in violent behaviours remains a critical concern across studies. The reasons for conducting this study were driven by the researcher's desire to contribute to prevention mechanisms of youth violence in urban local communities such as Mbare. The thesis examines and records the significant experiences of youth, their consequences, and the potential implications of their actions or inactions for peace and security in the Zimbabwean context. It recognises the critical need to provide a platform to present the distinctive narratives, experiences, and perspectives of Zimbabwean urban youth in an accurate, respectful, and non-patronizing manner. Hence, this research was guided by an understanding that despite being a significant demographic, youth in Zimbabwe and even across the entire continent of Africa have often been overlooked in research and policymaking, yet they have substantial potential to contribute to sustainable development and peacebuilding.

Zimbabwe is still developing the peacebuilding frontlines, and it is crucial to invest in ideas that help to promote and shape sustainable measures towards building peace across communities. This research responds to the need for a more comprehensive approach to understanding the complex dynamics of violence and peace in the country by examining the role and agency of young people in these processes. Connolly (2018) indicates that prioritisation of sustainable peace measures across most African countries must ensure the engagement of youth, women, and reconciliation mechanisms. Thus, a comprehensive and inclusive peace process is beneficial since it provides the necessary resources to rebuild and reinforce sectors that have been devastated by prolonged or intermittent conflicts (Yingi 2022).

This study sought to engage practical and alternative strategies for engaging youth peacebuilding using social entrepreneurship perspectives. It utilised action research

to explore social entrepreneurship and peace innovation lenses to reflect on conflict transformation ideas and practical steps that can harness the potential of youth peacebuilding in the urban local community of Mbare. This chapter introduces the thesis and provides a detailed orientation of crucial ideas that make up the study. It unpacks the study context, problem statement, study aims and objectives, the significance of the study, delimitations and limitations, a brief methodology, defining key terms and the overall thesis structure.

## **1.2. Study Background: Nature of Youth Violence in Zimbabwe**

Building peace in Zimbabwe has remained a daunting task, considering its violent history. Zimbabwe has seen various forms of political repression alongside civil unrest and violent conflict since the colonial era. This background has shaped the historical and political context, impacting the younger generations. Historical analysis by Mhike (2018) noted that political patronage, youth violence, and state efforts to indoctrinate youths in Zimbabwe were not unique to the new millennium. During the liberation struggles against British colonialism in the 1960s and 1970s, youth violence was a key instrument for nationalist movements in mobilising for the war effort. Since then, presidential and parliamentary elections in the post-independence era have seen varying levels of violence predominantly perpetrated by youths. The effects of this violence were felt disproportionately by youth due to their high representation in military forces and protest movements against oppressive regimes.

### **1.2.1. Youth violence in the post-Independence Zimbabwe**

Violence in Zimbabwe continued even after the liberation struggle. Thus, the post-independence Zimbabwe has experienced different epochs of violent activities. Instead, it took on new forms, particularly among the youth. A historical overview of youth violence in Zimbabwe reveals that youth violence is not a recent phenomenon but a persistent issue in post-independence. According to Muzondidya (2009), the post-colonial Zimbabwean state adopted authoritarian and repressive tactics, using violence and a hegemonic discourse of unity on its official opposition, workers, students, and youth groups. For instance, Rupiya (2005) narrates how state-sponsored violence emerged in the 1980s with the Zimbabwean government

establishing the Zimbabwe People's Militia (ZPM) in 1982 as a reconnaissance force of young people for the national army. The ZPM was trained by North Korean instructors, became the ruling party's spearhead in the *Gukurahundi* which witnessed thousands of unarmed civilians being massacred in Matabeleland and some parts of the Midlands province for being part of the opposition party, Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) (Rupiya 2005). Although this massacre and political crisis ended with the Unity Accord of December 1987, the excesses of the ZPM and other units caused over 20,000 deaths and 30,000 injured or displaced in Matabeleland, resulting in continued tensions between Zimbabwe's ethnic groups.

According to Mhike (2018) in the 1980s, three main components emerged in how ZANU-PF treated youths and its political opponents. Firstly, the party adopted a hierarchical leadership style where party leaders expected absolute loyalty and obedience from the youths. Party officials were at the top of the chain of command, and the youths were at the bottom. This style of leadership was intended to ensure that the youths were completely subservient to the party leaders. This guaranteed that young people would carry out their instructions without question, regardless of their personal opinions or beliefs.

Secondly, ZANU-PF employed a patronage system to enforce loyalty (Oosterom & Gukurume 2019). It utilised government loans and empowerment programmes serving as rewards for party allegiance (Mhike 2018; Oosterom & Gukurume 2019). According to Madondo (2008), the history of the ZANU-PF patronage system can be traced back to the 1985 parliamentary elections, where government loans and other empowerment programmes were given to youths who were loyal to the party as a reward for their allegiance. During the 2008 presidential elections, the party promised to distribute tractors to youths who voted for the party. The patronage system was and remains a powerful tool to ensure that the youths remained loyal to the party (Mutongwizo 2014). It is a loop where young people must rely on the party for their livelihoods. This system creates a culture of dependency among the youths, making them more susceptible to manipulation by the party leadership (Oosterom & Gukurume 2022).

Third, ZANU-PF openly displayed hostility towards political opposition, frequently employing young people as instruments of violence. Diverging opinions from the party

agenda was viewed with intolerance and often met with violent repression. While during the liberation struggle in the 1960s and 1970s, the party demanded and relied on cooperation from the masses, their engagement and approach changed in the post-independence era. The political environment became more intolerant, and pre-election violence worsened. For instance, ZANU-PF youths began to be more implicated in violent attacks against opposition supporters in the 2002 and 2008 presidential elections (Muzondidya 2009). This violence was a clear demonstration of the party's intolerance towards dissent and its willingness to use young people as instruments of violence.

ZANU-PF youths have been accused of perpetrating violence against opposition groups for a long time. Alexander & McGregor (2013) argued that while opposition youths have also been recorded as participants in inter-party violence, there is always a higher chance they were not the instigators. According to Maringira and Gukurume (2021), the ruling party used youth violence as a strategy to consolidate power, maintain control, and silence dissenting political voices. Thus, the trend of youth violence can be traced to the early 1980s and 1990s. However, it increased in the post-2000 era as young people became more politically motivated through the 'Third Chimurenga' land reform and the National Youth Service (NYS) unleashing hordes of violent tactics against opposition political parties (Oosterom & Gukurume 2019).

### **1.2.2. The National Youth Service/Youth Militias in the Post-2000s**

The background of national youth formations in Zimbabwe reflects the need to engage in a comprehensive process to promote youth peace. The state security apparatus in Zimbabwe has been accused of being the centre for driving youth conflicts (Mhike 2018). For instance, historical studies have revealed that the NYS, which had its origins in the National Service Act of 1979 passed by the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government, became another form of militarising youth for violent political purposes (Rupiya 2005; Mhike 2018). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003), the launch of the NYS in 2001 was a resuscitation of the youth brigades movement of the 1980s, which was initiated by the ruling party to institutionalise and control the aspirations of young people following the liberation struggle. While the youth brigades known as the Zimbabwe People's Militia (ZPM) were launched to eliminate the idleness of potentially

dangerous youth in post-war Zimbabwe, they eventually turned out to be politically activated and used violent tactics in advancing the agenda of the ruling party (Mhike 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003; Rupiya 2005).

Mhike (2018) argues that the formation and operation of the NYS between 2001 to 2007 marked the new era of youth militias in Zimbabwe. Evidence across literature posits that the NYS was established as a quasi-military training program where “militias” organised groups of young people loyal to ZANU PF were used to intimidate opposition supporters and suppress any dissenting voices (Kriger 2005; Mhike 2018; Rupiya 2005). These youth groups were indoctrinated with the party ideology and considered to be vehicles for advancing the political agenda tasked with political campaigns and violence against opposition supporters (Mhike 2018; Rupiya 2005; Rupiya 2020). Oosterom and Gukurume (2019) conclude that the use of the NYS as militia was a deliberate strategy by the ruling party to maintain political control and suppress opposition.

According to Obadare (2010), governments that support youth movements often utilise them as vehicles to instil desired notions of citizenship, which primarily hinge on allegiance and are thus susceptible to indoctrination. From this perspective, Mhike (2018) and Oosterom and Gukurume (2019) are in agreement that although some young people who participated in the NYS in Zimbabwe might have been unwillingly compelled, they later came to adopt the program ideologies and doctrines. Furthermore, these youths believed they had considerable power in their operations, with some even claiming they were encouraged by the police to act with impunity (Solidarity Peace Trust 2003). With some NYS graduates appraising the program for giving them “a lot of power”, Mhike (2018:260) concluded that:

Whether real or imagined, these wide-ranging powers, coupled with the effervescence of youth, gave the NYS graduates a newly-found social status at a time when the economic and social reality of Zimbabwean society was limiting. Their actions reinforced the social image of youth as violent and the role of youth in contemporary African politics as nothing more than a tool of violence.

Following the program youths were required to engage in one month of community service in their localities before pursuing further education or civil service jobs.

However, due to the defunct nature of many schemes, the primary focus for these youths was to educate the public on the dangers of supporting the Western-aligned MDC party and the benefits of supporting the revolutionary ZANU (PF) party. Mhike (2018) notes that indoctrination in NYS camps facilitated a collective identity centred on concepts of 'self' and 'other.' Participants were convinced of their role as educators of the masses and were duty-bound to protect the nation against Western 'surrogates' and 'sell-outs,' even through violence (Mhike 2018; Oosterom & Gukurume 2019).

The impact of the NYS-related youth militia violence is widely documented. Studies confirm that their involvement in political violence destabilised the entire Zimbabwean political environment and redefined citizen safety in political participation (Rupiya 2005; Rupiya 2020; Mhike 2018; Oosterom & Gukurume 2019). While the NYS was meant to facilitate nation-building and impart patriotism and leadership skills, it resulted in militias that perpetrated violence and eroded public trust in the ability of the government to protect its citizens (Oosterom & Gukurume 2019). For instance, Mhike (2018) narrates that most young people who joined the NYS had poor socio-economic backgrounds. Thus, their desperation and desire for a better life were a vulnerability that facilitated their succumbing to a life of banditry and brigandage (Mhike, 2018). Hence, Rupiya (2020) concludes that a culture of violence, which was once at a minimum, was increasingly nurtured with impunity in Zimbabwe (Rupiya 2020).

Similarly, Moyo (2020) argues that youth militias normalised violence with impunity in the political space, contributing to a culture of violence and weaponisation of fear. For instance, politically motivated vigilante groups such as "*Chipangano*" gangs (meaning "an Agreement" or "Oath") emerged in the urban areas of Harare. It was headquartered in Mbare and led by Jim Kunaka, a former NYS graduate. The gangs gained notoriety for their violent and criminal activities between 2003-2013. According to Gukurume (2022: 1),

*Chipangano* created a network of violent political mobilisation centered around Mbare's popular markets such as *Mbare Musika*, *Mupedzanhamo*, and *Magaba Siyaso*, among other spaces in Zimbabwe's capital Harare. This militia group used threats, intimidation, and violence to grab and govern economically strategic spaces such as markets, public plaza termini, and low-income flats, among other things, as part of its rent-seeking practices. In a context of skyrocketing youth unemployment, dwindling economic and

livelihood opportunities, and systemic economic and political marginalisation, many young people were compelled to join *Chipangano*, while others were forcibly conscripted into this militia group and its attendant violent networks of political mobilisation and rent-seeking practices.

The group was made up of unemployed youth who used violence and intimidation to control and extort money from local businesses and residents. Using these militias to intimidate opposition supporters and suppress dissenting voices had far-reaching implications for the country's political stability and the safety of its citizens. The impact of youth militias in the post-2000 Zimbabwean society underscores the need for sustainable peacebuilding efforts that actively involve and empower youth to promote peace and social cohesion.

### **1.2.3. The Opposition and Party-Foot Soldiers**

The wealth of literature concentrates on peddling the narrative that the Zimbabwean state and the ruling ZANU PF are the primary perpetrators of youth weaponisation (Mutongwizo 2014; Mutongwizo 2018; Rupiya 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003; Mhike 2018). However, the opposition political parties have also faced allegations of being equally complicit in the deplorable practice (Alexander & McGregor 2013; Moyo 2020). These aspects posit the need for balanced research that examines the participation of political parties in violent practices. This effectively set a platform to discuss the weaponisation of youth and a complete picture of the contributions opposition parties make in perpetrating youth violence.

A more comprehensive understanding is provided by Moyo (2020), who conceptualised and contextualised the MDC violence (between 2000-2020), revealing how party-foot soldiers (youths) have been consistently deployed for intra- or inter-party violence purposes. Party foot-soldiers are defined as passionate members of political parties who devote their time and energy to canvassing support for their parties and candidates while countering the activities of rival parties. They are characterised by their position at the bottom of the party hierarchy and their reliance on walking as a means of transportation during party activities as they are often poor and unemployed, and their brand of political activism is sometimes characterised by violence and lawlessness.

In addition, Moyo (2020:72) argues that the MDC, as the opposition political party, demonstrated its fair share of violence from early 2000 to 2019 by its party foot-soldiers “who are key in countering the ruling party’s activities and shaping internal power matrixes in the party”. In the same vein, Alexander & McGregor (2013) assert that the MDC's utilisation of youth military structures for "defensive" violent actions has been well-documented since the party's inception.

The tumultuous socio-political landscape in Zimbabwe is dominated by various incidences of violence from ruling and opposition political party foot-soldiers. In addition, in different political contexts across Africa, youth party foot-soldiers have been embroiled in protracted struggles characterised by intermittent bouts of violence (Bob-Milliar 2014; Paolo 2017; Moyo 2020). These lawless acts have been identified as the Achilles heel of democratic politics in sub-Saharan African countries such as Zimbabwe (Moyo 2020). These devastating acts of violence by young people in political and social spaces require practical efforts to advance peacebuilding initiatives among the youth. These insights motivated the researcher to invest efforts towards youth-centred peacebuilding interventions, with the intention to promote even the smallest steps towards peace and innovative participation of youth in their communities.

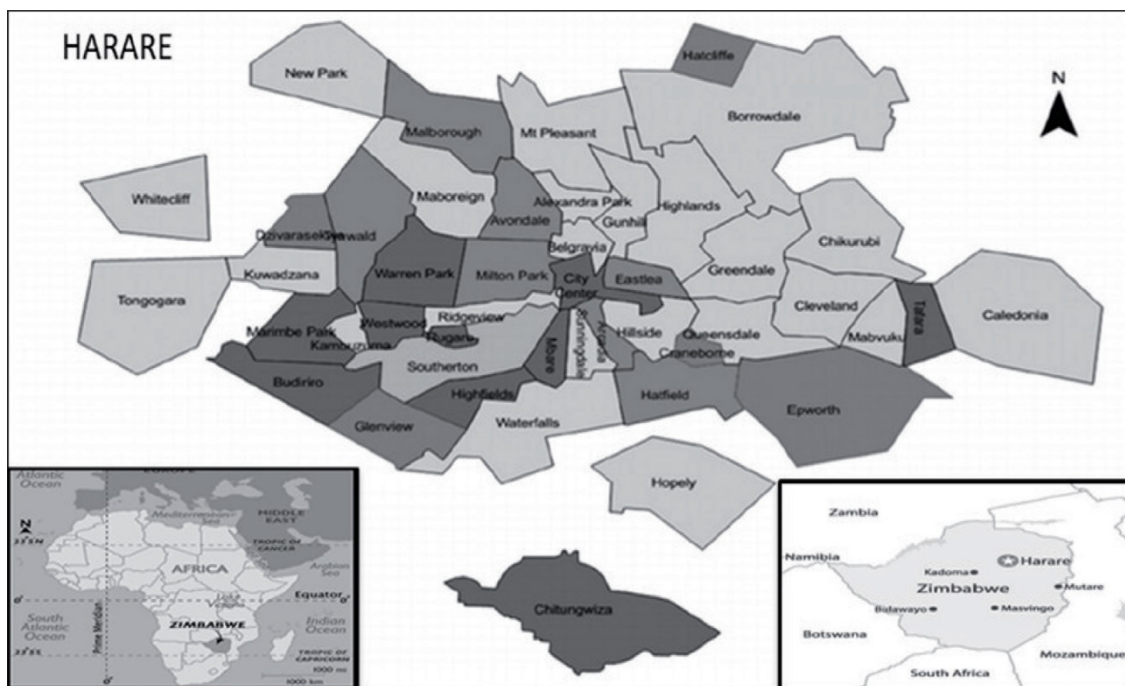
This study identified the potential of young people in driving peace and development transformation within their communities if efforts are made to promote their peacebuilding and sustainable socio-economic experiences. The insights from the study established the nurturing youth agency to facilitate positive social change towards peaceful communities. Hence, the thesis harnessed conflict transformation strategies to highlight the facilitating role of peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship frameworks in presenting unique opportunities to engage and transform the violent experiences of young people in urban communities in Zimbabwe.

### **1.3. Study Context: Youth and Violence in Mbare**

The study was carried out in Mbare (Harare) in Zimbabwe. Mbare is one of Zimbabwe’s oldest urban high-density suburbs and was established in 1907. It is regarded as the leading economic hub in Harare, with some of the most famous trading

markets such as *Siyaso* (industrial tools and products hub), *Mupedzanhamo* (indigenous textile retailers), and *Mbare Musika* (vegetable and consumables market) markets that attract over 800 000 people daily (Mutongwizo 2014; Mutongwizo 2018). Thus, it has a number of diverse informal markets, which range from retail trading to fruits and vegetables, hardware, and informal industries for agricultural and household tools, food outlets, and informal recycling businesses. Interestingly, the area reflects not only the significant economic activities of the city but also the political events. Mbare has been the hub of criminal, gender-based and politically related violent activities (Mutongwizo 2018). Mbare has two wards, which are Ward 4 and Ward 11, with a combined population of over 30000 residents (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2022). However, there are no specific statistics on the youth population in Mbare. Figure 1.1 below depicts a map of different areas in Harare, Zimbabwe.

**Figure 1.1:** Harare, Zimbabwe place locations map



**Source:** Makombe (2021: 278)

In addition, with the community of Mbare being the heartbeat of various economic activities and informal markets, access to the economic systems is negotiated through political connections or family affiliations (Mutongwizo 2014). Thus, most youths in the community have demonstrated a long-standing loyalty to their political affiliations for socio-economic livelihoods, and the pattern might continue to the next generation of

youth if not addressed (Maringira & Gukurume 2020; Mutongwizo 2014; Mutongwizo 2018). Kriger (2005) traces the patterns of youth participation in violence in Mbare back to 1980 and outlines how ZANU-PF youth attacked opposition party members of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) during the 1990 elections. In the post-2000 era, political, economic and electoral violence has been increasingly dominant, with politically aligned youth leading the cause (Mude 2014).

Ozerdem (2015) outlines that peacebuilders have often viewed youth as perpetrators of violence and conflict. Thus, they are often the subject of various stereotypical assumptions of being a threat, angry and violent. Zeroing in on the case of Zimbabwe, historical evidence clarifies that there are multiple factors behind the participation of youth in violence. Youth violence is influenced by various factors, namely unemployment, social marginalisation, poverty, insufficient educational opportunities, poor governance, and control by political actors (Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Bradfield 2018; Maringira & Gukurume 2022). Scholars agree that just like many youths across the world, manipulation has played a significant role in influencing the participation of Zimbabwean youth in political violence (Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Mude 2014; Bradfield 2018; Oosterom & Gukurume 2022). In Zimbabwean society, structural and cultural systems in politics, governance, and society have sustained exclusionary processes to youth participation in policy processes and decision-making, hence making them depend on handouts by their political affiliation or through patriarchal systems for survival. These systems have made youth vulnerable to all forms of violence, both as perpetrators and as victims.

The political actors in Zimbabwe have actively taken advantage of this situation to manipulate and influence youth into assisting their violent purposes for economic rewards. Mbare serves as a perfect case study in which political and electoral violence has been taking place since the 1980s. Fast-forward to the post-2000 era, youth from the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and the ruling ZANU-PF have been involved in severe violent confrontations since 2000. The MDC has been identified as having established various youth military structures that specialise in “defensive” violent action since the early day of its formation (Alexander and McGregor 2013: 755). However, the best-documented cases are those of how

ZANU-PF has been mobilising young men and women into quasi-military groups that attack and commit atrocious acts of violence against members of opposition party MDC; this includes the formation of the Border Gezi-National Youth Service (NYS) from 2001-2007 (Mhike 2018) and during the 2008 run-up election campaign. Episodes of intra-and inter-partisan youth participation in violence continue to happen even to this day across the country.

Mude (2014) feels that the idleness of youth is the leading cause of their manipulation and vulnerability to being influenced towards acts of violence. In compiling the “Zimbabwe Country Report for the 2014 Ministerial Conference on Youth Employment”, Murinda (2014:16) outlines that “84.2% of the currently employed persons aged 15 years and above are considered to be in informal employment, 11.2% in formal employment and 4.6% in unclassifiable employment”. Thondhlana (2017) notes that Zimbabwe is experiencing a formal unemployment rate of more than 85%. This means most of the youth in Zimbabwe are formally unemployed in a very unstable political and economic environment which is prone to violence. It is worrisome knowing that circumstances of vulnerability in the form of unemployment, poverty, lack of access to opportunities and poor economic advantages remain the bedrock affecting many youths in Mbare and Zimbabwe today.

#### **1.4. Need for Social Entrepreneurship in Promoting Youth Peacebuilding**

The background outlined above provides relevant justification for the need for alternative peacebuilding interventions that can facilitate the transformation of youth behaviour and community participation in Mbare. According to Gukurume (2022), although the informal economy in Mbare is politicised, it does provide a means for some young people to avoid violence and violent networks. Scholars agree that most youths in Mbare were driven to join groups such as *Chipangano* because they wanted to have access to sources of income and livelihood (Gukurume 2018; Mutongwizo 2014; Mutongwizo 2018). While patronage and politically aligned violence remain a threat in Mbare (Oosterom & Gukurume 2022; Maringira & Gukurume 2022), the study established that some young people had utilised access to informal economic

opportunities to resist political elites' manipulation and recruitment into violence (Gukurume 2022). This perspective highlights on the crucial role social entrepreneurship support networks can play in organising and amplifying the role of youth towards activities and measures that can promote sustainable peacebuilding in the community. Thus, the thesis utilised a systemic conflict transformation approach to reflect on how social entrepreneurship training can be instrumental in creating pathways for providing alternative peace practices that can mobilise youth towards positive and sustainable peace interactions and societal change efforts.

The exclusion of young people from decision-making spaces in politics, business, and governance limits their participation and denies them a voice in influencing policies that affect them (Musarurwa 2021; Munyede, Mazambani & Maja 2021; Jaji 2020). Youth participation in politics, business, or governance is limited in most African countries (Gounden 2018; Mpungose 2020). According to Musarurwa (2016), the rise of youth activism and non-conforming actions, such as protests against the government in Zimbabwe, has been a result of the lack of space, voice, or support to participate as decision-makers in influencing policies or development in the ailing and frustrating economic conditions. Evidence indicates that in situations where young people have no access to key decision-making or any relevant economic opportunities, frustration, agitation, and anger often lead to a rise in protests or violence (Nhapi, 2022; Ismail & Olonisakin, 2021; Gounden, 2018; Musarurwa 2021).

Furthermore, in Zimbabwe, the neglect and marginalisation of youth have led to socio-economic vulnerabilities and a lack of opportunities (Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Mhike 2018; Musarurwa 2018; Musarurwa 2021). Considering the broken social structure that denies young people opportunities and platforms upon which they can be heard, most young people have been forced to participate in any activities for survival (Mutongwizo 2018; Musarurwa 2018). As such, there is a need for attractive peace-building initiatives that can harness the potential of young people in Africa to contribute positively towards sustainable peace and development (United Nations 2018).

In this study, I utilised social entrepreneurship as a conflict transformation and change vehicle to facilitate youth peacebuilding. Social entrepreneurship is a change agent

that aims to create social value, and in the context of peacebuilding, such an agent is focused on disrupting the hegemony that maintains socioeconomic inequality (Musarurwa & Kaye 2016). Social entrepreneurship is intended to promote cohesion and enable institutions and members of society to give back to others or assist one another in solving challenges (Kickul & Lyons 2020; Mitra, Kickul, Gundry & Orr 2019). According to Musarurwa (2016), Zimbabweans have experienced structural and cultural violence for extended periods, leading to social inequalities that impede development efforts and human growth. The government's failure to deliver basic services and a good quality of life has left citizens frustrated and unable to realise their potential (Musarurwa, 2019; Hove & Chenzi 2020; Maweu & Mare 2022). This situation has created a highly conflicted environment.

Various factors can positively or negatively affect the behaviour of young people towards community engagement (Gukurume 2022; Mhike 2018; Mutongwizo 2018). These factors may serve as barriers or catalysts for social impact and may be personal, psychological, economic, social, political, institutional, environmental, situational, or demographic in nature (El Ebrashi 2013; Mitra et al. 2019). In Mbare, young people have been exposed to electoral and political violence, social and economic injustices, and clientelism by political elites for socioeconomic benefits (Oosterom & Gukurume 2019; Mutongwizo 2014). As a result, they are highly polarised along political lines, making it difficult to facilitate unity and cooperation for community development (Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Bradfield 2018). Therefore, I adopted social entrepreneurship with the aim of encouraging and shaping the perspectives of young people in Mbare towards positive peace participation.

As a peacebuilding tool, social entrepreneurship was employed to engage youth and provide them with a platform to voice their ideas and work towards community-oriented goals through socially responsible programmes. This approach allowed for the development of context-specific initiatives that addressed the needs of young people and may transform the community at large.

## 1.5. Problem Statement

The youth in Zimbabwe comprises about 67.7% of the entire population (Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission [ZHRC] 2018). While young people make up most of the population, they are at the receiving end of various challenges, which include poverty, unemployment, forced migration due to lack of opportunities, sexual abuse of young women, child marriages, and unaffordable education (Nhapi 2022; Hlungwani, Masuku & Masuku 2021; Maringira & Gukurume 2022). They have been deeply affected by poor governance, corruption, and lack of access to affordable and functional health care and are increasingly involved in high drug uptake (ZHRC 2018; Maringira & Gukurume 2022). Young people between the ages of 15 and 35 make up a significant number of those living in urban communities, and yet over 80% of them are unemployed (ZHRC 2018; Mhike 2018).

The term 'youth Bulge' is applicable in the Zimbabwe setting, a term defined by Pruitt (2020:713): "A 'youth bulge' is typically taken to mean a relatively large proportion of young people in the population of a given country." The continuous occurrences of political, electoral, and social violence in Zimbabwe can be traced to this 'youth bulge'.

The evidence reflects that most youth militias that have been involved in political "vigilantism" and massive electoral and politically motivated violence to target other youth and community members since the 1980s in Zimbabwe were unemployed and manipulated youths (Mude 2014; Mutongwizo 2014; Mhike 2018; Maringira & Gukurume 2020). The political elites have taken advantage of the vulnerable situations and poor state that youth experience, where even graduates are struggling to survive by vending in the streets (Mhike 2018). Political elites manipulate and abuse young people for the purpose of committing violence (Mhike 2018; Maringira & Gukurume 2022).

Disadvantaged urban youth frequently endure marginalisation and disenfranchisement, which can have severe effects on them, their families, and society (Chaskin, McGregor & Brady 2018). The young people in Mbare and the broader Zimbabwean context have been disenfranchised and negatively portrayed as

perpetrators of violence and conflict. Chaskin, McGregor and Brady (2018:1) emphasise that the disenfranchisement of youth in any society is exacerbated by:

“negative media portrayals and punitive policies that treat certain urban youth as threats to be *CONTROLLED* rather than as young people with the agency and potential to contribute effectively to society”.

Hence, scholars are increasingly coming to agreement that youth participation in violence is not their own choice but because of vulnerability to the politico-socio-economic challenges that surround them (Chaskin, McGregor & Brady 2018; Mhike 2018; Higgins & Lopes Cardozo 2019). In the Zimbabwean context, and particularly in Mbare, youth have been perpetrators of violence and victims because they do not have a political, economic, or social voice of their own in society and government to represent and advance their interests (Rukuni *et al.* 2017; Mutongwizo 2018).

Given the identified key problems, the study sought to provide an understanding of the extent to which political actors, economic exclusion and other factors influence the participation of youth in electoral or wider violence in Zimbabwe. It explored and evaluated the extent to which the engagement of youth through social entrepreneurship lenses in Mbare can promote their participation in peacebuilding and reduce involvement in political, economic, and electoral or wider violence. The study was guided by a significant interest in providing alternative peace practices that can help in mobilising youth towards positive and sustainable practices that promote peaceful interaction and societal change at a local level. It seeks to promote independent youth participation in the community through social entrepreneurship to provide positive, tolerant, and sustainable peaceful interaction for building peace in Mbare.

## **1.6. Research Aim and Objectives**

The study aimed to promote youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship in Mbare. Thus, it utilises an action research approach to explore the role of social entrepreneurship and peace innovation lenses in engaging youth in peacebuilding agency and participation in transforming and facilitating positive peace practices in local communities. Therefore, the study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To explore and understand the political, economic, and related factors influencing participation of youth in electoral or wider violence in Mbare, Zimbabwe.
- ii. To explore positive and alternative peace initiatives, and to facilitate and promote youth engagement in Mbare communities through social entrepreneurship.
- iii. To plan and implement social entrepreneurship initiatives as a tool for building community peace interventions for youth in Mbare.
- iv. To evaluate and analyse the intervention outcomes and the impact of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool.

## **1.7. Significance of the Study**

This study was conducted with the aim of promoting youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship in Mbare. Young people in the Zimbabwean context remain highly disenfranchised, vulnerable, excluded, and viewed more as problematic and perpetrators of violence than agents of peace (Mhike 2018; Mpofu 2019; Muchemwa, 2019; Musarurwa & Kaye 2016; Musarurwa 2018; Rukuni *et al.* 2017). Therefore, this study sought to contribute significantly to addressing the gaps that exist in youth peacebuilding, contextual solutions to peace, policy, and academic research.

The conducting of the study sought to contribute to the under-researched and still budding peacebuilding efforts in the broader Zimbabwean context, particularly in youth peacebuilding. While there is a wide range of studies that have been conducted in exploring and unpacking the role of youth violence in Mbare and the broader Zimbabwean context, studies that seek to promote peacebuilding solutions, particularly through engaging the youth, remain scant.

The researcher also sought to address the contextual research gap on youth peacebuilding in Mbare. While Mbare has a reputation for youth violence and complex patronage networks that sustain the web of structural violence, studies are yet to reflect on the positive role young people can play if engaged in peacebuilding agency (Bradfield 2018; Maunga, Mugari & Tundu, 2015; Mhike 2018; Mutongwizo 2014; Mutongwizo 2018; Oosterom & Gukurume, 2019; Gukurume, 2022). The historical and

contemporary trends in youth violence in Mbare can be traced back to the 1980s, when ZANU-PF youth were responsible for attacking opposition party members of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) during the 1990 elections (Kriger 2005). Moreover, in the post-2000 era, political, economic, and electoral violence has become increasingly prevalent, with politically aligned youth playing a leading role in these incidents (Mude 2014; Mutongwizo 2018; Mpofu 2019). Thus, the study reflects on the practical lenses of social entrepreneurship and reflects how youth agency towards sustainable peacebuilding can be promoted in the context of Mbare.

This thesis contributes towards localised approaches to promoting youth peacebuilding. It unpacks how informal discussions on topical peace issues can facilitate knowledge sharing among the youth, triggering new opportunities to address identified local challenges. It establishes the need for critical social entrepreneurship support in attracting the engagement of youth, as well as the role of advocacy and facilitating and shaping self-organisation in promoting youth peacebuilding in local communities. Policymakers and actors who seek to promote youth peacebuilding in the community of Mbare can draw significant insights rooted in local initiatives that they can use in shaping their engagement strategies. Thus, the study makes significant contributions to knowledge that provides alternative mechanisms that can be utilised to promote the effective participation of youth in peacebuilding.

## **1.8. Research Methodology**

With the understanding that youth are central to the narratives of violence in different global contexts, the study sought to explore the role social entrepreneurship can play in promoting agency in youth peacebuilding in Mbare, Zimbabwe. Using transformative lenses, the need to promote youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship was explored using a mixed methods research design in action research. The process allowed the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of data through surveys (n=270), qualitative in-depth interviews (n=20), qualitative focus group discussions (n=4), and intervention phases of action research which included topical informal discussions, a training workshop, and a youth peace awareness campaign. The data was gathered between 2019 and 2022.

Action research is a beneficial process in peacebuilding because it allows community members to both participate in and benefit from the research process (Kaye & Harris 2018). The process of action research involves cycles that are fluid and overlap in generating knowledge, planning, piloting data approaches, evaluation of outcomes, and in collecting and analysing data (Somekh 2008). Since young people are often seen as both primary perpetrators and victims of violence (Mhike 2018; Mutongwizo 2018; Gounden 2018), the use of action research as an applied process was crucial in engaging in capacitating youth towards peacebuilding while learning from them (Kaye & Harris 2018). The sample for surveys included Mbare youth, while the sample for interviews and focus groups included political party leaders, civil society and human rights experts, informal and formal business owners, church leaders and community youth. Key study participants in the intervention process were identified using the information gathered from in-depth interviews and focus groups, which also helped to plan and design implementation instruments, and construct the implementation phase of the action research and the project's instruments.

The intervention process resulted firstly in informal discussion forums being developed by the participants whereby five gatherings were conducted for a period of five months (November 2019-March 2020). Secondly, a process of an attempt to register a notarial deed of trust (Trust Deed) from 2019 to 2022 to facilitate a formal social entrepreneurship platform was undertaken. Thirdly, a one-day training workshop on peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship was conducted (9 August 2022), as was a youth peace awareness campaign (10 August 2022). An evaluation process was carried out using a reflection approach following the completion of each intervention process. The quantitative data was presented using SPSS, and the qualitative data was presented using thematic analysis. Detailed information on the methodological processes followed in this study can be found in Chapter 5.

## **1.9. Delimitation of the Study**

This research was conducted in Mbare (Harare), Zimbabwe. The researcher chose to conduct the research in Mbare because he lived and worked in Mbare for several years and some of his relatives stay there. The researcher had a good understanding

of some of the youth experiences at a personal level; hence, engaging in the study was crucial for him to explore measures that can contribute to improving positive participation of youth. Mbare is a historical hotspot of youth violence: it headquartered the famous “*Chipangano*” vigilante youth group that terrorised the community in the 2008 re-run election and single-handedly secured a monopolisation in the distribution of market and accommodation spaces in Mbare. The patronage patterns they created are still being utilised to this day (Basiru 2020). Therefore, the researcher sought to engage young people as a measure to empower them to participate outside some of these violent networks. While trust might be an issue for a stranger penetrating some spaces in Mbare to conduct research, the researcher had a buy-in as a local and through some of his relatives in areas that he was not known.

### **1.10. Limitation of the Study**

The biggest limitation which was experienced in conducting this research was the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected the intervention plans and the timeline of the study. The pandemic hindered the researcher from gathering and meeting with the participants as expected. While this was the case, the researcher realised that action research is never a linear progression, and hurdles that affect the process may be inevitable; hence, it is crucial to adapt and navigate opportunities to progress. This challenge also exposed various weaknesses with the youth, particularly the inability to self-organise in cases of disturbance or disorientation when working towards a peacebuilding plan.

Another critical limitation that was experienced was a lack of financial capacity to engage in social ventures with the youth. The social entrepreneurship process required funds to promote some social ventures for the youth, but this could not be achieved. Securing financial stakeholders could have jumpstarted an experimental process that could have been a control programme for impacting youth participation in peacebuilding. In addition, engaging the participants using social media platforms such as WhatsApp was expensive for some youth due to the high data tariffs in Zimbabwe. However, the knowledge gained in social entrepreneurship was considered crucial for identifying opportunities for social ventures.

The study was politically sensitive, and it was difficult to get some of the participants to trust me as a researcher. Some of the people could not bear to have the audio recorded for interviews and during focus groups. During the intervention process, it was quite challenging for some youth to trust each other and work together. For instance, the WhatsApp group forum, which was meant to ensure the continuity of discussion forums, was never utilised to discuss issues pertaining to the suggested topics because some felt that they could not be as honest as they would like to be because someone might take a screenshot and share with people who might victimise them. Political polarisations remain a critical challenge, especially among the youth; hence, the researcher had to ensure that the programmes were conducted apolitically to avoid unnecessary tensions.

## **1.11. Conceptual Definitions**

The study focused on the importance of promoting youth peacebuilding using social entrepreneurship tools. Hence, there are key terms that were consistently referred to in this thesis which include youth peacebuilding, social entrepreneurship, sustainable peacebuilding, and youth agency. These terms are defined below.

### **1.11.1. Youth Peacebuilding**

Youth peacebuilding has been defined by various scholars as a process where young people take part in future local development and play important roles in resolving conflicts in their own communities (Kujeke 2017; Neufeldt & Janzen 2021; Taylor, Marín, Cubillos & Alfonso 2021). The process is considered crucial in building the skills of youth as peacebuilding actors, strengthening their participation in democratic governance, and solving problems at the local and national levels. The goal of youth peacebuilding is to get young people involved as important partners in civil society, reconstruction, and development (Micinski 2016). This is done through programmes that help them take part in and own key decision-making processes in social, economic, and political platforms in their communities. Young people in Zimbabwe have been greatly excluded from key decision-making spaces, disenfranchising them from their role in positively contributing to the development and governance of their

communities (Musarurwa 2018); hence, there is a need to promote youth peacebuilding.

### **1.11.2. Social Entrepreneurship**

Social entrepreneurship is a process in which individuals, startups and entrepreneurs design their revenue-generating strategies to directly serve their mission to deliver social value (Abu-Saifan 2012). Thus, a social entrepreneur is defined as “a mission-driven individual who uses a set of entrepreneurial behaviours to deliver a social value to the less privileged, all through an entrepreneurially oriented entity that is financially independent, self-sufficient, or sustainable” (Abu-Saifan 2012:25). Thus, social entrepreneurs look to business models for inspiration to create positive social and environmental change on a large scale. The engagement of social entrepreneurship approaches in sub-Saharan Africa is considered crucial in addressing the many lingering post-colonial challenges such as informality, poverty, social inequalities, and structural violence (Rivera-Santos, Holt, Littlewood & Kolk 2015; Musarurawa & Kaye 2016). Though the development of social entrepreneurship ventures is shown to be a difficult process in several training manuals, scholars have highlighted its capacity to engage groups of people to reflect on ventures that are suitable for them in addressing identified challenges (Rivera-Santos et al. 2015). The social entrepreneurship space is considered a meeting place for people with fresh perspectives on how to solve local problems and bring about the desired positive social change. According to Pillay and Mitra (2015), the growth of social enterprises provides contextual help for people to better comprehend the challenges that marginalised communities encounter when trying to build enterprises, and the steps that must be taken to generate required social value. Therefore, the study engaged the use of social entrepreneurship based on its advantages in triggering practical processes towards advancing positive peace participation and social change, particularly in the lives of youth in Mbare.

### **1.11.3. Sustainable Peacebuilding**

Sustainable peacebuilding refers to a long-term process directed towards addressing structural violence issues that often lead to physical outbreaks of violence (Bräuchler 2021; Vanelli & Ochoa Peralta 2022; Uduji, Okolo-Obasi & Asongu 2021). The process

seeks to secure and prevent the outbreak or continuation of violence in a community through activating agency towards disarming conflicting parties, restoring order, and promoting peaceful and non-violent measures that can ensure reconciliation and ending of hostilities (United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office 2017). According to Mahmoud and Makoond (2017:2-3) “sustaining peace is an ongoing exercise, not a one-time intervention. Contexts change, because of both internal fluctuations and external shocks, requiring a concomitant adjustment in the norms and institutions governing society”. The sentiments of sustainable peacebuilding resonate with positive peace ideals which reflects on the strengthening measures that ensure the promotion and building of peace in communities (Galtung 1969; Grewal 2003). The idea of sustainable peace was crucial in this thesis as a way of reflecting on the importance of engaging young people as key stakeholders in promoting sustainable local peacebuilding in Mbare.

#### **1.11.4. Youth Agency**

Cardozo et al. (2015:3) define youth agency “as the space for manoeuvre available to young people in developing (un)conscious strategies that either support or hinder peacebuilding in relation to the broader cultural political economy context”. The idea of agency in youth peacebuilding seeks to capacitate the role of young people to actively contribute to building positive peace in their local communities. Most local peacebuilding practices in Africa miss the element of agency; hence, they cannot empower the actors or participants in the process to ensure sustainability (Hancock 2017). Thus, having agency capacitates the actors and gives them space to make independent decisions which they regard as important in sustaining peace within their local communities. Youth are also local actors for peace facilitation that are often denied the opportunity to actively contribute to the process (Cardozo et al. 2015; Hancock 2017). Therefore, youth agency involves the active engagement of young people in addressing prevailing challenges such as injustice, inequalities, violence, or conflict (Luppicini & Adell 2009). In this thesis, youth agency was realised by capacitating the role of youth in peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship ideas, training, and advocacy. The intention was to present alternative measures to help

youth engage institutions and capacitate their role in presenting their views with resilience in building effective peace frameworks and strategies in their local context.

## **1.12. Overall Thesis Structure**

The thesis has nine chapters which are structured as follows:

**Chapter 1** introduces the study and provides a detailed understanding of the study, presenting the study context, problem statement, study aim and objectives, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations and the key study concepts.

**Chapter 2** presents the reviewed literature and provides detailed foundations for key ideas on youth, violence, peace, and peacebuilding.

**Chapter 3** grounds the thesis in the theoretical foundations of conflict transformation perspectives.

**Chapter 4** provides key conceptual frameworks that guide the thinking of the study. Thus, it presents the role of behavioural strategies of social entrepreneurship, peace innovation and systemic conflict transformation in shaping the thinking promoting youth peacebuilding.

**Chapter 5** presents the methodological steps of mixed methods design in action research that were taken in conducting the study.

**Chapter 6** presents the quantitative results of the study.

**Chapter 7** presents and interprets the qualitative results gathered from the in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and action research intervention process.

**Chapter 8** discusses the findings of the study, reflecting on literature. It considers the theoretical implications of the study and contributions towards existing literature.

**Chapter 9** sums up the thesis by presenting the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

### **1.13. Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduced the study and provided an orientation of the key ideas that guided the interests of the researcher in conducting the study. The chapter highlighted how the study sought to promote youth peace building through social entrepreneurship in Mbare. It utilised mixed methods design in action research gathering relevant data and conducting the required interventions.

The next chapter presents the first part of the literature that was reviewed for the study.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Literature Review: Youth, Peacebuilding, Violence and Social Entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe**

### **Brief Overview of the Literature Review and Theoretical Chapters**

This thesis is guided by a literature review and theoretical framework that are presented in three distinct parts, namely Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Chapter 2 provides an extensive exploration of literature on youth, peacebuilding, violence, and social entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe. This chapter delves into the definitions of these concepts, their historical context and analysis, and existing debates and perspectives on the subject matter.

In Chapter 3, the literature review continues, with a focus on conflict transformation perspectives in ending violence and building peace. This chapter elaborates on the key tenets of conflict transformation thinking and its influence on the approach of this thesis. Given that conflict transformation informed the peacebuilding approach of this thesis, Chapter 3 contextualizes this framework in the specific context of Zimbabwe.

Finally, Chapter 4 outlines and discusses the main theoretical perspectives that guided the study, namely peace innovation (PI), behavioural theory of social entrepreneurship (BTSE), and systemic conflict transformation (SCT). This chapter examines how these theoretical lenses inform the study's approach to promoting youth peacebuilding in Mbare, Zimbabwe, through social entrepreneurship.

These insights offer a detailed overview of how the next three chapters, comprising the literature review and theoretical framework, are structured.

## 2.1. Introduction

*“My generation [young people] represents promise – not peril. We should be seen as an asset – not a problem” (UN News, 2018).*

These are the words of Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, at an open debate of the UN Security Council on youth, peace, and security, held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2018. One might suggest that her words were driven by the fact that youth are often portrayed in a negative light and are regarded more as troublemakers and perpetrators of political and social violence than as potential leaders and peacebuilders (Ozerdem 2017). According to Sukarieh and Tannock (2018), the most extreme protests, terror attacks, and political and social violence that have taken place across the world since the nineteenth century have been driven by young people. Therefore, may it be that Wickramanayake was in denial of this reality? Various suggestions across the literature indicate that young people are often excluded from key leadership roles across different spectrums of society (Qasem 2013; UN Youth 2019; Munyede et al. 2021; Jaji 2020). Her plea is an advocacy against the exclusion of youth from actively participating across all political, social, economic, and civic platforms (UN News 2018).

Current studies are increasingly presenting youth as crucial actors in realising political, social and economic goals in any community. One of the most important to note is UN Resolution 2250 (UNSC 2015), which thematically speaks of the importance and role of youth on matters relating to international peace and security (Sukarieh & Tannock 2018). The adoption of this resolution on 9 December 2015 marked a new dawn in the long-awaited guidelines to formally recognise and incorporate youth into mainstream decision-making platforms. Literature shows that the resolution received much praise and was embraced as a “paradigm shift” and a “breakthrough” for recognising and outlining “‘the positive role’ that ‘young men and women play for building sustainable peace’” (Sukarieh & Tannock 2018:855). However, despite this shift and seemingly positive embrace of young people, views on youth remain double-sided, with the one

side presenting a continuous stereotypical reflection of youth as a problem, and the other embracing them as a panacea.

In his study on youth violence, Umar (2016: 146) asks two critical questions:

What makes youth prone to engage in violent movements? And what programme strategies show the greatest potential to moderate this risk?

These questions feed into this study well, as they do not only help reflect on the above opening quote but invite provoking thoughts as to why young people are often looked at as a danger and what should be done to address the matter. Rising concerns across the literature highlight several factors contributing to youth involvement in violent movements in Africa and beyond. Some of these factors include the youth bulge theory, exclusion of youth from key political and development leadership roles, and coercion of youth by political elites. Thus, most negative reactions of youth are influenced or forced by the systemic structures of violence and inequality surrounding them. In as much as these factors can be identified in different contexts across the globe, the youth in Mbare, Zimbabwe are no exception.

In every study, it is essential to understand what has been done in other studies and reflect on how this can help in shaping your own. This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of related literature on youth involvement in conflict, violence, and peace. The review of literature is critical in grounding one's study perspectives through engagement with previous empirical work and critiques of relevant research that offer a platform on which a researcher builds in furthering their own study. In this chapter, international, regional, and contextual perspectives relating to youth involvement in political, economic and social violence are thoroughly explored. This review helps to comprehend contextual factors influencing youth participation in political, electoral, or wider violence in Zimbabwe and more specifically in Mbare. Previous studies are critically analysed and compared as this helps to avoid replication and shapes the contribution of the study. Expectations are high regarding the measures and initiatives to be put in place to engage the youth, for various reasons which include the youth bulge, violent extremism, rising protests and student movements, to mention a few.

Therefore, the chapter will provide an understanding of the meanings of youth, violence, peace, and peacebuilding, and reflect on social entrepreneurship and its role

in politically turbulent environments. These concepts are critical in guiding the thinking of the study. Reflecting how the concepts are defined across literature helps in integrating the ideas that already exist across studies with the objectives of the study being conducted.

## **2.2. Youth**

Defining the concept of “youth” is a challenging task. Studies indicate that there is no standard definition of the concept. Most of the definitions that exist in current literature define youth in relation to age groups. Age is regarded as the easiest way of defining the concept, and youth is a “more fluid [concept] than other fixed age-groups” (UNESCO 2019; UN Youth 2019). This means there are various factors that influence the categories defining youth. Bucholtz (2002) provides anthropological and sociological perspectives in defining youth that were followed in this study. The perspectives provide different scholarly debates that reveal how social circumstances, chronological age and cultural position make distinctive contributions to the understanding and defining of youth in different contexts (Bucholtz 2002). This insight formed the guiding parameters of how youth were defined using two categories. Firstly, using the social circumstances which are reflective of the chronological norm where society makes a distinction between childhood and adulthood through legal statutes and frameworks (Hartinger-Saunders 2008). Secondly, the definition of youth was also drawn from the cultural circumstances that exist in the Zimbabwean context (Harlan 2016). Therefore, there are two categories for defining youth that were explored in this study.

### **2.2.1. Social Circumstances in Defining Youth**

Firstly, social circumstances in defining youth rely more on biological chronology for interpreting concepts such as youth or adulthood, for example. There is, however, no universal definition of youth. The mainstream way that has been adopted across international, regional, and national platforms in defining the concept of youth is mainly biological (Hartinger-Saunders 2008). In current studies, youth are often defined according to age groups because these groupings are the easiest way of defining youth (Hartinger-Saunders 2008; UNESCO 2019). More importantly, the UN Youth

(2019) outlines that youth are easily defined in this manner to help interpret the expected social order of events, which include education and employment. This is essential in understanding various societal conditions which affect young people in different societies. Therefore, it helps in properly categorising challenges which might include identifying and labelling issues such as “child soldier” or “youth violence” (Bucholtz 2002; Hartinger-Saunders 2008).

The definition of youth as a concept is often subjected to different identities that might be associated to organisations, national or policy definitions, and even family (Harlan 2016; Hartinger-Saunders 2008). The United Nations (UN) defines youths as “persons that range between the age of 15-24 years, without prejudice to other definitions of Member States” (UN General Assembly 1985, para. 19). There is clear emphasis that the UN definition of youth is specifically for statistical purposes (UN Youth 2019). However, with the adoption of the *World Programme of Action for Youth*<sup>1</sup> to the Year 2000 and Beyond, the UN has indicated that “the meaning of the term youth varied in different societies around the world and that definitions of youth had changed continuously in response to fluctuating political, economic and sociocultural circumstances” (UN General Assembly 1999, para. 4). Thus, various countries define youth according to their own age groups and influencing conditions existing in politics, economy, society, and culture (Harlan 2016; Hartinger-Saunders 2008; UNESCO 2019).

### **2.2.2 Cultural Position in Defining Youth**

Secondly, defining youth can also be guided by the cultural position of any society. It is essential to note that current studies are increasingly ignoring cultural circumstances in defining youth. Bucholtz (2002) explains that in some cultures, youth might begin in a pre-adolescent stage, whereas in others, those in their 40s might still count as youth. This is because cultures have often regarded youth or adolescence as a stage which is not highly salient, though this might seem to have changed with time (Harlan 2016; Hartinger-Saunders 2008). There are various cultural principles and ideologies that

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<sup>1</sup> <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/youth/wpay>. Adopted in 1995 by the United Nations.

exist in defining youth in every context, meaning that in some cultural stages, youth can be a very long-term or even lifelong engagement in some cultural practices that might prolong the duties of the practitioner even beyond a known stipulated age group (Bucholtz 2002; Harlan 2016; Hartinger-Saunders 2008; Valentine, Skelton & Chambers 1998). This means the cultural practice of youth attracts strategic contestations that benefit the protectors of the cultural system (Hartinger-Saunders 2008; Valentine et al. 1998). For instance, in some communities, though the international, regional, or national cut-off age of youth might be 15 to 24, 24 to 35, it might only be in policy (UN Youth 2019; Hlungwani et al. 2021), whereas in practice there might be individuals beyond 40 or 50 years of age performing or working in offices that are meant to be for youth (Maringira & Gukurume 2022).

### **2.2.3 Understanding “Youth”**

According to UNESCO (2019), youth can be defined as a transitional period from a childhood stage of dependence to the stage of independence at adulthood and awareness of interdependence that exists and guides community members. Thus, despite the stipulations of age limits in defining youth in various international and national policy frameworks, the social and cultural representation of youth in various contexts remains fluid.

Research indicates that the UN has used the 15-24 age cohort in guiding their international youth programmes and statistical services since 1985 (The Commonwealth 2021; UNDESA *n.d.*). This means the various global statistics on youth (demography, education, employment, and health) from the UN that are referred to in this study are limited to this age group. However, for further verification and clarity in youth statistics in Africa, African Union (AU) and national statistics provide contextual details that extend beyond the UN youth statistical boundaries. The AU Charter defines youth as those between the ages of 15 and 35 years. In the context of this study, the Zimbabwean definition of youth is the same as that of the AU Charter. However, UNESCO notes that it uses different definitions of youth that relate to their context. For instance, at international and regional level, UNESCO uses the UN universal definition. Though the AU Charter has a different definition of youth, the UNESCO programmes in the African Youth Forum use the UN definition.

UNESCO has a more flexible approach in defining and understanding youth when implementing or engaging youth programmes in local communities. It adopts the Member State definition that can be based on a national policy framework. According to UNESCO (2019) there are various cultural conditions that are not usually specified in any policy framework when it comes to defining youth which are contextual. For instance, in Zimbabwe, while there is an official age category defining youth, the term is applied loosely, encompassing individuals both younger and older than the established age range (Beauvais, McKay & Seddon 2001). The individuals who fall under the age of 18 and those in their 40s and 50s, are sometimes categorized as youth and may be appointed to positions specifically designated for youth (Canada Research Directorate, 2011; Hlungwani et al. 2021; Maringira & Gukurume 2022). An example of this is the appointment of Cde Pupurai Togarepi as the secretary of youth affairs in the ZANU PF youth league at 54 years of age from 2017-2020. This observation highlights the social realities of defining "youth" in different African contexts such as Zimbabwe. According to UNESCO (2019), the age limit in defining youth has been increasing due to changes in socio-economic conditions which include high unemployment levels and the costs of setting up independent households that are keeping many young people into prolonged periods of dependency.

### **2.3. Understanding Violence**

As far back as records exist, violence has been part of human existence. It is a central theme that cuts across societal platforms such as politics, religion, family, and even social organisations. Ahluwalia and Miller (2019) note that violence has attracted a wide concern in academic research, social movements, journalism, filmmaking, policing, drama, and military strategy. In the contemporary world, if one browses through social media platforms, reads newspapers, or watches news channels, one is likely to come across issues relating to all kinds of violence.

Johan Galtung categorised and defined violence as a concept (Galtung 1969; 1990; 1996). He first asserted that violence has two forms, which are direct and indirect (Galtung 1969), and then later explained it as a triangular problem which is direct, structural, and cultural (Galtung 1990). Galtung acknowledged that direct violence is

straightforward and easily realised since it is overt. In addition, he notes that indirect violence involves systems that (1) monopolise and divert resources meant for constructive efforts for all society to only cater for a particular group; and (2) have repressive structures that limit society from realising its potential (Galtung 1969). Thus, violence cannot be defined under one umbrella term.

To provide an explicit definition and understanding of violence, Galtung's triangular understanding of violence (which is direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence) is explored in detail below. This helps in differentiating physical violence from verbal, cultural or systematic forms of violence.

### **2.3.1. Direct Violence**

Direct violence is also known as personal violence. Johansen (2007) notes that direct violence is the intentional harm of others. Ahluwalia and Miller (2019) explain that it involves the direct use of physical force to inflict harm. Galtung (1990) describes direct violence as an "event", meaning it is associated with episodic incidents in which one causes personal harm to oneself or the other. For instance, Galtung explains that the extreme outcome of direct violence is killing, while other brutal outcomes of direct violence might involve beating, maiming, siege, or causing misery (Galtung 1990).

Burchard (2016) provides an interesting clarification of how direct violence occurs. She outlines that violence can be incidental or strategic. Incidental violence refers to acts of violence that occur spontaneously without prior planning. For instance, "peaceful" protests might end up in unintended violent confrontations between protesters and the state security. On the other hand, strategic violence is a result of premeditated or planned acts of violence with a specific intent or agenda. Anecdotal evidence reveals that electoral violence in countries like Kenya and Zimbabwe in 2007 and 2008 respectively was strategically planned by politicians with different agendas or interests (Burchard 2016).

Studies indicate that direct violence manifests in various forms, such as personal, political, and social violence. All these forms of violence involve an intentional act of harm to oneself or others. For instance, the MacClinchy and Scott (2016: 20), defines political violence as:

the use of force towards a political end that is perpetrated to advance the position of a person or group defined by their political position in society. Governments, state militaries, rebels, terrorist organisations and militias engage in political violence, as well as actors who may adopt both political and criminal motives.

This definition highlights that violence is often used to achieve political aims and is linked to various factors, such as government types (be it authoritarian, colonial, or democratic etc.), corruption, the attitude towards law and order versus a dictatorship, history and the culture of the country. However, the choice to use violence is complex, and different groups might be driven by factors beyond political motives (Webber *et al.* 2020). For example, some rebels in countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR) often use violence as an incentivising tool in negotiating political ends with governments, while some students in South Africa might engage in violent protests for free education. Some may purely be involved in violence for criminal reasons. Studies reveal that political violence often thrives in environments with corrupt governance, inequalities, or a lack of justice (Howard 2016; Wall Myers *et al.* 2018). For instance, in Zimbabwe, the country's history of violence against colonial powers, corruption, and authoritarian attitudes has created an environment that perpetuates different kinds of violence by the state, youths, and political actors (Mhike 2018; Mutongwizo 2018).

The MacClinchy & Scott (2016) defines social violence as another form of direct violence. Social violence is described as

a broader manifestation of grievances, criminal behaviours, and interpersonal violence in society. These include multiple types of crime, homicides, and interpersonal and self-directed violence (MacClinchy & Scott 2016:20).

The definition reflects on the behavioural responses that trigger the manifestation of direct violence in communities and societies. One can understand how groups of people might engage in violent protests to draw the attention of authorities towards their grievances. For instance, the prevalence of violent student protests in South Africa in recent years highlights the concept of social violence. Acts of social violence are often fuelled by underlying structural issues, such as inequality and corruption, which result in violent activities and situations (De Wet, Somefun & Rambau 2018;

Enaifoghe & Dlamini 2021; Ismail & Olonisakin 2021). When violent protests occur, they have the potential to further exacerbate these issues, as the destruction of property leads to the diversion of funds from resolving the root causes of inequality to repairing damages. This pattern is evident in cases such as the violent student protests observed in South African universities such as UKZN, DUT, and various townships during the *#FeesMustFall* (Langa et al. 2017), which resulted in injuries, deaths, and destruction of property. Though the aspects of students' protests help in understanding the idea of social violence better, one has to understand that the legitimacy of a protest is lost once it becomes violent, thus eroding its moral authority. Hence, to effectively address social violence, it is necessary to address the underlying structural issues that give rise to it, while also acknowledging the counterproductive effects of violent protest.

The definition of violence by the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines direct violence more explicitly. It entails that 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. This includes interpersonal violence (occurring between individuals), self-directed violence (suicide and other forms of self-harm) and collective violence (occurring between groups, such as wars) (WHO 2019:3).

This paints a clear picture of the practices that portray the manifestation of direct violence. Understanding direct violence is essential for this study, since it helps differentiate various ways in which violence manifests itself in action. With this understanding, it is essential to note that though violence can be direct and manifest, it is also subtle and latent. These subtle and latent ways of violence are detailed in the following paragraphs.

### **2.3.2. Structural Violence**

Structural violence is an indirect form of violence. Galtung (1985; 1990) explicitly denotes that violence extends beyond just a physical image. He states that society is surrounded by structural factors that lead to violence. Therefore, he considers structural violence to be an “avoidable impairment” of intrinsic needs for human life.

Studies often indicate that direct violence is an outcome of long-standing and unresolved structural issues. Galtung (1990) argues that structural violence maintains and preserves a culture of violence, where exploitation, alienation, repression, marginalisation of people, and fragmentation of society continuously take place, presenting an environment which is detrimental to the existence of peace, since it will only remain negative (Galtung 1990). This helps to bring to light the idea that “some social structure or social institution may harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs” (Sinha et al. 2017:134). Structural violence reflects the bigger picture, which reveals the conditions that cause and effect the manifestation of direct violence (Galtung 2007). Understanding the social structures that breed violence is essential for creating the necessary conditions for peace (Grewal 2003; Lee 2016).

Structural violence is the most normalised form of violence that exists across social structures and institutions in Africa and the world today because it is built into the very fabric of society and perpetuates harm and inequality in subtle yet profound ways (Hosken 2020). It affects marginalised groups disproportionately and is perpetuated by discriminatory laws and policies, unequal access to resources and opportunities, and cultural biases and stereotypes. Furthermore, the legacy of colonialism and the continued exploitation of African countries by external powers also contribute to structural violence in the continent, while global systems of power and economic inequality perpetuate it worldwide. This is because there are various structural violence interactions, connections and distinctions in societies that influence conflicts and form the root causes of violence, and yet are not visible (Sorensen, Joshi & Sivitz 2014). According to Galtung (1969) structural violence maintains extreme marginalisation, exploitation, and fragmentation whereby society is engulfed in complex matters in political, economic and social orders which have serious consequences such as lack of freedom, or deprivation of general well-being, mostly instituted by those in power. One might suggest that what exists in structural violence is a continuous state of violence, which is put into effect in the form of abuse of human rights, hunger, sexism, and racism. Accordingly, Johansen (2007:151) defines structural violence as “the harm done by socio-political structures and decisions that deprive someone of their access to basic needs necessary for fulfilling one’s full potentials in life.” Given this, one might note that the face of structural violence is

revealed through social suffering and poverty within societies (Rylko-Bauer and Farmer 2016).

Literature indicates that there is much damage and harm affecting people's lives due to structural conditions, with further-reaching consequences than the conditions caused by armed conflicts and inter-and-intra-national wars (Rylko-Bauer and Farmer 2016). Research indicates that often those oppressed under structural violence might eventually form revolutions that are violent and, in most cases, cause the oppressors to retaliate with even more force and severity, for example, with the use of military arsenal against unarmed civilians. The incessant manifestation of youth violence across African countries sheds much light on the ominous consequences of structural violence (Abdullahi & Issah 2016; Massetti & David-Ferdon 2016; Wall Myers et al. 2018). A study by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019) reveals a worrying trend among young Africans, with more than 40% of them reporting that their current living situation is very bad or bad. Furthermore, a significant majority of 60% of Africans believe that their governments are doing a very bad or bad job at addressing the needs of young people, highlighting the growing sense of disillusionment and disconnection between young people and their leaders (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2019; Maganga 2020). The past decade in Africa has been marked by a rising conflict environment influenced by social instabilities led by frustrated young people (Cilliers 2017). Evidence shows that since the 2010 Arab Spring, young Africans have been at the forefront of demonstrations against dictatorships, "the extension of presidential term limits, the lack of transparency during elections, and unpopular socio-economic policies", with their protests often resulting in violence and widespread unrest (Maganga 2020: 30).

In addition, there are numerable indicators of the consequences of structural violence, notably, the *#Feesmustfall* student protests in South Africa, a movement conceived against rising social ills. Increasing social unrest by *#ThisFlag* and *Tajamuka* in Zimbabwe since 2016 are examples of the structural disorders that manipulate and pressure young people into direct physical violence (Musarurwa 2016). It becomes viable to state that the broader agenda that most peace practitioners such as Gandhi (1955) and scholars such as Weber (1999) agree on, is the need to eliminate elements of structural violence which are time bombs that work against sustainable peace.

### **2.3.3. Cultural Violence**

Cultural violence refers to the aspects of culture, such as religion, language, or ideology, that justify or legitimise direct and structural violence (Galtung 1990). It prevails in a society that predominantly considers direct or structural violence as normal or a natural right that depicts the identity or tradition of a community or society. The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2015) notes that violence can be encouraged within a cultural or social group through rules or patterns of behavioural expectations that are considered as a norm. WHO (2009) outlines that the tolerance of violent behavioural norms in a society can be traced to likely learned experiences such as corporal punishment in childhood, and exposure to violence in the family, media or in other societal settings.

Esposito and Standish (2015) notes that every society is defined by various narratives that might become forms of cultural violence if they display patterns of discrimination or reinforce hostility or aggressiveness. These narratives are referred to as conflict narratives, and the way they are often presented justifies physical or structural violence. The narratives by “revolutionary” political parties in most African countries often put emphasis on their roles in the liberation struggle as justification for them remaining in office. For example, the leaders of ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe have boldly claimed that they won the country through shedding blood, and any party willing to rule can only achieve that through shedding blood as well (Chitando & Tarusarira 2017).

### **2.3.4. Conceptualising Violence**

Conceptualising violence requires a comprehensive interaction of all aspects of violence. It allows one to reflect and understand the characteristics which exist in the different forms of violence. The breakdown helps in the exploration of all the paradigms to outline how violence manifests differently. For example, one differentiates the manifestations of physical violence and clarifies whether it is interpersonal (rape and/or domestic violence; crime), political (rebellion, terrorism, and militia etc.), inter and intra-state wars, a fight for justice, a fight to oppress or against oppression. There are collective (sanctioned or not) forms and individual forms of violence that exist in society. Therefore, it is not only limited to torture, war or different forms of physical

abuse but also includes exploitation, oppression, and emotional abuse. Galtung established the above and discussed types of violence to help identify these different forms that reflect on how violence manifests itself differently across societies. Understanding violence is essential in peace research because it helps make necessary connections in identifying the root causes of violence.

In this study, youth are recognised as both perpetrators and victims of violence. Young people are affected by physical, structural, and cultural forms of violence across the continent of Africa. Thus, understanding the concept of violence is critical in this research to explore factors influencing the involvement and participation of youth. It helps unpack how young people effect or are affected by violence.

## **2.4. Understanding Peace and Peacebuilding**

This section provides a detailed understanding of peace and peacebuilding as concepts in this study.

### **2.4.1 Defining Peace**

There are two typologies of peace that are given by Galtung. They indicate that peace exists in a negative or positive form. To unpack the concept of peace, one must reflect on how it is closely linked to violence (Galtung 1969). Negative peace is defined as the “absence of personal violence” and “absence of war”. Within a society, the absence of personal violence is important for relationships between people in communities. According to Shields (2017), in the security community, negative peace is associated with signing of peace agreements and cease fires on matters relating to armed conflict or war. Galtung (1969) clearly emphasises that achieving negative peace does not assure long-term peace or result in addressing the effects of structural violence, thus pointing to the need for positively defining peace. Galtung (1969) clarifies that positive peace deals with addressing social injustice to ensure a positive condition of equal distribution of resources and power. This kind of peace is both vertical and horizontal in nature since it considers structural and broader measures that are not only limited to ending overt violence (Galtung 1976).

Positive peace seeks to address matters that inhibit social or personal development and lead to oppressive outcomes. It endeavours to provide permanent and evolving structures that eliminate systematic and structural challenges that sustain conflict and violence (McCandless, Abitol & Donais 2015). For example, the socio-economic decline in Zimbabwe is a critical condition that has affected many people, leading to social unrest (Musarurwa 2016). It is essential to note that effective peace research reflects on the past, present and the future to be able to incorporate both conflict and development research in building strategies that are grounded in theory and effective peace practices (Galtung 1969). Understanding these components is essential in positioning the ideas and practices that guide research. As an exercise in action research, I engaged a positive peace lens. The thinking is that the larger practice of peacebuilding must explore structure-oriented and actor-oriented perspectives, in establishing change elements in divided systems or societies, and creating support systems that promote linking networks in social spaces, among individuals and organisations (Lederach 2005; MacCandless *et al.* 2015). Scholars warn that peace research which focuses on eliminating overt physical violence only runs the risk of limiting peace to the maintenance of law and order (Galtung 1969; Shields 2017).

Shields (2017) indicates that most practices of peace are limited to the *Pax Romana* type of peace, which is driven by the interests of those involved in signing the deal and maintaining order. African peace processes in the past two decades in countries such as Sudan (2005), Sierra Leone (2002), Mozambique (1992), Burundi (2005), Guinea-Bissau (1999) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (2003), are examples of intra-state conflicts which have experienced this kind of peace. Peace, in this instance, is one-sided, and maintenance of law and order takes priority over any other social justice values or human rights. Hence, in situations of social unrest or instability, the State or those who are in power might regard the protesters to be against the law, and disturbing the peace, and thus order must be maintained. For instance, evidence shows that protesting crowds in countries such as Zimbabwe are dispersed by any means necessary, by water cannons, riot police or military, and the process includes extreme use of personal or direct violence, which results in harm to or death of unarmed civilians. When the fighting or assumed conflict tension stops, negative peace considers the job to be complete.

These conditions of negative peace undervalue the social contract and deplete state-society relations, which raises various structural concerns and challenges for a sustainable peace (McCandless, Abitol & Donais 2015). Adhering to negative peace solutions distances one from the setting up of mechanisms that are focused on repairing fractured societies and building institutions that promote a society that is resilient and just (Shields 2017). Considering this, the study seeks to broaden the understanding of peace, and to facilitate ideas and measures on how sustainable peace mechanisms that advance social justice can be put in place.

Youth in Zimbabwe have been victims and perpetrators of all forms of violence (Gukurume 2018; Mude 2014; Musarurwa 2016; Mutongwizo 2018; Oosterom and Pswarayi 2014); therefore, their active involvement towards positive peace should be prioritised. Thus, the importance of incorporating peacebuilding perspectives in this research.

#### **2.4.1. What is Peacebuilding?**

The concept of peacebuilding has been researched and discussed by an array of scholars, and it has been conceptualised differently. It was first introduced by Galtung (1975). Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992) popularised it through his *Agenda for Peace* as the UN Secretary-General. Its value as a significant strategy for building sustainable peace has since been explored. Boutros-Ghali (1992) emphasised that peace is achieved by establishing durable foundations that address all the economic, cultural, social, political, and humanitarian challenges that influence conflict. These are broad lenses that help one to reflect on the various overt and structural factors of violence that are existing in any area. The process must target reducing any risk for conflict lapse or relapse, with the intention to strengthen local and national capacities that ensure effective peace and development (Donais 2013). When engaging in peacebuilding in any community, it becomes easier to identify which areas to look at to end or prevent the recurrence of violence and support the building of sustainable peace (Curtis 2013).

Francis (2008) viewed peacebuilding as more than planning interventions at the core causes and circumstances of the prevailing conflict. It means a continued process of programmes that seek to change the individual, societal, and financial relationships of

citizens. Gerstbauer (2010: 846) defines peacebuilding as “activities that non-violently prevent, limit, resolve or transform conflict and create peaceful justice”. Galtung, Jacobsen, and Brand-Jacobsen (2002) referred to peacebuilding as an edifice within states that removes reasons for physical violence and offers options to violence in circumstances where it may occur. Boutros-Ghali (1992:10) outlines that peacebuilding “is the rebuilding of institutions and infrastructure of nations torn by strife and the building of bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among people formerly at conflict”.

Peacebuilding in practice has various characteristics, which include the need to consolidate peace, engaging multidimensional issues, ensuring interdependence of actors, forging long-term processes from surrounding short-term realities, and involving multiple tools or instruments (Ozerdem 2015). Therefore, peacebuilding is not narrowly defined. For instance, the Alliance for Peacebuilding (2012:7) defines it as

a set of long-term endeavours undertaken continuously through multiple stages of conflict (before, during and after) and involving collaboration at several levels of society ... peacebuilding emphasises transformative social change that is accomplished both at the process-oriented level, and through tools such as negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation, and on the structural level, through the development of resilient institutions and social processes that allow conflict to be resolved through political, rather than violent means.

Moreover, Paffenholz (2015:13) presents peacebuilding as a:

long-term multi-track transformative contribution to social change, helping to create a just and sustainable peace beyond the narrow definition of a post-conflict period.

These definitions reflect how peacebuilding practice seeks to cut across deeper factors that contribute to conflict, not only to resolve or manage, but to facilitate transformation of the environment for positive peace outcomes.

#### **2.4.2. Peacebuilding as a Process**

Francis (2008) viewed peacebuilding as more than planning interventions at the core causes and circumstances of the prevailing conflict. It means a continued process of programmes that seek to change the individual, societal, and financial relationships of

the citizens. Peace research requires strategic mechanisms that seek to bring permanent changes that get rid of violent structures and systems. The eventual aim of peacebuilding in the Sub-Saharan African setting is the transformation of relations, asserting shared responsibility and increasing cohesion.

Smock (1998) suggested that peacebuilding is a continuing process that often take the form of interventions. There is never a “quick solution”, or a plan cast in stone for peacebuilding methods. Lasting commitment offers the room for the peacebuilding to permit individuals to figure out locally applicable, sustainable institutions and exercises that address sources of the conflict. The origins of violence can be found in the violation of key political and financial liberties (Taylor Nilsson & Amezquita-Castro 2016). Without tackling human rights-based abuses, peace may not be prolonged and development successes will be uncertain.

Gerstbauer (2010) argued that peacebuilding can be in three types: *political; social and structural*. Political peacebuilding (peace-making, official peace methods) concentrates on reducing differences between parties in conflict and is concerned with the communications which involve resolving a disagreement and accomplishing an agreement. Peace processes may progress, but then again, they also frequently suffer phases of relapse. Thus, the achievement of peacebuilding hinges, to some extent, on the party-political choices of those involved from the national to local governments as well as communities or donor agencies, in some measure on efficient leadership from the national to local and civil society, and on capital such as human resources or donor funding. Social peacebuilding concentrates on affecting generally held perceptions and attitudes. Social peacebuilding initiatives are finally concerned with changes in the fundamental relationships between groups in conflict.

Structural peacebuilding concentrates on mending or reconstructing the underlying structures that support and sustain a peacefully operational society (Gerstbauer, 2010). De Rivera (2008) contends that structural peacebuilding is the establishment of democratic institutions that are critical in combating the myths, stereotypes, and propaganda that drive social peacebuilding issues such as ethnic conflict. Hence, practitioners of structural peacebuilding could strive to reduce tensions between

groups (social peacebuilding) as well as increase chances for peaceful resolution of disputes (political peacebuilding).

### **2.4.3. Economically driven Peacebuilding**

Evidence from literature suggests that peacebuilding can also be done through economic means. The principle of economic support in peacebuilding is to deliver resources to permit and instil confidence into local groups to reconstruct socioeconomic structures, bring diverse groups of individuals together, decrease support for violence, encourage social integration, and deal with economic disparity (Haider, 2009). Economic aid may be dispatched to fund ventures (for example humanitarian assistance for youths), and victims of prejudice and natural disasters. It is anticipated that “economic growth will spill over into peace” (Gerstbauer, 2010:100).

According to Ball and Halevy (1996), economic aid is an essential part of any peacebuilding intervention; nevertheless, it needs to be used in tandem with other peacebuilding efforts to foster long-term stability. Zelizer (2018) argues that communities experiencing conflict require restructuring economic policies in the private and governmental sectors, reforming connections between social groups, psychosocial healing, and reconciliation. Conflict transformation and peacebuilding can only be truly effective if it takes a holistic approach and "depoliticises socio-economic problems in a sustainable structure that involves all stakeholders in a collective decision-making process" (Taylor, Nilsson & Amezquita-Castro 2016:87). Constructive interactions can be forged between previously hostile groups through inter-group schemes that prioritise cooperation and better financial interests. These may help people stick together in politically and culturally homogenous communities.

However, Byrne et al. (2006) argue that economic support alone is never a remedy for the transformation of negative views, mindsets, or activities towards others. Negative damaging perceptions, attitudes and destructive narratives of the “out-group” are deeply entrenched in a group’s culture. The pervasiveness of inter-group conflicts has led conflict resolution experts to widen their methods to include collaborative storytelling, discussion groups, and problem-solving seminars to challenge the matters that increase the conflicts. Experts have discovered that these peacebuilding techniques are applicable in a synchronised manner. Therefore, the above arguments

reveal that if directed properly, economic support, connected to other involvement strategies, can increase inter-group interactions.

#### **2.4.4. Ethical Standards of Peacebuilding**

The peacebuilding processes are not limited to social, political, and economic aspects, rather they are also driven by ethical standards to unpack some complex issues which are essential in promoting and sustaining peacebuilding efforts through promoting justice, trustworthiness and respect for others. For instance, Lederach (2007) reflects on justice as a crucial peacebuilding component. He considers that conflicts are likely to persist without it, and peace may be only temporary (Lederach 2007). Justice in peacebuilding helps to reflect on the root causes of conflict and engage in measures that can ensure sustainability of peace across communities through truth-telling, reparations, institutional reforms, or local peace mechanisms such as the *gacaca* courts of Rwanda.

Additionally, Bachelet (2020) highlights how the ethical standards of peacebuilding manifest trustworthiness as a means of fostering mutual respect and understanding among individuals and communities. Trust in peacebuilding can be built through transparency, accountability, and good governance. Therefore, trustworthiness is considered vital in promoting dialogue, reconciliation and building strong relationships among individuals and communities, rebuilding confidence in state institutions, which are essential components of sustainable peace (Bachelet 2020).

Respect for others is another ethical standard that is expressed through peacebuilding efforts as it seeks to facilitate the fundamental human value that promotes social cohesion and harmony. Galtung (2020) notes that respect for others entails recognizing and valuing diversity, promoting inclusion, and ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and equality. Therefore, respect for others is crucial in promoting a sense of belonging and identity, reducing social exclusion and marginalization, and fostering peaceful coexistence. Thus, understanding these perspectives of ethical standards of peacebuilding helped to reflect on promoting youth peacebuilding the values of justice, trustworthiness, and respect for others as key measures for achieving sustainable peace.

#### **2.4.5. Liberal Peacebuilding**

Liberal peacebuilding has been defined as "a comprehensive international agenda aimed at building a liberal peace in post-conflict societies" (Karlsruud 2019: 2). It typically involves a range of activities such as security sector reform, democratization, and economic development (Dodge 2021). The goal is to establish a stable and democratic society that upholds human rights and the rule of law (Volkan 2021). However, critics have pointed out the limitations of liberal peacebuilding, particularly its narrow focus on Western-style liberal democracy and free-market capitalism, and its tendency to overlook the complexities of local contexts (Paffenholz 2021). In response to these criticisms, scholars have proposed alternative paradigms such as perpetual peacebuilding, which seeks to move beyond the linearity of liberal peacebuilding by embracing complexity and uncertainty (Paffenholz 2021). Other scholars have emphasized the need to integrate local perspectives and traditions into peacebuilding efforts to promote sustainable and inclusive peace (Miyoko 2019). Therefore, this study aimed to move away from the dominant liberal peace approach, which tends to prioritize external interventions and state-centric solutions in peacebuilding efforts. Instead, it sought to adopt a more locally oriented and integrated approach to peacebuilding, which emphasizes the development of sustainable peace infrastructure within local communities. By focusing on the specific context of the study area, this approach aims to foster a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the complex dynamics of peacebuilding, and to identify locally relevant strategies that can support long-term peace and stability.

#### **2.4.6. Peacebuilding as a People-oriented Venture**

Van der Leest Kolarova and Mécréant (2010) postulate that peacebuilding should be a people-oriented venture. It must be positioned amongst those most affected by conflict and should be ingrained in local settings. Peacebuilding emphasises the necessity for approaches, tactics, and programmes that are based on local requirements and capabilities that allow local inhabitants to implement these plans. Peacebuilding concentrates on the very susceptible and the sidelined, with the view that violence is most frequently rooted in prejudice, segregation and "freezing out", predominantly of youths. Inclusion denotes not just identifying the excluded groups,

but giving impetus to their contribution to peacebuilding and other socio-economic development progress through capacity-building and empowerment initiatives (Zelizer, 2018).

Peacebuilding programmes are “multidimensional in essence and strive towards coherency with other sectoral and disciplinary approaches” (van der Leest, Kolarova & Mécréant 2010:100). Obtaining a buy-in “for or at least an absence of resistance to peacebuilding activities from emerging government institutions can impart greater legitimacy to such activities” (Taylor Nilsson & Amezquita-Castro 2016). Haider (2009) argues that political will can increase the scope of peacebuilding plans, predominantly where authorities express support for such schemes. Spreading peacebuilding programmes nationally requires the backing of local government bureaucrats and established connections and partnerships amongst communities and the government. The steady process of intensification affords time and room for government bureaucrats to develop more familiarity with, and become empathetic of, peacebuilding actions. Central and local government may feel intimidated by these peacebuilding actions, which is why efforts to achieve their ‘buy in’ are essential (Alexander 2018). Intensifying also permits space for government organisations to have the ability to run nation-wide peacebuilding programmes.

## **2.5. Global Debate on Triggers of Youth Violence**

There are several documented factors that explain the triggers of youth violence in various parts of the world. These factors may be contextual. Therefore, there is need to comprehend some of the primary causes of conflict or violence in most communities. Acemoglu, Fergusson & Johnson (2020) assert that in most cultures, the lack of resources and their unequal distribution frequently serve as catalysts for conflict and violence. As a result, the just war theory allows for the moral justification for violent acts that seek to establish an equitable distribution of resources. In other words, not all conflicts necessitate the use of peace-promoting transformative processes. It is crucial to review thinkers such as John Locke to see why some people choose violence as a means of expressing their grievances.

According to Locke (1690, in Laskar 2013), societies were created through a social compact in which people chose a ruler to operate in the society's best interests. According to the social contract, the people have more power than the government. The same people can participate in elections and revolutions to elect or overthrow unpopular governments (violently or peacefully). Therefore, violent revolutions and protests that seek to end socioeconomic inequalities, or advance the welfare of society as a whole, are morally justified (Laskar 2013). Locke therefore believed that the just war doctrine's explanation of why some individuals choose violence while others do not was a matter of moral justification and belief. However, there are common trends that can be identified as strains that contribute the most to the involvement of youth in violent practices. As reviewed in literature, some of these common trends include the youth bulge; youth exclusion from key decision making and participation; youth poverty and unemployment; manipulation and co-option of youth; political or ethnic patronage; and electoral processes.

### **2.5.1 Youth Bulge Narrative**

The international debate on global youth security is linked to the “youth bulge” concept. The youth bulge refers to an unprecedented population growth rate of young people and there has been a rising concern to unpack this phenomenon as either a “blessing” or a “curse” (Mukoma 2018; Jarrette 2017). Speculation is growing, even across studies, that disproportionate growth of youth in most countries across the Global South is creating a demographic imbalance that “can lead to escalated conflict, violence and political unrest if not addressed effectively” (Sukarieh and Tannock 2018: 865). It is essential to note that international policy guidelines on youth, particularly those on peace and security, dominantly refer to the concept of youth bulge as a necessary measure for engaging youth peacebuilding.

Current studies indicate that Africa will soon have the largest population of youth. In three decades’ time the estimate is that African youth will number about 1 billion (Kikwete, 2017). At this unprecedented population growth rate, and with the increasing socio-economic challenges, and social and political instabilities across the continent, the youth bulge poses more harm than good if strategic measures are not put in place. The global agenda regarding securitisation of youth perceives the untamed and unmonitored growth of young people to be a danger to society. Evidence indicates

that youth in social and economic institutions that are broken have been leading both peaceful and violent revolutions, protests and even wars. The African Development Bank (2017:18) posits that,

Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing an average 6% annual economic growth rate. Africa also has the fastest growing and most youthful population in the world. Over 40% of Africa's people are under the age of 15 and 20% are between the ages of 15 and 24.

A policy brief by the Africa Research Institute (2011) notes that Sierra Leone has a burgeoning generation which has received no formal education and has few skills. An estimated 800,000 young people, about 14% of the population, are unemployed or work for free. Those who are employed are often exploited, experiencing poor working conditions for negligible pay. According to the International Labour Organisation (2020) in urban areas, there is a growing population of young men who are not engaged in any meaningful economic or social activity, leading to frustration and feelings of marginalization. Hence, these idle young men may become vulnerable to radicalization and involvement in criminal activities. Unemployed young men therefore become susceptible to manipulation, capture and exploitation (Maganga, 2020).

However, Gounden (2018: 2) gives a more positive proposition, indicating that the increase in youth population across the continent ensures "that the continent will have the human resources to drive its development of the agricultural, industrial, information and fourth industrial revolutions." It is important to take note of these positive views and engage in attractive peacebuilding initiatives that can harness the potential of young people in Africa to positively contribute towards sustainable peace and development.

### **2.5.2 Youth Exclusion from Key Decision Making and Participation**

Youth exclusion from important decision-making spaces is one of the key factors contributing to youth violence. Adults in various societies have constructed societal boundaries for territories and platforms that youth can participate in. This is because youth are often considered to be inexperienced, less than rational, needing to be protected, lacking in knowledge and sometimes potentially dangerous (McEvoy-Levy 2013).

Evidence shows that there is controlled and limited participation of youth in the politics, business, or governance in most countries across Africa; hence, they have no space or voice or even support to participate as decision-makers in influencing policies or development regarding challenges affecting them (Mukoma 2018). Anecdotally, one would argue that most political and development terrains are controlled by adults who are rarely willing to give young people the opportunity to make key decisions. Some of these adult-defined spaces include the community of peacebuilding, where one finds that in local and international peacebuilding terrains there is still a very limited involvement of young people (McEvoy-Levy 2013). This means, with the increasing unemployment, corruption, inequalities, food and human insecurities, and injustice, youth remain vulnerable and trapped, since very little or nothing is being done to address the broken social structures that deny them opportunities and a platform to be heard. Similarly, Maina, Walusala, Cubitt, Forti, Mutisi & Tsuma (2012:12) note that:

Youth in Africa face critical challenges that can be summarised into issues of marginalisation from social, economic, and political life. This inhibits their ability to make fundamental decisions that can affect their lives positively and enable them to contribute to society as a whole.

Thus, the futility of governments in making efforts toward creating relations and arrangements that promote the interaction of society and shape the social systems and moral fabrics of communities to address the prevailing challenges are the sources of youth frustration, agitation, and anger, leading to non-conforming action (Mukoma, 2018; Agbor, Taiwo & Smith 2012).

According to Bangura (2016), there has been a historical neglect and marginalisation of youth, with young people facing unimaginable socio-economic vulnerabilities which have often driven them to willingly participate in any form of activity for survival. Sukarieh & Tannock (2018) concur with this notion, and they consider the problem to be ideological and trace the neglect of youth to the rise of industrial capitalism. Though other scholars trace the challenges affecting youth through ideological narratives, some scholars believe the problems affecting youth to be more structural than ideological (Hlagala & Delport 2014), with these structural problems being the result of exclusion of young people's voices by the older people in key leadership positions.

McEvoy-Levy (2018) provides an articulate narrative of the conditions that often affect youth transition to “peace”. She outlines how the experience of armed power and political promises during recruitment, difficult transitions to “peace”, inter-generational conflict, and fragile social and political situations can lure young people into violence. The marginalisation of young people is very common in most African countries, and they are rarely given opportunities to participate in key decision-making and political platforms. McEvoy-Levy (2018:1) concludes that:

youth are subordinate to adult elites who make political decisions, sign peace accords, write history, and distribute aid. And despite being the catalysts and fighters of wars and revolutions, despite having their futures drastically altered by conflict, youth get left out of many aspects of peacebuilding. This is more than an ironic contradiction. It is a set of processes around which further reflection, dialogue and research is needed.

The consideration of these factors is critical in shaping the furtherance of the research into youth peacebuilding. It helps one to understand the different contextual factors that trigger youth violence. With this understanding, the measures and approaches that can be taken to help in promoting relevant strategies that result in effective youth peacebuilding practices become clearer.

### **2.5.3 Youth Poverty and Unemployment**

Traces of youth violent protests and revolutions across the African continent have been driven by bread-and-butter issues. This is because the political, social, and economic systems surrounding the youth are broken, unjust and unequal. For instance, Bangura’s (2016) study on Sierra Leone’s post-conflict recovery reveals that young people have been neglected in every socio-economic opportunity by the government, leading to challenging frustrations. The study reveals that the government has continuously demonstrated incapability to engage and meet the needs of youth (Bangura 2016). It was evident that neglecting the socio-economic needs of youth resulted in negative implications for the peacebuilding process in the country in many ways. Evidence from previous research suggests that in most African countries, the appalling socio-economic conditions drive the youth into violence or to join violent gangs (Bangura 2016; McAra & McVie 2016; Maringira & Gukurume 2021).

#### **2.5.4 Manipulation and Coercion of Youth**

Most young people across the world are victims of brutal coercion to participate in violence for the political and economic gains of elites (Ojok & Acol 2017). Murphy (2013) explains this as the “coerced youth model”, where young people are mobilised and coerced to commit acts of violence on behalf of the party or political elites. Galtung (1990) explains that structural and cultural systems of violence are a brutal force which exerts extreme pressure on individuals or society to partake in direct violence due to compelling circumstances. In most cases, the youth are a viable tool for political organisations seeking to impose their dominance through undemocratic channels. This is because of the ease with which the youth can be manipulated by political organisations (Burchard 2016). For instance, engagement of youth in various political instabilities and violence in countries such Kenya (following the 2007 elections) and in Zimbabwe (following the 2008 elections) explains this situation well. Young people in Zimbabwe have been involved in violent practices for over two decades because of manipulation and coercion by political parties and candidates to intimidate voters. Scholars outline how youth were organised and taught to intimidate voters into supporting Robert Mugabe in the parliamentary elections of March 2002 and in the 2008 re-run elections (Burchard 2016; Mutongwizo 2018; Mhike 2018).

A study by Mwonzora and Mandikwaza (2019) highlights that the “menu of electoral manipulation”, which involves the use of fear, violence, food handouts and memory, is one of the major resources used by Zimbabwean political elites to achieve their intended political goals. The manipulation of the youth to influence electoral decisions is one of the main ways that leads to the election of authoritarian governments (Burchard 2016). Mhike (2018) outlines how ZANU-PF, as the ruling party between 2001-2007, utilised vulnerable youth in the National Youth Service to manipulate them to do their dirty bidding in intimidating voters in rural and urban communities. Thus, to understand authoritarian governments that do not practice or use naked force to control people, one has to look at the tactics of manipulation that *are* used by the government. By winning elections, authoritarian governments tend to get legitimacy from external actors. Therefore, elections are often controlled tightly by regimes through tactics such as manipulating and influencing the youth to engage in violence

to intimidate people to vote for the ruling government (Mhike 2018). In return, the youth is promised some rewards or incentives.

The study identified different factors that make youth in Mbare a vulnerable group of people. As highlighted by Maina *et al.* (2012), youths across Africa are affected by different critical structural marginalising challenges that inhibit their ability to make positive decisions to impact their social, economic, and political lives. These vulnerabilities expose youth to the danger of being manipulated by political actors to get involved in violent political actions. This explains why political patronage is common in most regimes that seek to reward people for political support and cement their political power (Pappas 2009).

### **2.5.5 Political or Ethnic Patronage**

Apart from the manipulation of youth to control elections, political patronage is one of the systems that is used by political organisations to cement their political grip. Weingrod (1968) defines patronage as a patron and client relationship, where the patron is the one with power and influence that can benefit his or her client, provided the client continues to be useful for the patron. Ethnic affiliations are also visible, where some people vote along ethnic lines, to support a leader based on his or her ethnic origin (Pappas 2009). However, the elected leader is often forced to reward the voters to cement his or her power in the next elections. These political patronages are at the core of political regimes that are based on relationships between clients that seek connections (mostly economic) in return for political loyalty (Pappas 2009).

### **2.5.6 Electoral Processes**

There is a concrete history of occurrences of violence surrounding electoral processes in various countries, such as Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Iraq, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. In a study by Burchard (2016), 57% of the 289 elections that occurred between 1990-2014 in Sub-Saharan Africa experienced pre-election violence.

## **2.6. Cases of Youth and Violence in Africa**

Political violence in Africa is very prevalent, with the youth heavily involved in political violence. There is a general understanding that the link between violence and the youth in Africa is down to the scarcity of resources and the exclusion of the youth from economic activities (Ismail & Olonisakin 2021). In countries like South Africa, the youth form a strong political actor that is often involved in influencing political and economic reform through protests. However, the democratic channels available in South Africa can protect the youth from government retaliation and surveillance when compared to other African countries like Zimbabwe and Nigeria (Mutongwizo 2018). Thus, the lack of strong democracy in other African countries has left the youth vulnerable to political violence and brutality from state security institutions such as the police and the military. In some cases, youth participation in politics has been reduced to social media only (Mhlomi & Osunkunle 2017). The fear of engaging in politics that is against the ruling government is therefore common in most authoritarian states compared to democratic states. In fact, the youth end up engaging in political activities that benefit the ruling government to prove their political allegiance, in return for political rewards and protection.

Africa has many elected authoritarian governments that tend to prioritise patronage politics over good governance (Ismail & Olonisakin 2021). Moreover, the elders are much respected and given precedence in the African political arena, leaving the youth frustrated and unstable. This explains the involvement of the youth in political activities. However, the involvement of the youth can be two-way, to sustain political violence and the rule of authoritarian governments, or to promote development and facilitate effective governance in addressing social and economic injustice as a way of ensuring peace and sustainable economies. The goal behind stable economies emanates from the belief that hunger, poverty, and unemployment are the main causes of violence (Acemoglu, Fergusson & Johnson 2020). Due to hunger and desperation, the youth will have to either “join the pack” or engage in political protests that encourage political and economic reforms as a solution.

## **2.7. Tracing Youth and Violence in Zimbabwe**

Violence is one of the most challenging issues that affects most societies as it creates fear in such societies. While there are different forms of violence, ranging from physical to psychological, Bangura (2016) points out that political violence is equally crucial to understanding modern political societies. For example, young people in Zimbabwe acknowledge how the fear of political violence is affecting every youth that wishes to engage or participate in politics (Dzimiri 2014). Thus, youths' fear of violence tends to increase towards elections. What is important to note is that the fear continues even after elections, as surveillance continues, thereby affecting how youths behave publicly. This is why Mutongwizo (2018) argues that structural or political violence tends to be more fearful compared to other forms of violence.

The patronage system that dominates Zimbabwean politics tends to affect the youth that choose not to engage in political activities that benefit the ruling government (Dzimiri 2014; Mutongwizo 2014). Due to the political and ethnical patronages, it is hard for youth to find jobs if they are not politically connected. This leads to a high unemployment rate, which leaves the youth vulnerable to political manipulation to participate in violent activities that benefit political organisations. This is why families are also encouraged to look after the youth, to advise them on the best ways to conduct themselves publicly in a complex political environment (Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014). Due to the vulnerabilities of the youth to political violence, some scholars like Urdal (2004) conclude that the youth are troublemakers responsible for political violence and instability in most developing countries. Other academics like Dzimiri (2014) and Mwonzora and Mandikwaza (2019) explored the Zimbabwean case and concluded that the manipulation of the youth into violent activities by political organisations is the main problem, rather than the youth themselves.

## **2.8. Positioning Youth Peacebuilding**

Youth peacebuilding is considered a process where young people take part in future local development and play important roles in resolving conflicts in their own communities (Kujeke 2017). It refers to different practices that are used by the youth to create a peaceful and sustainable environment. However, the broadness of the

peacebuilding concept means that it can be used differently among the youth, depending on their political, societal, and institutional differences in the environment in which they operate (Cromwell 2019). There are different types of youth peacebuilding mechanisms, ranging from social entrepreneurship to peace education as the dominant mechanisms. In sum, peacebuilding methods that focus on the youth are important, because the youth can be the leaders of tomorrow or the villains, depending on the level of peacebuilding behaviour that they are willing to practice (Ozerdem 2015).

Scholars agree that youth can be a symbol of defeat, success or hope for the future, depending on how they are positioned in society, particularly in fragile environments (McEvoy-Levy 2013; Ozerdem 2015). Given this reasoning, it is essential and necessary to engage more young people in different communities in practices of peacebuilding. McEvoy (2013) reviewed literature by Schirch (2004), Kemper (2005) and Galtung (2006) to help reflect that youth involvement in peacebuilding is a strategic initiative which helps to socialise young people into a peaceful future. This is an important thinking pattern which was embraced in this study. Various studies on peace education and training utilise this thinking, valuing the impact the process has in the long-term.

Berents and McEvoy-Levy (2015) note that, despite the lack of youth integration in decision-making in key spaces of politics and peacebuilding, they are indirectly involved in determining the course of direction. For instance, youth might be involved in peaceful direct action, violent protests or small organisations that advance social justice. Succinctly, McEvoy-Levy (2013: 297) posit that:

Young people consistently find multiple creative ways of resisting or subverting authority. So, despite the greater power of adult elites to police the boundaries of political action, those who are 'not yet adults' possess and utilize different forms of power as well, [and] they express [this] through a range of armed conflict-related and strategic peacebuilding activities.

This view helps to paint a clear picture of the positive energy that young people have a given a proper platform and direction. Hence, there is a need to eliminate the existing tensions and boundaries that frustrate the development and participation of young people in peacebuilding.

Ozerdem (2017) notes that young people comprise most of the world population and, as such, they hold the potential to facilitate change and positive action. This means young people must be shaped to engage in positive leadership to be able to challenge the fluidity of conflict which might perpetuate the politics of war and violence within their communities. Ozerdem (2017:1) clarifies that:

[w]hat needs to be underlined is that youth should be conceptualized and studied as agents of positive peace in terms of addressing not only the challenges of physical violence, but also the challenges of structural and cultural violence, and the broader social change processes to transform violent, oppressive and hierarchical structures, as well as behaviour, relationships and attitudes into more participatory and inclusive ones.

I concur with this perspective, which suggests the need for Sub-Saharan African countries to shape gravitating practices that support the promotion of youth peacebuilding. Kujeke (2017) shares the sentiments that youth in Africa can be effective peacebuilders if engaged positively. From this understanding, I consider youth peacebuilding as the equipping of young people with relevant navigational skills for eliminating violence in all its forms and transforming societies through strategic and sustainable peace initiatives. Youth peacebuilding is increasingly gaining momentum and attention across the globe and in most African peace narratives.

## **2.9. International Guidelines to Youth Peacebuilding in the 21st Century**

There is evidence to support an assortment of peacebuilding initiatives across the world. There is a need for new peace innovations in promoting positive peace infrastructures across the world and particularly in African countries (Miklian & Hoelscher 2017). In various debates, youth are often regarded as drivers of conflict, rather than peacebuilders. Cardozo et al. (2015) acknowledges that there is a need to facilitate educational programmes towards enhancing youth capacity to participate as peacebuilding agents. This reflects the need for transformation of youth to be agents of positive peace in their communities. Kujeke (2017) outlines that the UN and AU noted the potential of young people in advancing peace and security in Africa and have been mainstreaming their participation in peacebuilding.

Following the Arab Spring, which was led by youth, the African Union dedicated itself to accelerating “the 2009–2018 Decade of Youth Action Plan at the African Union 2011 Summit held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea” to counter the threats of instability that are being posed by increasing youth unemployment (Agbor, Taiwo & Smith 2012: 9). The African youth population of those aged between 15 and 24 years, as of the 2015 statistics, was 226 million and expected to double by 2050 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2015: 1). It is crucial to ensure the security of the youth population in Africa from the impending dangers of poverty, unemployment, and instabilities. Maina *et al.* (2012) note the importance of engaging youth in working towards durable peace on the continent, considering the danger they might pose to the stability of the continent. It is not gainsaid that disenchantment amongst youth has been on the rise across African countries, with increasing protest politics since the Arab Spring. For instance, in Southern Africa alone, the period from 2016 witnessed the growth of the #thisflag campaign and *tajamuka* protests in Zimbabwe, and the #feesmustfall campaign led by students across South Africa throughout 2017. These factors are just a snippet of the disgruntlement and desperation that drives youth towards violence.

Various international statutes and protocols provide agency to the youth in peacebuilding. For example, UN Resolution 2250 identifies that increasing instabilities and threats to active development provides an outcome of young people that are radicalised and yet without a voice in decision-making (United Nations Security Council 2015). Thus, the resolution advances the need for engaging youth in processes of building lasting peace. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge that one of the critical measures for achieving this process is through providing independent political, social, and economic voices.

Kurebwa and Dodo (2019:95) reveals that there is need for an economic approach that “identifies young people as central to the economic development of their country and promotes their access to economic opportunities as essential for their own development.” Interventions, such as Technical-Vocational Education programmes, are important in enhancing the agency of young people as participants in and beneficiaries of peacebuilding processes, through linking education to employability and in turn to poverty reduction, citizenship participation and community activism.

Given the fact that lack of employment opportunities, high levels of poverty and economic marginalisation of many different constituencies of youth are key drivers of conflict, such interventions have the potential to contribute directly to youth peacebuilding (Izzi 2013; Walton 2010).

Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seeks to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” (A/RES/70/1: 14). However, Martinez-Soliman and Fernandez-Taranco (2017) aver that, despite the specificity of Goal 16, the SDGs as a whole have a peace dimension which seeks to advance symbiotic development, peace and security, and human rights initiatives through coherent and integrated approaches to promoting the building of inclusive and peaceful societies. The SDGs call for transformative strategies that can be achieved through integrated partnerships and action to ensure the promotion of peace and justice at national, regional, and international level (Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies NYU CIC 2017). This study also feeds into these valued interests of SDGs, in seeking to promote and build the capacity of youth as drivers of community peace and development in societies. The adoption of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool is driven by the interest in attracting youth to be partners and agents of peace, development, and justice in their communities. Most conflict-related literature identifies youth as the main perpetrators of conflict and violence across societies (Maina *et al.* 2012; Ozerdem 2015). Thus, transforming the youth in conflict societies for peace and development through inclusive and participatory engagement is a strategic measure. Considering that the youth population of those below 35 years of age in Zimbabwe alone is about 77% of the total population (Murinda 2014:6), the study can be a platform to provide access to opportunities for youth to participate positively and sustainably towards development and positive peace within their communities. It is, therefore, essential to understanding the nature of factors influencing youth participation in violence around the world and in post-independence Zimbabwe.

## **2.10. Youth Involvement in Violence and Peacebuilding in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe has been experiencing chronic economic decline since 2000. In compiling the “Zimbabwe Country Report for the 2014 Ministerial Conference on Youth Employment”, Murinda (2014:16) outlines that “84.2% of the currently employed persons aged 15 years and above are considered to be in informal employment, 11.2% in formal employment and 4.6% in unclassifiable employment”. Thondhlana (2017) notes that Zimbabwe is experiencing a formal unemployment rate of more than 85%. This means most of the youth in Zimbabwe are formally unemployed in a very unstable political and economic environment which is prone to violence. As a result, political activism and social unrest have increased over the years, with the country experiencing episodes of extreme violence in the process. Central to these outcomes are the roles played by young people. There are many narratives that have been used to explain the Zimbabwean economic challenges and their political and social consequences on the citizens, and mostly on the youth. It is worrisome knowing that circumstances of vulnerability in the form of unemployment, poverty, and lack of access to opportunities and poor economic advantages remain the bedrock affecting many youths in the country.

Various factors are identified across literature to be key influencing factors for youth participation in violence across the world in general and in Zimbabwe in particular. Some scholars have come to agree that such outcomes are an act of desperation and frustration due to lack of socio-economic and personal development opportunities (Agbor, Taiwo & Smith 2012; Maina et al. 2012; Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Bradfield 2018). Various challenges, such as unemployment, lack of representation, elections, and poverty, among others, have played an enormous role in influencing youth participation in violence across Africa and the world at large.

Maina (2012:12) notes that “[y]outh in Africa face critical challenges that can be summarised into issues of marginalisation from social, economic, and political life. This inhibits their ability to make fundamental decisions that can affect their lives positively and enable them to contribute to society as a whole”. Tellingly, these sentiments resonate with the youth experiences in Zimbabwe, particularly in the post-2000 era.

Youth participation in violence in the country is mainly attributed to social marginalisation, poverty, unemployment, poor governance, insufficient educational opportunities, and influence of political actors (Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Bradfield 2018). It is crucial to note that most youths across the world are victims of manipulation to participate in violent acts for political and economic gains of the elites. Scholars agree that as is the case for many youths across the world, manipulation has played a significant role in influencing the participation of Zimbabwean youth in political violence (Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Mude 2014; Bradfield 2018).

### **2.10.1 Narratives of Youth Violence in Zimbabwe**

Physical violence in Zimbabwe is perpetrated by both the State and citizens; however, in most cases the State has maintained a culture of violence in the name of maintaining law and order. Historical evidence clarifies that there are multiple factors behind the participation of youth in violence. The perceived and actual occurrences of violence in Africa and countries like Zimbabwe are caused by youth exclusion and entrenched socioeconomic challenges. Youth in Zimbabwe are vulnerable, marginalised, and susceptible to violent behaviour (Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Musarurwa 2016; Bradfield 2018). A study by Musarurwa (2018) in Norton, Zimbabwe, revealed that youths are economically side-lined, largely unemployed and living in poverty, given the low income they earn. They lack skills in business management, vocational and technical areas, civic education, and elections, as well as skills on how to engage government. Similarly, Musarurwa's (2018) online study on youth participation in Zimbabwe revealed that their participation in elections and governance processes is low and is hampered by restrictive political structures, lack of interest, lack of information and lack of funds, amongst other things. In addition, the author observed that the decision-making processes are not improving in becoming more participatory or youth inclusive.

One important strand of writing on Zimbabwean urban youth emphasises the role of economic austerity in undermining routes to social adulthood, marriage, and advancement. Jones (2010) asserts that Zimbabwe has turned into a "*kukiya-kiya*" economy, where most citizens do everything possible to earn a living. This entails a progressive encroachment of economic styles and tactics formerly relegated to the

urban social margins. Indeed, activities formerly associated with lower-class urban youth and part-time female work, have rapidly become the source of livelihood for much of the urban population. This “*kukiya-kiya*” economy has spread from the perceived bottom of society to now involve nearly everyone: from urban youth to civil servants to wage labourers, and even former farm workers and the rural poor.

Structural and cultural forms of violence can easily pressure someone to partake in direct violence, because circumstances will be forcing them to do so (Galtung 1990). For instance, Mhike (2018) traces how youth were coerced through the Zimbabwe National Youth Service (2001-2007) to partake in agendas that enhanced the interests of ZANU PF for employment opportunities. The interviewed individuals in the study attested to being forced to participate in political violence activities even though they did not directly belong to the party (Mhike 2018). Lack of opportunities and resources amongst youth makes them vulnerable to manipulation to engage in violence in exchange for resource opportunities. Most youths are vulnerable because of socio-economic setbacks, and, as such, there is a need for a mechanism to engage youth towards stability and sustainable peace. This is because they lack the political, social, or economic independence to make their own decisions. With this background, I concur with Bangura’s (2016) argument that marginalisation of youth poses a severe threat to peacebuilding initiatives in any society. Youth violence in Mbare has dominant traces of political influence which then transcends other social and economic factors.

Some researchers focus on the role of political bigwigs in directly sponsoring youth violence. According to Mashingaidze (2010), during elections, political entrepreneurs condition youth into their “unruly disciples”, whom they instigate through hate speeches and promises of beer, T-shirts, cash, and jobs to intimidate perceived opponents and violate citizens’ rights to freedoms of assembly and choice. This was apparent during the 1985 and 1990 general elections, when the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) -aligned youth attacked and destroyed the property of purported Zimbabwe African People’s Union-Patriotic Front (ZAPU- PF) sympathisers in urban centres in many parts of the country. The violence of ZANU-PF’s youth militias reached unprecedented levels during the highly contested June 2000 parliamentary elections, the March 2002 presidential elections, and the June 2008 presidential election run-off, when they set up roadblocks, carried out party card

checks, and declared certain parts of the country out of bounds for opposition politicians and civic society activists. Youth activists aligned to the political opposition tried to resist these restrictions imposed by the ruling party's vigilantes, without much success, because the latter acted as auxiliaries to the state's security apparatus, especially the police and the army.

Political violence is also ingrained within the political parties. Alexander and McGregor (2013) postulate that in the Movement for Democratic Change, internal party democracy had been undermined by the growing dependence on "parallel" informal networks, youth, and "security" wings. Mashingaidze (2010) narrates how the increasing intra-party violence perpetrated by party youth instrumentally contributed to the devastating split of the MDC in 2005. Before the split, youth were involved in beating up some of the key political leaders, which included the party's director of security, in September 2004. Moreover, after the split, the youth belonging to the MDC mainstream faction attempted to assassinate a member of parliament (Hatfield Constituency) in Mabvuku in July 2006. Several cases of acts of violence by the youth were recorded, even at the party's Headquarters, Harvest House in the Harare CBD (Mashingaidze 2010). Although the party dismissed those who were implicated in these violent acts, they were later reinstated and re-employed by some of the high-ranking members. It is such controversial acts and the maintenance of violent systems and structures which perpetuate the participation of youth in violence. This shows that most traumatised youths begin to copy the methods of the perpetrators of violence. For example, Wilkins (2013), in his discussion of youth political activism in Zimbabwe, focuses on heroism – in particular the insight provided by the memory of a member of the MDC, Tonderai Ndira, a youth activist from the Harare suburb of Mabvuku-Tafara, who was shot in 2008. Ndira was a member of the MDC's "drugs section" – a security arm of the party formed in 2000 "to provide the physical muscle to counterbalance the government's use of force during the MDC national campaigns and protests" (Wilkins 2013:888). Alexander and McGregor (2013: 756) explain that the drugs section of the MDC was confrontational and offered protection. They narrate that "it was infamously 'heavy-handed', as its own members recall, indicating an important role for youth violence within the opposition political party".

The emphasis on political sponsorship of youth violence sometimes overlooks moves by the youth to become violent due to their individual preferences. Mhike (2018) argues that, at times, the youth make deliberate efforts to align themselves to resource-rich and influential adult politicians for their own benefit. The young men and women who participated in the government's controversial National Youth Service (NYS) training programme between 2001 and 2005 were largely poverty-stricken rural and ghetto-based youth. These desperate youths enrolled in the NYS to get preferential treatment for the few job openings in the army, police, urban municipalities, and parastatals, such as the Grain Marketing Board and the national power utility, the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA). The urge to align with the ruling party became stronger in June 2002, when the government ordered tertiary education institutions to offer preference to NYS graduates.

### **2.10.2 Narratives of Youth Peacebuilding in Zimbabwe**

There have been various attempts at youth peacebuilding in Zimbabwe, but with less-than-optimal results. For example, Dombo's (2014) study in Zimbabwe on the Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA), a national healing programme, revealed that healing has not always yielded the intended results. There were instances where the ZCA would gather the victims and perpetrators of violence together to camp, where they would be encouraged to speak out their experiences. However, the camping resulted in new incidents of violence among the youths due to the polarisation that is rife in the country. As a result, the ZCA has changed its tactics by simply initiating projects in communities that had much violence and encouraging victims and perpetrators to work together. The result was that people tended to warm towards each other, and the ZCA believes that this is one of the best models for reconciliation. Thus, any solution to the threatening trauma crisis cannot be obtained without a proper dialogue involving all stakeholders – a platform where invited participants are capacitated to speak freely as they articulate their opinion (Chirambwi, 2016). This is, then, the purpose of this action research.

Some youths have created initiatives to push for non-violence. These youth have acted as “guardians of the nation”, who resist the violent mode of Zimbabwean politics by engaging with broader social democratic actors such as labour unions, the church,

and women's rights movements to critique state excesses, intolerance in the political space, corruption, and general societal lethargy (Mashingaidze, 2010). University students, such as the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), have struggled to entrench the country's democratic culture by agitating for the opening and enlargement of the political space to multiple players. Their demonstrations in the late 1980s undermined ZANU-PF's one-party-state agenda by opening the floodgates of general criticism against state inefficiency, repression, and corruption.

However, previous studies reveal that some youth in Zimbabwe have devised strategies to cope with violence. Hammar, McGregor and Landau (2010) posit that Zimbabwean citizens have created a new regional dynamic, both through their physical movement to neighbouring states and by generating new economies and socio-political formations stretching beyond Zimbabwe's borders. These have been part of multi-layered strategies to protect themselves and their families from various forms of violence, to seek new livelihoods, and to endeavour to mobilise for political change at home and abroad.

## **2.11. Need for Sustainable Youth Peacebuilding**

Studies indicate that interventions towards positive peace practices must consider engaging various factors. A review of literature in this chapter revealed that the prevention of youth violence in Zimbabwe, let alone Africa, remains a challenging phenomenon that requires dedication, resources, and strategic efforts. According to Gounden (2018), there is much need to invest in Africa's conflict prevention mechanisms in the next decade if sustainable measures are to be put in place. Connolly (2018) indicates that prioritisation of sustainable peace measures across most African countries means one must ensure the engagement of youth, women, and reconciliation mechanisms. Other compelling factors that push for a renewed focus on peacebuilding are unemployment and the rising risk of social instability and as these are undermining effective economic growth in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, despite the huge resource endowments the continent has (African Development Bank 2015).

The next section unpacks and reviews literature on the concept of social entrepreneurship as a tool for facilitating sustainable youth peacebuilding. It provides

a historical review, debates, and challenges on its roles in facilitating youth engagements in the context of Zimbabwe.

## **2.12. History and Definition of Social Entrepreneurship**

One of the key ideas that is helpful in change, fostering peace, and resolving social justice challenges is social entrepreneurship (SE). Most social enterprises are driven more by environmental and social issues than by financial gain (Bozhikin Macke & da Costa, 2019). SE is intended to promote cohesion and enable institutions and members of society to give back to others or assist one another in solving challenges (Musarurwa & Kaye 2016). Organisations are expected to prioritise corporate social responsibility, which includes helping the communities or societies in which they operate, in addition to profit-making. Giving back to the community can be achieved by establishing hospitals and schools, participating in charities, and donating money. Overall, SE has emphasised the importance of doing an environmental and social impact analysis as a pre-requisite for any organisation wishing to operate in South Africa (Ajayi & Mmutle 2021). Thus, in most communities, promoting SE can lead to sustainable development.

According to Joseph and Van Buren (2022), SE has a greater impact in communities that face problems of social injustice and violence. The objective is to improve the world by opening chances for everyone, particularly the formerly underprivileged. It is a procedure that aims to create economic equity to level the playing field. So, if economic inequality and competition for limited resources are the main causes of war, levelling the playing field through SE can help bring about peace. Most social entrepreneurship-supporting organisations in South Africa strive to provide training to underprivileged individuals so they can develop entrepreneurial mindsets (Joseph & Van Buren, 2022). The point is that social entrepreneurship promotes peacebuilding by acting proactively rather than reactively. In conclusion, promoting SE has the potential to promote peace and prevent conflicts over limited resources from turning violent.

The practice of SE is not new, and its conceptualisation can be traced to a few decades ago. Though scholars agree that its practice has always been part of different

societies, they share different narratives on its conceptualisation. Bacq and Janssen (2011) trace the origins and emergence of the academic discipline back to 1983, when it was first mentioned as “innovative non-profit entrepreneurship” by Young, and to 1991 when Waddock and Post (1991) published “*Social Entrepreneurs and Catalytic Change*”. However, El Ebrashi (2013) establishes a clearer and logical narrative. He explains that social entrepreneurship emerged in the 1970s and was introduced with the aim of helping to provide sustainable solutions to various social problems (El Ebrashi 2013). Joseph Banks was the first person to coin the term “social entrepreneur” in 1972, in his seminal work *The Sociology of Social Movements*, to help describe the managerial skills that are necessary for addressing social problems (El Ebrashi 2013). In the 1980s, Ashoka became the first organisation to popularise the practice of social entrepreneurship and support social entrepreneurs extensively. Rey-Martí, Ribeiro-Soriano and Palacios-Marqués (2015) emphasise that despite its increase in reputation as an academic discipline, social entrepreneurship is still under-researched.

Social entrepreneurship has attracted different contextual definitions over the years. Dart (2004), cited in Cherrier, Goswami and Ray (2018), defines social entrepreneurship as the generation of income for a social good. Rey-Martí, Ribeiro-Soriano and Palacios-Marqués (2015) who note that social entrepreneurship involves a common drive in the desire and practice to promote change or social transformation, give a more progressive definition. Its value is in inculcating the ability to mobilise the collective towards solving the problems and challenges that plague societies (Pless 2012; Kickul & Lyons 2018; Pillay 2017). Others have concluded that, SE refers to the practice of using entrepreneurial principles to create innovative solutions to social and environmental challenges (Gumbe & Towera 2016; Katunga & Lombard 2016; Musarurwa 2021). Choi and Majumdar (2014) define SE as a cluster-concept that involves social value creation, nurturing the social entrepreneur, growing an SE organisation, establishing a market orientation approach, and facilitating social innovation. These definitions feed well into the conflict transformation thinking and practices which seek processes that help in changing relationships (from conflict/violent conditions to conditions of peace), and facilitating and promoting ideas,

structures, attitudes, and interests that encourage conditions that reduce or quell violent political circumstances or environments (Austin et al. 2011).

### **2.12.1. Social Entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe**

Social entrepreneurship has been a growing phenomenon in Zimbabwe driven by the aim to address social, economic, and environmental challenges facing the country, particularly those affecting young people (Chinyani, Nikisi & Chavhunduka 2021; Chundu, Masara & Mucheri 2022; Frank & Muranda 2016; Musarurwa 2021). As discussed earlier, Zimbabwe's youth bulge, high youth unemployment rate and limited opportunities for youth participation in political, social, and economic development has posed an intractable environment of visible and invisible conflicts that often implicate the youth (Mhike 2018; Musarurwa 2016; Musarurwa 2021; Thondhlana 2017). Scholarly work on SE in Zimbabwe, also refers to it as the process of identifying and addressing social problems through innovative solutions and strategies (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu 2021). Similarly, it is defined as a process of addressing social, culture and environmental challenges through the creation of innovative and sustainable business models (Kativhu, Iwara & Mwale 2021; Mutenga & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2021). Hence, SE in the Zimbabwean context is viewed as a solution to different social, economic, and environmental problems, as it involves using innovative and sustainable business models to create social impact while generating income.

Social entrepreneurship is a fairly new concept in the Zimbabwean context with very few studies that have been explored mainly focusing on its role in social work and community development practices (Chinyani et al. 2021; Chundu et al. 2022; Gumbe & Towera 2016; Frank and Muranda 2016; Katunga & Lombard 2016). For instance, a study by Katunga and Lombard (2016) examines how SE can contribute to meeting the needs of orphans in the Mberengwa district. They highlight the importance of partnerships between social entrepreneurs and government agencies in addressing social problems. Additionally, Frank and Muranda (2016) reflect and argue that social enterprise can be a game-changer in Zimbabwe by embracing innovation and dynamism in contemporary social work practice. They note the potential for SE to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development. A study by Chundu et al. (2022) unpacks the strategies used by Virtuous Women Trust to create sustainable

social and economic impact, including the mobilization of local resources, community engagement, and the promotion of gender equity. The findings suggest that social entrepreneurship can be an effective approach to promoting sustainable community development in Zimbabwe and other similar contexts. While these insights reflect on the potential impact of SE in social work, community development and income generating projects, research on its capacity and role as a peacebuilding tool in addressing youth violence and promoting peacebuilding practices remains highly unexplored.

A doctoral thesis by Musarurwa (2019) is one of the few detailed peacebuilding studies done on SE in Zimbabwe. The thesis explores social entrepreneurship as a youth peacebuilding tool to mitigate structural violence in Norton, Zimbabwe. He used mixed methods to conduct action research and finds that social entrepreneurship can be an effective tool for peacebuilding. However, his findings unpacked the overwhelming micro and macro level challenges facing SE in facilitating efforts to transform structural violence, such as limited access to funding, a lack of supportive policies, and a difficult economic environment. The insights present the complexity and unpredictability of the Zimbabwean context when it comes to engaging SE as a peacebuilding tool. However, the study affirms the important role the approach can play in promoting peacebuilding amongst the youth.

A study by Mutero (2017) examined the role of music and dance in facilitating conflict transformation and peacebuilding in the Mkoba community in Gweru, Zimbabwe. While the study does not focus specifically on social entrepreneurship, it does provide insights into how community-based initiatives, such as cultural activities, can be leveraged to promote peace and social cohesion. The findings of the study suggest that music and dance can be effective tools for conflict transformation and peacebuilding, as they provide a platform for individuals and groups to express their cultural identities and promote mutual understanding and respect. In this sense, music and dance can be seen as a form of social entrepreneurship, as they are creative and innovative ways of addressing social and economic challenges faced by communities. The study highlights the importance of community-based approaches to conflict transformation and peacebuilding and suggests that social entrepreneurship can play a vital role in facilitating such initiatives.

Hence, the insight of this study resonates with the concept of SE which is not solely about profit-making but rather focuses on creating positive social or environmental impacts. Gukurume's (2022) study further reinforces this argument, by highlighting how informal interactions through local soccer programmes between youth from different political parties in Mbare, Zimbabwe, have helped to bridge the gap, heal wounds, and build trust despite past political differences. This underscores the value of social capital gained through social entrepreneurship, as it enables individuals and communities to forge meaningful connections and partnerships, which can be leveraged to tackle social and economic challenges. These perspectives suggest that social entrepreneurship can play a critical role in promoting peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Zimbabwe by fostering social capital and promoting community-based initiatives that leverage local knowledge and resources to achieve positive social outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize and support the potential of social entrepreneurship to address pressing social and economic challenges, particularly in politically unstable environments where non-profit institutions and private voluntary organizations may face significant challenges.

### **2.12.2. Challenges to Social Entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe**

There are various challenges that affect the promotion of youth peacebuilding through SE in Zimbabwe that include the social, economic, and political issues, structural violence, social inequality, and youth unemployment. Scholars such as Musarurwa (2021) and Musarurwa and Kaye (2016) have suggested that SE could be a viable tool for addressing these challenges and promoting youth peacebuilding. However, a review of the literature indicates that implementing SE peacebuilding efforts in Zimbabwe may not be a straightforward task due to different micro and macro challenges.

Musarurwa (2019) highlights that some of the micro challenges to SE might include, but are not limited to, the lack of local ownership of the SE ventures and lack of self-organisation facilitating SE programmes. For instance, in his action research, Musarurwa (2019) identified that the failure of youth to self-organise and to take ownership of the SE ventures hindered their materialisation and success in the absence of the facilitator. While some of these micro challenging issues are to be

expected, it is the macro challenges that make the process overwhelming and difficult to ensure sustainability of SE processes on promoting peacebuilding in the Zimbabwean context. These include financial constraints and access to funding for SE ventures, political instability and government policies, and socio-economic problems (Musarurwa 2021; Mutenga and Vyas-Doorgapersad 2021; Ntini 2022; Ntini 2023).

Studies highlight that, despite the potential of social entrepreneurship among the youth in Zimbabwe, several financial constraints and access to funding hinder their effective implementation. Gumbe and Towera (2016) explore the barriers to social entrepreneurship for graduate professional social workers in Harare and reflects on the lack of funding, limited access to resources, and weak support systems as major challenges. Musarurwa (2021) argues that socio-economic barriers such as poverty, lack of education, and limited access to resources hinder youth participation in social entrepreneurship. Hence, one might note that the country's economic challenges and unemployment rate pose a significant barrier to the success of social entrepreneurship, particularly in promoting youth peacebuilding (Kativhu et al., 2021). Mutenga and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2021) assessment of the efficacy of economic policies towards socio-economic development argue that Zimbabwe needs to pursue more comprehensive policies that address structural issues in the economy.

Furthermore, the unstable political environment and government policies in Zimbabwe presents obstacles to social entrepreneurship as the ruling power perceives any non-politically aligned economic ventures as a threat to their power and control (Adekoye & Kondlo, 2020; Ntini 2022). For instance, Ntini (2022) highlights the dilemmas faced by international nongovernmental organizations operating in post-2000 Zimbabwe. These dilemmas include restrictions on freedom of speech, association, and movement, which can limit the ability of social entrepreneurs to operate effectively.

In addition, the perpetuity of political power in Zimbabwe, as highlighted by Adekoye and Kondlo (2020), creates suspicion for the ruling power towards any non-political economic ventures. Hence, in most cases non-politically aligned entrepreneurs struggle to access resources and support for their ventures. Non-governmental organizations or even informal non-profit efforts often face suspicion and hostility from the ruling party, which perceives them as a threat to their power. This is because the

ruling political party controls most of the resources and tends to channel them towards individuals or entities that are aligned with their interests, hence efforts to support any venture without any link to the ruling party is viewed with suspicion. Hence, the government's policies and regulations tend to be unpredictable and often change without warning, making it difficult for entrepreneurs to plan and execute their businesses effectively.

These challenges can also affect social entrepreneurs who are seeking to promote youth peacebuilding in Zimbabwe, as the authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe may view youth peacebuilding initiatives as a threat to its political power and may therefore suppress such initiatives (Mhlanga and Ndhlovu, 2021). For instance, in March 2022, the government implemented the suspension of registration of trusts and Private Voluntary Organisations (PVOs), which raised concerns among stakeholders who view it as a strategy to limit local involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and non-profit organizations (Chikono 2022). The ruling party's tight grip on power has led to limited opportunities for individuals or entities that are not aligned with their interests. Adekoye and Kondlo (2020) concludes that the political power perpetuity affects the economic development nexus in Zimbabwe. Thus, the political environment in Zimbabwe poses a challenge to non-politically aligned socio-economic support (Ntini 2022). This challenge may affect effective support of social entrepreneurship and youth support programmes, as noted by Mutenga and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2021) and Kativhu et al. (2021). Nonetheless, some organizations and individuals are working towards promoting social entrepreneurship and supporting young entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2021).

### **2.12.3. Alternative Opportunities for Social Entrepreneurship**

Social entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe face a number of challenges, including a lack of access to finance and credit, inadequate skills and training, and a lack of mentorship and guidance. However, social entrepreneurship is a promising way to promote youth peacebuilding in Zimbabwe (Musarurwa 2021; Musarurwa & Kaye 2016). Several strategies for addressing these challenges and promoting successful youth peacebuilding initiatives can be implemented through social entrepreneurship ventures.

One approach is collaboration with government agencies, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders. Such collaboration can result in long-term and significant programmes that benefit communities (Mutenga & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2021). However, it is important to note that collaborations should not be limited to the macro level when it comes to promoting youth peacebuilding, but they should explore the informal micro-level collaborations that can foster relevant relationships that ensure the sustainability of peace (Oosterom & Gukurume 2022). Furthermore, social entrepreneurs can use technology to enhance their operations and reach a larger audience. Building networks and relationships within their communities is also critical for gaining trust and legitimacy, especially in Mbare, which has a history of political and social unrest (Ntini, 2023).

According to Mago (2018), addressing the challenges faced by young people in Zimbabwe's urban areas, including Mbare, requires a more inclusive and participatory approach to socioeconomic development. As a result, creating a conducive policy environment that encourages the growth and development of social entrepreneurship can aid in addressing the challenges posed by the political environment. A policy environment like this can give young entrepreneurs access to credit and finance, while training and mentoring will provide them with the skills and knowledge, they need to run successful businesses (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2021).

Furthermore, encouraging collaboration, inclusivity, and sustainability, as well as providing access to finance and credit, can assist social entrepreneurs in overcoming some of the challenges posed by Mbare's political environment (Kativhu et al., 2021; Mhlanga & Ndhlovu 2021). Through these strategies, social entrepreneurship can provide a promising avenue for promoting youth peacebuilding initiatives in Mbare, Zimbabwe.

## **2.13. Chapter Summary**

The chapter explored published research on youth and peacebuilding over the world and in Zimbabwe. The chapter provided a definition of youth as characterised by international and regional statutes. The chapter situated the research by contextualising peacebuilding and its various typologies. It provided the rationale for

economic peacebuilding. The chapter extensively discussed drivers of youth violence in Zimbabwe and efforts at peacebuilding. It discusses why peacebuilding endeavours in Zimbabwe are producing less than optimal results. Lastly, the historical overview and role of social entrepreneurship in promoting youth peacebuilding was engaged. The debates on the challenges and opportunities for engaging social entrepreneurship in promoting youth peacebuilding were discussed.

The next chapter discusses the conflict transformation perspectives that were used in this study.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Conflict Transformation Perspectives in Ending Violence and Building Peace**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This study envisions a society that positively embraces peace as opposed to continuous violence. In this chapter I explore conflict transformation perspectives with a clear aim of identifying and promoting holistic, contextual, local, and systemic practices of building peace. The chapter seeks to capture an understanding that durable peace is achievable, but it requires strategic and flexible thinking and initiatives. Guided by Lederach's conflict transformation perspectives, the chapter advocates for a clear and understandable thinking that provides holistic steps in engaging peace research. Wide research in Africa notes that conflicts across the continent are affected by direct, structural, and cultural forms of violence which concurrently inhibit the existence of both negative and positive peace.

Reflecting on the concepts of violence and peace through Galtung's perspectives, the role of peacebuilding in the transformation of conflicts seeks to employ nonviolent practices that aim to improve relations and address social problems. To ensure the building of sustainable peace, there must be proper guidelines for effective planning and implementation of mechanisms that achieve sustainable results. Using conflict transformation thinking, I reflect on how Zimbabwe has failed to facilitate effective transformation and peacebuilding following the Lancaster House Agreement which led to independence in 1980. Peace in Zimbabwe has remained negative since then, with continuous manifestations of political, electoral, social, and economic violence occurring in different places and periods. Mbare is one of the urban communities in Zimbabwe which has had long-term violent experiences; however, there is limited evidence to suggest that effective measures are being taken towards transformative peace to ensure the end of such cycles of violence. Hence, the chapter unpacks the understanding of violence, peace, peacebuilding practice and the role of conflict transformation in changing the culture of violence into a culture of peace.

Hendrick (2009: 4) defines conflict transformation as a “comprehensive and long-term approach to social change in situations of violence”. The definition refers to various lenses, such as security, ecology, development and aid, as important factors in conflict transformation processes (Hendrick 2009). I harness Lederach’s conflict transformation thinking in this study to help envision long-term initiatives that are feasible and yet flexible in building peace contextually and locally in Mbare. Lederach (2005) speaks of the endless possibilities for peace outcomes that can be utilised and exploited within the contextual and local settings of the conflict environment. He suggests that one must appeal to the moral imagination of peace (Lederach 2005). In this chapter, I will unpack these views to reflect on how contextual, local, integrative, and innovative peace mechanisms do not only promote, but facilitate the practice of the positive culture of peace. Considering that this is action research, understanding the applicability of conflict transformation is crucial.

### **3.2. Peacebuilding as Panacea**

The conflict environment in Africa has been very fragile in the past decade, despite efforts made towards building sustainable peace. Countries such as South Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR), Mali, Libya and Burundi have all experienced a resurgence in conflict in the past decade. Social instabilities are critical factors that have been increasingly experienced in Egypt, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Kenya in the past few years. According to Gounden (2018), this evolving conflict environment might continue in the next few years if effective measures are not put in place. Therefore, considering that this study focuses on youth, it seeks to exploit their role as agents of peacebuilding.

The concept of youth peacebuilding refers to the active participation of young people in the development and resolution of conflicts in their communities. This process is essential in building the capacity of youth as peacebuilding actors, empowering their engagement in democratic governance, and enhancing their problem-solving abilities at both local and national levels. The ultimate objective of youth peacebuilding is to establish young people as key partners in civil society, reconstruction, and development efforts, with a view to promoting sustainable and peaceful societies

(Micinski 2016). The perspectives align with the concept of peacebuilding as a panacea for promoting sustainable peace. This is supported by contemporary research that acknowledges peacebuilding as an effective approach for re-establishing stability and mitigating conflict risks, such as violent and criminal behaviours, through strategic and intentional interactions (Donais & Burt 2014).

Peacebuilding as a concept was first introduced by Galtung (1975). Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992) popularised it through his *Agenda for Peace* as the UN Secretary-General. Its value as a significant strategy for building sustainable peace has since been explored. For Boutros-Ghali (1992), peace is achieved by establishing durable foundations that address all the economic, cultural, social, political, and humanitarian challenges that influence conflict (UN 1992 para. 57). These are broad lenses that help one to reflect the various overt and structural factors of violence that exist in any area. The process must target reducing any risk for conflict lapse or relapse, with the intention of strengthening local and national capacities that ensure effective peace and development (Donais 2015). When engaging in peacebuilding in any community, it becomes easier to identify which areas to look at to end or prevent the recurrence of violence and support the building of sustainable peace (Curtis 2013).

Peace research requires strategic mechanisms that seek to bring permanent changes that get rid of violent structures and systems. Peacebuilding in practice has various characteristics, which include the need to consolidate peace, engaging multidimensional issues, ensuring interdependence of actors, forging long-term processes from surrounding short-term realities, and involving multiple tools or instruments (Ozerdem 2015). Therefore, peacebuilding is not narrowly defined. For instance, Alliance for Peacebuilding (2012:7) defines it as

a set of long-term endeavours undertaken continuously through multiple stages of conflict (before, during and after) and involving collaboration at several levels of society ... peacebuilding emphasises transformative social change that is accomplished both at the process-oriented level, and through tools such as negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation, and on the structural level, through the development of resilient institutions and social processes that allow conflict to be resolved through political, rather than violent means.

Paffenholz (2015:13) presents peacebuilding as a

long-term multi-track transformative contribution to social change, helping to create a just and sustainable peace beyond the narrow definition of a post-conflict period.

These definitions reflect how peacebuilding practice seeks to cut across deeper factors that contribute to conflict, not only to resolve or manage, but to facilitate transformation of the environment for positive peace outcomes.

Research indicates that building sustainable peace should be considered a continuous commitment. Hutton (2014) posits that most peacebuilding practices in Africa have resulted in resurgence of conflict in less than a decade following peace agreements, because it has been practiced *ad hoc*. As a result, recent studies extensively castigate Western-oriented liberal peacebuilding approaches when it comes to addressing African conflict environments. They have argued that they are more liberal in nature (liberal peacebuilding that overlooks the complexities of local contexts) and accuse them of being top-down, monolithic, and short-sighted, since they often neglect local involvement and regard peacebuilding as a short-term mission. One might consider that perhaps these approaches might be ideological or a competition for superior knowledge over African peace. But following the thinking of peace research and the ideas of Galtung (1969), peace must be attainable, and there is no single way of doing this. Therefore, Lederach's work focuses extensively on how peacebuilding can be applicable and flexible in transforming any conflict environment to attain peace (Lederach 1997, 2003, 2005, 2012). Both Galtung and Lederach acknowledge that there can never be absolute peace in any society where both personal violence and structural violence are present. Rather, strategic mechanisms to reduce and compare them in the best way possible must be continually searched for, meaning that sticking to a formula strategy, as mostly presented in liberal peace, is quite problematic. Hence, the need to reflect on peacebuilding as a complex and continuously evolving process of identifying and setting up structures that strengthen positive peace, generate measures that avoid conflict lapse and ensure the building up of resilient social institutions within local communities (Ahere & De Coning 2015). Complexities are most likely to be experienced in trying to identify feasible and practical ways to buy in to the society to facilitate action-oriented research or programmes. Thus, the process of building peace must be holistic and systemic, such that strategies and

solutions are found through close interaction with the community and with them as the solution drivers.

### **3.3. Practical Peacebuilding Through Systemic Means**

This research engages peacebuilding through systemic lenses to foreground holistic thinking and harness an advantage in engaging broad strategies. Systemic peacebuilding approaches feed into conflict transformation, a key theory in this study. Systemic approaches suggest interventions that are anchored in strategy and provide a reasonable set of criteria in which the responses/interventions must be structured and processed (Ahere & De Coning 2015). Systemic peacebuilding activities are often pursued in a fragmented manner, with various agents working towards a goal of peace through their independently designed programmes. In some instances, the programmes are not necessarily identified as peacebuilding activities, since they might be focusing on development, job creation or even human rights, but have a combined and cumulative outcome of consolidating peace. This is the idea embraced in this research: to harness the capacity of youth through holistic programmes that boost their socio-economic status, which eventually translate to peace.

### **3.4. Building Peace through Conflict Transformation Lenses**

This study adopts John Paul Lederach's view of conflict transformation. This is because Lederach provides a simple but rich view, which is based on wide research experiences and practices of more than three decades. His account of peacebuilding practices witnessed across the world magnifies the importance of constructive initiatives that create opportunities for transforming conflict environments, de-escalating violent situations, promoting justice within social structures, and addressing challenges that pose threats to human relationships in the long run (Lederach 2005). Although conflict transformation and peacebuilding are often engaged strategically, Lederach reflects that there are always some important but unexpected elements, that one should always be on the lookout for, to exploit in facilitating the peacebuilding process. He considers these elements to be the moral imagination that is used to transform societies from conflict to peace.

Lederach (1997) highlights that most processes of building peace are engaged without proper preparation towards medium- or long-term interests. Therefore, most interventions tend to ignore relationships that matter in facilitating long-term strategies in building peace. This means in every conflict environment there is a need to identify opportunities and the cultural and human resources that can be utilised to facilitate the transformation of the society from conflict patterns and behaviours. Lederach (1995; 2003) and Miall (2004) agree that the people, materials, and resources in the conflict society play a special complementary role in shaping the relationships that can reduce the occurrence of violence in the long run. They are all regarded as important actors and tools towards weaving strategies that can facilitate the building of peace through development initiatives, political dialogues, or relevant social ventures (Lederach 1995; Lederach 2003; Miall 2004). Hence, conflict transformation magnifies those lenses that can be used to identify these opportunities, through promoting wide-ranging approaches that are multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary. This appeals to the networking of contextual ideas that seeks to address societal challenges and problems through the construction of platforms and initiatives that focus on future outcomes (Miall 2004).

When one engages conflict transformation perspectives in building peace, one seeks to understand the root causes of conflict and violence in the particular environment. The main interest is to foster peaceful measures that can help change the existing pattern of behaviour. In Lederach's conflict transformation views, relationships are the main components that hold society together (Lederach 1995; Lederach 2003). Thus, conflict transformation approaches adopt relationship-centred approaches to promote integration and inclusivity of ideas in addressing conflict challenges in a community. Paffenholz (2009:4) notes that "conflict transformation does not only focus on ending an undesired conflict or creating endless communication opportunities but also focuses on how to create greater future outcomes". As an effective framework towards sustainable building of peace, it speaks to the importance of exploiting every necessary possibility that is essential towards achieving the desired goal of peace. It seeks to eliminate structural causes of violence through,

creating a culture of nonviolent approaches that proposes an integrated approach to peace-building aimed at bringing about long-term changes in

personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions (United States Institute of Peace 2011: 15-16).

This means that conflict transformation is interested in providing strategic solutions that can help address economic, social, and political challenges that might be promoting conflict and violence. It promotes relationships of ideas from both the bottom and the top of leadership structures in societies through interactive communication and implementation of ideas.

Lederach (2005) reflects that the transformation of conflict can happen intentionally or unintentionally, as some individuals might not be aware that they are engaged in the peacebuilding process. Lederach (2005) further argues that the morality of one's involvement in building peace is critical in influencing one's action towards facilitating mechanisms of peace. This implies that powerful peacebuilding practices are engaged in by individuals who understand that they have everything to lose if the current order of events continues. In a radio interview with Krista Tippett (2012), Lederach outlines the peacebuilding successes he witnessed in countries such as Kenya, Columbia, Tajikistan, Northern Ghana, and Somalia in transforming societies. He explained how the elements of moral imagination are guided by the ability:

to imagine yourself in a relationship with your enemy and that if that's not present peace-building itself collapses. The second [element] was that people never fell into a kind of a simple dualistic understanding of the options that they had where it was always an either/or choice: You're with us or you're against us. You're on that side or you're this side. Or you're in favor or not in favor of this idea. What they sustained was, by my view, a form of [paradoxical] curiosity. Paradoxical in the sense that paradox is not contradiction — it's two things or three things or four things that are different but ultimately are tied to each other in a form. And that's actually the genius of complexity, is that while it can feel overwhelming when we're in the middle of it, it keeps offering up new ways to understand something that doesn't require you to choose one option against another (Lederach 2012 [Radio Interview], *On Being with Krista Tippett*).

This captures the core of Lederach's conflict transformation belief, which emphasises flexibility in manoeuvring peacebuilding practice. Lederach (1995) believes that to effectively transform any society from conflict there is need to identify opportunities that can be exploited to engage both human and cultural resources in the targeted context. I engage conflict transformation theory to reflect on measures to transform

the institutional and systemic violence which promotes unjust systems that exploit the socio-economic vulnerabilities of youth to legitimise violence. Transforming a society from the continuation of violence requires the engagement of processes that foster discourse, interests and relationships that can create the necessary conditions for sustainable peace (Maill 2004). It encourages innovative and interactive engagements that can be harnessed to promote dialogue, and facilitate mediation (and even healing) amongst foes, victims, and perpetrators of violence. Miklian and Hoelscher (2017) propose that there is a need to encourage new peace innovations that can be utilised to resolve, reduce, or prevent conflict.

### ***The case of Wajir Women***

The story of Wajir women's involvement in ending inter-clan violence and recruitment of young men into armed conflict serves as a good example in explaining a moral imagination of peace. Lederach (2005:11) gives a detailed explanation of why the women from different clans had to boldly engage in facilitating measures that would permanently end violence in their marketplace and their community:

So, the women quietly gathered, fewer than a dozen of them at first. "We just wanted to put our heads together," they said, "to see what we knew and could do. We decided the place to start was the market." They agreed on a basic idea. The market should be safe for any woman of any clan background to come, to sell, and to buy. Women were looking out for their children. Access and safety to the market was an immediate right that had to be assured. Since women mostly ran the market, they spread the word. They established monitors who would watch every day what was happening at the market. They would report any infractions, any abuse of someone because of her clan or geographic origin. Whenever issues emerged, a small committee of women would move quickly to resolve them. Within a short period of time, the women had created a zone of peace in the market. Their meetings and initiatives resulted in the creation of the Wajir Women's Association for Peace. While they were working hard on the market, they soon discovered that the broader fighting still affected their lives. Sitting again, they decided to pursue direct conversations with the elders of all the clans.

The case of the Wajir women helps to reflect on the various approaches and measures that can be engaged in every context to help address challenges. Eventually, their intervention received attention from the government and was awarded support and resources. This example is essential and important for this study: it shows that the power for impacting effective transformation and sustainable, peaceful social change

is harnessed through contextual and local advantages. It appeals to the importance of action research practice in helping create avenues that can help to frame structures of sustainable peace, not only for the community, but also for the government in the long run. This means the engagement of this research in Mbare is crucial, not only for strengthening local peace frameworks, but also for shaping sustainable frameworks that can also be adopted at a national level. Thus, this helps in strengthening local and national frameworks towards sustainable peace.

In this regard, the research explores social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool that has the capacity to engage young people in Mbare to cooperate towards transforming society from conflict to peace (see Chapter 4). The next section briefly reflects on the conditions surrounding youth in Zimbabwe and unpacks the violent trend amongst youth in Mbare. This helps to understand the use of conflict transformation to facilitate contextual approaches to building peace.

### **3.5 Contextualising Conflict Transformation**

Lederach (1995:212) view of conflict transformation is that it “must actively envision, include, respect, and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting”. Lederach (1995) emphasises the need to look at the conflict communities as the bearers of their solutions, in which outsiders come not as solution-bearers but facilitators and supporters, with the goal of transforming, validating, and building on the local people and resources that surround them. Increasingly, peacebuilders are arguing for transformative measures that build up strategic conditions for ending violent conflict (Miklian & Hoelscher 2018; Donais & Burt 2014). Conflict transformation theory is a flexible theoretical measure in reflecting on processes that are applicable and relevant to ensuring transformational processes from negative peace to positive peace in the Mbare community.

#### **3.5.1 Reflecting on Conditions of Youth in Zimbabwe**

I focus on youth in this study, not only because they are young and vibrant, but because they are also vulnerable and are viewed as both perpetrators and victims of violence. I utilise social entrepreneurship as an opportunity that can be used to engage

young people as peacebuilding agents in transforming the conflict environment in Mbare. I acknowledge that social entrepreneurship presents the socio-economic values that are important in attracting young people to venture into conflict transformation and peacebuilding practices (see Chapter 4). Thus, I identify it as a useful peacebuilding tool in establishing sustainable peace mechanisms that can end the continuity of violence.

Violence in Zimbabwe is perpetrated by both the State and citizens; however, in most cases the State has maintained a culture of violence in the name of maintaining law and order. Historical evidence clarifies that there are multiple factors behind the participation of youth in violence. Youth violence is influenced by various factors, namely unemployment, social marginalisation, poverty, insufficient educational opportunities, poor governance, and control by political actors (Bradfield 2018; Musarurwa 2016; Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014). Scholars agree that, just as for many youths across the world, manipulation has played a significant role in influencing the participation of Zimbabwean youth in political violence (Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Mude 2014; Bradfield 2018). In examining the Zimbabwean society, structural and cultural systems in politics, governance and society have sustained exclusionary processes to youth participation in policy processes and decision-making, hence making them depend for survival on handouts from their political affiliation or through patriarchal systems. These systems have made youth vulnerable to all forms of violence, both as perpetrators and as victims.

### **3.5.2 Violent Experiences in Mbare and the role of youth**

According to Lederach (2003), the immediate causes of conflict are rooted in contextual factors and refer to the relationship patterns that can be traced historically. As such, there is a web of factors that contribute towards conflict and violent manifestations in Mbare. It is essential to trace the patterns of factors that influence youth participation in violence-related behaviour and trends. Studies on youth often present a negative image of young people as rowdy and uncontrolled; however, it is forgotten that they are products of the environment that nurtures them. Ozerdem (2015) outlines that peacebuilders have often viewed youth as perpetrators of violence

and conflict. Thus, they are often subject to various stereotypical assumptions of being a threat, angry and violent.

Mbare (Harare) is Zimbabwe's oldest urban high-density suburbs, which was established in 1907. It is regarded as the leading economic hub in Harare, with some of the most famous trading markets such as *Siyaso* (industrial tools and products hub), *Mupedzanhano* (indigenous textile retailers), and Mbare *Musika* (vegetable and consumables market). Thus, it has a diverse number of informal markets which range from retail trading, fruits and vegetables, hardware, and informal industries for agricultural and household tools, to food outlets and informal recycling businesses. Interestingly, the area reflects not only the significant economic activities of the city, but also its political events. Mbare has been the hub for criminal, gender-based and politically related violent activities.

Political and electoral violence has been particularly experienced in Mbare, and this is largely tied to patronage and socioeconomic issues (Mutongwizo 2014; Mutongwizo 2018; Mhike 2018). With the community of Mbare being the heartbeat of various economic activities and informal markets, access to the economic systems is negotiated through political connection or family affiliations. Thus, most youth in the community have demonstrated a long-standing loyalty to their political affiliation for socio-economic livelihoods, and the pattern might continue to the next generation of youth if not addressed. The political actors in Zimbabwe have actively taken advantage of this cause to manipulate and influence youth into doing their violent bidding for economic rewards. Mude (2014) outlines that the idleness of youth is the leading cause of their manipulation and their being vulnerable to being influenced towards acts of violence.

Kruger (2005) traces the patterns of youth participation in violence in Mbare back to 1980 and outlines how ZANU-PF youth attacked opposition party members of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) during the 1990 elections. In the post-2000 era, political, economic and electoral violence has been increasingly dominant, with politically aligned youth leading the cause (Mude 2014). With the emergence of the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), youth from both the MDC and ZANU-PF youth have been involved in severe violent confrontations

since 2000. The MDC has been identified as having established various youth military structures that specialised in “defensive” violent action since the early day of its formation (Alexander & McGregor 2013: 755).

Well-documented cases are those of how ZANU-PF mobilised young men and women into quasi-military groups known as “*Chipangano*” during the 2008 re-run election, and these attacked and committed atrocious acts of violence against members of the opposition MDC. The group mostly consisted of young men and women who had been previously trained in the Border Gezi-National Youth Service (NYC) from 2001-2007, and they participated in various atrocious acts during the 2008 run-up election campaign, not only in Mbare, but around Zimbabwe (Mhike 2008). More so, in 2012 reports indicated that the “*Chipangano*” group was using its political advantage as the ZANU-PF youth wing to solely control all the taxi rank operations in Mbare and in other parts of Harare (Maringira & Gukurume 2020; Mutongwizo 2014). Episodes of intra- and inter-partisan youth participation in violence continue to happen to this day across the country.

Current research studies by Musarurwa (2016; 2018) strongly indicate the vulnerability of youth, and how strategies that boost their socio-economic status can go a long way in addressing peace. Galtung (1990) outlines that to end the culture of violence requires one to think of how to create a culture of peace. He emphasises that creating a culture of peace means there is a continual search for opportunities to create “peace culture” (Galtung 1990: 291). Social entrepreneurship is increasingly gaining attention in peacebuilding as an agent for effecting social change, addressing structural violence, and ending social inequalities in society (Musarurwa & Kaye 2016; Zelizer 2018; Paul 2018). This feeds into the conflict transformation narrative that seeks a thorough engagement in overhauling conflict roots, eliminating social unrest and inhibiting the perpetual violence that is deeply entrenched in conflict environments. Transforming of conflict societies requires (re)construction, (re)conceptualisation, and reframing of positions to facilitate measures that are suitable for establishing peace mechanisms that can achieve social justice (Miall 2004; Shulika 2013).

Addressing violence and ending the conflict in any community is always challenging and demanding, because the process of building peace does not only require political

or organisational leadership at the top, but also requires commitment and energy from the bottom (Lederach 1997). The research seeks to engage young people within their local context and help them reflect on the conflict and development challenges that need attention to achieve sustainable peace. Lederach (2012) notes that engaging contextual and local level approaches has proven to be more sustainable in transforming societies from conflict than politically driven processes. He emphasises that transforming societies must be advanced by empowering the local/indigenous people (Lederach 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003). Considering that this study is action-oriented research, the use of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool provides an interactive platform for participation amongst people of various backgrounds, with the understanding that violence goes beyond direct physical violence, as explained by Galtung (1985; 1990). Studies indicate that youth violence in Mbare is a manifestation of the various structural, cultural, and environmental disorders that manipulate and pressure the youth into direct physical violence.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter explored Lederach's conflict transformation and peacebuilding thinking as the key guiding theoretical framework in this study. It harnesses the idea of building sustainable peace through practical and strategic measures. Considering that this study seeks to engage the capacity of social entrepreneurship in facilitating youth peacebuilding, conflict transformation theory reflects on the essentiality of multi-disciplinary approaches and applicability of integrated and inclusive methods in building enduring peace. The concepts of violence, peace, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation explored above are critical in realising the objectives of this study. Thus, this chapter explains the thinking that guides this study and indicates how the theories are applied.

The next chapter demonstrates how the views of conflict transformation and peacebuilding link with social entrepreneurship. It unpacks their applicability and how these theories help to facilitate holistic and practical peacebuilding interventions that transform society. They offer ideas that promote systemic approaches. Thus, the following chapter explores the peace innovation (PI) approach, behavioural theory for

social entrepreneurship, and systemic conflict transformation to help guide the thinking and practice of the conflict transformation and peacebuilding in this study.

## Chapter 4

### Theoretical Lenses: New Innovations for Building Peace Through Social Entrepreneurship

#### 4.1. Introduction

The idea of research is not only to identify challenges and limitations, but also to promote new knowledge. The interest of this study is premised on the urgency for new contextual practices that interact with young people to make them part of the solution in addressing the patterns of violent conflicts that disrupt peace within their communities. Guided by Lederach's conflict transformation thinking presented in the previous chapter, I advance the idea that interacting with youth to establish social ventures and enterprises can do more in facilitating sustainable peace mechanisms that resist and transform structural and cultural patterns of violence. Young people in Mbare, and in Zimbabwe at large, have been exposed to brutal violence in all its forms for a long time. Transforming such a society to build durable and tangible peace requires careful and innovative approaches that are feasible and practical. Therefore, I recognise social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool that has much to offer towards promoting youth agency and positive participation in building peace. In Collier's view, poor socio-economic conditions in any post-conflict or violent community are a danger to sustainable peacebuilding efforts (Collier 2004). Bangura's (2016) case of Sierra Leone youth indicates that they disregarded peacebuilding efforts because they lacked socio-economic benefits. This triggers much concern towards the need for incentivising peace mechanisms. As explored in the previous chapter, the morality of building peace is in engaging practical and contextual solutions that reap rewarding and durable peace, as reflected by Lederach (2005).

Conflict transformation research informs the need for exploring different experiences to prepare and address new challenges that might be faced (Austin, Fischer & Giessmann 2011). Rauta (2014) notes that the best conflict transformation practices that seek to achieve sustainable results in confronting contemporary conflicts must be

advanced through interdependence approaches that integrate various theoretical and methodological approaches. This helps in unpacking complex designs that are essential in achieving the desired purpose of peace. Considering that action research might involve or encounter various complexities, it is essential to integrate different theoretical positions with practice. Adding to Lederach's conflict transformation theory and systemic peacebuilding discussed earlier, I engage Miklian and Hoelscher's (2018) peace innovation (PI) approach and how it helps reflect on social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool, and then reflect on the behavioural theory of social entrepreneurship (hereafter referred as BTSE) of El Ebrashi (2013). This appeals to the applicability of social entrepreneurship in providing solutions to various social problems, which in this case include violence and continuous conflict challenges. Systemic Conflict Transformation (SCT) is then used to show the holistic and cyclical process of how social entrepreneurship can be utilised in engaging feasible steps and innovative practices that can facilitate agency in transforming societies and building sustainable peace. This is because social entrepreneurship is recognised as an essential tool to reflect on necessary measures that are relevant to ending the continuation of youth participation in violent conflicts in Mbare.

## **4.2. Theoretical Lenses of Social Entrepreneurship**

The broader and detailed definitions of SE were discussed earlier in Chapter 2, this section seeks to understand the concept through theoretical lenses. Different reviewed studies have analysed social entrepreneurship through various theoretical lenses, including stakeholder theory, institutional theory, and resource dependence theory. For instance, Institutional theory emphasises the significance of the external environment in social entrepreneurship venture formation. According to Ntini (2022), social entrepreneurship ventures in Zimbabwe operate in a hostile political environment, which poses significant operational challenges. As a result, the institutional environment influences their strategies, structures, and practises as they attempt to adapt to a changing environment. The resource-based perspective highlights the significance of organisational resources in determining the success of social entrepreneurship ventures. According to Mutenga and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2021), social entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe have difficulty gaining access to financial

resources, which impedes their ability to grow and scale their businesses. Therefore, social entrepreneurship endeavours should focus on developing strategic partnerships with stakeholders such as government agencies and civil society organisations to gain access to essential resources such as funding and mentorship. In social entrepreneurship endeavours, stakeholder theory emphasises the significance of stakeholder management. According to Mhlanga and Ndhlovu (2021), social entrepreneurship initiatives in Zimbabwe must identify and manage their stakeholders to achieve their objectives. These parties may consist of government agencies, donors, investors, clients, and beneficiaries. Social entrepreneurship ventures can build strong relationships with their stakeholders and gain their support by employing strategies that promote collaboration, inclusivity, and sustainability. These theoretical perspectives help to highlight the complex challenges faced by social entrepreneurs in the Zimbabwean context. However, this study engages the theoretical lenses of social entrepreneurship to unpack critical factors in promoting youth peacebuilding.

The focus of this study is to glean the values that facilitate operationalising social entrepreneurship practices as means for building sustainable tools. As argued by El Ebrashi (2013:203), social entrepreneurship is a concept that is defined by its practice and processes which include:

- discovering opportunities to eliminate social and institutional barriers and address markets;
- experimenting with ideas;
- establishing innovative social organisations;
- having clear social outcomes and impacts;
- performing activities to achieve the social outcomes and impacts;
- working on the social organisations' growth; and
- using specific indicators to measure the success of the organisation through achieving social impact.

Therefore, the definitions identified simply help to reflect on how the rewards of social entrepreneurship are more identified in the practical social impacts rather than in contested definitions. The concept reflects on identifying opportunities that can be harvested towards effective transformation of societies for positive and sustainable

gain. Thus, my interest focused more on identifying the opportunities that young people can exploit for innovation and agency towards peace initiatives, and with an intention of facilitating and building resourceful social ventures and enterprises that positively contribute towards peaceful and socio-economic outcomes within their community. Hence, this study adopts a PI approach and BTSE to facilitate the position of social entrepreneurship as a social innovative practice that can be contextually driven to promote change and social transformation in creating sustainable political, social, and economic conditions of peace across communities.

### **4.3. Need for New Innovative Peace Practices**

In their quest for new research for peace, Miklian and Hoelscher (2018:189) ask an interesting question: “How can we foster more socially responsible pro-peace innovations that also have deeper impact?”. One would believe that such a question is driven by both conflict resurgence problems and new emerging conflict challenges. Though inter-state conflicts have decreased following the fall of the Berlin wall, intra-state conflicts have increased, characterised by civil wars, social unrest, and violent protests. All these are influenced by different factors, which include religion, politics, ethnicity, and continuous conditions of socio-economic decline. Research shows that with the emergence of extremist groups such as the Islamic State and Boko Haram, the number of conflicts across the world doubled in the 2010-2015 period alone. A fusion of civil wars and terrorism has further intensified and created complex new threats to peace and security across Africa and other parts of the world (Jones & Metzger 2018). This has posed challenges for states to constructively build peace and engage diplomatic negotiations for peace settlements (Jones & Metzger 2018). One can cite the several terrorist bombings and shootings in Kenya, the abduction of civilians in Nigeria by Boko Haram and other extreme terror events noted across the world as examples. Despite their endless positive contributions, the emergence of new technologies has also contributed its fair share towards conflict threats, facilitating the spread of violent uprisings, protests, and political and social instabilities through social networks and alternative media platforms. All these factors reflect how the nature of conflict across the globe has been changing, bringing with it new conflict challenges. As such, Zimbabwe is no exception: a review of the conflict and violent trends in the

country since 1980 (after independence), reveals that political interests and socio-economic changes are the sinister siblings that have continuously fuelled the continuity of conflict and violent practices in the country. The use of alternative media platforms and social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter) post-2010 in organising mass protests (violent and nonviolent) increased, especially among the youth, resulting in the government setting up a ministry of cyber-security to ensure a close monitoring of citizen activities on social media platforms. Understanding these issues is essential in showing the need for new innovative peace practices in the country.

To address the new conflict challenges posed in this generation, Miklian and Hoelscher (2018) advocate for context-specific, area-based, and conflict-sensitive measures in guiding peace practices. Most importantly, they insist on the need for peace innovations (PI), with an interest in engaging various alternative practices to promote and facilitate mechanisms that advance towards building more peaceful societies. Their work places an urgent and essential call for peace scholars, researchers, and innovators to positively devise more tools that are contextual, sensitive and more localised. There are various intersections identified across literature that feed into peace and innovation. For instance, the increase in technological innovations in peacebuilding has resulted in effective organisation of community mediation towards peaceful outcomes, safeguarding indigenous social knowledge and practices, and increasing integrated civic-political engagements and facilitating government accountability (Breuer & Welp 2014; Bailey & Ngwenyama 2016; De Ville et al. 2015). These aspects all make a positive contribution towards peaceful societies. It should be clearly noted that none of these ideas should ever be adopted blindly, and thus the necessity and essentiality of research in seeking to contextualise and reflect on strategies that are localised, seek to eliminate inequalities and engage integrative approaches.

#### **4.3.1. Why the PI Approach?**

Most peace approaches utilised across Africa have been highly liberal. However, they are blamed for failing to deliver sustainable peace. Current studies indicate that the liberal peace approach has various limitations that affect sustainable engagements

towards durable peace (Philipsen 2014; Simangan 2017). In the past decades, studies have increasingly suggested various alternative peace solutions to liberal peace, arguing for contextual and localised (Lederach 1997), indigenous and endogenous practices (Murithi 2006; 2008), Ubuntu and peacebuilding (Akinola & Uzodike 2017; Arthur, Issifu & Marfo 2015), and integrated peacebuilding (Donais & Burt 2014). As identified in Lederach's work (1997; 2003; 2005), there is a need for new transformative thinking and flexible approaches to building peace. He reflects on the importance of engaging more contextual, local, and practical peace approaches. Therefore, understanding Miklian and Hoelscher's (2018) new approach to peace research is important in this study, hence its adoption. I use PI in this research for the following reasons:

- Firstly, because it promotes the need for systemic research initiatives which suggest practical and integrative solutions that are drawn from both social and technological contributions. Miklian and Hoelscher's idea to achieve socially and commercially responsible peace outcomes accords with the interest of the study to promote youth peacebuilding, which would require practices that resonate with young people.
- Secondly, this study is action oriented, calling for interactive peacebuilding engagements through social entrepreneurship as a tool. Miklian and Hoelscher (2018) advocate for social entrepreneurial innovation in building peace, with the agenda of empowering peace scholarship and innovators for peace, and strengthening policy frameworks for peace. These are the viable factors that the study contributes towards.
- Thirdly, there are various factors that hinder the realisation of peace in different communities. These might be lack of finances, political reasons, structural factors, poor policy frameworks and lack of innovation and integrative approaches. PI advocates for strategic and flexible frameworks that are critical in addressing hindrances and challenges to peaceful outcomes, hence its adoption in guiding the thinking of the study.

#### **4.3.2. Understanding the PI Approach**

The use of the PI approach helps to broaden the lenses used to investigate social entrepreneurship as a peace approach in this study. However, Miklian and Hoelscher's (2018) ideas link innovation highly to technology, which might not always be the case

in some contexts. Therefore, I find their emphasis on technology as their main standard of innovation to be very limiting. Thus, in the application of this approach, I regard innovation to be a transforming initiative that leads towards a positively desired and peaceful society. Hence, I adhere to a more flexible thinking that integrates and considers any practical and feasible solution towards sustainable peace as “innovative peace”. The intention is to advance towards building sustainable social ventures and enterprises through social entrepreneurial initiatives which are not only limited to technology. This is because in some contexts, technology might be regarded as far-fetched. This means that the study was conducted with a more open mind to various ideas and initiatives that can be identified as essential to facilitating durable peace innovations. Thus, to prepare for the challenges one might come across in conducting action research, I reflect on the four PI intentions, which are as follows:

- **“1. *Expand the scholar–entrepreneur–policy triad of PI*”**

Structural challenges are the most violent critical factors affecting various societies in this era. They manifest themselves through many faces which spread inequalities (social and economic), exclusion, exploitation, manipulation, abuse, and marginalisation. Miklian and Hoelscher (2018) identify three key processes that are essential in addressing these identified structural challenges that might exist in any conflict environments. These are as follows:

- Firstly, they identify the need for integrated multi-stakeholder approaches. They consider this approach to be viable for providing best strategic partnerships that drive towards durable peace. This is crucial for PI, because it helps in “providing innovators with context-specific, conflict-sensitive guidance [that] helps innovations have greater impact and ultimately provide greater peace dividends for affected communities” (Miklian and Hoelscher 2018:194). This helps to bring together innovators, non-profit organisations, scholars, civil societies, businesses, philanthropists, and governments. The intention is not just to cultivate interest in facilitating exchange of ideas and promote interaction for PI working patterns amongst stakeholders, but also to create an institutionalised basis for sustainable financial support. For example, a study by Bangura (2016) indicates how youth in Sierra Leone have consistently threatened the sustainability of the peacebuilding processes due to lack of socio-economic sustainability from both government and private sectors, thus their reaction: “*we can’t eat peace*”. Therefore, multi-stakeholder integration is meant to promote and formalise more holistic measures for funding various PI approaches, be it innovation or scholarly initiatives such as peace education, peace clubs, contests, or start-ups. This is meaningful in action research, as it reflects on essential measures that need consideration in establishing sustainable networks that maintain the peacebuilding processes within a community.
- Secondly, they argue that innovations are most likely to have a “transformative impact if designed in inclusive peace-innovation spaces that bring actors together in houses of joint work” (Miklian and Hoelscher 2018:194). These spaces might include universities or innovation communities; however, in this case the community of Mbare is identified as the innovation community itself. This helps in stimulating different approaches to innovation that are essential in engaging peace and conflict issues in that environment. Thus, the need for devising new insights, promoting cutting edge research and measures that are modelled in the best interests of human and peace development (socio-economically sustainable solutions, creation of new spaces for development, and processes that positively support peaceful societies).
- Lastly, Miklian and Hoelscher (2018:194) suggest the pioneering of social development and technology incubators like IDEA London, the Grameen Creative Lab, ICT4Peace, PeaceTech Lab and BUILD Peace bridge technology and social innovation and entrepreneurship for the purpose of supporting peace and development.

Though the suggestion is purely technological, some communities might not be as technologically competent as others. However, the pioneering of social innovation and entrepreneurship are practical processes that are achievable and that this study also seeks to promote in facilitating youth peacebuilding and development in Mbare. This can add to the research on innovations for peace that is still limited.

These identified processes offer critical insight of how scholarly ideas and holistic engagements that facilitate durable peace practices and innovations can be integrated. Scholars such as Donais & Burt (2014) have since advanced the importance of integration peacebuilding in facilitating multi-stakeholder interaction to pool resources and ideas. These steps will be utilised in engaging the action steps in this research practice in Mbare.

- **2. “Prioritize ethical, culturally sensitive engagement in all innovations”**

Miklian and Hoelscher (2018) reflect on the importance of prioritising ethical conduct in developing innovations. They argue that most innovators lack a deeper understanding of the ethical consequences of their innovation. Thus, in every innovation there should be an *informed purpose*, which is ethically reviewed. Their primary focus on ethical consequences of innovation is purely focused on technological innovations such as developing an app that might end up jeopardising people’s lives. Though this study might not be focused on technological tools for peacebuilding, the initiatives engaged might influence or inspire young people to pursue technologies for peace, and thus exploring these factors is essential. In action research, this view also helps the researcher to reflect on the consequences of their conduct in fragile environments. The PI approach seeks to help innovators to engage in thorough ethical reviews before embarking on their innovations. This is achieved through considering the unique components of every conflict environment, context and local factors that help in guiding moral reasoning that maximises on rewarding social (primary requirement) and commercial (secondary) success. Therefore, scholarly support is recommended as a guide in facilitating and promoting grounded research that helps peace innovators to conduct ethical innovations for peace.

- **3. “Design innovations to deliver specific positive impacts”**

This reflects the need for researchers to institutionalise impactful PI. The interest in this case is not just to integrate various stakeholders through scholarly engagement, which might be a challenging task, but rather to engage initiatives that reap both commercial and social benefit for the innovators. For instance, the use of social entrepreneurship in this research is meant to engage young people to positively build peace through social and commercial endeavours. Thus, PI is associated with the integration of “commercial and social benefit, and can appeal to both for-profit and non-profit operations to address social change and development in a sustainable and scalable manner” (Miklian & Hoelscher 2018:196). Therefore, the aim of this action research is not to produce profit-oriented individuals, but socially sensitive and morally-guided young people who seek to sustainably build peaceful societies, and facilitate positive social change and development in their community. Though they might engage in commercial practices, their aim is not profit, but social reward. Thus, the adoption and exercise of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool will be regarded as a success.

- **4. “Glocalizing the peace-innovation playing field to improve local ownership”**

To build more acute strategies that result in sustainable peacebuilding and development, one should think both global and local, termed “*glocal*”. This is an instructive paradigm, with the interest in harnessing relevant products and ideas that can bear positive results from related global settings to local cultures. According to Miklian and Hoelscher (2018:197) there are,

complex crisis environments where political actors may have more to gain from conflict, glocal-oriented PIs can improve accountability and efficiency in conflict reduction and peace promotion and reduce the likelihood that unintended consequences will exacerbate conflict (Miklian and Hoelscher 2018:197).

There are widespread ideas that have been used or are being used in addressing different complex conflict situations across the globe, and PI helps in reflecting on how these various practices can be engaged to suit into our local environments and reap the same success as experienced elsewhere. Engaging youth in peacebuilding is considered challenging. However, current studies consider social entrepreneurship as

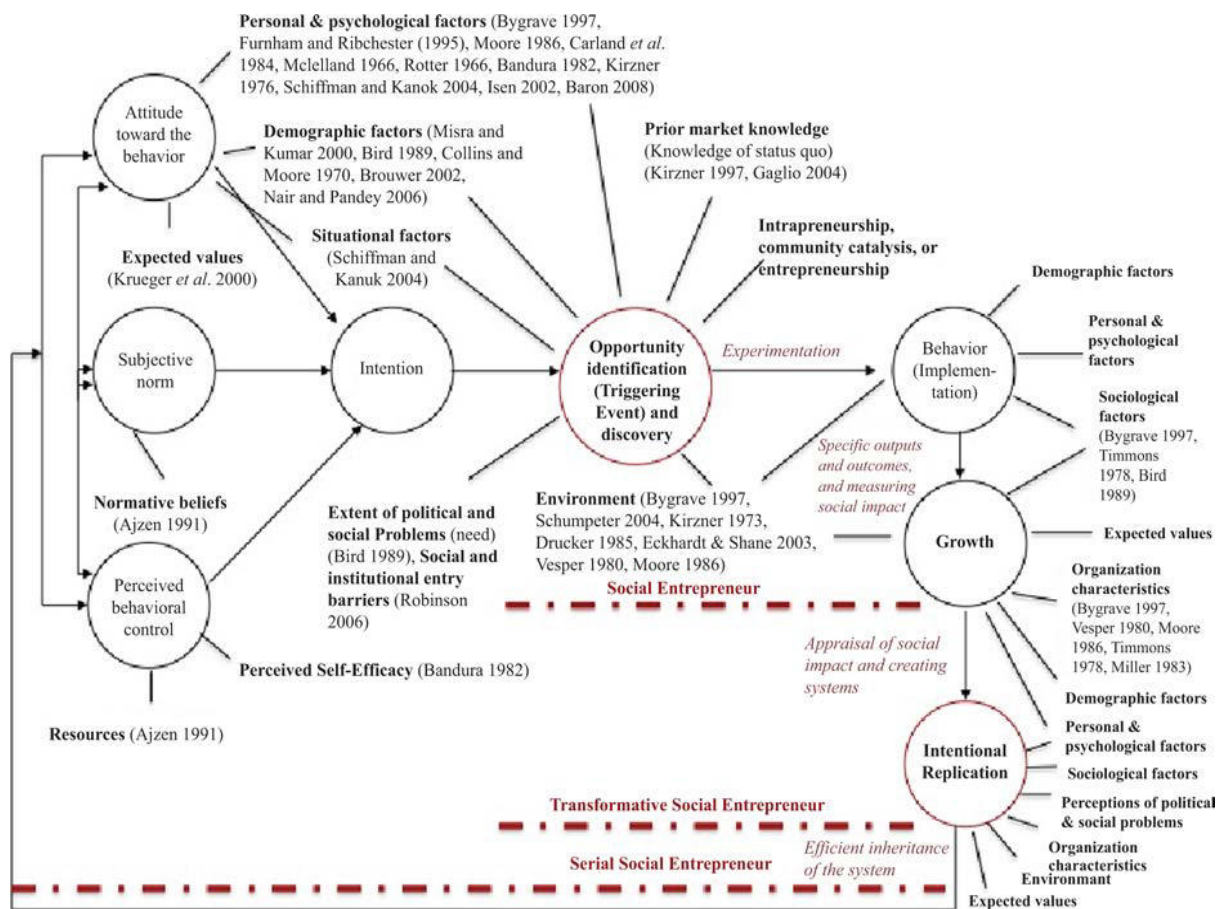
a suitable tool that can harness both global and local capacity in transforming communities positively (Musarurwa & Kaye 2016). Therefore, in glocalised PI, young people in Mbare will be contextually engaged to reflect on the value of social entrepreneurship and how they can engage it in building peace and achieving both the commercial and social benefits thereof.

#### **4.4. Understanding the Behavioural Theory of Social Entrepreneurship**

The BTSE looks at the contextual factors that can trigger the creation of social ventures, and existing structures and dynamics that can be used to mobilise resources, promote social impact, and facilitate sustainable social change (El Ebrashi 2013). Using the social entrepreneurship behaviour theory of El Ebrashi (2013), the intended outcomes of this study include using social entrepreneurship knowledge to facilitate youth agency to set up and run social ventures and enterprises and establish platforms that result in positive and peaceful interaction for skills exchange and development. Thus, the aim is to encourage behaviours, characteristics and typologies that promote public wealth creation, and facilitate social transformation in Mbare (El Ebrashi 2013).

The lenses of this theory are important for allowing this study to dig deeper into the social needs of young people in Mbare. This will help in engaging their ideas and views in practical social ventures and enterprises that are driven towards socially viable outcomes. The BTSE appeals to the aspect of mutual respect, as inspired by Friere (1972:72), who indicates that to achieve effective engagement among people, there should be equal treatment of individuals. This theory is used help engage youth and give them a voice and an opportunity to share their ideas and work towards goals that place them at an advantage to contribute positively to their community through socially-responsible programmes. Thus, the theory enables one to engage context-specific initiatives that appeal to and address the needs of young people and transform the community at large.

**Figure 4.1: The Behavioural Theory of Social Entrepreneurship**



**Source:** El Ebrashi (2013: 197)

The theory presents three major constructs that are adopted from Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour. These constructs include attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (See Figure 4.1). They are argued to be critical in developing intentions for engaging social ventures amongst social entrepreneurs (El Ebrashi 2013). This means that in every social venture there are triggering events that guide and inform the construct of an idea that helps in capacitating the creation of sustainable social impact. This guides the research into engaging in social entrepreneurship ventures that are not limited to achieving social outputs (providing certain services), but in creating the ability to facilitate sustainable agency towards desired social ends. Thus, the theory helps to harness the social entrepreneurial ability of youth in transformative social ventures, and they become agents for building peace with an intention to build and grow the social ventures that will impact their community positively. The theory reflects that:

Social entrepreneurs do not stop at the formation of social ventures, but work on the ventures' growth and exhausting more opportunities [than] their business counterparts. To reach the growth stage, social entrepreneurs have to state their impact clearly through outputs and outcomes, and to measure social impact as the defining success of the organization (El Ebrashi 2013: 199).

The purpose of adopting this theory is to help encourage and shape the perspectives of young people in Mbare towards positive peace participation. Musarurwa (2016) notes that Zimbabweans in general have been subjected to structural and cultural violence for long period of time, which has resulted in social inequalities affecting development efforts and impairing human growth. Evidence shows that continuous failure by the government to deliver basic services and good lives has been frustrating for citizens as they fail to reach self-actualisation and experience their potential growth being stunted. This has created tensions and a highly conflictual environment.

There are factors that affect the behaviour of young people towards negative or positive engagement in their communities. These factors might also stand as barriers or catalysts towards social impact. Thus, they might be personal, psychological, economic, social, and political, institutional, environmental, situational, or even demographic. El Ebrashi (2013) explains that these are antecedents that might affect the attitudes and behaviour patterns of the social entrepreneur in effectively pursuing their social ventures. With this picture in mind, young people in Mbare have been exposed to electoral and political violence, and different kinds of social and economic injustices, for decades. They are highly polarised along political lines and access to economic spaces is negotiated as such. Evidence indicates that most young people in Mbare are vulnerable to manipulation by the political elites for socio-economic benefits; thus, clientelism is at its peak in the community. Therefore, one can suggest that if socio-economic conditions (unemployment, poverty etc.) are reasons for youth violence and are used as tools for control over youth by political elites, hence, creating alternative solutions for youth to alter their behavioural patterns might be beneficial. The theory helps to envision the strategies and hope for creating sustainable socio-economic ventures and agency towards impacting peace and social changes driven by young people in Mbare. It helps to foster socially- impactful ideas that are manifested through social ventures and initiatives that are not driven by profit or

economic gains but seek to create a harmonised community which peacefully co-exists and advances towards the positive transformation of society and integrative solutions to the perceived challenges.

The determination behind using this theory is to facilitate long-term strategic approaches that seek to transform the experiences of violence into sustainable peace. Thus, the study is conducted through action-research methodology to best explore the context-specific strategies and approaches that can be feasibly implemented in establishing social ventures in Mbare. This means the process will go through some experimental phases to reflect on the possibilities and limitations and devise the best alternatives that can be embarked on. El Ebrashi (2013: 199) notes that “experimentation increases the confidence of the social entrepreneur in his/her idea and contributes to the motivation towards implementing the behaviour”. Considering that every conflict environment is unique, the use of Social Entrepreneurship Behaviour Theory helps to explore various cooperatives that can be engaged and allows one to learn how other organisations have been built and thrived in that environment. Zahrani (2022) indicates that action-oriented social entrepreneurs address social challenges and obstacles more effectively because they create value in societies, and they are in contact with the community. There are already some young people involved in various socially impactful programmes or initiatives, such as drama, music, or arts, that can be engaged to promote the planned or intended social ventures. All these factors are harmonising social entrepreneurial initiatives that can be assessed to help in ushering in systemic and holistic peacebuilding practices.

#### **4.4.1. Applying Social Entrepreneurship Behaviour Theory in Building Peace**

The use of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool is not more than a decade old. Recent studies suggest that social entrepreneurship is increasingly gaining attention in peacebuilding as an agent for effecting social change, addressing structural violence, and ending social inequalities in society (Musarurwa & Kaye 2016; Zelizer 2018; Paul 2018), though literature on various practices and experiences on its use remain very limited. Stone (2017) argues that strategies towards building positive peace in various conflict communities have also to consider fostering measures that promote sustainable economic growth. In view of this, the study

acknowledges social entrepreneurship as a useful peacebuilding tool in establishing sustainable peace mechanisms that can end the continuity of violence perpetrated by youth in Mbare.

Pless (2012) notes that social entrepreneurs are individuals who engage in providing solutions to society's various problems. Socio-economic challenges such as unemployment, social inequality and poverty are often setbacks in the implementation of sustainable peace frameworks. These are identified as some of the problems affecting sustainable building of peace across Africa (MercyCorps 2011). Therefore, social entrepreneurship behaviour theory offers applicable ideas that can be utilised in materialising sustainable peacebuilding mechanisms. In 2012, the UN peacebuilding architecture emphasised the need to enhance the available tools in building peace (UN 2012). I consider this as a motivating factor, as I engage in strengthening social entrepreneurship as a useful tool for transforming youth from violence to sustainable peace. Though there are various tools one could utilise, social entrepreneurship is the most relevant and rewarding tool in the context of Mbare.

Social entrepreneurship helps in producing interaction and collaboration amongst individuals from different backgrounds. Though social entrepreneurship is still in the experimental phase in peacebuilding, its experience in harnessing ideas from different platforms and collaborating stakeholders is essential in this study. This resonates with conflict transformation ideas that seek to facilitate integrative and inclusive peacebuilding towards transforming conflicts. The use of social entrepreneurship thus offers an advantage in helping to create and facilitate ideas that do not only seek to transform conflicts, but also to impact socio-economic sustainability. This allows for a networking of high value exchanges that might accumulate into the growth of new infrastructures for peace and economic support within the community. Most peacebuilding practices rely on donor support funding, meaning that, without funding, most peacebuilding initiatives and approaches in operation in Africa today would come to a halt. On an online platform called "*OpenIdeo*", Stone (2017) articulates that:

Social entrepreneurship holds the potential to create seismic change in the peacebuilding field, bringing with it an emphasis on local action, scalability, sustainability, and a financial model involving investment rather than project funding. There are an increasing number of social entrepreneurs working to

build peace—by themselves, or in concert with existing peacebuilding organizations—but they often lack the funding or support to scale their businesses.

Engaging peacebuilding mechanisms that are financially self-sustaining is critical in most African contexts. As such, it is in the best interests of a social entrepreneur to facilitate social change and impact through income-generating initiatives that help the community to develop and grow. Achieving sustainability through the perspectives of social entrepreneurship behaviour theory is only guaranteed when the social venture has impacted the society to continue with the initiatives on their own. Maina et al. (2012: 9) emphasise that there is a need for a “mechanism” to engage youth in building durable peace. This means the important aspect in facilitating sustainable peacebuilding is to ensure innovative peace mechanisms that can generate their own funds.

Galtung (1990) outlines that to end the culture of violence requires one to think of how to create a culture of peace. He emphasises that creating a culture of peace means there is a continual search for opportunities to create “peace culture” (Galtung 1990: 291). This study builds on social entrepreneurship to design several community socio-economic initiatives that gravitate toward sustainable peace. The International Peace Institute (2017:1) states that “[e]conomic opportunities are an important component of this ecosystem; the inequitable distribution of resources, economic deprivation, exclusion, and joblessness have all been well-documented as causes of conflict both nationally and globally”. Therefore, advancing peace initiatives that promote socio-economic gains for young people in communities can make equal economic opportunities available to them that can eventually encourage positive peace participation within societies (International Peace Institute 2017). With this perspective, I therefore, concur with Musarurwa and Kaye’s (2017) argument that the use of social entrepreneurship in peacebuilding can be regarded as an agent for effectively directing efforts towards dismantling? the hegemonies that advance socio-economic inequalities which often feed into conflict and violence. It is pertinent to acknowledge that this ability is being harnessed to disrupt and disarm various social, economic, political, traditional, cultural, and historical factors that promote youth participation in violence and cripple society’s functions in Mbare.

#### **4.4.2. Youth Agency for Peace through Social Entrepreneurship**

Hancock (2017:255) argues that most local peacebuilding practices miss the element of agency, meaning they cannot empower the actors or participants in the process to ensure sustainability. In other words, the process of local peacebuilding is rarely independent, as external forces are often influencing and stirring the direction in which the peace initiatives should go, meaning the local actors are not given much space to facilitate, develop and own the peace process. Hancock (2017:258) defines agency as a form of power or control that is exercised by actors in determining and influencing their actions and outcomes. Thus, the agency capacitates the actors and gives them space to make independent decisions, which they regard as important is sustaining peace within their local communities. Youth are the perceived actors for local peace facilitation in this study, since a report by Cardozo, Higgins and Le Mat (2016:7) establishes that agency for youth capacitates them to contribute positively towards positive peace practices. Social entrepreneurship is utilised to ensure youth agency in community peace practices. Thus, this study promotes the relevance of stimulating youth agency in building sustainable peace.

Engaging social entrepreneurship in peacebuilding is critical and important in facilitating youth agency in devising peace practices in communities. Studies note that most influencing factors for youth violence are related to their socio-economic instabilities and vulnerabilities. Vernon (2017:8) posits that building a generation of peacebuilders requires a sustainable lens that invests in “capacity-building on the concepts, approaches and skills needed to build peace”. Therefore, it is essential to reflect on the capacity of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding instrument, especially for young people experiencing extreme economic hardships. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century more young people have been involved in driving the agenda for more inclusive societies across the globe. However, due experiences of structural and cultural violence surrounding most of them, their interaction towards social change has been through more violent means than nonviolent ones. Studies indicate the former to be the most dominant practices because of frustration and exclusion from critical decision-making platforms. Globally, evidence indicates that young people have been prime targets for recruitment by extremist groups, mostly because they are socio-economically vulnerable (Crespo-Sancho 2018). Youth across Africa countries are

increasingly affected by high unemployment, poverty, exclusion from key economic and political platforms, and social inequalities. In post-conflict societies and fragile environments, such conditions require urgent and strategic approaches. In a research study conducted in Somalia by the World Bank in 2018, findings indicate that the agency of youth in peacebuilding can only be guaranteed through social ventures that promote socio-economic sustainability, inclusive participation in key political ideas and active participation of youth in socially impacting ideas (Crespo-Sancho 2018). This is why the application of social entrepreneurship is valued in this study: it helps promote practical socioeconomic ventures that attract youth to create and facilitate sustainable peace initiatives in Mbare.

#### **4.5. Integrating Social Entrepreneurship and Systemic Conflict Transformation**

The history of Mbare reflects and relates the violent activities of the community to youth that are manipulated through structural and cultural violence that excludes them from independent decision-making. Social entrepreneurship is argued to be focused on changing “the rules of the systems” that are creating and sustaining conflict (Paul 2018), meaning social entrepreneurship can provide meaningful contributions to addressing complex systems that influence or cause conflict. In peacebuilding, this is referred to as systemic conflict transformation (SCT) (Wils et al. 2006). SCT as an approach seeks to contribute towards the transformation of systems that influence violence by “mobilising the system’s internal resources...[to]... help to establish or reinforce support systems that will promote the necessary political and social change towards a peaceful and just society” (Wils et al. 2006: iv). Reflecting on the context of Mbare, social entrepreneurship is the necessary SCT approach to transform youth who are the internal resources that require mobilising to promote the necessary changes that enable sustainable peace. In most conflict zones and post-conflict communities, social entrepreneurship seeks to build, support, and empower the grassroots towards behaviours that seek to transform their communities into places of sustainable peace (Skoll Foundation 2018). However, the literature on the role of social entrepreneurship in peacebuilding is still insufficient, and research on its

capacity as a useful tool still has limited empirical practices; hence the need for more studies to reflect on and justify the process.

The use of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool provides an interactive platform for participation amongst people of various backgrounds. It encourages innovative and interactive engagements that can be harnessed to promote dialogue, facilitate mediation (and even healing) amongst foes, victims, and perpetrators of violence. As identified earlier, Miklian and Hoelscher (2017) propose that there is a need to encourage new peace innovations that can be utilised to resolve, reduce, or prevent conflict. Thus, the use of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool in the context of Mbare can be regarded as an innovative peace initiative that receives valued status as new knowledge.

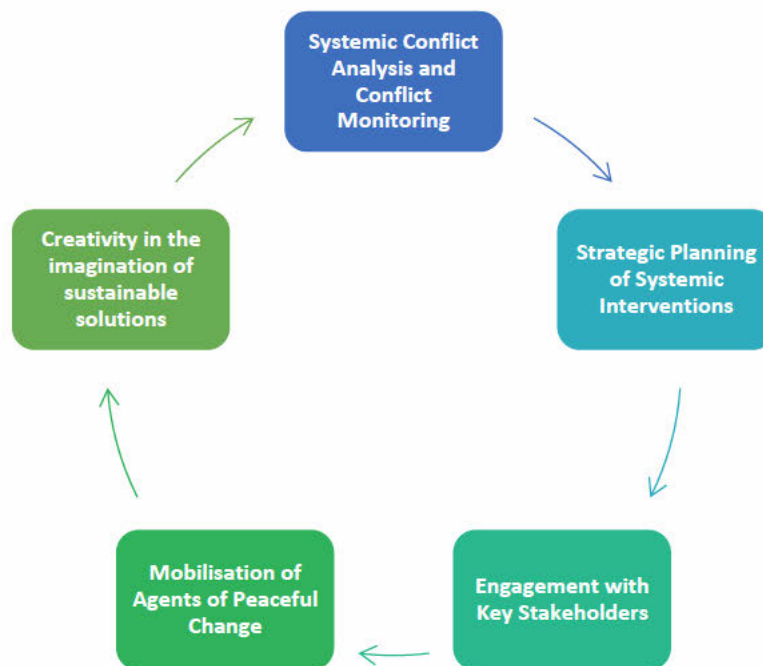
#### **4.5.1. Systemic Conflict Transformation**

To ensure the practicality of a transformation process in building durable community peace in Mbare, I adhere to the five core elements of Systemic Conflict Transformation (SCT). These elements are: “Systemic Conflict Analysis and Conflict Monitoring; Strategic Planning of Systemic Interventions; Engagement with Key Stakeholders; Mobilisation of Agents of Peaceful Change; and Creativity in the imagination of sustainable solutions” (Wils et al. 2006:5). The elements do not only provide guidelines on planning and implementation of transformation initiatives, but also present working strategies at various levels in ensuring the building of relationships, engaging actors, and addressing issues simultaneously. In this study, I seek to address the problem of youth participation in violence by offering social entrepreneurship as a remedy for transforming youth into agents of promoting community peace. Adopting SCT provides a platform to establish robust peacebuilding mechanisms that are relevant in preventing the recurrence of youth violence. As an action-oriented approach, it gives room for interaction which might lead to reconciliation, healing and forgiveness amongst youth who might have previously victimised each other. Hence, it calls for innovative peace mechanisms that promote what Galtung (1990) refers to as a positive culture of peace. Thus, the need for peacebuilding interventions to address such circumstances via the promotion of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool to engage youth in Mbare.

#### 4.5.2. Following the Practical Steps of Systemic Intervention

SCT as a theory is premised on sound academic research and practically relevant approaches (Smith 2008). It seeks to simplify complex conflict systems through providing practical steps that are essential in addressing the complexity (Unger & Wils 2006). To materialise these practical steps, SCT utilises systemic intervention, whereby possible “agents of peaceful change” are identified to facilitate feasible interventions for sustainable peacebuilding (Unger & Wils 2006). This allows for integration of theory and practice through planning, implementation, and reflection (Körppen, Schmelzle & Wils 2008). Basically, SCT has five steps which are considered in this study as a framework for understanding the practical steps that one might engage in facilitating holistic peacebuilding processes. Just like action research, SCT happens in cyclical process.

**Figure 4.2:** Systemic Conflict Transformation Cycle



**Source:** Adopted from Unger & Willis (2006)

As demonstrated in the steps in the cycle, SCT as an approach contributes towards transforming systems that influence violence by “mobilising the system’s internal resources...[to]... help to establish or reinforce support systems that will promote the necessary political and social change towards a peaceful and just society” (Wils et al. 2006: iv). In this study there was a demonstration of how social entrepreneurship as a

systemic approach can be utilised to facilitate youth agency and promote the necessary changes that enable sustainable peace. This is because the practice of social entrepreneurship fits well within systemic initiatives for transforming societies from conflict to peace. Therefore, I explain the SCT in detail, referring to social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool.

These steps include:

(i) *Systemic Conflict Analysis and Conflict Monitoring*: This means understanding the conflict challenges existing in a context-specific area and monitoring the key trends that cause and trigger conflict. In this study we are looking at factors influencing youth conflict in Africa. The analysis and monitoring of conflict do not follow a specific pattern; it can be done through social media platforms, news reports, observations or other relevant technological tools that are used for monitoring and analysis of conflict situations.

(ii) *Strategic Planning of Systemic Interventions*: This refers to the identification of key resources that can be utilised within the conflict context to stir a change of approach in addressing the conflict challenge. This promotes the engagement of local partners, through a systemic perspective, to establish viable measures that can be effective in the peace process, such as dialogue seminars, training programmes or thematic workshops etc. We identify social entrepreneurship as a systemic tool for intervention since it promotes interaction and mobilises the collective in addressing the identified problems in the community (Pillay 2017; Kickul et al. 2018). In most conflict zones and post-conflict communities, social entrepreneurship seeks to build, support, and empower the grassroots towards behaviours that seek to transform their communities into sustainable peace (Skoll Foundation 2018).

(iii) *Engagement with Key Stakeholders*: This calls for an effective consideration of all conflict actors and considers their potential and role in building peace support structures. It acknowledges the importance of practical inclusive approaches that are necessitated based on creative engagement to evade spoiler challenges. Conflict transformation actively envisions an inclusive and collective approach that seeks to promote the utilisation of human and cultural resources in any conflict context towards promoting peace practices. The advantage of social entrepreneurship in this step is its innovative capacity and incentivising advantages to constructively engage youth, governments, and other relevant societal actors, with their various vested interests, for a better end. It helps define clear parameters on the contributions and requirements of each stakeholder in the peace process. Social entrepreneurship is built through legitimate processes, thus reducing disadvantages of prejudice and complex processes to establish legitimacy for the peace support structures.

(iv) *Mobilisation of Agents of Peaceful Change*: I argue that to ensure the building of sustainable peace in Africa, there is a need to actively mobilise youth to be agents of peace, meaning that I have already identified youth as our agents. I therefore utilise social entrepreneurship as an incentivising tool that provides alternative and innovative platforms that promote youth participation in de-escalating violence and promoting the culture of peace. This is because it is a practical exercise that demands capacity building through interaction of stakeholders and building of relationships to address common goals and attain socio-economic rewards in the process. The approach can lead to sustainable livelihood support networks and provide alternative political and development spaces that can be used to facilitate sustainable support networks that foster positive peaceful changes.

(v) *Creativity in the Imagination of Sustainable Solutions*: The main essence advanced here is that peacebuilding is premised on expertise and inspiration, close observation of resistances and use of creative measures in addressing them and establishing and utilising the correct frontiers in addressing conflict. This thinking affirms the flexibility of conflict transformation approaches in reflecting on processes that are applicable and relevant to ensuring transformational processes from negative peace to positive peace (Lederach 1997). To contextualise this understanding, youth agency requires proper resource capacity, understanding of the contextual challenges affecting them, and use of a social entrepreneurial approach. Social entrepreneurship has various alternatives which attract innovation and make it a creative tool that inspires imagination towards building sustainable peace solutions. This hints at the importance of theory in providing necessary steps that feed into the practice of research and formulation of policies that actively promote actors within conflict societies to participate in ending all forms of violence.

## **4.6. Conclusion**

The chapter discussed the key theoretical underpinnings of the study. The discussions revealed that it is evident that the innovative application of social entrepreneurship presents a vital pathway for fostering sustainable peace in communities plagued by violence, like Mbare in Zimbabwe. Reducing violence requires firstly a clear understanding of the causes of violence within a specific context, secondly a conceptualisation of possible actions that may be taken to transform a violent situation to one of constructive involvement in creating a viable solution. Social entrepreneurship as applied in this context can provide practical and relevant insight into the lived experiences of youth, who are often at the heart of conflict in different societies. The ideas presented in this chapter reflect the importance and possibilities of channelling the energies and capacities of youth into social ventures. Hence, the

insights from theories identify that engaging young people is crucial in addressing immediate socio-economic challenges, but also actively contributing to a transformative process that reshapes the very fabric of conflict-ridden societies. The constructive steps taken to develop a social entrepreneurial option provides an option to an otherwise seemingly hopeless context. This journey, as explored, navigates through multifaceted strategies, intertwining theoretical insights with actionable steps, thereby carving a route towards resilient and enduring peace. The theories presented further support the concepts of action research – that of integrating theory with practice.

This chapter explored the importance of innovative peace practices in engaging youth. The overarching message in the chapter reflects on the need to empower young people through contextually grounded, entrepreneurial solutions is more than a theoretical concept; it's a pragmatic blueprint for breaking the cycle of violence and fostering a culture of peace and innovation. It reflected on the relevance and applicability of the PI approach and BTSE in this study. Thus, it provided an understanding of possible steps and ideas that can be engaged in facilitating sustainable peace practices in communities.

The next chapter discussed the methodological processes that were followed in conducting the study.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The main objective of this study was to promote the idea and role of social entrepreneurship as a tool for facilitating positive peace practices amongst young people in Mbare (Harare), Zimbabwe. The researcher's personal experience staying in Mbare between 2009 and 2010 following the infamous 2008 re-run election violence, which was mostly perpetrated by youth, motivated the conducting of this study. The researcher witnessed and experienced the residues of a post-conflict environment and feelings. There are various reports and stories concerning this episode of violence in the history of Zimbabwe that are well-documented by news agencies, non-profit institutions, and civil society organisations. For decades, Zimbabwe has experienced a vicious cycle of violence linked mostly to politics, elections, and resources, widely involving youth at the centre of it all, in both rural and urban communities. Urban and high-density communities, such as Mbare in the capital Harare, are a microcosm of the macro structural and direct violence trends that involve youth in most Zimbabwean urban communities. To establish relevant peace solutions through social entrepreneurship to promote positive youth participation in building sustainable peace, the study was guided by the following objectives:

- (i) To explore and understand the political, economic, and related factors influencing participation of youth in electoral or wider violence in Mbare, Zimbabwe.
- (ii) To explore positive and alternative peace initiatives, and to facilitate and promote youth engagement in Mbare communities through social entrepreneurship.
- (iii) To plan and implement social entrepreneurship initiatives as a tool for building community peace interventions for youth in Mbare.
- (iv) To evaluate and analyse the intervention outcomes and the impact of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool.

These objectives guided the researcher in choosing the relevant research design and approach in fulfilling the demands of the study. The literature reviewed in a previous chapter (see Chapter 2) posits that positive participation of youth in peacebuilding is lacking at both global and local scales. Hence, engaging young people is a necessary initiative to facilitate preventive and strategic peacebuilding solutions in the long run (UN Resolution 2250). One of the key arguments advanced in this thesis is that most peace solutions seeking to facilitate peacebuilding amongst youth across Africa have been lacking in incentivising mechanisms (mostly economic), leading to the sustainment of violence, even in a post-conflict or peacebuilding environment. Therefore, the study sought to generate new knowledge on how social entrepreneurship (SE) can play an effective role as a tool for promoting youth participation in building sustainable peace, with the understanding that (i) economic solutions alone are not a guarantee for peace, and (ii) social entrepreneurship can introduce an ethical/moral component than straight economic gain. With this understanding, the researcher had to engage appropriate research instruments that are suitable for capturing the key ideas and aims of the research.

I made use of a mixed-method approach design in action research to explore and understand the political, economic, and related factors that influence violent behaviour and trends by youth in Mbare. I made use of mixed-method research instruments in achieving the first and second objectives of the research. The interest was to position the need for social entrepreneurship as a relevant tool in advancing positive and alternative peace initiatives that can be engaged to reduce the involvement of youth

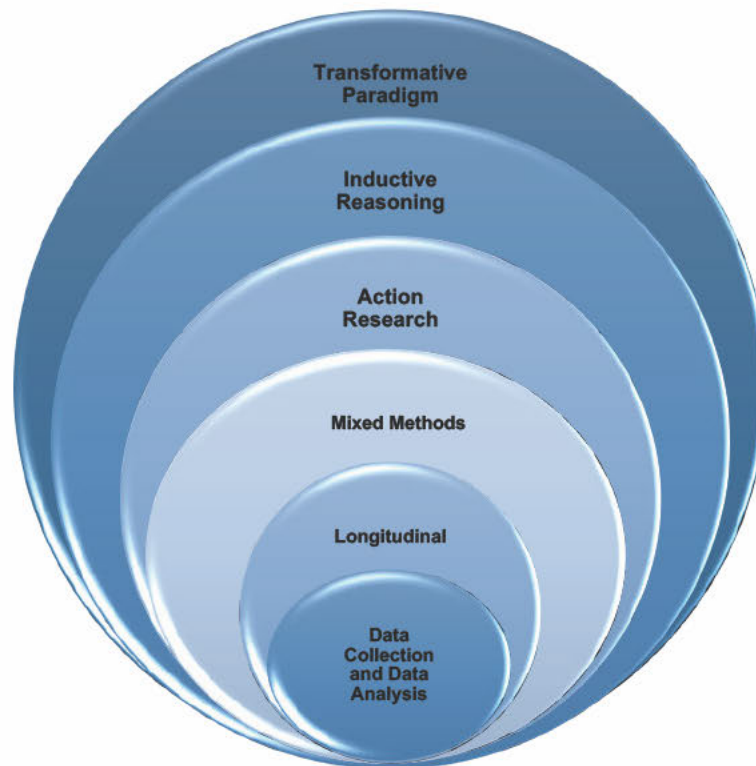
in violence. Hence, a sequential data collection process, quantitative surveys, in-depth interviews (young people and key informants) and focus group discussions were conducted. The synergistic integration of qualitative stakeholder interaction with quantitative outcomes to guide action/intervention design, implementation, assessment, and monitoring can lead to more scientifically sound and transferable results (Ivankova & Wingo 2018). Therefore, mixed methods in action research presented a platform to engage the views of young people and other relevant stakeholders to explore feasible and possible SE initiatives and interventions that can be used as tools for facilitating positive peace in Mbare, Zimbabwe. It helped to build towards the implementation of action programmes, which addressed the third and fourth objectives of the study.

This chapter presents the methodological processes of the study: defining and deciding the research design, the research sample, and research instruments used in collecting data and analysing the findings. The chapter also presents the limitations experienced in conducting the research, and it outlines how trustworthiness and validity were reached.

## **5.2. Research Design**

A research design provides an outline of the research procedures that are undertaken by the researcher in conducting his/her study. According to Asenahabi (2019), research design is a plan on how the information for the research is gathered or collected towards the fulfilment of the perceived objectives, questions, or hypothesis. Dannels (2018) regards a research design as a strategic framework which guides the processes of executing successful research. Mello (2021) explains that research design involves a plan or proposal presentation of how the research is conducted; it outlines the philosophical worldviews, the approaches of the research inquiry and the key specific methods used. This research is premised on the platforms of transformative paradigm and action research. This means this study was designed to be conducted through multiple phases and strategies of inquiry as depicted in Saunders' research onion in Figure 5.1. below.

**Figure 5.1 : Saunders' Research Onion**



**Source:** Adapted from the original diagram in Saunders et al. (2009: 108)

Reflecting on the diagram above, the research made use of a transformative paradigm to help conduct a participatory process through an action research approach to generate new knowledge on youth participation in peacebuilding practices. The use of mixed methods research enabled me to engage in a deep inquiry of issues causing and influencing youth violence, and triangulation of information to verify the authenticity and quality of the data. It was conducted using inductive reasoning to ensure broader interaction of youth experiences in Mbare to generate relevant themes for issues affecting them. This research is longitudinal, because the field research was conducted over a long period involving short-term intervention projects. This was achieved using research instruments such as surveys, interviews (youth and key informants) and focus group discussions.

### **5.3. Transformative Research Paradigm**

Peace solutions and interventions across the world, and particularly in Africa remain limited (Asenahabi 2019). With this understanding in mind, it was relevant to engage

a transformative paradigm as the underlying research philosophy in conducting this study. The transformative research paradigm is influenced by various philosophies and theories in the family of research designs and mixed methods research, with an interest in providing emancipatory and transforming views and solutions through group action (Chilisa & Preece 2005; Barnes 2019). The transformative paradigm emerged “in response to individuals who have been pushed to the societal margins throughout history and who are finding a means to bring their voices into the world of research” (Mertens 2010:3). This study identifies youth violence as a problem and explores how young people can be engaged to positively participate in building sustainable peace within their community. Most existing literature on youth identifies young people as a problem and perpetrators of violence, while neglecting the manipulation and structural vulnerabilities which in most cases influences the violent behaviour of youth. Therefore, I sought to bridge this gap by consciously positioning himself side by side with the youth to offer a socially transforming research which reflects on the structural conditions, manipulation and vulnerabilities that are experienced by young people (Mertens 2012). I embraced the bias that young people are often manipulated into violent acts because of socio-economic ills or vulnerabilities that exist in society. Adopting the transformative paradigm in this regard was essential to help identify the multiple structural realities surrounding youth violence. Participants played an essential role in reflecting the emancipatory needs of young people through surveys, interviews, focus group discussions and initiating their recommended solutions.

Mertens (2007:212) argues that the “transformative paradigm provides an overarching framework for addressing issues of social justice and consequent methodological decisions”. The research sought to use multiple approaches to achieve its objectives, which feeds well into transformative research. Transformative researchers seek multifaceted frameworks that allow them to situate their study as a response to the existing societal challenges with the intention of pursuing social justice (Nasr & Fisk 2019). Anderson and MacLachman (2016:2) clarify that the transformative research paradigm involves a variety of “participatory and action-based methodologies as exemplified by community-based research, performative ethnography, participatory action research (PAR), and militant investigation”. In this regard I worked with and for participants to acquire information and ways of pursuing social justice and relevant

solutions to youth violence problems. To understand the need for and importance of alternative youth peacebuilding solutions through social entrepreneurship, the transformative paradigm was utilised, to allow the use of mixed methods as an initial platform to facilitate action research study and provide detailed insight and information through proper methodological orientation (Barnes 2019). The participants suggested various socio-economic solutions which justified the need for social entrepreneurship action programmes in providing practical innovative peace solutions. This paradigm inspired the exploration of the political, social, and economic marginalisation affecting young people in the perceived hostile environment, and helped us to explore, plan and follow routes (within ethical considerations) to establish alternative ways for sustainable youth peacebuilding with few or no limitations.

This is transdisciplinary research which involves conflict transformation and social entrepreneurship. It combines the academic theories of conflict transformation, peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship with some non-academic practical solutions suggested by participants to help build positive and sustainable peace solutions through young people (Pennington et al 2013). Using a transformative paradigm in a transdisciplinary study helps to explore, investigate, anticipate, and potentially predict the complexity that exists in any environment, helping the researchers or evaluators to unpack the necessary alternative steps for facilitating social justice and desired sustainable solutions (Mertens 2007; Pennington et al. 2013). Most recent studies on youth identify the potential young people have for facilitating transforming, positive social change, but they are lacking in providing evidence and transformative shifts to encourage young people in meaningful peacebuilding practices. Through the lens of the transformative paradigm the participants and I had the responsibility to arrange and channel relevant action processes to catalyse transformative and innovative ideas to achieve the desired emancipatory solutions or outcomes.

It is essential to understand that in conducting research there is allowance for one to consider individual biases in designing and implementing research and intervention; however, this only leads to satisfying the researcher's interests and goals rather than those of the participants (Jumarali, Mandiyan & Javdani 2019). Though this research was partially driven by my bias as a researcher, the transformative paradigm was

relevant in neutralising my voice as the researcher with the lived experiences and desired social change of the participants. The transformative paradigm gives room to the researcher and the participants to have an experimental learning process in the “social laboratory” to establish the relevant solutions to their perceived challenges (Jumarali et al. 2019). As a result, I was very aware of the agency of participants in transforming their own lives. With this insight, though the research had stipulated guided interests in the research proposal, it must be noted that the research participants in an action research process cannot be “boxed”. Hence, ideas of this research were methodologically presented for the participants to have simple but full understanding of their role in pursuing interventions that best suited their social context in eliminating conflicts and threats of violence . The transformative paradigm adheres to collaborative practices and encourages the researcher to work with participants as equals to ensure that the people are empowered to take charge of the research process and to carry forward the desired outcomes, even after the research (Mertens 2010; Pennington et al 2013; Jumarali et al. 2019).

As alluded to in the above paragraphs, I argue that the transformative paradigm used was the appropriate design because of its emancipatory insight and ability to facilitate methodological engagement to upset social injustice and human rights abuses in different social contexts. It provides flexible and practical methodological processes for engaging people to collaborate and work towards their desired social change through the action research process.

#### **5.4. Research Population and Sample**

While population refers to an entire group (people or organisations) from whom study information is obtained, the target population in research refers to a defined group or elements that the study specifically targets as a sample for research data (Majid 2018). To explore and understand the various factors surrounding youth violence and ways to promote sustainable youth peacebuilding in Mbare, several population groups were involved as participants. The population groups involved included young people (male and female) aged between 18 and 35 years of age, activists and leaders from political parties (MDC and ZANU PF), church leaders, informal and formal business owners,

and civil society experts and peacebuilders working for and with non-profit institutions such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, the Counselling Services Unit and Tree of Life.

Young people were the primary target population in this study, while other groups were involved for control purposes to confirm the vulnerability of youth as perpetrators of violence and their potential as agents for positive peace in Mbare. All the survey questionnaires were distributed to young people only. The interviews sampled participants from the different population groups identified above. The focus groups were conducted mostly with young people and a few other population groups that were available to attend. More details pertaining to the procedures of how these research programmes were conducted are discussed in the research instruments section.

As an action research study, other population groups were involved as part of the action team to help and facilitate the intervention programmes. The participants that made up the action team were community youth members. Having explained the population groups involved in this research, it is important to understand how they were sampled.

#### **5.4.1. Sampling Techniques**

There are only two sampling approaches which are used in research. These are probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Choosing an appropriate sampling approach is important in establishing the right broad sampling technique(s) to be used for the study. This research made use of the non-probability sampling approach. Non-probability sampling involves selective techniques in which the process of gathering a sample does not give equal opportunities or chances of being included in the study to all the participants in the population (Etikan et al. 2016). The non-probability samples often seek to engage real life phenomena where participants must be chosen based on a clear rationale towards inclusion of some individuals or cases over others (Taherdoost 2016).

This study made use of non-probability sampling techniques, namely purposive sampling, convenient sampling, and snowball sampling. Using all these three sampling techniques allowed me to adequately select relevant participants for the study.

Purposive sampling involves a careful selection of participants based on the qualities that they might possess (Taherdoost 2016). Convenient sampling refers to the range of participants that are available and can be conveniently reached by the researcher (Taherdoost 2016). Snowballing is a sampling method whereby the initially identified participant(s) help the researcher to identify another potential research participant (Creswell, 2015).

For quantitative surveys, I purposively targeted young people who live and work in Mbare; however, to complete the surveys more quickly, the process had to involve convenience sampling. Thus, I went into various locations such as business areas (Magaba Home Industry, Mbare Musika, Koffman), residential areas (Matapi Flats, Tagarika Flats, and Mbare National) and surrounding community hotspots in Mbare where young people hang out, distributing survey questionnaires. I sought to survey the violent experiences and behavioural trends of young people and of participants that have first-hand information on some of the violent activities (past and present) associated with youth in Mbare; purposive sampling was helpful in identifying the first interviewees who then latter referred other potential participants. Most interviews were conducted based on the snowballing sampling technique which is also known as chain-referral sampling. There were several categories of participants interviewed; these include young people, informal/formal business owners, political leaders/actors and professionals working with non-profit institutions. Each initial participant in each of these categories was purposively identified by the researcher and referred other participants based on their understanding of the knowledge they possess on issues pertaining to youth violence and challenges affecting youth in Mbare and Zimbabwe at large. Considering the time framework for completing the research, using convenience sampling was appropriate and suitable for approaching young people who are accessible and available to participate in focus groups. Considering that FGDs take several hours to conduct, only those participants who were willing and could afford to come at the agreed time participated. However, convenience sampling was also applied in conducting surveys and some interviews when some referred participants did not have time to participate.

After understanding the sampling techniques used in conducting research, it is essential to understand how the sample size was determined.

## **5.4.2. Sample Size**

For research to be conducted in a timeous manner, only a few individuals of the whole population can be involved. This selection of a few individuals from the whole group is known as a sample. A sample refers to data sources who are members of a group that are extracted to represent a larger group population in a research study (Alvi 2016). Sample size differs depending on the overall population size of the targeted group and with the type of research approach being used. Quantitative research often requires large samples as compared to qualitative research. This research used both quantitative and qualitative samples to provide a comparative advantage and inductive reasoning on the issues surrounding youth violence and the need for youth peacebuilding practices in Mbare.

### **5.4.2.1 Quantitative Sample Size**

Norouzian (2020) notes that sometimes, when conducting quantitative surveys/questionnaires, it might be difficult to determine the exact sample group or size which is representative of the population due to various limitations such as lack of defined or specific population figures, as in the case of Mbare. Considering that the study focused on youth in Zimbabwe, it is essential to note that youth population, consisting of those between 15 to 35 years of age, is 67.7% (Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission 2017) of the entire estimated population of 14.4 million (Crespo-Sancho 2018).

The study was conducted in the Mbare district, a high-density suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe. Mbare district has two Wards, which are Ward 4 and Ward 11. The target population in this study was from Mbare Ward 4, which has an estimated population of over 11,699 (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2022). Therefore, to ensure a justified representation of youth population sample size for the quantitative research survey, an online (Raosoft)<sup>2</sup> quantitative sample size calculator was used. The researcher had a margin of error tolerance of 5%, and hence a large sample was required. The confidence level that the researcher had pertaining to the responses

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<sup>2</sup> See: [www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html](http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html)

was 90%, because he assumed that asking questions relating to issues of violence might be sensitive and even create some sense of mistrust among participants. As expected by the researcher, some young people refused to complete their surveys and others would not write their real names on the consent forms, despite being assured of anonymity. Some participants also expressed their suspicions of the surveys as they kept on asking if the surveys were not some form of state security investigation which might end up getting them in trouble or becoming targets of violence, considering the history of youth violence in the community. The standard deviation, which indicates the response distribution of participants, was expected to be 50%. With these given details pertaining to the population size (14 970), margin of error (5%), response confidence level (90%), and standard deviation (50%), the sample size calculated was 266 using the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
 x &= Z^{(c/100)^2} r(100-r) \\
 n &= \frac{N x}{((N-1)E^2 + x)} \\
 E &= \text{Sqrt}[\frac{(N-n)x}{n(N-1)}]
 \end{aligned}$$

Raosoft (2023): Available at: [www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html](http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html)

*n* = sample size | *N* = population size | *z* = z-score (for confidence level) | *r* = response proportion | *E* = margin of error | *c* = confidence level

With this understanding, 266 makes up about 1.7% of the entire estimated population of Mbare. The researcher distributed around 280 survey questionnaires and only 270 were answered, thus the estimated sample size for this research was reached.

#### 5.4.2.2 Qualitative Sample Size

The qualitative samples for this research included interviews and focus groups. Qualitative sample sizes are always small, because they often engage a case-oriented depth analysis of issues to provide rich textual information (Vasileiou *et al.* 2018). Qualitative samples are often purposively selected for their capacity to generate relevant textual information on specific issues under investigation, which may result in acquiring a great deal of textual data that takes time to process and organise, considering that research projects always have a limited timeframe (Crouch & McKenzie 2006; Dworkin 2012; Norouzian 2020). Though there is variance regarding the specific recommended number of qualitative participants to be sampled for

interviews, recommendations indicate that any number between 20 and 30 participants can be suitable for generating fine-grained and in-depth information of issues in their natural setting (Crouch & McKenzie 2006; Dworkin 2012; Vasileiou *et al.* 2018). As a result, a qualitative sample size often includes few participants or few focus groups.

In this study, qualitative in-depth interviews sampled twenty (20) males and female key informants. These included ordinary community youth (5), church leaders (2), political activists and leaders (MDC [3] and ZANU PF [3]), informal business leaders (4), a formal businessman (1) and professionals working with non-profit institutions (3). Table 5.1 below shows the demographic details of the interviewed participants.

**Table 5.1:** Demographic Details of Key Informants

| Name (Pseudonym) | Age  | Sex | Employment Status                     | Social Affiliation                   |
|------------------|------|-----|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Musi             | 50   | F   | Informal (Self-Employed)              | ZANU PF Political Leader             |
| Lisa             | 45   | F   | Informal (Self-Employed)              | Informal Business Owner              |
| Mukepekepe       | 40   | M   | Informal (Self-Employed)              | ZANU PF Political Activist           |
| Mhofu            | 44   | M   | Informal                              | Informal Business Owner              |
| Cloud            | 55   | M   | Informal                              | Informal Business Owner              |
| Petro            | 55   | M   | Employed (Informal Business Employee) | MDC Political Leader & Activist      |
| Taku             | 32   | M   | Informal                              | Informal Business Owner              |
| Kuda             | 19   | F   | Employed (Informal Business Employee) | Community Member                     |
| Skelo            | 35   | M   | Informal                              | ZANU PF Youth Leader & Activist      |
| Charmie          | 19   | F   | Unemployed                            | Community Member                     |
| Gile             | 26   | F   | Unemployed                            | Community Member                     |
| Adam             | 33   | M   | Employed                              | Church Leader                        |
| Jamie            | 49   | M   | Employed                              | MDC Political Leader and Activist    |
| Lynn             | ---- | F   | Employed                              | Civil Society & Peacebuilding Expert |
| Rea              | ---- | M   | Employed                              | Civil Society Expert                 |
| Lee              | ---- | M   | Employed                              | Civil Society & Human Rights Expert  |
| Nyarie           | 37   | F   | Employed                              | MDC Youth Leader & Activist          |
| Levi             | 35   | M   | Informal                              | Community Member                     |
| Mark             | 35   | M   | Employed                              | Local Businessman                    |
| Prev             | 33   | M   | Informal                              | Church Leader                        |

As well as the interviews, four (4) focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted. Literature presents several debates on the number of focus groups to be conducted, ranging them between two to five groups (Morgan 1997; Hughes & Durmont 1993;

Krueger 2009; Mullen et al. 2021). A review by Sim and Waterfield (2019) shows that there is no specific number recommended for focus groups that can be carried out in a study. A focus group creates a platform for participants to share perceptions without any pressure to reach a consensus. The repeated conduct of the focus group with the same participants or a similar group of participants helps the researcher to trace the trends and patterns in perceptions to identify the clues and insights to offer a systematic analysis of the ideas, challenges and opportunities that exist in the community under investigation (Carsen & Glenton 2011; Sim & Waterfield 2019). Just like in-depth interviews, FGDs gather a lot of information and require many procedures to record, translate and transcribe the data, which requires more time; hence the FGDs were limited to only four (4). The participants that were involved in the FGDs ranged between 6 and 9 participants. Table 5.2 below shows the details of focus group discussions that were conducted.

**Table 5.2:** Details of the Conducted Focus Groups

| <b>FGD</b>     | <b>No. of Participants</b> | <b>Sex of Participants</b> | <b>Date Conducted</b>  | <b>Time Period</b>                  |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Group 1</b> | 7                          | 4 (F)<br>3 (M)             | 22<br>November<br>2019 | 10:00hrs-<br>14:00hrs (4hrs)        |
| <b>Group 2</b> | 7                          | 2(F)<br>5(M)               | 27<br>November<br>2019 | 12:00hrs-<br>15:30hrs<br>(3h30mins) |
| <b>Group 3</b> | 8                          | 3(F)<br>5(M)               | 28<br>November<br>2019 | 10:00hrs-<br>14:00hrs (4hrs)        |
| <b>Group 4</b> | 11                         | 4(F)<br>7(M)               | 29<br>November<br>2019 | 14:00hrs-<br>18:00hrs (4hrs)        |

## **5.5. Data Collection: The Action Research Process**

Data was collected using both primary and secondary data. The primary data was gathered through survey questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and action research components of planning and social entrepreneurship interventions identified by

participants. Secondary data was gathered from various authentic sources which include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and relevant internet resources.

### **5.5.1. Primary Data Collection**

Primary data is collected directly from the people or sources under study. Chinnathambi et al. (2013) explain that this is original data that is acquired by the researcher through data collecting instruments such interviews, focus groups, direct observation, and survey questionnaires, to mention a few. This gives the researcher access to first-hand information. In this case, first-hand information was accessed through multiple instruments, which included surveys, interviews, focus groups, and action research processes (such as needs analysis, training workshops, programme interventions and evaluation processes).

### **5.5.2. Secondary Data**

Secondary data is pre-existing information or evidence that has already been compiled for other purposes by individual(s) other than the researcher (Trinh 2018). In this study, secondary information is mainly gathered to build up literature that is relevant to conflict transformation, youth, violence, and peacebuilding. Secondary data in this study was accessed from credible and reliable sources, such as peer-reviewed journals, books, organisational and government reports, and relevant internet sources.

### **5.5.3. Data Collection Instruments**

There are various methods or instruments that can be utilised in collecting data in any research study. Data collection instruments are tools that are used in gathering data, and these include interview guides, checklists, survey questionnaires and tests (Zohrabi 2013). In a mixed methods approach, both qualitative and quantitative data collecting instruments are used. The qualitative data collecting tools that were used in this research are unstructured/in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. For quantitative analysis, a structured interview guide/survey questionnaire was used.

#### **5.5.3.1 Structured Interview/Survey Questionnaires**

According to Jain (2021), structured interviews are more inclined to quantitative research and are mostly used in conducting surveys. Thus, they are also referred to

as survey interviews, and are done through a survey guide or closed-ended questions. The questions in structured interviews are controlled to establish a specific pattern in the practice or behaviour of a group under study. Survey questions were chosen to establish the various behaviour patterns of youth violence and the various influencing factors surrounding violence in Mbare. Survey questionnaires were chosen for this study because they are flexible. The researcher conducted the surveys in Mbare by walking around the community and giving the questions to young people in the streets, market, and business places, and in their homes, to quickly conduct a survey. Each survey took about 10-15 minutes to complete. The researcher intended to have 266 completed survey questionnaires; hence 280 survey questionnaires were distributed to young people (male and female); 270 were answered, and thus the estimated sample size for this research was reached.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections which are Section A: Demographic data; Section B: Understanding the nature of Violence in Mbare; Section C: Experiences of Factors Influencing Violence; and Section D: Willingness to Participate in Alternative Peace Initiatives. Quantitative surveys require a lot of data to validate the model of responses before concluding. Therefore, the researcher captured the completed survey questionnaires on an Excel spreadsheet with numeric coded responses.

### **5.5.3.2 Unstructured/In-depth interviews**

Twenty in-depth interviews with both male (14) and female (6) key informants were conducted in this study. Unstructured interviews are also commonly referred to as in-depth interviews. They are qualitative research interviews which involve the researcher asking open-ended questions in which he/she can probe further via various follow-up questions that might emerge throughout the interviews. The interview guide which was used, consisted of 8 unstructured guiding questions. The first part of the interview guide, before the interview questions, consists of bio-information, which sought to establish the age, sex, and employment status of the interviewee. This was essential for comparative purposes of the kind of responses given. The use of unstructured guiding questions in the interviews allowed the researcher to maintain consistency in all the interviews, which in turn promotes the gathering of quality data

that is comparable and reduces the risk of various negative and biased judgements (Herbert, Brandsma & Fischer 2014).

The key informants included young people from Mbare, who were targeted based on their understanding of the day-to-day experiences of common youth in the community. The informal/formal businesspeople have had vast experience of the influence of the socio-economic consequences of youth violence, based on their experience of living and conducting business in Mbare. The political actors from both ZANU-PF and the MDC gave detailed accounts of how their politics affects and influences the behaviour and activities of young people in Mbare. Engaging professionals working with non-profit institutions helped in providing insight into the different trends of youth violence, not only in Mbare, but across the country. Ten (10) of the research participants refused to be recorded, indicating that they did not know where the recording might end up and that it might implicate them. Therefore, the researcher had to rely on scribbling notes. Such a reaction was not at all expected, but it reflected the sensitivity of youth violence in the Mbare community. Through these interviews, the researcher sought to understand the multiple challenges affecting youth in Mbare, and conditions that influence their participation in violence of any nature. In-depth interviews provided the opportunity to engage with participants using a more detailed approach. For instance, the researcher managed to trace and understand several factors that have influenced youth violence in the past and continue to pose a threat in Mbare. Moreover, interviews became one of the key platforms where participants reflected on and confirmed the potential of social entrepreneurship solutions in promoting youth peacebuilding.

### **5.5.3.3 Focus Group Discussions**

Four (4) focus groups were conducted in this study. A focus group is an informal discussion amongst a collection of participants selected and gathered by the researcher to reflect and share opinions on a specific subject under study (Sim & Waterfield 2019). The researcher's initial plan was to conduct the FGDs at the Good Governance Africa offices that had been offered to ensure the safety and comfort of the participants. However, due to the long distance from Mbare to Strathaven, where the offices are, most participants were not willing to travel there despite the promise of transport being catered for. The participants raised suspicions and insecurities, thus

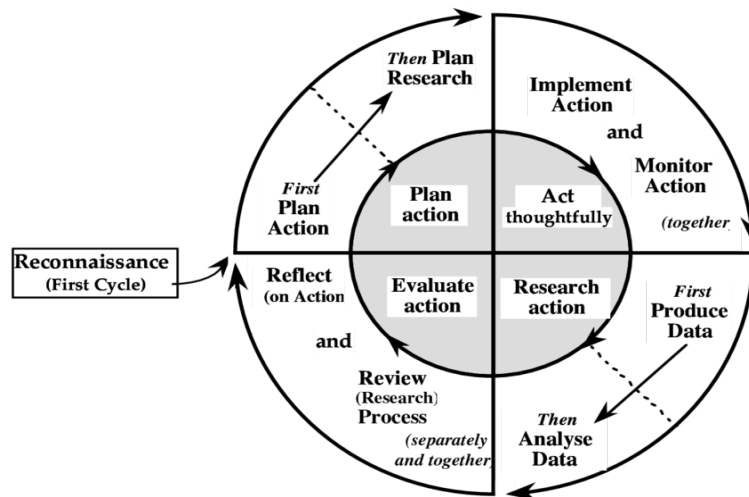
the researcher had to find alternative venues they were all comfortable with. The first focus group was conducted at Newlines residences in Mbare in a house offered by the researcher's aunt, and 7 participants came. The second focus group was conducted at a church on the outskirts of the city, close to Mbare, and 7 participants attended. The third (8 participants) and fourth (11 participants) focus group were conducted on a backyard house veranda in Newlines, Mbare, which was offered by one of the participants. All these locations were chosen because they were convenient for the participants to attend.

Most of the participants were recruited from the survey questionnaires and interviews, based on their willingness to attend. The researcher also invited the police and the actors from non-profit institutions, but none of them were available due to their work schedules. However, in the second focus group, two male pastors attended. Each FGD began with the facilitator explaining what the gathering was about and setting ground rules with the participants. Each participant would introduce their names and express their expectations for the discussion. The facilitator would then ask questions, allowing each participant to give their response, and share their views and thoughts. At the end of each focus group discussion, a needs analysis of programmes that could be implemented to help facilitate youth peacebuilding was conducted. The participants identified unemployment, poverty, and lack of socio-economic support infrastructures as some of the major influencing factors for violence in Mbare. The participants suggested several solutions to help eliminate their vulnerability and address different traps that create and attract youth violence in Mbare. The suggested solutions included peacebuilding and business training programmes and creating projects that support youth in eliminating socio-economic challenges.

## **5.6. Action Research Intervention Process**

Richter (2016) describes the process of participatory/action research as systematic and cyclical. According to Somekh (2008:6), "action research involves fluid and overlapping cycles of the investigation, action planning, piloting of new practices, and evaluation of outcomes, incorporating at all stages the collection and analysis of data and the generation of knowledge". As identified in Figure 5.2 below, action research

(AR) happens in a continuous process of a cycle, where the researcher and participants identify the problems, plan an action towards addressing the perceived problems, execute the planned action through an intervention, observe the progress, evaluate the outcomes, and reflect on how the process can be improved in further engagements.



**Figure 5.2:** Action Research Cycle (Tripp 1995)

AR is regarded as a “key tool for peacebuilding because it includes the community as participants and direct beneficiaries” (Kaye & Harris 2018), with the understanding that AR is an applied process. In this study, youth were engaged to participate towards sustainable youth peacebuilding solutions through social entrepreneurship initiatives. The mixed methods process findings confirmed youth violence as a challenge in Mbare, and established the need for socio-economic solutions to help distance youth from violent practices.

### 5.6.1. Project Planning

Following every focus group discussion, participants were asked to provide alternative solutions to equip young people for effective youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship. Training workshops were suggested as the basic platform that could help to ground the strategies for building sustainable peace.

The action team was adopted from the participants who were, willing and it consisted of 12 individuals. Six of the participants were key youth members and leaders of political parties which include ZANU-PF (3) and MDC-T (3), another four were

apolitical community members, and the remaining two consisted of an experienced social worker and an educator.

**Figure 5.3: Members of the Action Team**



To create the relevant platforms to facilitate positive youth peacebuilding, the action process included organising youth knowledge sharing initiatives and platforms, peacebuilding training, youth employment solutions, fostering youth peace awareness campaigns, engaging community health and drug abuse awareness campaign, and an attempt to create and register a community-based organisation (CBO) as a trust (See Table 5.3).

**Table 5.3: Project Planning & Implementation**

| <b>Proposed Interventions</b>                                | <b>Solutions</b>   | <b>Mobilising Agents</b> | <b>Intended/perceived goals</b>   |
|--|--|--------------------------|---|
| Organising youth knowledge sharing initiatives and platforms | WhatsApp forum and engaging informal youth discussion groups                             | Researcher & AT          | Promoting organisation of youth, community engagements and knowledge sharing on positive peace participation that respond to conflict, violence, and exclusion. |
| Need for Peacebuilding Training                              | 1-Day Training workshop on conflict analysis, peacebuilding, and social entrepreneurship | Researcher               | Knowledge and understanding of peacebuilding practice, conflict analysis and the role of social entrepreneurship  |
| Youth employment solutions                                   | Developing business initiatives  | AT                       | Promoting knowledge of small business development and management of enterprises among youth in Mbare.   |

|   |  |                 |   |
|---|--|-----------------|---|
| Fostering youth peace awareness campaigns                     | Youth awareness campaigns in streets                                     | AT              | Peace education and reduction of violence among youth in Mbare.   |
| Engaging community health and drug abuse awareness campaign   | Community campaigns against drug abuse                                   | AT              | Promote health living and encouraging youth to shun drug abuse.   |
| Creating and registering a Community-Based Organisation (CBO) | A notarial deed of trust to be registered as a vehicle for SE solutions. | AT & Researcher | To promote youth peacebuilding using social entrepreneurship strategies and local peace solutions that are practical. |

The project procedures identified in the table were critical in guiding the intervention process of the study. These programmes were meant to help address the second to fourth objectives of the study. The evaluation process was conducted using pre- and post-test reflection. The process of evaluation marks the hallmark of the action research cycle in assessing the effectiveness of intervention tools and revisiting advantages and disadvantages, as well as identifying the opportunities and challenges for further engagements. It is essential to note that it is difficult to assess and evaluate the impact of a peacebuilding project in a short period of time and more so, in the absence of active violence. To ensure effective and efficient evaluation of the intervention initiatives, the researcher made use of the pre-test and post-test reflection processes of the intervention to assess the expectations and justify whether the expectations were met. Some of the outcomes are expected to continue even after the end of the study; hence it becomes a contribution towards facilitating positive peace practices for young people.

As an action research study, putting in place pre- and post-evaluation measures before and after the agreed interventions with the participants helps in identifying whether the desired goals set by the participants and the action research team were met. The evaluation package was designed by the researcher and the action support team with full consultation with the participants. This made it simple to measure the effectiveness of the intervention and to understand the next steps that need to be engaged. Therefore, a thematic approach was utilised to reflect, present, and analyse the processes and outcomes of the intervention procedures.

## 5.7. Data Analysis

There are various methods of analysing qualitative and quantitative data findings. This study made use of thematic analysis through the Nvivo qualitative data analysis tool. It also made use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for quantitative data analysis. Thematic analysis is a data analysis tool which is mainly used in qualitative research, while SPSS is a quantitative data analysis tool.

The findings from the quantitative and qualitative data is presented, interpreted, and analysed in Chapter 6 and 7, respectively. In Chapter 8, a detailed discussion of the findings is conducted, where an integrated analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data was carried out. The discussion reflects on the key related and unique insights from the survey, interviews, focus group discussions, and action research process that were conducted in this study. This analysis highlights how the identified issues complement each other and provides a comprehensive view of the research results.

### 5.7.1. Thematic Analysis

Maguire and Delahunt (2017:3352) define thematic analysis as a “process identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data”. This study made use of in-depth interviews and focus groups, and they both provide a lot of information that needs to be recorded, translated, and transcribed. The processes involved arranging the experiences and social methods explained by participants in interviews and focus groups into themes. The use of thematic analysis is meant to interpret and organise the findings in a simple and summarised way. I utilised Braun and Clarke’s (2006) latent thematic approach, following the steps detailed in Table 5.4 below:

**Table 5.4:** Phases of thematic analysis

| <b>Phase</b>                                     | <b>Description of the process</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Familiarising yourself with your data:</b> | Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.  |
| <b>2. Generating initial codes:</b>              | Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.                        |
| <b>3. Searching for themes:</b>                  | Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.  |
| <b>4. Reviewing themes:</b>                      | 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.  |
| <b>5. Defining and naming themes:</b>            | 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 of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

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Source: Adopted from Braun & Clarke (2006)

Related ideas of the data findings are put together and reflected on through the lenses of existing literature and theories. This helps in making sense of the results and assessing if they are transferable and relatable in different contexts.

### **5.7.2. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)**

SPSS is a quantitative analytical tool which is used to analyse survey data findings in social science research. This study made use of quantitative primary data tools in the form of survey questionnaires which collected vast quantities of data in the way of questionnaire responses. The completed surveys required a statistical tool to process and analyse the findings. All the survey responses were organised into an Excel spreadsheet and transferred into the SPSS software for processing. The choice of using an analytical tool in interpreting data is fundamental in ensuring that conclusions are reached correctly, and the data produced is valid.

### **5.8. Data Validity and Reliability**

In every research, it is essential to ensure that the outcomes are valid and reliable. Validity in research refers to the trustworthiness and dependability of the study findings. Williams and Morrow (2009:577) outline that researchers can ensure trustworthiness in their study through the following three steps: “integrity of the data, the balance between reflexivity and subjectivity, and clear communication of findings”. The integrity of data means the researcher must clearly articulate the methods used in the study so that they can also be transferred to studies by others. Concepts in this study were clearly defined through simple language. To ensure consistency in all the results, a uniform survey questionnaire was used in all the 270 surveys conducted, a similar interview guide was used in all the in-depth interviews with the key informants, and a similar focus group guide was used in all the focus group discussions.

To ensure the quality, feasibility and reliability of the research instruments, the researcher made a pilot study of all the instruments used before embarking on actual research. For survey questionnaires the researcher distributed 10 surveys for pilot study purposes. Before conducting the interviews, 2 pilot interviews were conducted and one mock focus group was conducted before the actual focus groups were conducted.

The literature used in this study relied on peer-reviewed journal articles, relevant books and credible online sources on peacebuilding, conflict transformation and social entrepreneurship to ensure reliable and transferable quality data outcomes and to ensure that the meaning of participants was interpreted in a balanced manner by the researcher with minimum or no bias. The researcher made use of multiple approaches, such as recording interviews, journaling the research processes and follow up questions with the participants, and making use of the action support team for checks to ensure that the information produced reached credibility. The findings are communicated clearly, and the work was edited to ensure that the language is contextual and straightforward to understand. Since this study is using more than one method, rigorousness is provided through triangulation, which is the comparing of data through both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

## **5.9. Ethical Considerations**

This study adhered to DUT ethical clearance standards. Necessary procedures that are taken before conducting any fieldwork were taken by seeking consent and ethical approval from the DUT ethics office before engaging in any fieldwork. All the necessary processes that are required for the approval of the research were met before pursuing the field study. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:520), "when undertaking social scientific research, it is necessary to be aware of the general agreements among researchers about what is proper and improper in the conduct of scientific enquiry". Therefore, I adhered to the "do no harm" principles and ensured that the questions and questionnaires would not bring any psychological or incite physical harm to the participants. The participants were invited to participate in the study voluntarily, and all details were explained before the consent letter was signed.

All details were clearly explained, and simple language was used to ensure that every participant understood and was able to express their views. The participants were guaranteed their confidentiality and their real names have been replaced by pseudonyms in the study. The gathered data will be kept safely in a password-protected file and any sensitive information it was destroyed immediately after it had been used. All the hard copy questionnaires were destroyed by shredding or burning once they had been captured into a software copy. By-in into the Mbare community was negotiated through Good Governance Africa, a registered private voluntary organisation (PVO) in Zimbabwe, which partnered with the researcher in providing access for conducting the research. As a PVO it had a non-profit organisation status with approved access to engage and conduct research and project-related initiatives in any community around Zimbabwe.

## **5.10. Chapter Conclusion**

In conclusion, the chapter presented and discussed the methodological steps I followed in completing the research. Thus, the chapter outlined how the mixed-methods approach was blended with action research. A transformative paradigm was adopted in shaping the thinking of the study. The procedures and steps that I utilised in gathering critical information using in-depth interviews, focus groups, surveys, and action research processes which included socio-entrepreneurship and peacebuilding training workshops and awareness campaigns were discussed. The methods allowed for a rich, multi-dimensional analysis, providing a clear picture of the challenges faced by the youth and the opportunities for positive engagement. The study was carried out through longitudinal research design to deeply explore the political, economic, and societal factors influencing the youth's participation in violent activities and to identify potential pathways for promoting youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship. The methodological procedure was essential in offering a blueprint for assessing the success and impact of social entrepreneurship in promoting sustainable youth peacebuilding.

The following three chapters cover the results of the study. In Chapter 6, I present and interpret the quantitative data gathered from surveys. In Chapter 7, I present and

analyse the findings from the interviews, FGDs, and action research process using qualitative thematic analysis. Chapter 8 is a comprehensive discussion that analyses both the quantitative and qualitative findings from Chapters 6 and 7. This discussion highlights the key ideas that emerged from the results, existing literature, and key theories. It confirms the existing studies and provides unique insights from our study.

# Chapter 6

## Quantitative Presentation of Findings

### 6.1. Introduction

The study was conducted to investigate the nature of youth violence and the relevance of social entrepreneurship as a mechanism to promote the role of youth in peacebuilding. Though this study is action research, it utilised a mixed methods approach to broaden and deepen understanding of the factors surrounding youth involvement in violent behaviour. In addition, the process is meant to help explore the value of social entrepreneurship opportunities and alternatives that can be used to promote youth peacebuilding in Mbare, with the understanding that the first two main objectives of the study were:

1. To explore and understand the political, economic, and related factors influencing the participation of youth in electoral or wider violence in Mbare, Zimbabwe.
2. To explore positive and alternative peace initiatives and to facilitate and promote youth engagement in Mbare communities through social entrepreneurship.

This chapter's findings from the quantitative process (surveys) address these primary objectives. To help provide a broad and simple understanding of these objectives, the researcher created assumptions and sub-objectives to guide the presentation of the findings.

### 6.2. Quantitative Findings Report

This chapter presents the report on the quantitative findings of the study. The data consists of (N=275) survey questionnaires gathered from Mbare youth. The surveys were conducted to address the two main objectives identified above. In addition, sub-objectives were created by the researcher to guide the exploration of specific information. Thus, the data results present the descriptive statistics, ANOVA (Analysis of variance), T-test, Hosmer-Lemeshow test for regression analysis, and Chi-square test that were generated on IBM SPSS version 26 to provide data analysis and address the sub-objectives indicated below.

## Research sub-objectives:

1. There is a different perception of Factors Influencing Violence across different age groups
2. There is a different perception of Factors Influencing Violence across marital status
3. There is a different perception of Factors Influencing Violence across the level of education
4. There is a different perception of Factors Influencing Violence across employment status
5. There is a different perception of Factors Influencing Violence across gender.

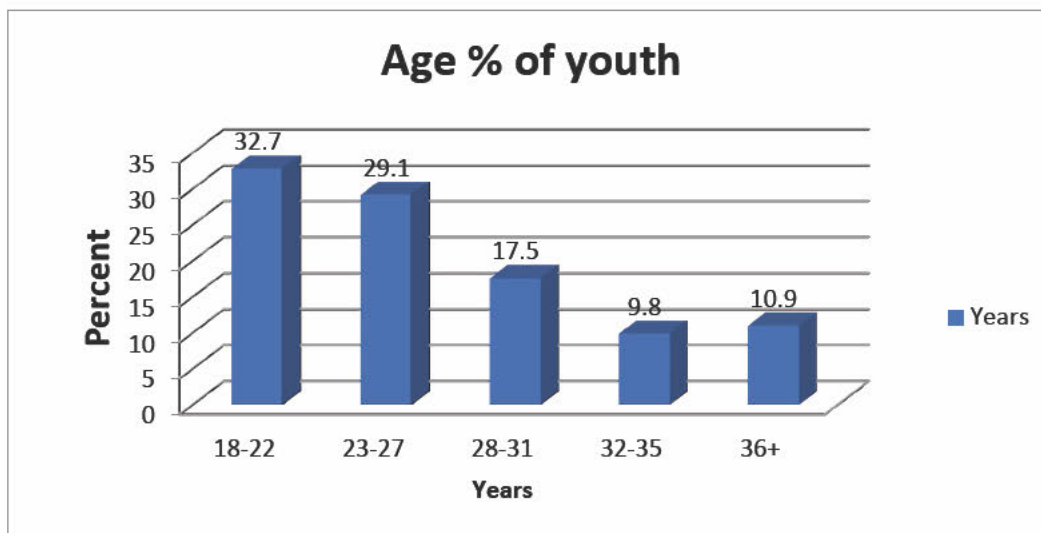
## 6.3 Descriptive Findings

### 6.3.1 Section A: Demographic Findings

#### 6.3.1.1 Age of respondents

The results in figure 6.1 below reveal that the largest group of young people that responded to the study survey were between 18 and 22 years old, with an average of 32.7%. Conversely, the age group of 36+ years had the fewest respondents at 10.9%.

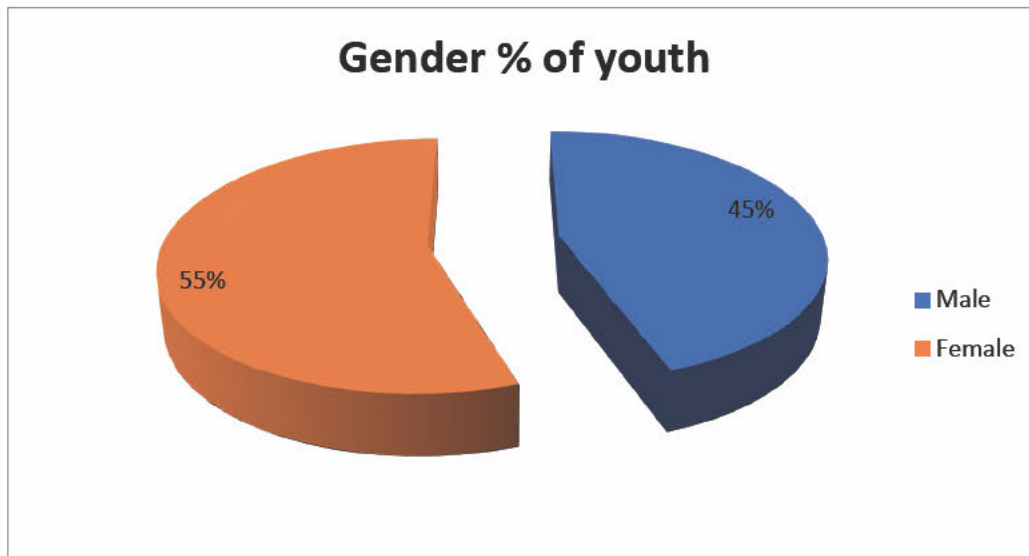
**Figure 6.1:** Age Groups of Youth Respondents



### 6.3.1.2 Gender of Respondents

The results in Figure 6.2. below indicate that most study respondents were female (55%).

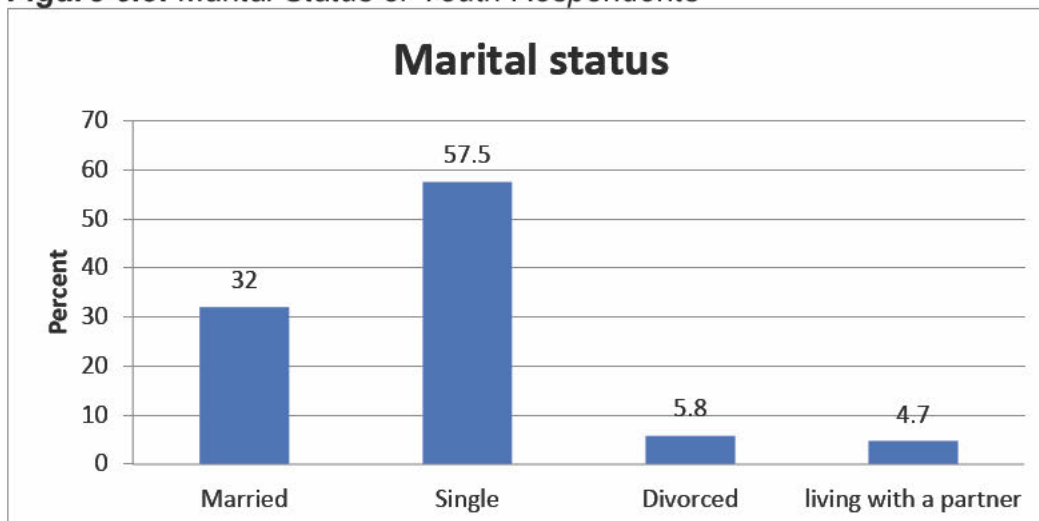
**Figure 6.2:** Gender of Youth Respondents



### 6.3.1.3 Marital Status of Respondents

Most of the youth respondents were single, consisting of 57.5% of the sample, as indicated in Figure 6.3 below.

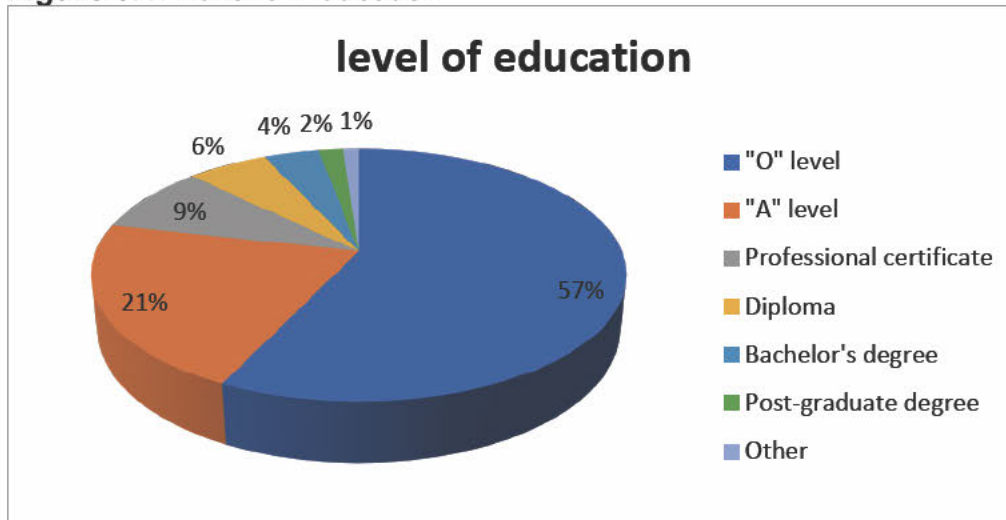
**Figure 6.3:** Marital Status of Youth Respondents



### 6.3.1.4 Respondents' Levels of Education

The results in Figure 6.4 demonstrate that most young people (57%) who contributed to the study have obtained "O" levels as the highest level of their education, while only 2% indicated having attained a post-graduate degree, and the lowest number of respondents, consisting of 1% of the respondents, had attained other forms of vocational education skills, including welding, carpentry, sewing and metalwork.

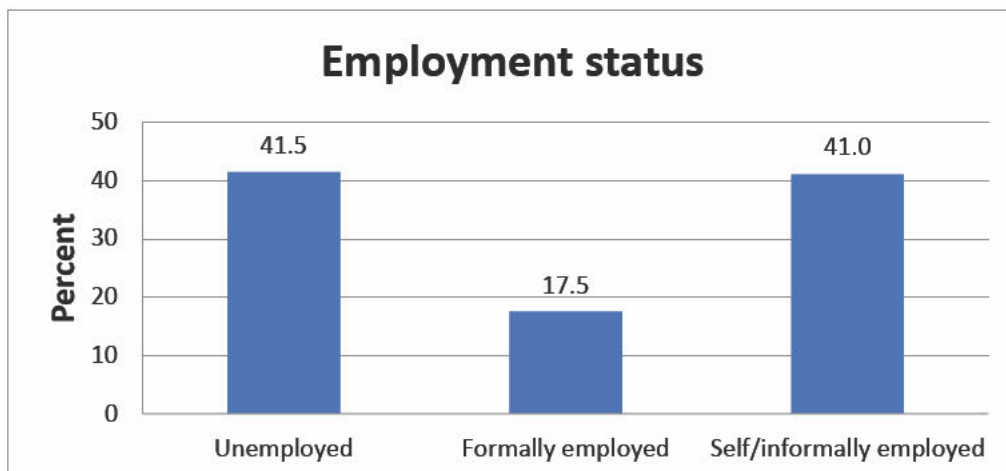
**Figure 6.4:** Level of Education



### 6.3.1.5 Employment Status of Youth

The results in Figure 6.5 show that 41.5% of young people are unemployed, while only 17.5% are in formal employment. The other group of youth, 41%, are self-employed and employed in the informal sector.

**Figure 6.5:** Employment Status of Youth



### 6.3.2 Section B: Understanding the Nature of Violence in Mbare

Section B presents results on young people's understanding of the nature of violence occurring in Mbare. It outlines statistics on whether they have heard or witnessed violence, whether they consider violence a problem in the community, the nature of the violence they are involved in, any participation in acts of violence, and knowledge of people involved in any acts of violence.

#### 6.3.2.1 Heard or Witnessed Acts of Violence

The results in Figure 6.6 below indicate that 88% of the respondents have heard about violence and witnessed acts of violence within their community of Mbare. Only 12% indicated not having heard or witnessed acts of violence in the community.

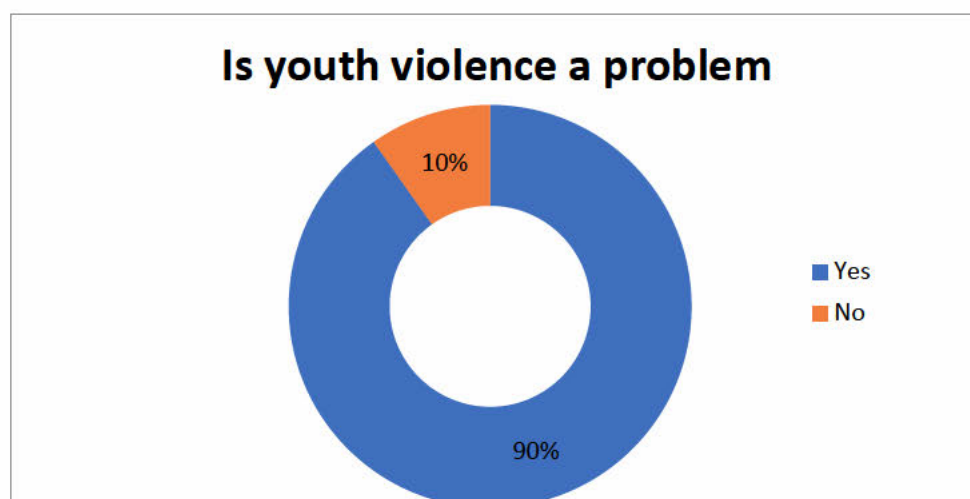
**Figure 6.6:** Youth who Heard or Witnessed Acts of Violence



#### 6.3.2.2 Is Youth Violence a Problem?

The study's findings in figure 6.7 show that 90% of the respondents consider youth violence a problem in the community of Mbare. At the same time, 10% do not see youth violence as a problem.

**Figure 6.7:** Youth Violence a Problem in the Community



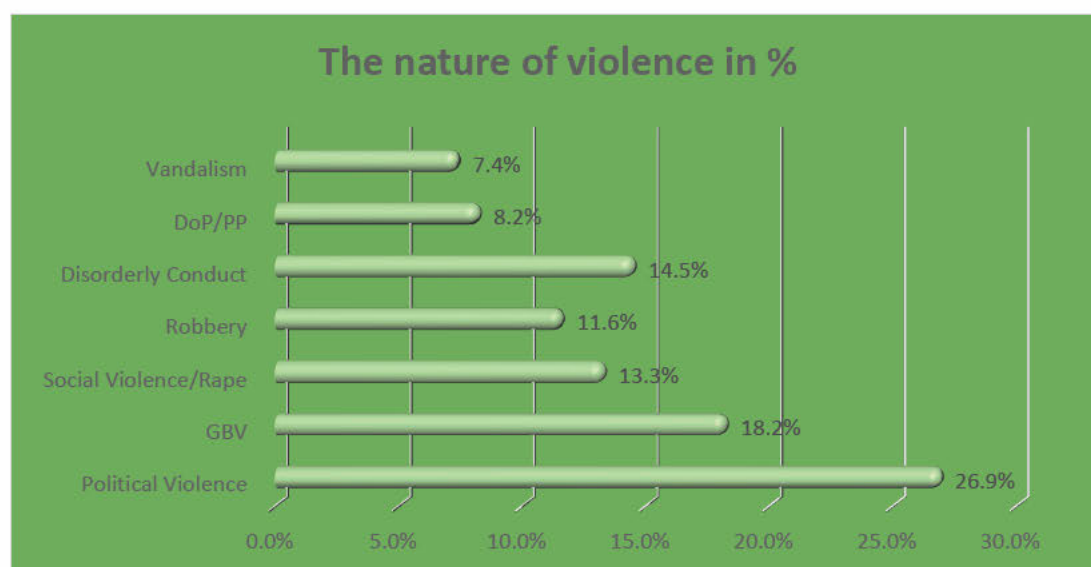
### 6.3.2.3 Nature of Violence that Young people are Commonly Involved in in the Community

Violence manifests in different forms and natures. The study contextualises violence as a physical act that often results in physical harm to persons or properties. With this understanding, the study sought to perceive the nature of violence that young people in the community of Mbare to are dominantly involved in. Table 6.1 and Figure 6.8 below show that the nature of violence that young people in Mbare are mostly involved in is political violence (26.9%), followed by gender-based violence (18.2%).

**Table 6.1:** The Nature of Violence

|  | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| <b>Political Violence</b>  | 223       | 26,9%   |
| <b>Gender-Based Violence</b>   | 151       | 18,2%   |
| <b>Social Violence/Rape</b>  | 110       | 13,3%   |
| <b>Robbery</b>   | 96        | 11,6%   |
| <b>Disorderly conduct (Causing fights in public, swearing loudly in public)</b>  | 120       | 14,5%   |
| <b>Destruction of private or public property (e.g., breaking of windows)</b>     | 68        | 8,2%    |
| <b>Vandalism (destroying other people's assets such as cars or marketplaces)</b> | 61        | 7,4%    |

**Figure 6.8: The Nature of Violence**



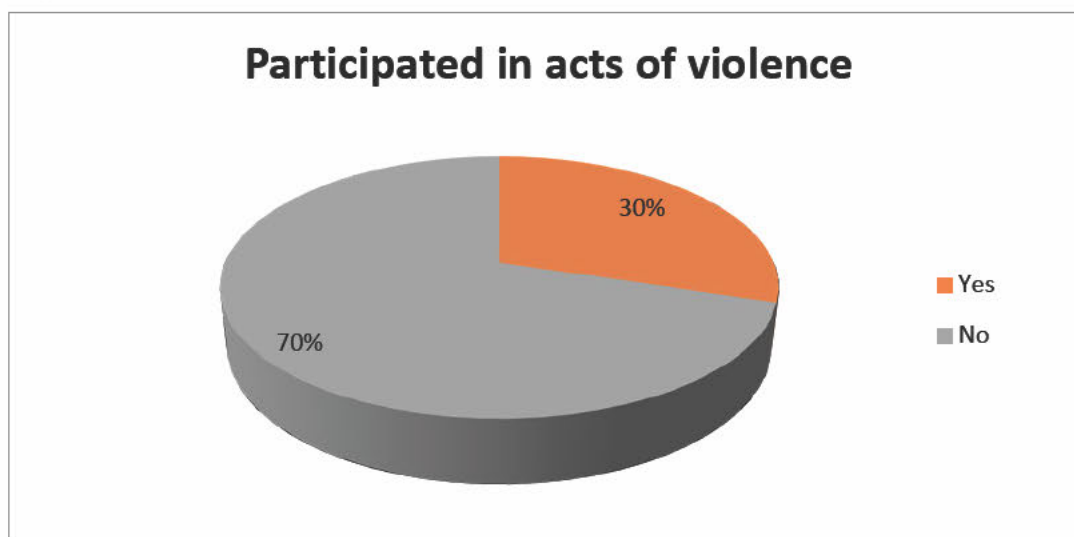
#### 6.3.2.4 Participation in Acts of Violence

Considering the different acts of violence identified as occurring in the Mbare community (i.e. political violence, gender-based violence, sexual violence, robbery, disorderly conduct, and destruction of private or public property), the study sought to establish if the surveyed youth might have participated in any of these acts. The results in Table 6.2 and Figure 6.9 below reveal that most respondents (70%) stated that they did not participate in any acts of violence. However, 30% admitted having participated.

**Table 6.2: Participation in Acts of Violence**

| Have you ever participated in any acts of violence? | Frequency (N=275) | Percent |
|---|-------------------|---------|
| Yes   | 82                | 30      |
| No  | 193               | 70      |

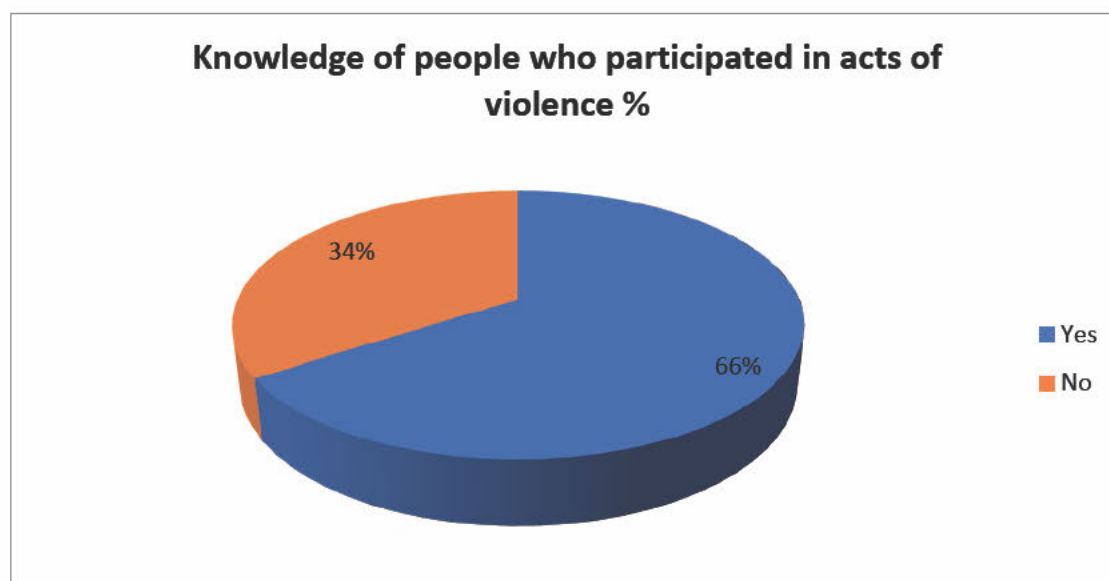
**Figure 6.9: Participation in Acts of Violence**



#### **6.3.2.5 Knowledge of People who Participated or were Involved in Acts of Violence**

Figure 6.10 below shows that the majority (66%) of respondents mentioned being aware of people who have participated or been involved in different acts of violence mentioned in the previous section. These outcomes indicate that young people in Mbare are highly exposed to different acts of violence. Research reveals that in instances where children or youth are constantly exposed to or become victims of violence within their societies, there is a high risk and possibility of them manifesting violent behaviour at a later stage (SaferSpaces 2022; Seal, Nguyen & Beyer 2014). Young people who are indirectly exposed to violence can experience positive effects, such as the determination to escape and resilience, and negative effects, such as fear, aggression, and paranoia (Seal Nguyen & Beyer 2014).

**Figure 6.10:** Knowledge of People who Participated or are Involved in Acts of Violence



### 6.3.3 Section C: Experiences of Factors Influencing Violence

Section C presents results on the experiences of youth with the various factors influencing violence in Mbare. It reflects on the main causes of youth violence, the link between political and economic violence, the value of entrepreneurial support in reducing politically related violence, and the influence of political or community leaders on youth participation in violence. The section unpacks the importance of youth empowerment in reducing violence, the influence of social ills on youth participation in violence, and the need for sustainable economic support networks to reduce youth violence.

#### 6.3.3.1 Main causes of youth violence in this community

Factors that cause violence are complex and multifaceted and exist at different levels (individual, interpersonal, neighbourhood, and societal) (Seal, Nguyen & Beyer 2014). Table 6.3 below provides detailed insight into the assumed dominant causes of youth violence in Mbare. A Likert scale was used to help provide clear views of respondents on the main causes of youth violence in Mbare.

Most of the respondents stated that youth violence in the community is always caused by substance abuse (54.2%), poverty (48.7%), politics (41.1%), and peer pressure (39.3%) and sometimes caused by disgruntlement against poor services by the

government (46.2%), competition over marketplaces (38.9%), and the influence of political or community leaders (38.5%).

**Table 6.3:** Main Causes of Violence in Mbare

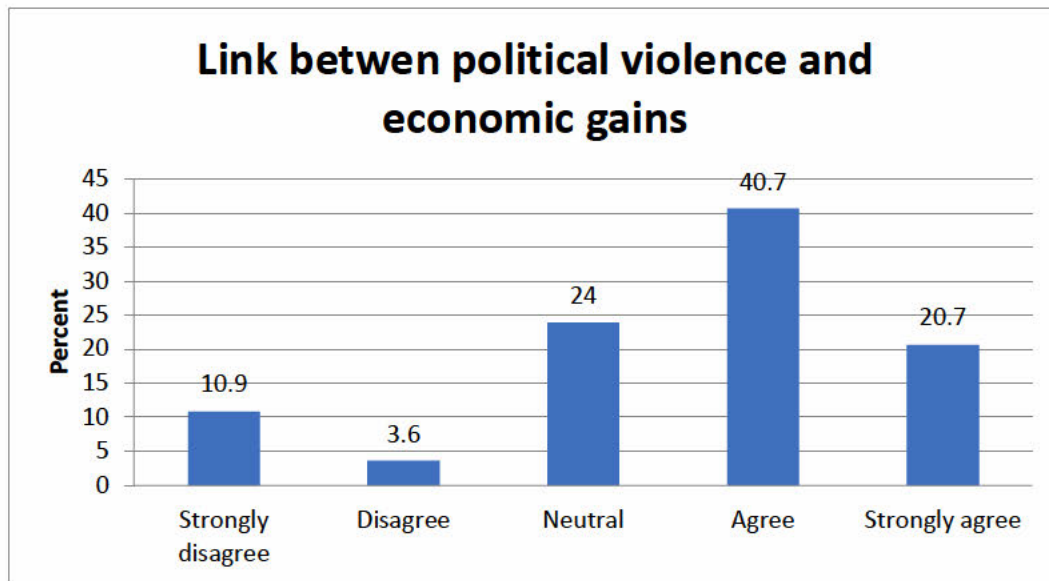
|   | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| <b>Competition Over Market Places</b>                         |           |         |
| Never   | 18        | 6,5     |
| Always  | 104       | 37,8    |
| Sometimes   | 107       | 38,9    |
| Very Often  | 35        | 12,7    |
| Rarely  | 11        | 4,0     |
| Total   | 275       | 100,0   |
| <b>Substance Abuse (Drugs or Alcohol)</b>                     |           |         |
| Never   | 9         | 3,3     |
| Always  | 149       | 54,2    |
| Sometimes   | 68        | 24,7    |
| Very Often  | 40        | 14,5    |
| Rarely  | 9         | 3,3     |
| Total   | 275       | 100,0   |
| <b>Politics</b>   |           |         |
| Never   | 3         | 1,1     |
| Always  | 113       | 41,1    |
| Sometimes   | 98        | 35,6    |
| Very Often  | 47        | 17,1    |
| Rarely  | 14        | 5,1     |
| Total   | 275       | 100,0   |
| <b>Influence by Political or Community Leaders</b>            |           |         |
| Never   | 11        | 4,0     |
| Always  | 94        | 34,2    |
| Sometimes   | 106       | 38,5    |
| Very Often  | 48        | 17,5    |
| Rarely  | 16        | 5,8     |
| Total   | 275       | 100,0   |
| <b>Disgruntlement Against Poor Services by the Government</b> |           |         |
| Never   | 16        | 5,8     |
| Always  | 68        | 24,7    |
| Sometimes   | 127       | 46,2    |

|                      |     |       |
|----------------------|-----|-------|
| <b>Very Often</b>    | 39  | 14,2  |
| <b>Rarely</b>        | 25  | 9,1   |
| <b>Total</b>         | 275 | 100,0 |
| <b>Poverty</b>       |     |       |
| <b>Never</b>         | 22  | 8,0   |
| <b>Always</b>        | 134 | 48,7  |
| <b>Sometimes</b>     | 52  | 18,9  |
| <b>Very Often</b>    | 31  | 11,3  |
| <b>Rarely</b>        | 36  | 13,1  |
| <b>Total</b>         | 275 | 100,0 |
| <b>Peer Pressure</b> |     |       |
| <b>Never</b>         | 16  | 5,8   |
| <b>Always</b>        | 108 | 39,3  |
| <b>Sometimes</b>     | 79  | 28,7  |
| <b>Very Often</b>    | 35  | 12,7  |
| <b>Rarely</b>        | 37  | 13,5  |
| <b>Total</b>         | 275 | 100,0 |

### 6.3.3.2 Connection between Political Violence and Economic Gains

As shown in the results (Figure 6.11) below, the highest (40.7%) number of the respondents agreed that youth participation in political violence is connected to economic gains. Therefore, considering that about 20.7% strongly agreed, it is evident that over 60% of the respondents believe there is a strong connection between youth participation in political violence and economic gains in Mbare.

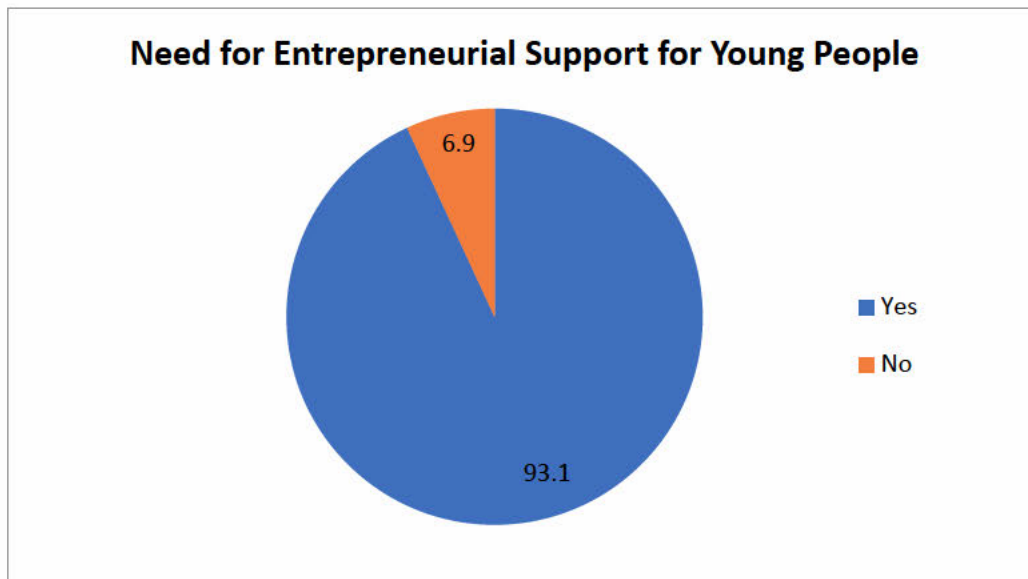
**Figure 6.11:** Link between Political Violence and Economic Gains



### **6.3.3.3 Non-politically Aligned Entrepreneurial Support and Reduction of Violent Practices**

The study sought to establish if providing young people with alternative non-politically aligned resources for entrepreneurial support can facilitate a reduction of their involvement in violent practices. The results show that the majority (93.1%) of the respondents agree that providing young people with entrepreneurial support will reduce their involvement in violent practices. With this insight, one can conclude that young people in Mbare consider politically aligned resources to be the main source of influencing and inciting youth violence practices.

**Figure 6.12: Entrepreneurial Support in Relation to the Reduction of Violence**

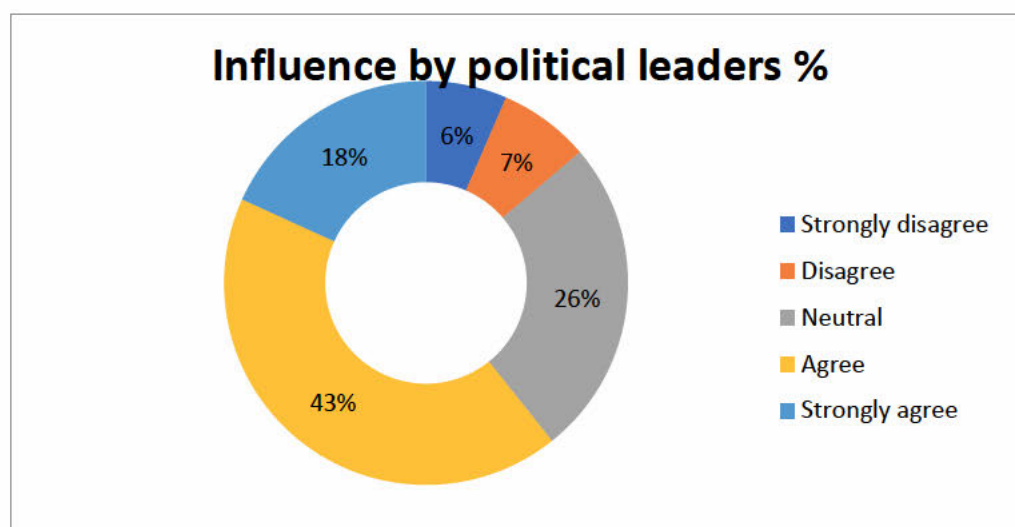


#### **6.3.3.4 Political or Community Leaders and Influence on Youth Violence**

The study aimed to understand how young people are influenced or incited by political or community leaders to commit acts of violence against their opponents or detractors. The elites in different social structures often play significant roles in promoting youth violence (Abdullahi, Seedat-Khan & Abdulrahman 2016; Antony & Ikechukwu 2019). There is a wide range of evidence across studies on how political, religious, or ethnic elites, in many instances, directly or indirectly incite acts of violence in different communities across countries (Abdullahi, Seedat-Khan & Abdulrahman 2016; Antony & Ikechukwu 2019; Cleven 2013; Gavin 2007; Ismail & Olonisakin 2021; Makonye & Rukema 2019; Paalo 2017). For instance, the political elites in Zimbabwe have been accused of sponsoring idle youth to commit acts of violence before, during, and even after elections (Makonye & Rukema 2019).

Figure 6.13 reveals that 43% of young people agree and 18% strongly agree that youth violence within the community is motivated by the political or community leaders inciting them to commit acts of violence against their opponents. Only 6% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the view, while 26% were neutral. Thus, the results reflect that over 60% of the respondents consider that youth involvement in violence within the Mbare community is often incited by political actors who seek to gain political advantage over their opponents.

**Figure 6.13: Political or Community Leaders and Influence over Youth Violence**



### 6.3.3.5 Empowerment Programmes and Impact of Youth with Alternative Voices of Peace

The survey inquired if empowerment programmes such as social entrepreneurship training and leadership seminars can be useful for youths in providing alternative voices of peace in Mbare. The results in Table 6.4 indicate that most (48.7%) of respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship training and leadership seminars could promote community peacebuilding.

**Table 6.4: The Importance of Youth Empowerment Programmes**

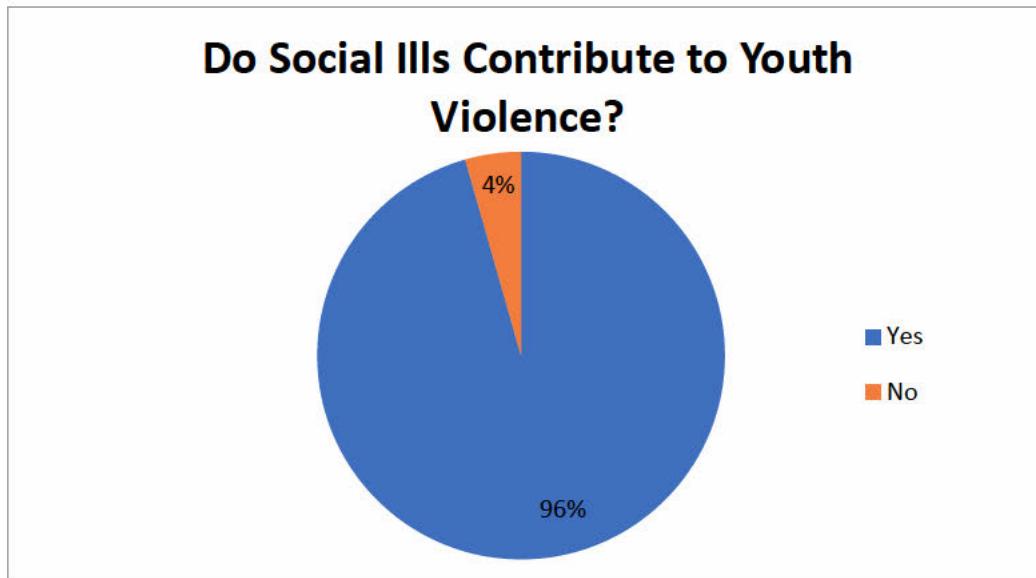
|                                   | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b>          | 27        | 9,8     |
| <b>Disagree</b>                   | 8         | 2,9     |
| <b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b> | 44        | 16,0    |
| <b>Agree</b>                      | 134       | 48,7    |
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>             | 62        | 22,5    |
| <b>Total</b>                      | 275       | 100,0   |

### 6.3.3.6 Contribution of Social Ills to Youth Involvement in Violence

Economic decline, poverty, deterioration of educational virtues and values, and urban youth unemployment are some critical social ills contributing to youth violence in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods or poor urban communities (Abdullahi, Seedat-Khan & Abdulrahman 2016; Antony & Ikechukwu 2019). The study established

that Mbare, as a high-density urban community, is not exempt from various socio-economic challenges and a wide range of social ills. Considering these sentiments, the study's findings in figure 6.14 below highlight that the majority (96%) of respondents agreed that young people are involved in violence because of social ills such as poverty, unemployment, and other economic-related problems.

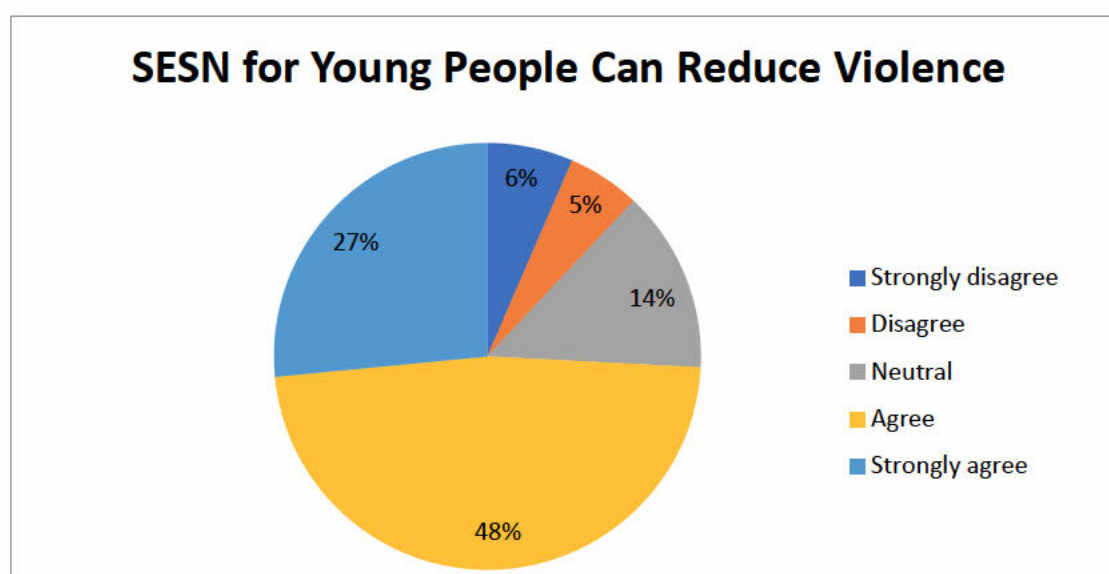
**Figure 6.14:** *Contribution of Social Ills to Youth Violence*



#### **6.3.3.7 Sustainable Economic Support Networks (SESNs) and Reduction of Youth Violence**

The results of this study reveal how most respondents (48%) agreed that setting up of SESNs, that young people own independently, are needed to reduce violence in the urban community of Mbare. Over 70% of the respondents believe that awarding youth sustainable economic platforms and support to be independent in developing their own businesses and entrepreneurial endeavours can directly help reduce youth violence. Research across studies notes that there can be a reduction in youth violence in communities with high socio-economic challenges if relevant solutions or interventions are engaged (Irwin-Rogers, Muthoo & Billingham 2020; Ismail & Olonisakin 2021; Masseti & David-Ferdon 2016; Parker 2015).

**Figure 6.15: SESNs and Reduction of Youth Violence**



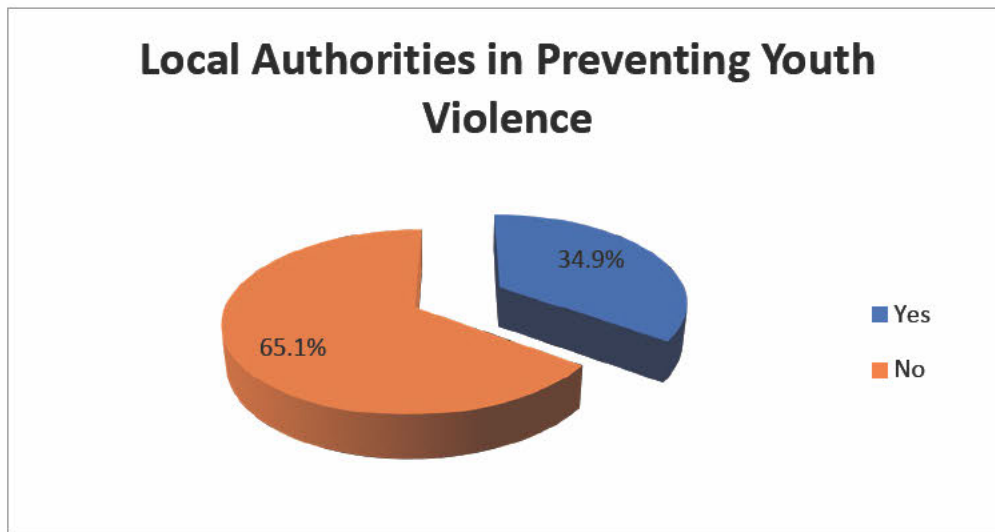
#### **6.3.4 SECTION D: Willingness to Participate in Alternative Peace Initiatives**

Section D provides an understanding of the willingness of respondents to participate in the alternative peace initiatives toward eliminating youth violence in Mbare. It presents the findings on the views of respondents on the role of local authorities in preventing youth violence; and if they would consider participating in initiatives that seek to facilitate or promote peace activities and interaction in the community. The results sought to provide insight into whether young people have an interest in and eagerness to address the violence problem and engage in positive peace practices.

##### **6.3.4.1 Performance of Local Authorities in Preventing Youth Violence in Mbare**

One of the important questions that was asked to understand some of the factors influencing youth violence in Mbare was: Are local authorities doing enough to prevent youth violence in the community? Figure 6.16 below shows that the responses indicate that 65.1% of the respondents believe that local authorities are not doing enough to address the community's youth violence problem. In addition, scholarly observations on the occurrence of politically related youth violence reflect that during the Mugabe era ZANU-PF-linked youth often enjoyed committing violence with impunity (Maringira & Gukurume 2021; Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Oosterom & Pswarayi 2019).

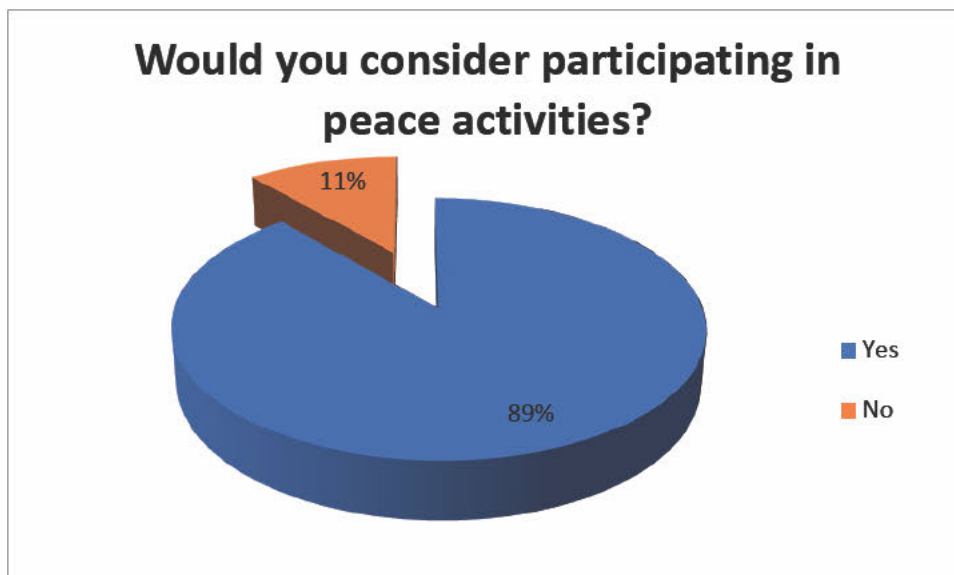
**Figure 6.16:** Performance of Local Authorities in Preventing Youth Violence



**6.3.4.2 Considerations to Participate in Programmes that Facilitate Peace Activities**

When the respondents were asked if they would consider participating in a programme that seeks to facilitate peace activities and interaction in the community, the majority (89%) responded with a “yes”, indicating the high interest of young people in participating and interacting in any programmes that seek to promote peace within the community of Mbare.

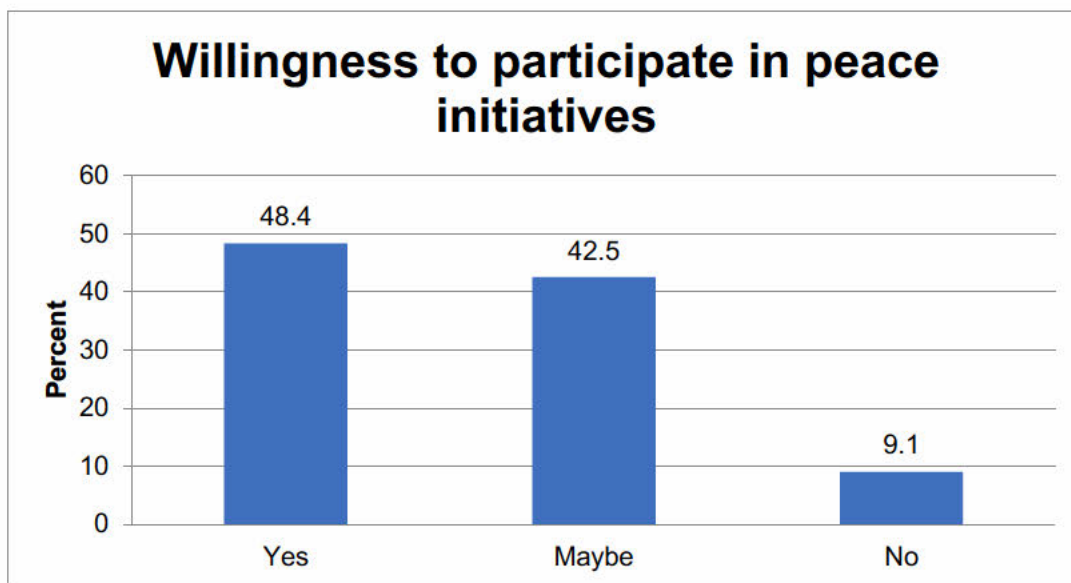
**Figure 6.17:** Participating in Peace Activities



### 6.3.4.3 Willingness to Participate in Peace Initiatives

The study also established that most young people in Mbare are willing to participate and be involved in any programme that seeks to facilitate peace initiatives in the community. Figure 6.18 below indicates that 48.4% of the respondents indicated that should any opportunity arise, they were willing to be contacted to participate in peace initiatives, while 42.5% revealed that they “maybe” were willing to participate, and only 9.1% were not willing.

**Figure 6.18:** Willingness to Participate in Peace Initiatives



## 6.4 ANOVA (Analysis of variance)

One-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean scores of factors influencing violence across age, marital status, level of education, and employment status. The following three tables were considered: (1) The descriptive table provides each group's mean and standard deviation of the dependent variable. (2) The ANOVA table indicates whether there is a statistical significance between the groups. The significant difference is determined by a P-value that is below 0.05. (3) The Post-hoc table (multiple comparisons) provides additional information about where the difference lies within groups. This table should be analysed when the ANOVA shows a significant result (p-value <0.05). The Tukey test was used in this ANOVA.

## 6.4.1 Experiences of Factors Influencing Violence

### 6.4.1.1 Objective 1. There is a different perception of Factors Influencing Violence across different age groups

#### **Age:**

The results in Table 6.5 indicate that the mean score difference of factors influencing violence across age groups is different to a smaller extent.

**Table 6.5:** Descriptive of factors influencing violence across different age groups

|                | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------------|------|----------------|
| 18 to 22 Years | 2,74 | 0,56           |
| 23 to 27 Years | 2,87 | 0,58           |
| 28 to 31 Years | 2,82 | 0,51           |
| 32 to 35 Years | 2,81 | 0,46           |
| 36+ Years      | 2,73 | 0,53           |
| Total          | 2,80 | 0,54           |

Table 6.6's results indicate that the mean score difference indicated in Table 6.5 above is not statistically significant, because of the p-value (0.569) above 0.05. These results indicate that young people from different age groups perceive factors influencing violence in the same way. The results indicate a difference in the mean score, but it is not statistically significant; therefore, objective 1 is not defensible.

**Table 6.6:** ANOVA of factors influencing violence across different age groups

|                | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F     | P value |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|---------|
| Between Groups | 0,870          | 4   | 0,217       | 0,734 | 0,569   |
| Within Groups  | 80,002         | 270 | 0,296       |       |         |
| Total          | 80,872         | 274 |             |       |         |

### 6.4.1.2 Objective 2. There is a different perception of Factors Influencing Violence across marital status

#### **Marital status:**

The average mean score of factors influencing violence is slightly different across marital status (Table 6.7).

**Table 6.7:** Descriptive of factors Influencing violence across marital status

|                       | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-----------------------|------|----------------|
| Married               | 2,88 | 0,54           |
| Single                | 2,75 | 0,57           |
| Divorced              | 2,84 | 0,40           |
| Living With a Partner | 2,68 | 0,42           |
| Total                 | 2,80 | 0,54           |

The difference in an average mean score across marital status is non-statistically significant because of the p-value (0.292) above 0.05, which means that people of different marital statuses perceive factors influencing violence similarly. The results indicate a difference in the mean score, but it is not statistically significant; therefore, objective 2 is not defensible.

**Table 6.8:** ANOVA of factors Influencing violence across marital status

|                | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F     | P value |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|---------|
| Between Groups | 1.106          | 3   | .369        | 1.251 | .292    |
| Within Groups  | 78.980         | 268 | .295        |       |         |
| Total          | 80.086         | 271 |             |       |         |

#### 6.4.1.3 Objective 3. There is a different perception of Factors Influencing Violence across education levels

##### **Level of education:**

The results in Table 6.9 indicate that the mean score of young people who obtained a post-graduate degree (3.46), bachelor's degree (3.04), or diploma (3.18) is higher than the average mean score of young people who obtained a professional certificate (2.84), A level (2.77), and O level (2.73).

**Table 6.9:** Descriptive of factors influencing violence across education levels

|                          | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------|------|----------------|
| “O” Level                | 2,73 | 0,50           |
| “A” Level                | 2,77 | 0,47           |
| Professional Certificate | 2,84 | 0,61           |
| Diploma                  | 3,18 | 0,78           |
| Bachelor’s Degree        | 3,04 | 0,38           |
| Post-Graduate Degree     | 3,46 | 0,91           |
| Other                    | 2,62 | 0,44           |
| Total                    | 2,80 | 0,54           |

According to the results in Table 6.9, the mean score indicated above is statistically significant because of the p-value (0.002) is below 0.05 (see Table 6.10), meaning that there is a difference in how young people from different levels of education perceive factors influencing violence.

**Table 6.10:** ANOVA on factors influencing violence across education levels

|                | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F     | P value |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|---------|
| Between Groups | 6.088          | 6   | 1.015       | 3.636 | .002    |
| Within Groups  | 74.784         | 268 | .279        |       |         |
| Total          | 80.872         | 274 |             |       |         |

The results in Table 6.11 below indicate that the average mean score of young people who obtained an “O” level is significantly higher than the average mean score of students who obtained a diploma ( $p= 0.021$ ) and a post-graduate degree ( $p= 0.041$ ). This means that there is a significant difference in how young people who obtained “O” level education, and those who have a diploma, or a post-graduate degree perceive factors influencing violence. According to the results, young people who obtained an “O” level tend to perceive factors influencing violence more than those who obtained diplomas and post-graduate degrees.

The results indicate that there is a difference in the mean score, and it is statistically significant. Therefore, objective 3 is addressed.

**Table 6.11: Multiple Comparisons**

| <b>Dependent Variable:</b>      |                          | <b>Factors influencing violence</b> |                   |                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>Tukey HSD</b>                |                          |                                     |                   |                |
| <b>(I) Education</b>            | <b>(J) Education</b>     | <b>Mean Difference (I-J)</b>        | <b>Std. Error</b> | <b>P value</b> |
| <b>"O" Level</b>                | "A" Level                | -0,048                              | 0,081             | 0,997          |
|                                 | Professional Certificate | -0,112                              | 0,116             | 0,960          |
|                                 | Diploma                  | -.45155*                            | 0,139             | 0,021          |
|                                 | Bachelor's Degree        | -0,312                              | 0,165             | 0,487          |
|                                 | Post-Graduate Degree     | -.73012*                            | 0,240             | 0,041          |
|                                 | Other                    | 0,108                               | 0,308             | 1,000          |
| <b>"A" Level</b>                | "O" Level                | 0,048                               | 0,081             | 0,997          |
|                                 | Professional Certificate | -0,064                              | 0,128             | 0,999          |
|                                 | Diploma                  | -0,404                              | 0,149             | 0,099          |
|                                 | Bachelor's Degree        | -0,264                              | 0,173             | 0,731          |
|                                 | Post-Graduate Degree     | -0,682                              | 0,246             | 0,085          |
|                                 | Other                    | 0,156                               | 0,313             | 0,999          |
| <b>Professional Certificate</b> | "O" Level                | 0,112                               | 0,116             | 0,960          |
|                                 | "A" Level                | 0,064                               | 0,128             | 0,999          |
|                                 | Diploma                  | -0,339                              | 0,170             | 0,423          |
|                                 | Bachelor's Degree        | -0,200                              | 0,192             | 0,945          |
|                                 | Post-Graduate Degree     | -0,618                              | 0,260             | 0,211          |
|                                 | Other                    | 0,220                               | 0,323             | 0,994          |
| <b>Diploma</b>                  | "O" Level                | .45155*                             | 0,139             | 0,021          |
|                                 | "A" Level                | 0,404                               | 0,149             | 0,099          |
|                                 | Professional Certificate | 0,339                               | 0,170             | 0,423          |
|                                 | Bachelor's Degree        | 0,140                               | 0,207             | 0,994          |
|                                 | Post-Graduate Degree     | -0,279                              | 0,271             | 0,947          |
|                                 | Other                    | 0,560                               | 0,332             | 0,628          |
| <b>Bachelor's Degree</b>        | "O" Level                | 0,312                               | 0,165             | 0,487          |
|                                 | "A" Level                | 0,264                               | 0,173             | 0,731          |
|                                 | Professional Certificate | 0,200                               | 0,192             | 0,945          |
|                                 | Diploma                  | -0,140                              | 0,207             | 0,994          |
|                                 | Post-Graduate Degree     | -0,418                              | 0,285             | 0,764          |

|                             |                          |         |         |       |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------|---------|-------|
|                             | Other                    | 0,420   | 0,344   | 0,886 |
| <b>Post-Graduate Degree</b> | “O” Level                | .73012* | 0,240   | 0,041 |
|                             | “A” Level                | 0,682   | 0,246   | 0,085 |
|                             | Professional Certificate | 0,618   | 0,260   | 0,211 |
|                             | Diploma                  | 0,279   | 0,271   | 0,947 |
|                             | Bachelor’s Degree        | 0,418   | 0,285   | 0,764 |
|                             | Other                    | 0,838   | 0,386   | 0,314 |
| <b>Other</b>                | “O” Level                | -0,108  | 0,308   | 1,000 |
|                             | “A” Level                | -0,156  | 0,313   | 0,999 |
|                             | Professional Certificate | -0,220  | 0,323   | 0,994 |
|                             | Diploma                  | -0,560  | 0,332   | 0,628 |
|                             | Bachelor’s Degree        | -0,420  | 0,344   | 0,886 |
|                             | Post-Graduate Degree     | -0,838  | 0,38578 | 0,314 |

#### 6.4.1.4 Objective 4. There is a different perception of Factors Influencing Violence across employment status

##### *Employment status:*

The results in Table 6.12 below indicate that the average mean score of factors influencing violence is slightly different across employment status.

**Table 6.12:** Descriptive on factors influencing violence across employment status

|                               | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|----------------|
| <b>Unemployed</b>             | 2,76 | 0,51           |
| <b>Formally Employed</b>      | 2,73 | 0,49           |
| <b>Self/Informal employed</b> | 2,87 | 0,59           |
| <b>Total</b>                  | 2,80 | 0,54           |

According to the results in Table 6.13, the different average mean score indicated above is non-statistically significant because of the p-value (0.173) being above 0.05. The results indicate that there is a difference in the mean score, but it is not statistically significant. Therefore, objective 4 is not defensible.

**Table 6.13:** ANOVA on factors influencing violence across employment status

|                       | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F     | P value |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|---------|
| <b>Between Groups</b> | 1.040          | 2   | .520        | 1.765 | .173    |
| <b>Within Groups</b>  | 79.825         | 271 | .295        |       |         |
| <b>Total</b>          | 80.865         | 273 |             |       |         |

## 6.5 Independent sample test

The Independent T-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of factors influencing violence across gender (male and female). To determine if there is significant difference between mean scores, we look at the p-value from the Independent Samples Test table. Any p-value less than 0.05 means a significant difference, but any p-value above 0.05 means a non-significant difference.

### 6.5.1.1 Objective 5. There is a different perception of Factors Influencing Violence across gender

#### Gender

The results indicate that the average mean score of males (2.83) is somewhat different from the mean score of females (2.78).

**Table 6.14:** Descriptive on factors influencing violence across gender

|               | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------|------|----------------|
| <b>Male</b>   | 2,83 | 0,56           |
| <b>Female</b> | 2,78 | 0,52           |

Table 6.15's results indicate that the Table 6.14 above mean score difference is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.405) is above 0.05. This means that factors influencing violence are perceived the same by both males and females. The results indicate a difference in the mean score, but this is non-statistically significant; therefore, objective 5 is not defensible.

**Table 6.15:**Independent Samples Test

|         | T value | Degree of freedom | P value |
|---------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| Factors | 0,834   | 272               | 0,405   |

## 6.6 Regression results

The diagnostic statistics of the estimated model (Table 6.16) recorded a chi-square of 29.775. Furthermore, the Hosmer-Lemeshow test was not significant (model is correctly specified). The pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> of 0.14 implied that the explanatory variables explained 14 percent of the model's dependent variable variations. The variables of witnessed violence (X<sub>6</sub>), participated in acts of violence (X<sub>7</sub>), and knowing someone who participated in acts of violence (X<sub>8</sub>) exhibited a positively significant relationship.

**Table 6.16:** Factors Affecting the Willingness to Participate in any Programme that seeks to Facilitate Peace Initiatives.

| Explanatory variables   | B      | p-values |
|---|--------|----------|
| (X <sub>1</sub> )-Age   | -.090  | .416     |
| (X <sub>2</sub> )-Gender  | .052   | .851     |
| (X <sub>3</sub> )-Marital Status                                    | .163   | .364     |
| (X <sub>4</sub> )-Education   | .123   | .215     |
| (X <sub>5</sub> )-Employment Status                                 | -.058  | .690     |
| (X <sub>6</sub> )-Witnessed violence                                | 1.295  | .005**   |
| (X <sub>7</sub> )-Participated in Acts of Violence                  | .780   | .008**   |
| (X <sub>8</sub> )-Know Someone Who Participated in Acts of violence | .870   | .003**   |
| Constant  | -1.517 | .098*    |
| Model chi-square  | 29.775 |          |
| No of observations  | 275    |          |
| R <sup>2</sup>  | 14%    |          |

Note: \*, \*\*, \*\*\* represent significance at 10%, 5% and 1% respectively

The coefficient of witnessed violence is positive and significant (P<0.005). This implies that youth who have witnessed an act of violence are more willing to participate in any programme that seeks to facilitate peace initiatives. The probability of willingness to participate in any programme that seeks to facilitate peace initiatives increases among those who have witnessed an act of violence. Similar findings have been reported by Felice and Wisler (2007), who find that young people are willing to try alternatives that

can help them shape a better future which is different from the violent past they have experienced.

The coefficient of participation in acts of violence is positive and significant ( $P < 0.008$ ). It indicates that there is a high probability that young people who have participated in violence are more willing to participate in programmes that seek to facilitate peace initiatives. These findings relate to the study by Bangura (2016), which found that young people involved in the Sierra Leone civil war were highly willing to engage in peacebuilding initiatives.

The variable on respondents who know someone who participated in acts of violence shows a significant relationship ( $P < 0.003$ ) on willingness to participate in peace initiatives. Therefore, the perception is defensible.

## 6.7 Chi-square results

### 6.7.1 Age Group and Participation in Violence

The study used the chi-square test to understand the relationship between the age group of young people and their involvement in violence.

**Table 6.17:** Age Group which is more Involved in Violence.

|                                  |     | Age group (percent) |       |       |       |     | P-value |
|----------------------------------|-----|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------|
|                                  |     | 18-22               | 23-27 | 28-31 | 32-25 | 36+ |         |
| Participated in acts of violence | Yes | 25.6                | 28    | 29.3  | 6.1   | 11  | 0.012** |
|                                  | No  | 74.4                | 72    | 70.7  | 93.9  | 89  |         |

Results in Table 6.17 show a statistically significant relationship ( $p < 0.012$ ) between the age of youth and participation in acts of violence. This implies that participation in violence decreases as the youth reach the later stages of their youth.

### 6.7.2 Relationship between Socio-economic Characteristics and Participation in Acts of Violence

The study also conducted a chi-square test to understand the relationship between different socio-economic characteristics and youth participation in violence.

**Table 6.18:** Socio-economic Characteristics and Participation in Acts of Violence

| Variable                  | Participated in Acts of Violence |      | P-value |         |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------|---------|---------|
|                           | Yes                              | No   |         |         |
| <b>Age</b>                | 18-22 years                      | 26.8 | 35.6    | 0.010** |
|                           | 23-27 years                      | 28   | 29.5    |         |
|                           | 28-31 years                      | 29.3 | 12.4    |         |
|                           | 32-35 years                      | 10.9 | 11.6    |         |
|                           | 36+ years                        | 5    | 10.9    |         |
| <b>Gender</b>             | Male                             | 54.9 | 40.4    | 0.027** |
|                           | Female                           | 45.1 | 59.6    |         |
| <b>Marital status</b>     | Married                          | 40.2 | 28.5    | 0.022** |
|                           | Single                           | 45.1 | 62.1    |         |
|                           | Divorced                         | 12.2 | 3.1     |         |
|                           | Living with partner              | 2.4  | 5.7     |         |
| <b>Education</b>          | “O” level                        | 63.4 | 54.4    | 0.138   |
|                           | “A” level                        | 15.9 | 23.8    |         |
|                           | Professional certificate         | 6.1  | 9.8     |         |
|                           | Diploma                          | 4.9  | 6.2     |         |
|                           | Bachelor’s degree                | 3.7  | 4.1     |         |
|                           | Post-graduate degree             | 4.9  | 0.5     |         |
|                           | Other                            | 1.2  | 1       |         |
| <b>Witnessed violence</b> | Yes                              | 92.7 | 86      | 0.119   |
|                           | No                               | 7.3  | 14      |         |
| <b>Employment status</b>  | Unemployed                       | 41.5 | 41.6    | 0.885   |
|                           | Formally employed                | 15.9 | 18.1    |         |
|                           | Self/informally employed         | 42.7 | 40.4    |         |

Note: \*, \*\*, \*\*\* represent significance at 10%, 5% and 1% respectively

The results presented in Table 6.18 reveal a significant relationship, at 5% ( $p=0.010$ ), between young people within a specific age range as a socio-economic characteristic and their participation in acts of violence. Furthermore, the chi-square test showed that certain age groups of young people could be influenced to participate in acts of violence more than others. The results confirm how a certain age group of desperate young people could be weaponised for socio-economic returns. The involvement of youth in violent practices in exchange for socio-economic possibilities has been observed and is still prevalent in Zimbabwe, given the country's socio-economic decline (Irwin-Rogers, Muthoo & Billingham 2020; Ismail & Olonisakin 2021; Maringira & Gukurume 2021; Mhike 2018; Oosterom & Pswarayi 2019). For instance, young people who had just turned 18 years old, finished high school, and were looking for employment were enlisted in the Border Gezi national youth service and utilised by

ZANU PF as tools of political violence in exchange for socio-economic prospects (Mhike 2018).

The results also show a significant relationship, at 5% ( $p=0.027$ ), between gender and the participation of young people in violence. The chi-square test results revealed that gender also plays a significant role in influencing participation in violence. Also, the results indicate a significant relationship, at 5% ( $p=0.022$ ), between marital status and youth participation in violence. The chi-square test results indicate that marital status influences young people's participation in violence.

The results in Table 6.18 also highlight an insignificant relationship, at 5% (0.138), between education and the participation of young people in violence. This implies that education had no influence on the participation of young people in violence.

The results also show an insignificant relationship, at 5% ( $p=0.119$ ), between those who witnessed violence and participation in violence. Thus, it implies that witnessing violence had no influence on the participation of young people in violence.

The results also indicate an insignificant relationship, at 5% ( $p=0.885$ ), between employment status and the participation of young people in violence. The results imply that employment status had no influence on the participation of young people in violence.

### 6.7.3 Education and its Influence on Youth Involvement in Violence

**Table 6.19:** Education and its Influence on Youth Involvement in Violence

| Variable          | Education |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Age               | 0.062***  |
| Employment status | 0.021**   |
| Marital status    | 0.025**   |

The Chi-Square was conducted to explore the crucial role of education in comprehending the participation of young people in acts of violence. The goal was to analyse the educational backgrounds of young people to reveal connections between educational attainment and factors like age, employment status, and marital status in relation to violence. The frequency distribution of educational levels among the youth

participants was first presented, forming the basis of the analysis, offering a clear picture of the educational landscape within the study group. The investigation of the connections between education and other variables using chi-square tests came after this.

Analysing the statistical significance of the relationship between age and educational attainment in relation to youth violence, the p-value stands at (0.062). This figure, although marginally exceeding the conventional threshold of ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicates an absence of a statistically significant correlation. Therefore, this infers that the age of the youth does not play a significant role in how their education level affects their involvement in violence. This outcome implies that age, as a stand-alone factor, does not markedly sway the influence of educational background on youth participation in violent acts.

Conversely, the relationship between education and employment status, with a p-value of (0.021), is statistically significant. This finding denotes a substantial link between the youths' educational achievements and their employment circumstances. When it comes to youth violence, this could be interpreted to mean that youths who are unemployed or underemployed, and who possess certain levels of education, might have a heightened propensity to engage in violent activities.

Additionally, the p-value of (0.025) in examining the link between education and marital status also crosses the threshold of statistical significance. This outcome highlights a noteworthy association between the educational levels of youth and their marital status, suggesting that these two variables in combination could influence tendencies towards violence in different ways.

The findings from these statistical analyses elucidate complex interconnections between educational levels and various demographic factors in relation to youth involvement in violence. It is apparent that age does not display a significant link with educational attainment in this context, whereas employment and marital status show meaningful correlations. Such insights are invaluable for the formulation of interventions that acknowledge the intricate ways in which education influences youth behaviours and their tendencies toward violence. Understanding these relationships

is key to crafting interventions that are not only education-focused but also tailored to address the specific needs and circumstances of different youth groups. This knowledge directs us towards creating more nuanced, education-based strategies aimed at positively engaging youths. This implies that it is possible to not only mitigate their participation in violent acts but also to promote a more constructive role for them within their communities. This approach underscores the importance of considering the broader socio-economic and personal factors that interact with educational attainment in shaping youth behaviours.

## **6.8 Chapter Conclusion**

In conclusion, the chapter presented the results of quantitative data collected to study the nature of youth violence and the role of social entrepreneurship in promoting peacebuilding. The study used descriptive statistics, ANOVA analysis, T-test, regression analysis, and chi-square test to analyse the data. The results established that most young people in Mbare have witnessed violence and are highly involved in violent activities. The results reveal that youth involvement in violence is associated with socio-economic challenges and political factors. The results showed that many young people in Mbare have been exposed to violence and are involved in violent activities. Socio-economic challenges and political factors are associated with youth involvement in violence.

Most young people in Mbare have witnessed or participated in violence, and consider it a problem in the community. Political violence is the most common form of violence, followed by GBV, social violence, robbery, disorderly conduct, destruction of property, and vandalism. The study found that drug abuse, poverty, politics, peer pressure, resentment over subpar government services, competition in markets, and the influence of political or community leaders are the main causes of youth violence in the community.

The study revealed that youth participation in political violence is linked to economic incentives. The results suggested that providing young people with entrepreneurial support could reduce their involvement in violent practices. The study also found that politically aligned resources are the main source of influence and incitement of youth

violence and established that social entrepreneurship training and leadership seminars could promote peacebuilding in the community. The chapter also emphasized the importance of addressing poverty, unemployment, and other social issues to address youth violence problems and promote peacebuilding practices. The results concluded that young people in Mbare are eager to address the violence problem and engage in positive peace practices.

The next chapter discussed the findings gathered from the qualitative data gathering process.

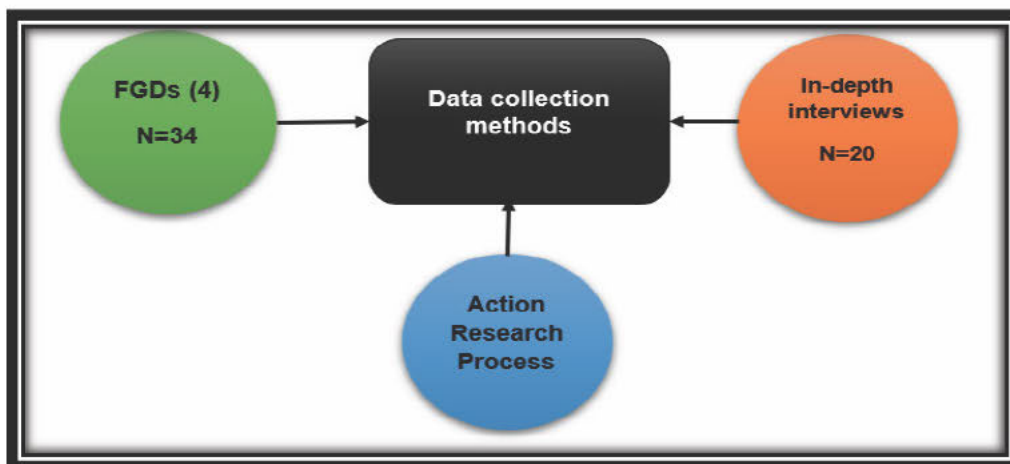
## Chapter 7

### Presentation & Analysis of Qualitative Findings: Understanding the Need for Youth Peacebuilding in Mbare

#### 7.1. Introduction

The presentations of this chapter provide insights into the views and understanding of youth violence, peacebuilding, and the role of social entrepreneurship in promoting positive peace amongst young people in Mbare. It presents findings that were gathered from focus group discussions (FGDs) (n=34), interviews (n=20), actionable knowledge through training workshops (n=10) and action research processes. Thus, the FGDs and interviews helped to gather factors surrounding youth understanding, experiences, and involvement with violence in the community. In addition, they helped understand the nature and cycles of violence that affect youth in Mbare. The chapter uses thematic analysis to present the findings that emerged from the FGDs and crucial ideas arising from interviews. After that, the action research process is presented, reflecting on the steps, challenges, and critical study outcomes. Finally, it details the role and impact of the training programme and initiatives toward promoting youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship in Mbare. The details of how the interview, FGDs, and action research process observations were used to gather qualitative findings are summarised in the following sections.

*Figure 7.1: Qualitative Data Gathering Methods*



Source: Author

### **7.1.1. Interviews**

Using interviews is one of the most common strategies for conducting qualitative research (Hawkins 2018). Interviews of a qualitative nature provide a wealth of information and specifics that are useful in comprehending people's experiences in a particular context (Majid et al. 2017). The researcher conducted 20 in-depth interviews with youth leaders (n=5), civil society experts (n=3), church leaders (n=2), businesspeople (n=1), informal business leaders (n=3) and some political activists (n=6) in Mbare. These interviews allowed the researcher to understand the views on youth violence, peacebuilding, and the need for positive peace solutions in promoting youth peacebuilding in Mbare. The insights from the interviews were crucial in reflecting and guiding the action team (AT) in identifying key areas that need the training to promote the facilitation of youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship.

### **7.1.2. Focus Group Discussions**

The use of FGDs is considered crucial in qualitative research to have a detailed understanding of the social issues existing in the study environment (Nyumba et al. 2018). FGDs have been used for decades in academic and applied research studies to provide rapid access to in-depth information with a group of participants (Gundumogula 2020). The researcher used FGDs to identify critical structural violence issues affecting youth in Mbare. It allowed for a comprehensive understanding of youth experiences with violence and their perceived solutions to sustainable peacebuilding. Four FGDs were conducted.

### **7.1.3. Action Research Process**

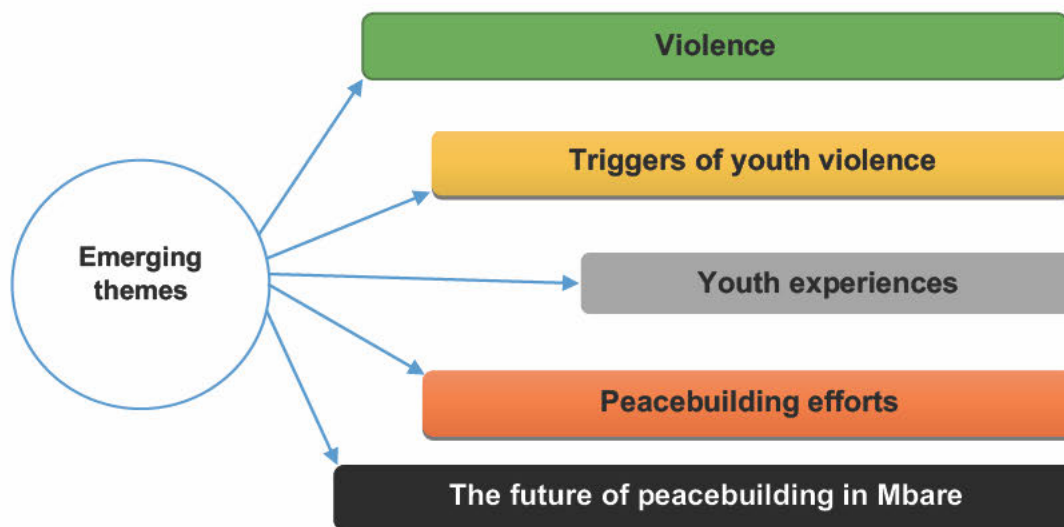
The study made use of an action research process to gather data and reflect on key intervention solutions for promoting youth peacebuilding in Mbare. The process of gathering action research data involved spiral processes, which involved diagnosing the challenges and experiences, planning relevant action, implementing planned solutions, and evaluating the outcomes. Thus, the action research process in this study involved conducting five (5) informal youth discussion forums with the action team, a training workshop on peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship (1 day), and

a youth peace awareness campaign. The action research findings observed that youths are confronted by different challenges that disorient their positive roles in society. The findings established that there is a need for equipping young people to self-organise through social entrepreneurship strategies, capacity building and peace advocacy towards promoting sustainable youth peacebuilding in Mbare.

## 7.2. Thematic Analysis: Emerging Themes

The study used thematic analysis to carefully analyse the gathered qualitative data, which generated large volumes of transcribed texts. The researcher read and re-read the texts to identify patterns or themes that emerged from participants. Thus, he could compare different perspectives on youth and violence from views shared by young people, political leaders, informal economy leaders, civil society actors and businesspeople. Figure 7.2 shows the list of themes identified from the gathered data.

**Figure 7.2:** Emerging Themes



**Source:** Author

Several sub-themes were identified under each of these, and they were presented and analysed in the following section. The key sub-themes are presented in Table 7.1 below.

**Table 7.1: Emerging Sub-Themes**

| <b>Themes</b>                               | <b>Sub-Themes</b>  |
|---|--|
| <b>Violence</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of violence</li> <li>• Conceptualisation of youth violence</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Triggers of youth violence</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political factionalism and polarisation</li> <li>• Bread and butter issues</li> <li>• Social ills</li> <li>• Coercion and manipulation of youth</li> </ul>              |
| <b>Youth experiences</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harsh socio-economic and political factors</li> <li>• Fear</li> <li>• Culture of impunity</li> <li>• Exclusion, exploitation &amp; negative perceptions</li> </ul>      |
| <b>Peacebuilding Efforts</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of efforts towards peace and addressing violence</li> <li>• Youth peace programmes in Mbare</li> <li>• National peace strategies and wounds of the past</li> </ul> |
| <b>The future of peacebuilding in Mbare</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for education</li> <li>• Need for alternative income sources</li> <li>• Hope</li> <li>• Spreading the message of peace</li> </ul>                                  |

### **7.3. Theme 1: Violence**

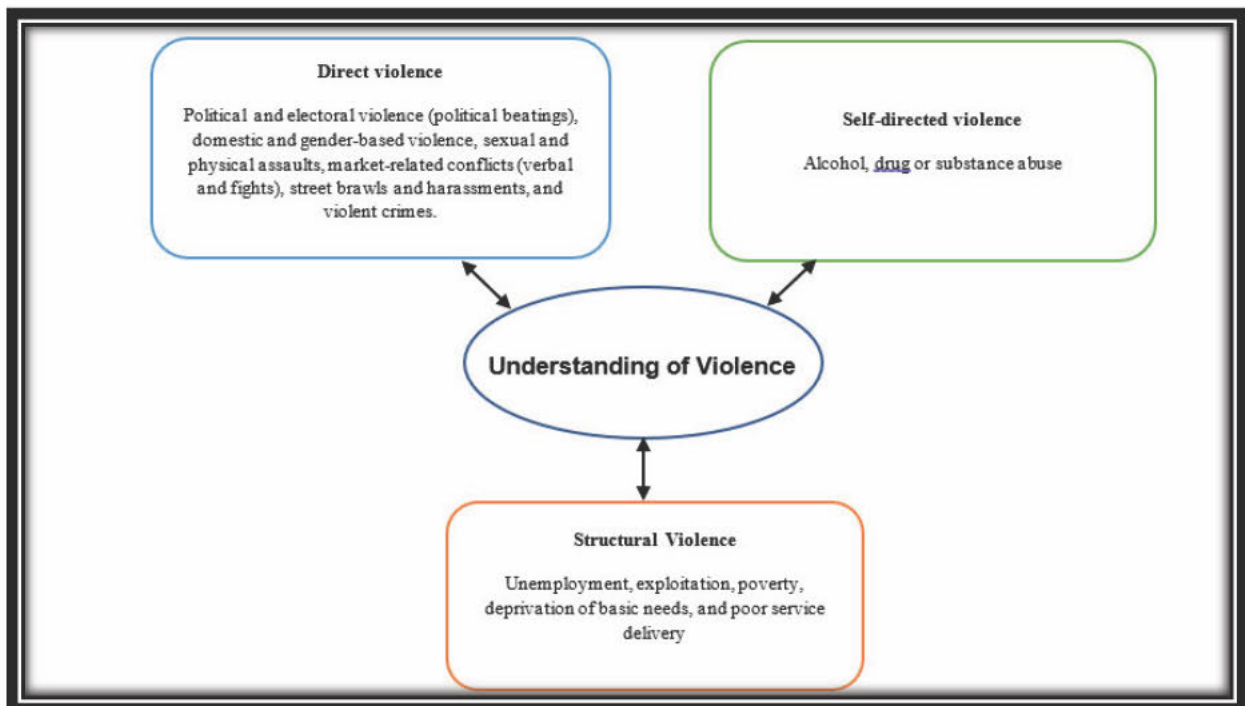
Understanding violence requires a thorough examination and consideration of the complex interplay of its constituent parts (Esposito & Standish 2015; Galtung 1969; 1990; 1996; OECD 2016). The opportunity to contemplate and learn about the commonalities between many violent acts is a valuable benefit to building peace. The dissection of the perspectives and views of participants was useful for investigating all the paradigms that describe the many manifestations of violence involving youth in Mbare. The findings revealed that youth violence exists in Mbare society both at the collective (whether sanctioned or not) and the individual level. As a result, it encompasses not only physical forms of violence like fights, domestic violence, political beatings/torture, or other types of abuse, but also economic and political forms of power and emotional forms of abuse. Galtung (1969; 1990; 1996) laid the groundwork for understanding the above and described diverse sorts of violence to aid in identifying these forms, which represent the varying manifestations of violence

among cultures. The study of peacebuilding requires an understanding of violence because it enables researchers and peace stakeholders to notice the required linkages that lead to identifying the underlying causes of conflict. Hence, the following themes help to reflect on how the participants conceptualised violence and the different forms of its manifestation among the youth in Mbare.

### 7.3.1. Understanding of violence

The study established that youth and the people of Mbare have a broad understanding of different forms of violence. Most of the participants demonstrated knowledge of what violence entails, not only in its direct form but also its structural and cultural forms. The participants provided their understanding of violence and offered several examples of the types of violence they dominantly witness and are most likely to experience daily in the community. The study found that violence in Mbare manifests in direct, self-directed, and structural forms (see Figure 7.3 below).

**Figure 7.3 :** Understanding Violence and its Forms of Manifestation in Mbare



Source: Author

### **7.3.2. Direct Forms of Violence**

Direct violence can have a wide range of horrific consequences, including, but not limited to, physical harm, emotional distress (as in the case of torture), and physical harm (as in the case of beatings and other forms of physical injury), and even death (Ahluwalia & Miller 2019; Galtung 1990; Johansen 2007). Researchers have identified several different types of direct violence, including domestic, community, and societal. The findings reveal that participants mostly defined violence in its direct form as an act of conflict, someone harassing or being harassed by other people, beating, or being beaten, involving force on others, and the abuse of self or others. One of the participants shared her understanding, saying,

I consider violence to be when someone is harassed, beaten, or forced to do what they do not want to do. We see different kinds of violence occurring every day here, people fighting, shouting at each other and all kinds of noises (Lisa, female, informal business owner).

Another participant who shared an almost a similar sentiment said,

I understand violence to involve harassment of other people and beating up of people (Musi, female, political leader and activist).

Overall, most participants associated the manifestation of violence by young people in Mbare with direct/physical/personal forms of violence, which include political and electoral violence (political beatings), police brutality, domestic and gender-based violence, sexual and physical assaults, and market-related conflicts (verbal disagreements and fights), street brawls and harassment, and violent crimes. These issues were consistently highlighted to be dominantly conceptualising direct forms of violence among the youths in Mbare.

### **7.3.3. Self-directed forms of violence**

While most participants associated violence with its direct physical form, which manifests in fighting and beating people, some participants associated youth violence in Mbare with other, self-directed, forms of violence. Abuse of alcohol, drugs, or other substances can be viewed as a type of self-directed violence, even if the intended victim is not the one who is being harmed (Saferspaces 2022). For instance, one participant said,

Violence I believe is the abuse of self and others. For example, abuse of drugs and fighting (Mukepekepe, male, political leader and activist).

Many participants attested how young people in Mbare are increasingly affected by alcohol, drugs, or substance abuse, leading to health hazards and violent behaviours in society.

#### **7.3.4. Structural forms of violence**

There is more to violence than meets the eye, as Galtung (1985; 1990) makes clear. Structural violence upholds and perpetuates a culture of violence, where exploitation, alienation, repression, marginalisation of people, and disintegration of society continuously occur, providing a setting that is harmful to the existence of peace because it will only remain unfavourable (Galtung 1990). The structural forces in society that contribute to violence are everywhere, as they aid in illuminating how social structures or institutions are harmful to individuals by denying access to basic livelihood needs, such as access to clean water, or preventing citizens from exercising basic rights. This explains why Galtung (2007) concluded that structural violence reflects the bigger picture, which reveals the conditions that cause and effect the manifestation of direct violence. Findings reflected that participants understood structural forms of violence that exist in Mbare, as they were able to conceptualise how structural forms of violence manifest. For instance, some participants provided a more structural understanding of violence and indicated that:

Violence is an act that violates the norms and values of a community or society ( Female, young community member, FGD1).

Another participant said,

Violence involves different things. However, besides the usual situations of fighting and beatings, it involves abuse of people denying them resources and opportunities (AT participant, Peacebuilding Workshop).

In the same vein, another participant emphasised that,

For me, violence is when people are structurally denied basic opportunities and are constrained to exercise their rights (Prev, male, religious leader).

A further understanding of how structural violence was identified to be manifest as a key violent form among the youth in Mbare is how there was a growing frustration due

to poor economic opportunities driving most of them into undesirable behaviours. For instance, Lynn clarified how the structural challenges, such as harsh economic downturns, forced many youths into sexual promiscuity. She said,

There is a growing exploitation of young people for sexual purposes. You know, sex work and the sugar mama and sugar daddy's syndrome, where young people are exploited for sexual purposes and put themselves at risk of infectious diseases. I think there is a growing frustration among young people that makes them more vulnerable to violence and being exploited in violent ways or for violent purposes (Lynn, female, civil society expert and leader).

### **7.3.5. Conceptualisation of Youth Violence**

The findings reveal that youth violence in Mbare is dominantly associated with political violence and social instability. Across the literature, the conceptualisation of youth violence is riddled with political and social violence determinants in the form of political militias, political and civil unrest, criminal behaviours, and interpersonal violence (Sukarieh & Tannock 2018; Ozerdem 2017). The conceptualisation of youth violence in Mbare reflected these sentiments and provided insight on how every occasion of youth violence often has deep-rooted connections to the community's political, social, and economic activities. For example, Lisa (female, informal business owner) provided a detailed insight into the informal institutionalisation of youth violence through politically aligned structures in social and economic spaces. Most participants shared how politically aligned youth oversee most taxi ranks and some informal trading spaces for food and clothing markets and harass anyone who does not follow their interests. The following was said:

Political violence is very dominant in Mbare. I say this because almost every business operation ranging from Combi [Taxi] ranks, Magaba, Mupedzanhamo or Musika [food and clothing marketplaces] around this community are largely controlled by party-aligned individuals. You do what they say and if you are identified as a member of opposition or you disagree with them, you are beaten, or your business space is taken from you. All these combi ranks you see are controlled by hwindi [Taxi conductors] who are ZANU-PF youth. They collect money there every day, and they are always harassing people (touting) in the road to board their taxis (Lisa, informal business owner).

Most participants associated the youth violence in Mbare with political issues based on the history of electoral and politically related violence and brutality in Zimbabwe as

a whole. For instance, one of the participants narrated how youth violence can be traced to the participation of young people as liberation war fighters in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chimurenga liberation struggle against the colonisation of Zimbabwe. He said,

Youth violence has a history; we need to understand the history of Zimbabwe first before we talk about youth violence. Violence started before independence, violence continued into independence and violence continued post-independence. And violence still continues in the post-independence processes (Lee, male, civil society and human rights expert).

It was also evident that most of the participants could not mention youth violence without reflecting on political violence. Jigzah (male, self-employed youth) highlighted that

The main thrust of youth violence in Mbare is political. Though there are other different types of violence which often happen in the streets and beerhalls mostly because of youth.

Rea (male, civil society expert) explained how the context of youth violence in Mbare, and Zimbabwe generally, cannot be divorced from the political environment where young people are trapped in a vicious cycle of the difficult socio-economic environment. This places youth at the mercy of those in political power for survival opportunities and helps to define the conceptualisation of youth violence as political, as Rea explained:

Because they [youth] have nothing to do, they have no money, so they are easily lured, so you can buy them a few things and give them opportunities for some freebies in exchange for them to do some political dirty work like violence, threatening people.

However, while most participants considered youth violence to be dominantly political, some indicated that youth political violence is seasonal and dominant during election periods only. They presented youth violence as mainly social. The study also established that youth violence is associated with various social violence instabilities in marketplaces, taxi ranks and communities, which include crime and mob violence, fighting, drug abuse and domestic violence. Hence, the findings reflected that:

Youth violence in Mbare involves a lot of things; I have often witnessed youths fighting for business spaces, control over taxi ranks and political differences (Musi, female, political leader and community activist).

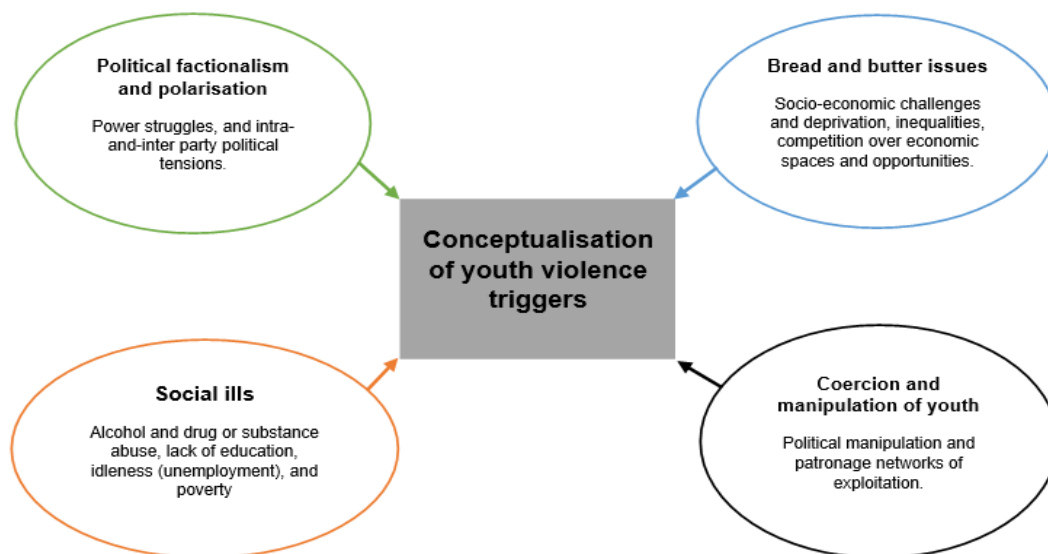
Furthermore, another participant emphasised the following:

Drugs, unemployment and poverty are the major causes of violence. These are key contributing factors to different conflicts such as fights, verbal abuse and domestic violence in this community. I would say political violence is seasonal, its highly common during elections but mostly quiet when the election period is over. But you will always hear some stories here and there but not much (Mukepekepe, male, political party leader).

#### 7.4. Theme 2: Triggers of youth violence

Numerous factors have been noted in the literature as important determinants of youth involvement in violent actions worldwide and in Zimbabwe. Scholars suggest that youth violence is often influenced by a lack of options for socio-economic and personal growth, or political issues, and some have concluded that such consequences are an act of desperation and dissatisfaction with societal livelihoods (Agbor, Taiwo & Smith 2012; Maina et al. 2012; Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; Bradfield 2018). However, while these highlights reflect critical issues influencing youth, the study findings confirm that youth violence in Mbare is dominantly linked to political and social challenges and socio-economic factors. Political factionalism and polarisation, “bread-and-butter” issues, social ills, and coercion and manipulation of youth are among the key factors identified as triggers of youth violence in Mbare.

**Figure 7.4:** Conceptual Map of the Triggers of Youth Violence in Mbare



Source: Author

#### 7.4.1. Political factionalism and polarisation

Political factionalism and polarisation are some major factors contributing to politically active youth involvement in violent practices. Wafawarova (2016) accurately described how members of political factions in the Zimbabwean context frequently go above and beyond simply voting in unison in favour of specific policies or regulations. Power struggles have been constantly witnessed over the years within the two major parties, the ruling ZANU-PF, and the opposition MDC-T, leading to mass expulsions and splits. Members of factions are often caught in a binding predicament that requires them to forego their own independent opinion and moral compass to support the predetermined policy stances of the faction's ruling elite. This becomes the breeding space for activities that often trigger most politically active youth into violence. Studies have revealed that factionalism and polarisation create and facilitate tensions, and in some instances even affect building or promoting peace (Chirambwi 2016). The study found that political factionalism and polarisation triggered and influenced youth violence in Mbare. For instance, one of the participants said,

The youth have been at the centre of this violence both as recipients and perpetrating violence in the country. The reasons are very clear and very simple. One, there is what we call intra-party violence when it comes to issues of politics. And then there is inter-party violence. Inter-party violence is mainly violence perpetrated between youth or people from different political persuasions. Then intra-party violence is the violence that mainly originates from within parties, for example, factionalism, where you have two or several factions. They use the youth as a conduit to perpetrate maim[ing], bea[ing]t, and kill[ing] for political expedience and for political reasons. So, factionalism has been at the centre of perpetrating and perpetuating violence in Zimbabwe, especially in mainstream politics (Lee, male, civil society and human rights expert).

Another participant shared how factionalism has been a dominant factor influencing youth violence in both intra- and inter-party political spaces in Mbare. He highlighted how major political parties were not spared from this vicious challenge and highlighted that:

There has been a lot of intra-party violence going on amongst most ZANU-PF youth around this community due to their district leadership elections. Despite the brutal violence occurrences carried out by the party youth, there was no single arrest made by the police. Last year [2018], in the MDC we had primary elections at two venues. Others were in Mbare and others at

Harvest House because whenever we would have them at one place, there would be vicious and violent confrontations amongst the youth and the police never made any arrests (Jamie, male, political leader and activist).

In confirmation of the above sentiments, one political youth leader gave a detailed narration, saying,

A few months ago, we had our intra-party structure elections; those who wanted to be voted for District Chair positions went about buying young people beer and giving them money to do anything necessary to see them elected. The situation was tense because fights kept on happening, a lot of party members were harassed. This is the danger which have seen in many cases in the past. There are some people within our party structures who thrive on violence, and they sponsor these young people to do their [violent] bidding (Skelo, male, youth political leader).

Thus, political factionalism and polarisation were identified as being among the key and dominating triggers of youth violence in Mbare.

#### **7.4.2. “Bread-and-Butter Issues”**

The phrase “bread-and-butter issues” is derived from several dictionary meanings; it is related to access to financial resources that provide the basic livelihood income to individuals, families or organisations. Though this phrase might have the same representation in the context of Mbare, it represents more personal issues and challenges that often define and influence the behaviour and choices of many young people in the urban community. Hence, the results identified that many challenges affect youth access to basic socio-economic livelihoods, and reflect how violent actions by young people in Mbare are in one way or the other linked to “bread-and-butter issues”.

Bread-and-butter issues have been at the root of violent demonstrations and revolutions led by young people across Africa (Bangura 2016). The political, social, and economic systems in which they operate are flawed, unjust, and unequal, making it hard for young people to survive through normal economic systems unless they are involved in unconventional methods of survival which are criminal and violent. Various scholars attest that young people are exposed and trapped in a *kiya kiya* (informal) economy which is mostly unregulated, illegal, and politicised (Jones 2010; Pswarayi 2020; Dodo 2018). This has put a lot of pressure on most young people trying to earn

a living by, it seems, any means necessary. For instance, in Mbare, young people are often roped into political and social violence activities to gain access to business opportunities, as indicated:

Youth get involved in other different conflicts fighting for business spaces, but this is mostly linked to politics because political parties at local level distribute and allocate places of business. Because most of the young people are desperate and vulnerable, they often compete against each other to impress their political leaders (Musi, female, political leader and community activist).

Another participant shared these same sentiments and emphasised,

I can tell you that most of the violence that has occurred in this country is linked to politics and economic issues. We can trace this to the war veterans' protests in the later 1990s which led to a huge pay-out for war veterans in 1997. We also witnessed the rapid land reform programme to socio-economically appease the war veterans and youth by the ZANU-PF regime. It's clear that every act of violence that has been taking place in this country is closely linked to political and economic issues of the country. I can take, for example, in Mbare, for you to survive in the Mbare informal market, you have to be aligned with the ruling party. This alone fuelled a lot of violent activities by youth for more than two decades (Prev, male, religious leader).

It was evident that due to the challenging economic environment in Zimbabwe, characterised by high unemployment, poverty and scant economic opportunities, most young people are willing to do anything for survival. As such, participants emphasised that in Mbare,

The challenge is that we have a critical mass of young people who are unemployed, with a majority of them educated, but no employment accessing [means] no means to survival, so politics becomes their only means for survival, so it is the politics of the stomach that will lead the youth to commit to political violence because they would want to smoke, they want to drink so whoever comes in with money or incentives, the youth are easily enticed and easily motivated to be involved in such barbaric and archaic practices (Lee, male, civil society expert).

The reflections highlight the web of complexity that interrelates youth involvement in violence and the "politics of the belly". Thus, while some young people during focus group discussions simply reiterated the adage "A hungry man is an angry man" (Young male in FGD3), they expressed how most manifestations of youth violence in Mbare are linked to bread-and-butter issues. The people's need to access economic

resources and put food on the table has been weaponised in both political and economic spaces in Mbare, leading to youth violence.

### **7.4.3. Social ills**

Scholars have highlighted that young people who grow up in violent and harsh social contexts often exhibit violent behaviour in their adulthood (Mtemeri & Mashavira 2019; Oosterom & Pswarayi 2014; WHO 2015). These contexts include abusive homes, witnessing violence, and extreme poverty. They argue that such environments result in extreme consequences of poor youth education or school dropouts, delinquent and violent behaviour, and drug abuse (Dodo, Mateko & Mpofu 2019; Pswarayi 2020). While a wide range of studies presents this psychological train of events, the findings from this study reveal that most young people in Mbare are idle, school dropouts, and poverty-stricken. They have increasingly resorted to abusing alcohol and drugs to supposedly “try and forget their problems” (Male business leader in FGD2). In most cases, the abuse of alcohol and drugs was identified as often resulting in the aggravation of violent, disturbing, and abusive behaviours that rattle the community. A civil society expert who has worked on post-violent youth rehabilitation programmes emphasised how the psychological burden of different social ills is easily triggered into violence when drugs and alcohol are added into the mix:

Added to that, we then have youth embedded with other social ills like alcohol and drug abuse because they are generally idle, they are easily drawn into the cycle of violence (Rea, male, civil society expert).

While the dominant narrative and justification for drug and alcohol abuse by young people is to “forget their worries”, it was evident that abuse of drugs and alcohol triggers violent behaviours, as one participant highlighted:

The other factors include drug abuse: most of these youth you see abuse alcohol, ngoma [Histalix cough syrup] or mbanje [marijuana] to forget their worries and they swear and speak foul language and fight when they are intoxicated. Prostitution is one of these sources of violence. Every week, young people are caught with other people’s wives or husbands. It’s really worrying, you know (Musi, female, political leader and community activist).

Another young female confirmed these sentiments, saying,

Drug abuse is one of the major causes [of youth violence] I can tell you about. Drugs seem to give these young people wings and aggravate their behaviour. When intoxicated by these drugs some shout at everyone, they harass people at taxi ranks and some go on to beat their wives or spouses (Charmie, female, young community member).

In the absence of critical social fabrics such as education, it becomes difficult in challenging times for most young people to foster personal agency and mould positive participation toward navigating resilient strategies to resources (Dodo 2018; Pswarayi 2020). Participants shared that most of the young people sitting idle in the community were “school dropouts” and had nothing else to do. Lee, a human rights expert, described these youth as “lumpens” because of their idle state of life; they spend most of their time sitting at community bridges smoking dagga and abusing drugs. Hence, there was wide agreement among participants that lack of education is one of the common characteristics among most violent youth:

Lack of education is the number one cause of violence, Vanhu vazhinji vanoita izvi havana kuenda kuchikoro saka mafungiro avo akadhakwa [Most people who perpetrate violence are not well educated, therefore, they have poor thinking capacity] (Lisa, informal business owner).

Another participant said,

Do you think all those involved in beating people and giving members of the opposition “short sleeves” and “long sleeves” [Maiming of people’s hands at the joints] were employed or educated people? Definitely not! If you are to come across those who were doing it now, they were school dropouts and are still begging around politicians trying to survive. We have a real problem because of these issues, and as long as poverty continues, we have a problem because crime will continue. Political-related violence will always be persistent (Cloud, male, informal business owner).

While other recent studies have highlighted low educational achievement as a high-risk factor with the potential to trigger youth into violence in most rural Zimbabwean districts (Dodo, Mateko & Mpofu 2019), urban communities such as Mbare are not spared.

#### 7.4.4. Coercion and manipulation of youth

With young people facing unimaginable socio-economic vulnerabilities, political parties have found it easy to create networks and patronages that place youth at their disposal. One political youth leader explained that:

Youths in Mbare are always running around with nothing to do. Things are tough for most young people around here because of unemployment and poverty. They need direction, and we must keep them in check or else they end up doing some crazy stuff [such as protests and demonstrations]; this is where we come in as youth leaders. In our party, we have come up with measures to help some of these young people to have business spaces to work from and give them responsibility at taxi ranks for a small income (Skelo, male, youth political leader).

Youths reflected that they enjoy different “perks” when aligned with a political party (mostly the ruling party). However, one young female political party activist lamented that enjoying politically related opportunities always comes with consequences:

Any party-related benefits come with conditions here. We are always at the mercy of those that have given us access to some opportunities. There is always a day when you are called to do some dirty stuff, and you cannot say no because you depend on their resources for survival (Female ZANU-PF youth activist, FGD1).

Difficult life situations often drive young people into these traps in which they usually end up participating in different forms of undesirable behaviour for survival. A human rights expert deciphered how these patronage systems work and how they often manifest:

The youth are disenfranchised, hungry, and wallowing in poverty. This has made them more vulnerable to control and mostly manipulation into political and electoral violence. In communities like Mbare, the politicians are the gatekeepers of all the prominent marketplaces and only give access to those politically aligned and loyal to their cause. With just a small bag of silver [money] most political elites have been using these youths to do their evil bidding to advance political interests (Lee, male, civil society and human rights expert).

Adding to these voices, a pastor who has been involved with youth leadership in Mbare and the greater parts of Harare traced the relationship between poor economic conditions and the political patronage of youth in the community. He emphasised that:

When young people are impoverished and unemployed, they become desperate. After going hungry for a while, they will be like wild dogs when given the opportunity to loot. The well-known National Youth Service [NYS] is a good example of how political patronage and manipulation by the elites hijacked the programme and took advantage of the poor and unemployed youth to serve their political interests (Male, church leader, FGD 2).

The extreme conditions of poverty experienced by most youths have been the foundation for political manipulation and radicalisation in Mbare. A study by Mhike traced how, throughout the 2000s, the ruling ZANU-PF party harnessed unemployed young people through the NYS to thwart opposition and gain social control in both rural and urban communities (Mhike 2018). These views complement a quantitative study by Maunga, Mugari and Tundu (2015), which revealed how vigilante groups such as *Chipangano* (translated as “Oath”) in Mbare were mobilised from unemployed youths. *Chipangano* youths utilised their ties to ZANU-PF and immunity to police arrests to engage in political vigilantism to mobilise resources and create economic opportunities in Mbare in other parts of greater Harare (Mutongwizo 2014; 2018). As reflected by Skelo above, and other participants, it was evident that the same patronage networks that the *Chipangano* group created are still evident, controlling youth activities by offering them access to some economic resources. Several youth participants reiterated the plight faced in the bid to survive the harsh political, social and economic conditions that affect them.

The political leaders (from both ZANU-PF and the MDC) gained the reputation of weaponising youth to leverage their intra- or inter-party leadership quests. One long-term serving political leader and activist in Mbare narrated that:

There are political candidates who push for violence to win elections. This is happening in both MDC and ZANU-PF camps. They pay youth, buy them beer and drugs and entice them to do whatever is necessary to win. This is the order of the day during election years and even in intra-party leadership contests (Jamie, male, political leader and activist).

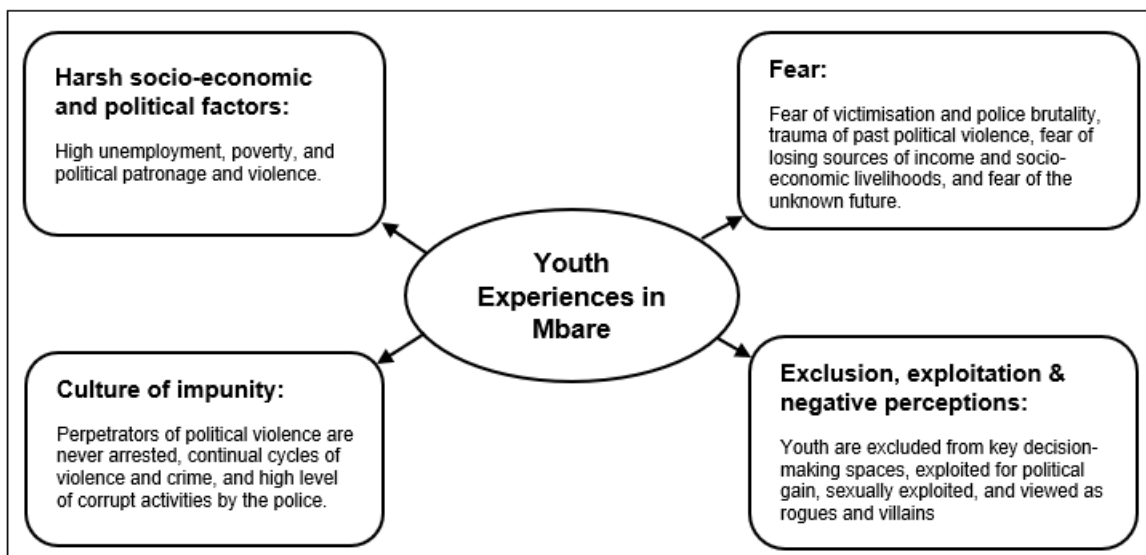
Several perspectives shared by youth resonated with these sentiments. Participants acknowledged how these divisive tactics thrive on the vulnerability of young people and prey on their need for daily bread; as such, youth remain vulnerable and trapped by the broken social security structures, which limit their options for survival support

structures. It is crucial to note that coercion and manipulation of youth still play a significant role in influencing youth participation in political violence in Mbare.

### 7.5. Theme 3: Youth Experiences in Mbare

The study found that young people are trapped in harsh political and socio-economic experiences, which often influence negative behaviour and attitudes. However, it was evident that most of the experiences surrounding youth in Mbare include harsh socio-economic and political experiences, fear, a culture of impunity, and exclusion, exploitation and negative perceptions.

**Figure 7.5:** Youth Experiences in Mbare



**Source:** Author

These experiences were identified as being aided by the politicisation of resources, lack of social security support, and poor commitment to peace and reconciliation by the authorities. The following presentations provide in-depth insight into the youth experiences which help to reflect on the existing gap in youth peacebuilding in Mbare.

#### 7.5.1. Harsh Experiences and the Negative Behaviour of Youths

Harsh economic experiences, such as high unemployment and poverty, have scarring effects on the youth’s mental and material well-being (McQuaid 2017). The experiences of youth in Mbare strongly reflect the social and psychological impact of

harsh economic conditions on the negative behaviour of young people. Kuda (male, community youth), a young man in his early twenties working in the informal sector, lamented,

As young people, we are experiencing high levels of unemployment and are exposed to many problems. I can tell you that most of the young people you see around are just doing what they think is good for their life. Many young people of my age I know are getting involved in anything just to get by – mostly dangerous things. You hear them saying “kusiri kufa ndekupi” [it’s a do-or-die situation].

Taku (male) explained,

Young people in this community are suffering. Employment is the basic foundation to which every young person should have access, but there is nothing. Some of us had to rely on the woodwork skills we acquired in our high school practical subjects to earn a little income to survive. In this kind of economy, most young people are involved in criminal activities just to get by.

The study revealed that young women are being exposed to regrettable indecent behaviours. For example, Charmie (female), a twenty-year-old, lamented:

For most of us young girls, it has become very challenging to maintain our decency under these extreme conditions of poverty and hunger. Sometimes you try to do everything possible the right way, but no one is willing to just help you for free in the society that we live in.

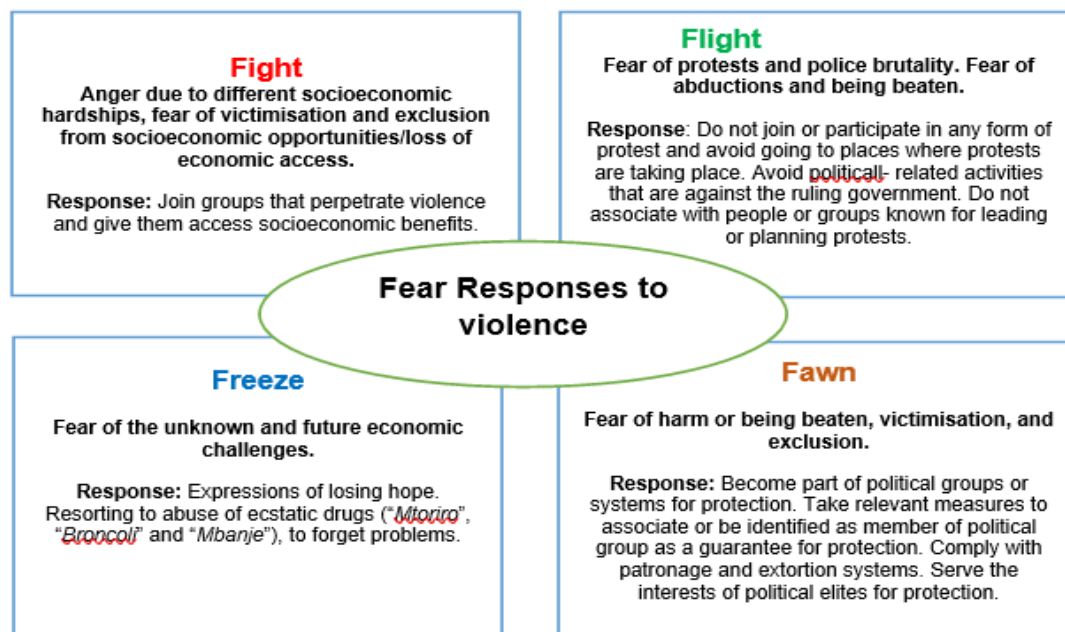
Violence, abuse of drugs and alcohol, prostitution and a high crime rate are behavioural patterns often identified with youth in most urban communities with a large population and high unemployment (Maunga, Mugari & Tundu 2015), and Mbare youths are no exception. The decline of economic conditions in Zimbabwe has reduced chances for a better future for young people. Narratives shared by participants on the life experiences of youths in Mbare reveal how the high social and psychological stress of poor socio-economic livelihoods has negatively impacted their behavioural choices. Most participants showed little hope or expectation for the future and reflected on how such experiences have led most young people to resort to heavy use of toxic and illicit drugs as a way of keeping themselves high and forgetting their problems. These youth experiences in Mbare are related to Pepper and Nettle’s (2017) behavioural constellation of deprivation, which provides a thorough explanation of how the structural and ecological factors of harsh or low socio-economic status influence

negative and violent behavioural manifestations. Such conditions have detrimental effects on peaceful livelihood in the community, as youth are exposed not only to self-destructive behaviours but to manipulation towards extremism.

### 7.5.2. Fear

Fear forms a critical part of the human experience; and it was evident how it has registered different responses and alerts in the minds of youths in Mbare. Marschall (2021) explains that fear triggers different quick behavioural responses toward decisions that are considered to ensure safety. She categorises these responses as fight, flight, freeze and fawn (Marschall 2021). Therefore, the study utilised these categories to illustrate the responses to the experiences of fear in Mbare.

**Figure 7.6:** Illustration of Fear Responses to Violence by Youth in Mbare



**Source:** Author

The explorations of this study identified that fear was being experienced in different categories by young people and the general community of Mbare. As highlighted in Figure 7.6 above, fear manifests in different ways.

#### ***Fight response to fear experiences***

Firstly, the fight response to fear experiences was illustrated to be dominant in influencing the behaviour of many young people. The fight response of fear manifests

in the form of anger, which is demonstrated through physical or verbal altercations. Marschall (2021 n.p.) clarifies that the fight response triggers the brain to try “to ward off danger by defeating it. If the danger is real and can be overcome with physical strength, this can be an effective tool to keep us safe. But when the perceived danger is not actually a threat, this can get us into trouble”. Results found that most young people involved in perpetrating violence manifest the fear triggered by the socio-economic challenges and the need to survive the incessant political turbulence known to linger in the community. The predatory nature of the political environment can be historically traced to political vigilante youth groups such as *Chipangano*. They were renowned for their involvement in political violence, extortion, and the seizure of market stalls, bus terminals, and public spaces while having the support of Mugabe’s ZANU-PF administration in Mbare and are a clear example of the factors influencing the experiences of fear (Maringira & Gukurume 2020). One participant said, “a hungry man is an angry man” (Last, male youth leader in FGD3), illustrating how the factors influencing the violent nature of most young people in the community are centred around socio-economic challenges.

The findings highlighted how political violence and an unstable socio-economic environment had led many youths to anger and were identified to be major experiences of fear triggering some young people into a fight response, leading to a cycle of violence. The results show that youth in Mbare are both violent offenders and victims. This being the case, it was discovered that most young people are entrapped in fear and use a variety of desperate measures to protect themselves. The researcher found that one of the major issues in their precarious socio-economic status is the fear of losing the benefits they have access to if they separate themselves from the patronage structures. Some politically- involved young people expressed their fear of becoming victims if they cut ties with the political establishment and its associated violence. Therefore, it remains preferable for some youths to be perpetrators rather than victims.

### ***Flight response to fear experiences***

Secondly, the flight response to fear experiences entails that the brain triggers an attempt to leave the potentially harmful area or situation quickly (Marschall 2021). The study revealed how fear guides young people’s different social interactions and

responses to different challenging issues. The findings showed how most young people live in fear of police brutality. One participant explained how young people are often targeted by police and soldiers following every protest to discourage them from participating in future protests. He said,

When there are protests like what has been happening due to the need for service delivery changes, it always ends in violence because police always begin to brutalise people to disperse the peaceful protests and sometimes people end up fighting back, resulting in serious injuries and sometimes death. When serious incidents like this happen, it affects every order of business, especially these informal businesses, because they are always suspected to be the ones mobilising protests, so the soldiers and police might come beating all young and middle-aged men here. It happened after the January protests against fuel increases; some of us had to run away and spend a week without coming to work here in Mbare (Peter, male, political leader & activist).

The findings reveal how young people have resorted to the fear response of avoiding protests and keeping away from places where protests are taking place, as a security measure to prevent falling victim to police brutality. Hence the participant further clarified:

People live in fear of violence, but it depends with the times and situations. If its election time, people know that anything can happen so [you] will find that people will be more afraid. If there are rumours of protests, you will find that others will not even come to work because we have a history of what happens when there are protests and we know what the police are capable of (Peter, male, political leader & activist).

### ***Freeze response to fear experiences***

Thirdly, the fear response of freeze suggests that one stays still or quiet until the danger passes. It was evident that some participants expressed how they suffer from social anxiety when they reflect on the past's violent social and political experiences. For instance, the study's findings illustrated that people who are known or suspected to be associated with opposition politics always live on alert and with fear of the unknown. Jamie, who has been a leader and activist in opposition politics, narrated how violent political tactics have been used as an essential tool for instilling fear among young people and the general citizens of Mbare. He said,

It is quite obvious to most of us to know that violence can happen at any time. You have to be alerted all the time if you are a member of the

opposition in this community and in most parts of the country. The history of the Chipangano brutal violence by youth is enough evidence to tell you that no one can ever say they are safe in Mbare because you never know what ZANU-PF youth are capable of. You never know who can just come after you because you are not safe even from the state security itself. We have had many incidences of people being abducted and beaten. So obvious we live in fear (Jamie, male, political leader and activist).

These insights reflect that, though people might be living in fear of the previous state and politically related violence, their fear increases when election time approaches.

In addition, the study results illustrated that most young people, especially those who are non-partisan, have a phobia of being involved in any form of violence or falling victim to political violence because of their neutrality in a highly polarised political environment. Hence, most of them confessed to being trapped and living in fear of the unknown. Some of the participants shared the following saying,

Violence is not a good thing. I don't like it, and I fear being involved. With the way things are going these days, anything can happen that makes everyone unstable. There is always that fear of the unknown. As a young man, I have a lot to live for, but the environment seems very unstable (Kuda, male, community youth member).

The everyday life challenges we face due to this poor economy make everyone afraid of tomorrow. No one knows how things will turn out because there is no hope (Peter, male, political leader & activist).

These comments highlight how the fear of most young people is dominantly driven by the uncertain socio-economic burdens, which confine them in fear of the unknown, whereby they feel trapped and suffocated. In some instances, it was evident that such experiences seem to trigger most young people into unpredictable behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse.

### ***Fawn response to fear experiences***

Lastly, fear has also trapped some young people in Mbare in a cycle of violence where they have to align with the interests of the perpetrators or make strides to be identified with them. Marschall (2021) explains this behavioural response as fawning, when one decides to please whoever is causing the fear to prevent harm from occurring to one. Gile, one of the young community members, explained how most young people in the

community, including herself, had taken ZANU-PF membership as a protection measure against any potential form of violence. She said the following:

From my point of view, people still live in fear, and it creates a lot of tension among community members. Most young people are ZANU-PF card-carrying members not by choice, but because they are trying to protect themselves from the potential violence that might come, so there is a precedence of violence which is not good at all (Gile, female, community youth member).

Other participants shared similar sentiments in FGD2, clarifying how:

The only way you can protect yourself as a young person from all the political threats is to be a card-carrying member. That gives you at least peace to do what you want to do in this community (Yala, male, FGD2).

The violent threats and occurrences that dominate the history and activities in Mbare have driven youth to respond in different ways. The experiences presented in this section provide insight into how the experiences of fear have triggered different reactions.

### ***Reflections on fear***

Young people's fears were broken down into categories: historical violence fear, police brutality and victimisation fear, economic exclusion fear, and fear of the unknown (despair). The results indicate the psychological burden that political and electoral violence has taken on the people of Mbare. It was clear that the political violence and the severe socio-economic challenges had a negative impact on people's mental health. A person's social and political environment offers substantial protection against the psychological effects of exposure to political violence (Sousa 2013). Most people still feel frightened and apprehensive when it comes to participating in social and political life due to the fear of past tragedies of political and electoral violence. The majority of respondents stressed the need for extreme caution and care while having conversations about politics.

In addition to the researcher's own conversations with participants, interactions with them also revealed the participants' experiences of fear. For instance, two participants expressed that they could not stomach the audio being captured because it might end up in the hands of state security. In addition, some prospective subjects declined to

participate in the study and were forthright enough to admit that they did so out of fear of being victimised for taking part in a study that looked into politically sensitive issues. According to Young (2018), these kinds of behavioural signs of dread are a blatant demonstration of the terrifyingly repressive methods that are frequently used by authoritarian governments to crush dissent. The complexity of political activities in Mbare spans and interacts with young people in a highly polarised environment governed through structural violence frameworks influenced by patronage along party lines. Thus, most young people feel pressured into a corner where they live in fear of different political, social and economic instabilities that they have no control over.

### **7.5.3. The Culture of Impunity**

There is a long history of youth violence in Mbare that can be traced back to the 1980s. Findings revealed that most of the violence in the community is electoral and politically motivated; this is also confirmed by other studies (Mude 2014). Though evidence reveals a long history of youth violence in the community, there has never been any form of rehabilitation and reconciliation among perpetrators and victims of violence. Key informants and youths interviewed revealed how there has never been a case of arrest for perpetrators of political violence in the community, especially those belonging to the ruling party. Rea (male, civil society expert) explained how the lack of proper rehabilitation platforms among the Mbare youth is a serious challenge that has promoted a culture of impunity. One participant narrated their experience of violence and impunity:

Honestly, the police are not usually available to help in any way if the nature of violence is political. I can tell you that the police will arrest criminals involved in all kinds of things but not perpetrators of political violence. If victims of political violence go report to the police, they are sent away; this is a trend. I know of many people who have been serious perpetrators of violence here. I know of someone who is nicknamed "Riot" because of their violent behaviour demonstrated since the 2008 elections. My very own place of business was terrorised and destroyed by this individual. The sad reality is that police never arrest any of these perpetrators of violence (Lisa, female, Informal business owner).

In addition, the study's findings highlighted corruption as one of the leading factors sustaining violence with impunity. Participants emphasised the challenge of corruption and how it is increasingly creating room for violent perpetrators of any sort in the

community to go free. The participants revealed how corruption had created many loopholes for violent perpetrators of domestic or sexual abuse and other well-known criminal activities to go unpunished in the community. One of the participants revealed the following:

There is too much corruption in our law enforcement authorities. Those involved in drugs are sometimes in cahoots with the police officers who also supply drugs to these local drug dealers for money. So, violence is common among drug abusers, but nothing is done (Mukepekepe, male, political leader and activist).

Another participant further clarified how corruption is happening and sustaining youth violence experiences:

The authorities are always trying ... because it's their job, but the truth of the matter is they fail because most matters of violence are political and also because the system is highly corrupted. Most perpetrators are not arrested for long, and justice never takes place because they are protected by some senior political party member, or they pay the police (Cloud, male, informal business owner).

The findings highlighted how the culture of impunity remains one of the critical experiences sustaining violence in Mbare.

#### **7.5.4. Exclusion, Exploitation, and Negative Perceptions**

Exclusion, exploitation, and negative perceptions (EENP) are some the major experiences surrounding youths in Mbare. The findings established how young people are excluded from key decision-making spaces, exploited by the political elites, and are suffering from stigmatisation through negative perceptions in the community. The youth participants highlighted that though they might be committed and willing to participate toward positive initiatives within the community, they are often weighed down by their frequent exclusion from key decision-making spaces, even when decisions are being made on matters that directly impact their welfare. The marginalisation, exploitation, and negative perceptions against them make their experiences in different societies more difficult to deal with.

##### ***Exclusion***

Exclusion from important decision-making spaces such as key social and political leadership positions as councillors, members of parliament, boards of directors in key

government structures or any mainstream leading roles in political parties, municipalities, or government was identified to be affecting young people. Studies reveal that young people rarely receive support from adults towards engaging in any leadership or development activities and are often kept on the peripheries of community development initiatives (Mortensen et al. 2014; Rogers 2006). The participants highlighted how youth violence in Mbare is increasingly sustained by keeping young people on the peripheries of power and decision-making, where they have to struggle for recognition by the political elites. One of the participants said,

These young people are never included in mainstream politics, they are manipulated and are told that you are the vanguard of the party. But what is a vanguard without real influence in decision-making, money or proper source of income? They are deceived and manipulated for a few cents for drugs, beer and [a] few regalia and that's it, they are muscles for life (Mhofu, male, informal business owner).

Another participant shared the following perspective:

Young people in this country have been ignored for a long time. They must be acknowledged that they are there and given key roles in government. There must be strict policies which support young people's businesses, dreams, and ideas. This will help reduce some of these problems, because the young people in power will advance initiatives that resonate with their generation (Prev, male, church leader).

Another participant in the FGD1 clarified that:

Youths are often considered to be voiceless and are never given an opportunity to raise any voice, as most of our leaders believe that young people have no ideas and their duty is to follow what the elders say (Paddy, male, political party youth member, FGD1).

The findings reveal that young people are not only excluded from key decision-making spaces, but also from legitimate business spaces. They are mostly relegated to compete and contest for informal market spaces and taxi industries, where political patronage networks take precedence, and lack any form of influence beyond informal spaces. Similar sentiments of disenfranchisement of youth have been noted in Masvingo's high density suburb of Muccheke, where their relegation to informal activities has made them feel unvalued and incapacitated and that their only role is to help the political elites to achieve their goals (Rukuni et al. 2017). These issues explain

how exclusion of youths is one of the most sensitive experiences affecting positive peace participation of young people in the community of Mbare.

### ***Exploitation***

Young people are a peculiar demographic group that is susceptible to being lured by prospects and promises. In Mbare, most of this group lack the economic resources and relevant social capital needed to stand on their own and choose their own path. Chirisa, Maphos, Mandaza-Tsoriyo and Matamanda (2019:100) highlight how “politicians like the elite take advantage of this missing link in their self-definition and self-determination towards exploitation, abuse and creation of dependency syndrome”. The study found that young people are being exploited in different ways due to poverty, unemployment, and continuous socio-economic deterioration in the country. One of the civil society experts highlighted the social and political nature of the exploitations being experienced by the youth. She explained that:

There’s a growing, exploitation of young people for sexual purposes. So most young people are trapped in “unwanted” sex work, and mostly involved in the sugar mama and sugar daddies syndrome, where young people are exploited for sexual purposes and put themselves at risk of communicable diseases as a result. There is also a growing kind of frustration among young people that makes them more vulnerable to violence and being exploited in violent ways or for violent purposes (Lynn, female, civil society leader and peacebuilding expert).

The participants revealed how sexual and political exploitation are some of the key leading factors being experienced by young people in Mbare. Studies indicate that the vulnerability of young people both socially and economically exposes them to differential power with “sugar daddies” and “sugar mummies” for sexual purposes (Kuate-Defo 2004; Mlyakado & Li 2021). One of the participants explained the sexual exploitation of young people as “extreme sexual affairs”, where girls are the most common victims (Prev, male, church leader). Furthermore, in most cases of conflict and cyclic election violence, it has been realised that young women fall victim to further sexual exploitation in the form of rape and different forms of sexual abuse and manipulation (Jonga 2013; Mutongwizo 2014; Mutongwizo 2018; Rukuni et al. 2017). Addressing these societal problems requires strategic engagements that strengthen the role of youth in sustainable peacebuilding. These challenging outcomes of the

socio-economic issues experienced by youth remain the biggest enabler of occurrences that sustain exploitative practices of structural and direct forms of violence in the community.

### ***Negative perceptions of youth***

Youth have been predominantly branded as “trouble” and as people who cause social challenges and moral panics (Azunna 2018). Ozerdem (2017) argues that across societies many people often have a bad impression of young people and see them more as potential troublemakers and perpetrators of political and social violence than as future leaders and peacebuilders. The findings established that the youth “brand” in Mbare is highly tainted. The dominant narratives from some participants labelled youth as perpetrators of violence, disenfranchised, easily enticed, hungry, and vulnerable. As one participant succinctly highlighted,

“Youth are always at the forefront of violence, I don’t know if it’s the problem of being young” (Mukepekepe, male, political party leader and activist).

Most youth participants also reflected that they are always looked upon and regarded people who are unfocused,

As young people we are often looked down upon, and our efforts and views are always crushed. It’s not something that just happens in society in general, it happens in our families, it happens in political organisations and even on social media. The narratives about youths are always negatives (AT participant).

A civil society expert and peacebuilder who has been working with young people for over two decades detailed how the demonisation of youth is highly consistent, such that it frustrates some positive efforts they seek to engage in. She narrated one of the experiences shared by young people in Mbare and other parts of Harare when they were conducting peacebuilding reflection programmes:

In our reflection day programmes that we interact and discuss with young people, we discovered that youth struggle in terms of livelihood opportunities, but also in terms of having a meaningful role in their community. When some of these young people start to talk to us, they share about how they are being sort of demonised in the community. So, they are perceived to be a problem. They’re perceived to be the source of violence in the community. They are perceived to be the source of tension and conflict in their community. Um, and that’s what they really felt was a frustration: that

they are seen as the problem and not as part of the solution (Lynn, female, civil society expert and peacebuilder).

Although young people are frequently portrayed negatively as reckless, undisciplined, and unruly, one should remember that they are the products of their surrounding environments. The political and socio-economic set-up in Mbare sustains violence as a governance mechanism to access spaces and resources, trapping young people in the negative lines of peace participation. Hence, most participants could not divorce their negative perceptions of youth from the political and socio-economic conditions they are experiencing in the community.

## **7.6. Peacebuilding Efforts**

Implementing peacebuilding in any community requires a moral engagement with holistic approaches that are contextual in addressing specific issues that might be limiting to the realisation of sustainable positive peace in any community (Lederach 2005). Findings in Mbare revealed that peacebuilding efforts are almost non-existent, and in cases where they are highlighted, they remain extremely precarious. The dominant views shared by participants indicated that traumatic wounds of past violent experiences remain unaddressed, promised efforts towards reconciliation and peacebuilding by state institutions are yet to materialise, and the maintenance of peace through law and order is highly tainted by corruption and brutality by state security forces.

### **7.6.1. Lack of Efforts towards Peace and Addressing Violence**

Despite the existence of laws, there is lack of enough support towards addressing youth violence in Mbare. Some of the participants are convinced that peacebuilding efforts in Mbare are bound to fail, mainly because government authorities (who are supposed to promote peace and maintain law and order) are politicised and highly corrupt. One of the participants shared his concern and said,

The authorities are always trying ... because it's their job, but the truth of the matter is they fail because most matters of violence are political and because the system is highly corrupted. Most perpetrators are not arrested for long, and justice never takes place because they are protected by some

senior political party member or they pay the police (Cloud, male, Informal business owner).

Another participant emphasised the following:

Police never show up to address inter or intra-party violence. There is now a special branch of law and order who are now involved in addressing these issues of violence. This has helped in minimising? violence practices (Musi, female, political and community leader).

Most of the young people felt that there is lack of determination by the government towards setting up peacebuilding measures such as those of rehabilitating the youth and promoting reconciliation programmes to address the violence of the past. They expressed their concern, saying,

Reconciliation and peace are possible when the government is determined, and the people are willing. But it seems our government has no interest in that. (Taku, male, young business owner).

Most of the young people registered their disappointment in the police, labelling them as “useless”, “toothless” and “corrupt” when it comes to handling perpetrators of violence and ensuring promotion of peace.

### **7.6.2. Youth Peace Programmes in Mbare**

The study found that most of the peace-related work in Mbare is being conducted by non-profit institutions such as churches, NGOs, and civil society. Young people in Mbare indicated how they have turned to relying more on non-profit institutions in addressing various social challenges such as violence and drug abuse. One of the participants explained,

There are some support services from NGOs. We had a YES program for young people, but it's gone now. There is “Youth In Action” which is being run by the Roman Catholic Church. It focuses on addressing community challenges affecting young people, they have been involved in cleaning the community and addressing a lot of youth challenges such as drug abuse and violent behaviours (Jigzah, male, youth leader).

Moreover, the study established that civil society organisations such as the Counselling Services Unit (CSU) are also involved in the rehabilitation of victims of violence. One of the civil society experts who has been involved in the CSU rehabilitation programmes expressly indicated that they discovered that most young

people are trapped in the cycle of violence due to high unemployment and drug abuse. Therefore, as a result,

Civil society in Zimbabwe is working to prevent violence through conscientisation programmes where high-impact human rights trainings are being conducted (Rea, male, civil society expert).

While such programmes were mentioned as being conducted by the civil society at national level and in communities such as Mbare, most participants had never been involved in any rehabilitation and reconciliation programmes.

### **7.6.3. National Peace Strategies and Wounds of the Past**

While NGOs and civil societies were identified as engaging in some peace-related work, efforts from the state were indicated to be close to non-existent. Some of the participants outlined that while they had heard of national healing programmes following the Global Political Agreement of 2009 and the creation of the Chapter 12 institutions such as the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), they have never witnessed any of the mandates taking place in the community. The participants said,

After the 2008 election violence, the GNU government formed COPAC to promote the message of peace. They told us that there will be healing workshops, but they never happened here in Mbare. We have a lot of people who were injured and affected during those times. It's important to have reconciliation and peace: Zvinoita kuti vanhu vawadzane [It promotes good fellowship amongst people] (Musi, female, political and community leader).

Another participant reflected as follows:

There has never been any form of reconciliation or forgiveness in this community. All the national stories of healing and reconciliation never reached the real victims in different communities across the country, I think it was all for show (Lisa, female, Informal business owner).

These sentiments were also confirmed in FGDs as participants revealed the following:

There is a lot of political violence that takes place here [Mbare]. The violence has history, takangokura tichiinzwa, tikazozvionera and zvinogara zvichiitika (We grew up hearing about it [political violence], we have also witnessed it, and now we see it happening every now and then). But there has never been a form of intervention or healing program to help people heal from this

history of violence. It quite traumatic you know (Male, community youth, FGD1).

We last heard about peace and healing during the GNU. And we know there is a commission on peace and reconciliation, but we have never seen them doing anything here, yet violent activities are always taking place every time (Male, civil society, FGD 2).

The findings revealed that the absence of rehabilitation or any form of reconciliation efforts following tragic violent experiences in the community has plunged most youth and the community into a state of fear of the unknown. Most participants relayed their traumatic experiences of the past political and electoral violence. There were indications that though they want to break away from the past, they felt trapped and suffocated by different unaddressed structural conditions sustaining cycles of violence within the community. Lee (male, civil society and human rights expert) explained that with efforts toward reconciliation and peace being pushed at a national level, “the biggest problem in local communities is failure to address issues of the past”. The results indicated that there is a need to engage the youth on their traumatic experiences and in healing peace initiatives. Prev (male, church leader) gave an insightful narrative on the lack of reconciliation platforms:

I remember in 2008 when the Global Political Agreement (GPA) was organised there was a period of reconciliation and issues of national healing programmes were even advertised on TV and radio. However, this only lasted for a short period of time. I know a lot of young people who were involved as violent perpetrators but have never been involved in any reconciliation programmes though they are regretting their actions.

It is evident that the wounds of the past and the lack of reconciliation and rehabilitation remain some of the critical challenges that are affecting the realisation of youth peacebuilding in Mbare. Furthermore, the findings from the action research offer additional valuable insights that highlight the crucial significance of peace and reconciliation initiatives. For instance, one participant from the action team highlighted the importance of peace and reconciliation efforts in the community, saying,

Peace programmes especially, those on healing and reconciliation help to shape new relationships that can be the platform for addressing old wounds and close gaps for any future violence where people might try to settle scores from the past (AT participant).

The perspectives shared by the participants shed light on how these programmes contribute to community healing and the development of new relationships. The participants' expression of these new dynamics provides a solid basis for addressing historical grievances and preventing the continuation of violence stemming from previous conflicts. Kabwete (2018) emphasizes the transformative potential of reconciliation in post-conflict settings, particularly in mitigating the cycle of violence and trauma. This perspective aligns with the findings of this research, where the active engagement of youth in peace processes emerges as a pivotal element. The lack of progress in reconciliation efforts, especially among younger generations who are at risk of inheriting and perpetuating cycles of violence, can significantly impede the journey towards lasting peace. Thus, it is imperative to advance reconciliation measures that resonate with the youth, enabling them to transition from being carriers of historical trauma to architects of a peaceful future. This approach is not only a necessity for healing but also a strategic investment in breaking the cycle of violence, thereby fostering sustainable peace and stability in post-conflict societies.

#### **7.6.4. Ad hoc Peacebuilding Programmes**

The study realised that short-term peace initiatives can be a critical and long-term challenge to the future of youth peacebuilding in Mbare. While the engagement of peace initiatives in any form can be highly recommended, several participants indicated having lost trust and faith in some NGOs and researchers due to ad hoc programmes that would come and gather information, set up short-term projects and leave without establishing any long-term initiatives that help those involved to have a more sustainable outcome than before. Participants said the following:

How I wish we had proper long-term programmes that can help address youth and development issues especially challenges such as unemployment and violence. You see most NGOs though they help, they just come for a short period of time. In most cases, it's just about donations and food with no training or something that can equip us to address our everyday issues you know (Female, community youth, FGD3).

Another participant emphasised,

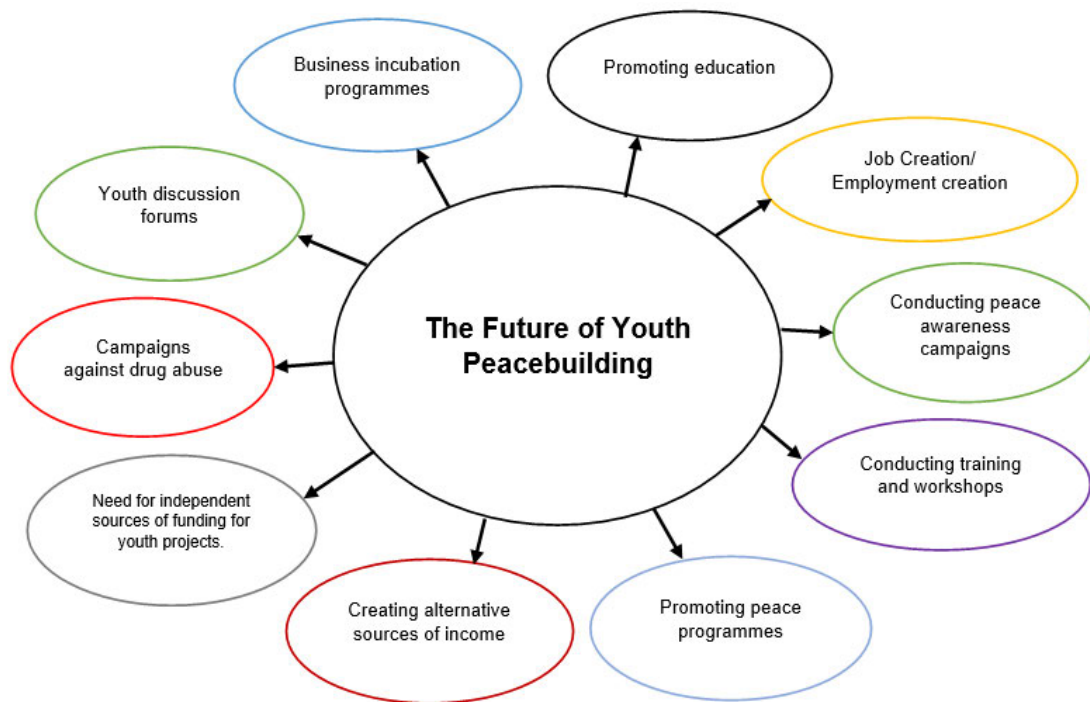
We have seen different NGOs coming and calling for the youth. We would go and they tell us that they are here to help, but in most cases, they are never actually interested in hearing our key issues (Male, community youth, FGD4).

It was evident that while some were more specific in their expectations of sustainable youth peacebuilding, others were sceptical on issues relating to research and non-profit work conducted on a short-term basis, because these only seek to “tick project completion boxes” without engaging in any sustainable initiatives. With the conducting of training workshops and peace awareness campaigns, the knowledge gained about peacebuilding, social entrepreneurship ideas and youth advocacy was identified as being practical and beneficial toward personal growth and addressing community issues. Some participants who were sceptical before, commented how the knowledge gained would be useful for them in planning and organising initiatives that can be of value to the community.

## **7.7. The Future of Peacebuilding in Mbare**

The study revealed that the participants' ideas on the future of youth peacebuilding in Mbare were diverse. According to the results, the main causes of youth violence in Mbare are found to be of a political and socioeconomic nature. Thus, participants emphasised the importance of promoting economic alternatives, raising awareness about peace, developing alternative education and knowledge sharing platforms, and sharing expertise as part of future community peacebuilding efforts.

***Figure 7.7: Mind Map of Participants' Views on the Future of Youth Peacebuilding***



**Source:** Author

Figure 7.7 above presents a mind map on the different views shared by participants as suggestions towards the future of youth peacebuilding in Mbare.

### 7.7.1. The Need for Education

A consensus reached amongst participants was that availability of proper educational opportunities that can provide practical and business skills could contribute towards reducing youth involvement in violence. For instance, Taku (male, informal business owner) reflected how the woodwork skills he attained during his high school days proved to be important in navigating the socio-economic challenges, as he used them to build his informal furniture-making business and generating some income. He narrated how that opportunity shielded him from participating in the different social ills causing most youth of his age to be trapped in brutal political, social, and economic cycles of violence for survival. These sentiments reflect on the value of shaping the education of young people in Mbare, and how it can change the trajectory of peacebuilding in the community.

Participants further revealed the importance of engaging in peace education through workshops, programmes, and awareness campaigns that conscientise young people

about the negative challenges of violence. One of the participants had the following to say:

There should be some education on the negative challenges caused by violence. If such kind of education is given, it can be the best platform for youth in this community to start working towards a peaceful future (Gile, female, young community member).

Another participant, a church leader, shared the same sentiments, saying,

There are a lot of things that have to be done, including extensive community education for peace and education in general. Those that are not well-educated are often the ones that are influenced into barbaric activities of violence. Civil societies such as churches and government [should] create spaces for shaping and mentoring young people (Prev, male, church leader).

Most of the participants were of the view that education is the vehicle for promoting positive thinking and transforming the mindsets of young people towards a more peaceful engagement within the community.

#### **7.7.2. Need for Alternative Income Sources**

It is significant to underline that alternative and independent networks of sustainable income-generating projects and initiatives are required if the future of youth peacebuilding in Mbare is to become a reality. Several young people indicated their unwillingness to cut ties with the patronage networks that provide them with sources of income in the name of peace without any tangible independent economic alternatives. One of the participants explained,

You see, it difficult to talk about peace when the stomach has no food, and you don't have clothes to wear. While I want peace and [it's] a good image, it's not going to put food on the table. So, we have to be active in some of these political networks of ours even though it's violent sometimes, but that's where we have access to tables [informal business spaces for street vending] and some source of income, you know (ZANU-PF Cell Youth leader in FGD2).

The findings reflected that some of the youth lacked faith in the possibility of youth participation in peacebuilding programmes without sustainable economic projects and funding. They claim that in an environment like Mbare, where informal business spaces are accessed and negotiated through patronage networks and political ties,

such initiatives would make a difference in providing alternative socioeconomic platforms. With this, the political networks would no longer have a monopoly on shaping the norms and values of the community's youth. One participant explained,

Most of these market spaces [Informal businesses] you see around belong to politically aligned people, and mostly those who are ZANU-PF youth and a few MDC youth because they have [a] few councillors in power. If you are to benefit you must make sure that you are participating in party issues. I now have access to a few tables, and I am earning a decent living because I had to be actively involved with the party. It's difficult to think otherwise in an economy like this, if you do not have access to a decent job or business opportunity that is stable (Female, ZANU-PF youth member, FGD1).

It is apparent that if there are no viable alternatives to these patronage income networks, most young people would rather maintain their various violent and political survival ties. Hence, although they are aware of the structurally violent nature of these systems, an increasing number of young people are seeking to be card-carrying member of political parties in order to join these networks. Thus, some participants strongly recommended that sustainable youth peacebuilding can only be viable if employment or business projects are created. For instance, one of the participants said,

Young people need proper employment opportunities. There should be projects by the state – even digging trenches for the city council – to develop this community. If people are employed, they never get involved in all these violence activities (Taku, male, young informal business owner).

Participants were largely of the that view that development of businesses for the youth, employment/job creation, and creating alternative sources of income through incubation projects would help to reduce the challenges of youth violence and channel more young people toward peaceful choices. Thus, their pictured future of youth peacebuilding would involve broader economic strategies and socioeconomic solutions for the youth in Mbare as the entry point. These shared sentiments soundly resonate with Collier (2004) and Bangura (2015)'s studies which indicate that poor socio-economic conditions in any post-conflict or violent community are a danger to any measures towards sustainable peacebuilding.

### **7.7.3. Hope**

The findings reveal that despite some of the horrible experiences of brutality and violence that young people, and the Mbare community at large, have faced and are still facing, there remain high hopes towards effective peacebuilding measures. Some of the participants were of the view that in the post-Mugabe era the political environment has shifted for the better and become more tolerant, saying,

I think things have changed and conflict can be resolved. Political violence particularly has been silenced, I believe because of the neutrality reconciliation and peace can have a chance. I can give you an example about myself, I was victimised because I bought a red BMW [red was considered to be a political symbol for the opposition party]. I was taken and beaten. I only survived because I ran to the police. The youth that beat me, we are working together here in Magaba. Of course, we have a history, but we have learnt to work together. Some of them have gone mad because they killed a lot of people in 2008 and others have converted to church which means they have changed their ways (Mhofu, male, informal business owner).

The insights from these findings reveal that if peacebuilding is intentionally engaged, the hope that exists across communities can be channelled towards sustainable peacebuilding efforts. For instance, the participation of young people in the training workshops and the awareness campaign revealed that the exposure of youths to peacebuilding programmes can help facilitate positive peace engagement of youth in Mbare and across society. One of the participants in the training workshop said:

If young people are exposed to more programmes and initiatives like this, we can be equipped to address the violence problem in our community (Training Workshop Participant).

The findings reveal that the hope for sustainable youth peace that exists in Mbare can be strengthened through intentional peacebuilding efforts that engage youth.

### **7.7.4. Spreading the message of peace**

There was a consensus among participants that the message and idea of peace is often disenfranchised in the political space. Some of the participants were of the view that if the message of peace is really engaged frequently, it will promote a positive attitude. For instance, one of the participants indicated how the spreading of the

message of peace by key political stakeholders played a critical role in reducing the challenge of violence following the 2008 violent elections. He had the following to say:

Yes, the government pushed the aspect of reconciliation following the 2008 election violence. In the 2018 election the party candidates and leaders from both sides tried to spread the message of peace and it helped. I can say that it helped a lot in bringing sanity and there has been some changes though violence incidents occurred (Jamie, male, political leader and activist).

Another participant was of the view that relevant measure to promoting future peace would require key government stakeholders, such as law enforcement agencies, conducting community forums and awareness campaigns towards promoting peace. The participant explained,

I think people can be willing to engage in resolving these violence and conflict challenges if relevant authorities like the police are also positively leading in encouraging peace, visiting communities and educating on the importance of peace; it boosts confidence and trust. I believe it can be done (Petro, male, political youth leader).

Furthermore, one civil society expert and peacebuilder (Lynn) shared a wealth of experience on how her years of peacebuilding and rehabilitation of youth have helped her to understand that there are different ways to try and reach young people to promote and build sustainable peace. She highlighted the critical need to identify unique angles that resonate with young people of the target community. Hence, she suggested that promoting pro-peace initiatives to engage young people can be done through different campaigns that might include cleaning campaigns, intergenerational workshops between the old and young people, sports and culture days, drama, and youth dialogues. The findings revealed that spreading and planting the seeds of peacebuilding among youths requires flexibility and innovative engagement that resonate with their local needs and opportunities and that attract them as primary stakeholders. For instance, the participants found the discussion forums and training workshop useful and eye-opening in approaching real-life situations. The participants attested that the workshop helped them to understand their community challenges and guided them to express themselves regarding measures they can engage in tackling the problem of violence, as reflected in the surveys and interviews conducted. They considered the new knowledge learned through the training workshop to have unlocked ideas and the capacity to organise themselves.

### **7.7.8. Social Entrepreneurship as a Youth Peacebuilding Tool**

The findings of the study established that social entrepreneurship is a relevant approach for promoting youth peacebuilding in Mbare. The participants revealed that young people in Mbare are drawn to violence due to different issues mainly due to socio-economic issues which expose them to different vulnerabilities (Mutongwizo 2018; Mhike 2018). Hence, the participants felt that social entrepreneurship can create platforms that can facilitate access to finance and credit, promote skills and training, and provide mentorship and guidance leading to sustainable youth peacebuilding outcomes.

#### **Leveraging social capital to raise finance and credit.**

The participants reflected that one of the key challenges affecting young people in Zimbabwe is lack of access to finance and credit. According to Mutenga and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2021) this is a significant barrier to the success and sustainability of social enterprises in Zimbabwe. One of the participants revealed that,

As young people we have no employment, and we don't know what a payslip is. Even if I want to start something, I don't know where I can get any money. At least if there are opportunities whereby, we can be organised as young people to put some ideas and plans together, there might be a better solution to raise capital. Otherwise, without that, we will always be at the mercy of our political leaders who never hesitate to call in a favour for their few cents they give (Female, Community youth, FGD 2).

It is evident that young people have no disposable income and do not have any access to finance and credit which exposes them to manipulation and abuse. However, the findings also reveal that there is an opportunity for social entrepreneurs to mobilise and facilitate self-organisation amongst the youth in the community and perhaps harness the advantages of social capital in building relevant funds and social ventures that can help address some socio-economic challenges. Several studies confirm to the sentiments and reveal that the organisation of social entrepreneurs is critical in facilitating and organising people to collaboratively work with various stakeholders such as government agencies and civil society organizations at formal and informal levels to create sustainable and impactful programmes that benefit communities (Kativhu et al. 2021; Mhlanga & Ndhlovu 2021). In this case, SE is identified as a

catalysing ingredient that can be used to galvanise young people to self-organise and leverage their social capital to create ventures.

### **Inadequate Skills and Training**

The study also identified that most young people in Mbare have poor access to education and lack skills and training that can help them navigate the turbulent socio-economic environment in Zimbabwe. One of the participants explained,

It quite challenging for these young people to navigate the socio-economically volatile situation. Most of them have no proper skills they can use if they can't get a job. That's why you see we have graduates that are selling airtime and lumpens that can be easily manipulated into violence. Relevant practical skills and business knowledge can be of use in helping the youth find their feet again (Lee, Civil society, and human rights expert).

Social entrepreneurship exposes young people to innovative and practical insights that can be utilised in addressing perceived daily challenges. Mhlanga & Ndhlovu (2021) argue that adequate training and mentorship of social entrepreneurs can equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to run successful ventures. Hence, the problems and challenges to sustainable youth peacebuilding identified need the holistic and pragmatic approaches of SE. For instance, some of the participants after the training workshops of SE and peacebuilding reflected on how the process helped them to understand advocacy processes and offered them a platform to work with others in deliberating ideas and shaping their interests which they could not have done or think of without the exposure. Young people reflected that they are willing to participate in programmes and initiatives that can equip them in promoting positive social change.

This section presented and analysed the findings that were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions with youths and key informants in Mbare. The next section presents the findings from the action research process.

## **7.8. Action Research Procedure**

### **7.8.1. The Role of the Researcher (Facilitator)**

The researcher adopted an active role as a facilitator in the action research procedure of the study. Firstly, the researcher conducted the overall facilitation of the action research process as an outsider (“second order action researcher”) providing a supportive role to the insider (Action Team) to promote a reflective and collaborative learning that would help address youth- related challenges and problems in the community (Cebrián 2016). Secondly, the researcher promoted knowledge-sharing among the AT through facilitation of a training workshop.

The researcher assumed the facilitator and critical friend role. Cebrian (2016: 861) defines facilitators or critical friends in a research process as individuals who “are able to listen, step back from the process and assist through providing another perspective.” The researcher assumed this role to engage in a process that is reflective, supportive, and helpful in developing and assisting youth in a learning and practical procedure for positive peace (Cebrián 2016; Estensoro 2015). The main interest of the researcher was to facilitate a process that would ensure that there was knowledge-sharing and learning for both the facilitator and the participants (Estensoro 2015). Hence, the researcher’s engagement with the AT was driven by interest to only guide or influence their decision in implementing ideas and initiatives, but to understand their fears, experiences, and limitations. Thus, the researcher engaged the young people to reflect and co-create training manuals on the ideas they hoped would be crucial in promoting youth peacebuilding. The researcher had an interest in promoting transformative and innovative thinking and engagement by participants in addressing the identified challenges through positive and strategic participation (Cebrián 2016).

### **7.8.2. Forming the Action Team (AT)**

The AT was formed from participants who had willingly shared their contact details, indicating an interest in participating in programmes that promote youth peacebuilding during the survey phase, interview and FGD phases of the study. The researcher managed to gather 50 contacts who were further followed up, but the researcher only

manages to secure 10, who made up the AT, to engage in the action research component of the study. The researcher's involvement with the team was to follow up on the tasks developed and agreed on by the action team. Though the role of the researcher was that of the outsider, he would intervene in instances where advice was requested, in instances of non-participation and in disagreements that would threaten the progress of the study.

### **7.8.3. Action Plan and Research Intervention Process**

The action research process involves planning, activities, and reflection on the initiatives (Estensoro 2015). The planning phase for this project involved the researcher facilitating the identification of different challenges that needed to be addressed by the AT. The researcher made use of the participatory approach as the needs assessment and the conflict tree to identify the key challenges and to prioritise the key issues to be addressed.

FGDs were used as engagement platforms in identifying the needs and planning relevant action. While the youth highlight having heard about peace and entrepreneurship, they acknowledged a lack of understanding of the idea of what peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship entail. Thus, the researcher was able to identify gaps and entry points towards implementing the action process.

**Figure 7.8:** *First Discussion Forum and Intervention Planning Meeting with the AT*



While most of the planning phase and discussion was conducted in 2019, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic affected the gatherings and implementation of

the interventions. The table 7.2 below reflects on the action plan that was designed by the AT.

**Table 7.2: Action Research Plan**

| <b>Proposed Interventions</b>                                 | <b>Project Activity</b>   | <b>Solutions</b>  | <b>Mobilising Agents</b> | <b>Intended/perceived goals</b>  |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|--|
| Organising youth knowledge-sharing initiatives and platforms  | Conducting discussions on youth experiences with violence and alternative solutions | Setting up WhatsApp forum and engaging informal youth discussion groups                 | Researcher & AT          | Promoting organisation of youth, community engagements and knowledge-sharing on positive peace participation that respond to conflict, violence and exclusion. |
| Need for Peacebuilding Training                               | Peacebuilding & Social Entrepreneurship Training Workshop                           | 1-Day Training workshop on conflict analysis, peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship | Researcher               | Knowledge and understanding of Peacebuilding practice, conflict analysis and the role of social entrepreneurship   |
| Youth employment solutions                                    | Social entrepreneurship   | Developing business initiatives   | AT                       | Promoting knowledge of small business development and management of enterprises among youth in Mbare.  |
| Fostering youth peace awareness campaigns                     | Community youth engagements and awareness   | Youth awareness campaigns in streets  | AT                       | Peace education and reduction of violence among youth in Mbare.  |
| Engaging community health and drug abuse awareness campaign   | Community awareness   | Community campaigns against drug abuse  | AT                       | Promote healthy living and encouraging youth to shun drug abuse.   |
| Creating and registering a Community-Based Organisation (CBO) | To serve as a vehicle for SE solutions.   | A notarial deed of was supposed to be registered  | AT & Researcher          | To promote youth peacebuilding using social entrepreneurship strategies and local peace solutions that are practical.  |

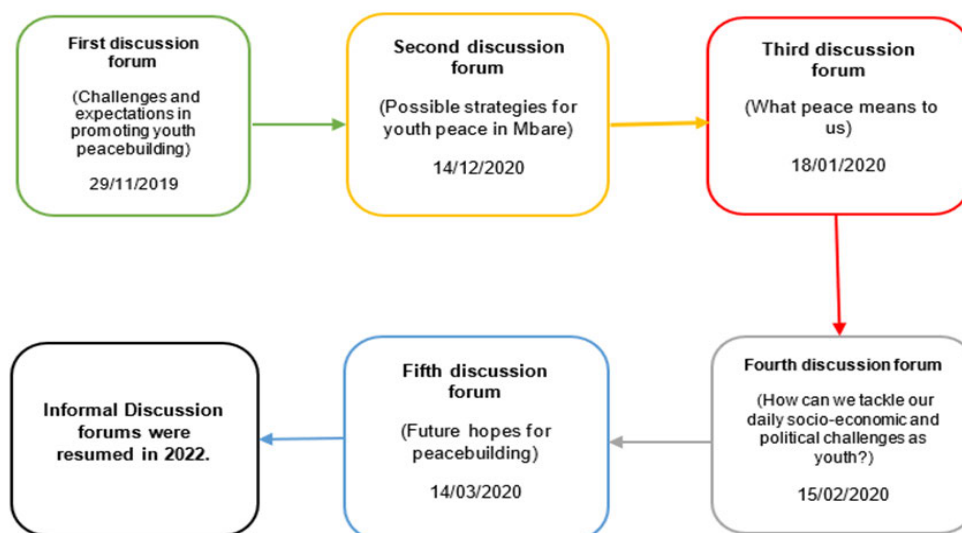
#### **7.8.4. Creating Discussion Platforms**

The discussion platforms were the first process to be implemented. These included the creation of a WhatsApp platform and conducting informal physical gatherings to discuss the different social experiences with violence and possible measures for promoting peace.

### (a) Physical Discussion Forums

The AT was responsible for conducting these gatherings, and the researcher's role was to observe and facilitate when required. The physical discussion platforms had an initial successful run from November 2019 to March 2020. The researcher and the AT planned and organised the first discussion forum, and the following forums were organised by the AT who updated the researcher on the outcomes of their discussions and shared their experiences. The emergence of Covid-19 broke the momentum as it was difficult to gather due to lockdown. Following the end of the lockdown, efforts to resume these gatherings remained challenging due to the failure of the youth to self-organise.

**Figure 7.9:** Mbare Youth Informal Discussion Forums Timeline



**Source:** Author

Five discussion forums were conducted in total, and each had a topic to help the youth to reflect on their lives and experiences (see Figure 7.9). These topical discussions helped the youth to organise their thoughts and reflect on their daily experiences. Moreover, some participants outlined that the discussion forums provided them with some form of “therapy” to reflect and also share ideas on how to tackle some daily challenges. The youths were able to model and reflect on the structural violence experiences they encounter every day. Some of the issues that were reflected on included the vulnerabilities they experience and the socio-economic barriers they face;

they also shared some opportunities they would come across to earn some income. The participants indicated how the platform helped them to learn to rely on each other and learn from one another's experiences.

### **b) Online/WhatsApp Discussion Forum**

The WhatsApp discussion forum named "Mbare Youth Peace Project" was established on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2019 following the first discussion and implementation planning forum (see Figure 7:10 below). Participation on the WhatsApp platform to reflect on the other discussions that followed was rather challenging, as some claimed financial constraints in buying data. Follow-up by the researcher in private spaces on the challenges with WhatsApp group participation revealed that the participants were not comfortable to comment and share their views and reflections on the platform, citing insecurities that one could take a screenshot and share the information which they assumed to be private.

However, it turned out that participants felt more comfortable discussing in their private space or in-person or physical groups, rather than online group platforms. Hence, evaluation reflections that the researcher intended to do using the platform ended up being done through WhatsApp inbox platforms. The participants reflected that though they were still learning to work together, they could not trust sharing some of their sensitive socio-political perspectives on a group platform with participants who might have different opinions. One of the participants reflected:

Let me be honest with you on the issues of WhatsApp group participation. It's one [thing] to share a view in a physical discussion forum where you can see people's facial expressions and also get them to ask you what you mean. On WhatsApp it's easy to be misquoted and your views can be screen grabbed and they will show up later on and be used against you. It's difficult to trust each other in this politically sensitive community (AT participant).

Though the group could not be used for the intended evaluation reflections, it served as a good place for bonding and creating trust, discussing general business ideas, and planning for programmes. The participants were able to share their general lockdown experiences and organise social gatherings, and plan for a training workshop after the lockdown.

**Figure 7.10:** WhatsApp Discussion Platform for Mbare Youth Peace Project



The discussion forums were evaluated through reflection engagements between the researcher and the AT. Following the completion of each discussion forum session, which had a specific topical subject, the participants would share their reflections on the insights gained and how they expected to implement the new insights they had gained. The researcher only managed to attend the first discussion forum; then, he solicited the reflections from the participants in the form of a FGDs. In the other four discussions, the researcher had to engage the reflections through WhatsApp in each participant's inbox, since group reflections seemed to be fruitless. The researcher established that the platforms provided more of a safe space where the participants shared life experiences and alternative strategies to address issues.

### **7.8.5. Conducting a Peacebuilding Workshop**

#### **(a) Planning Sessions with AT**

The second phase of the action intervention and implementation process involved conducting a peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship workshop. The initial process leading to the training workshop involved planning discussions on 28-29 November 2019 to develop the training manual. The agreed setting of the training workshop suggested a two-day peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship programme in April

2020. However, the emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic affected the gathering and the timeline, and the workshop ended up being conducted in one day on 9 August 2022 due to financial constraints and various commitments by the AT.

### **(b) Pre-Workshop Reflections**

A pre-workshop reflection was conducted by the researcher and the AT on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> August 2022 to re-visit the 2019 planning discussions of the training manual. The pre-workshop was considered necessary because, firstly, three members of the AT had dropped out of the project due to personal commitments and had been replaced by four more. Secondly, there was a need to reflect and ensure that the perspectives of the AT on the training workshop had not changed. The one-day training was designed to have two parts which were (i) peace concepts and (ii) what is social entrepreneurship?

### **(c) Training Workshop**

The training was conducted with clear intentions to promote knowledge on the ideas around peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship. The process was, therefore, well-guided to promote and ensure capacity-building, shape advocacy, and trigger positive responses in the community, as indicated by peacebuilding scholars such as Cardozo et al. (2015) and Abdullahi, Seedat-Khan and Abdulrahman (2016). Though the training was divided into two parts, an unplanned third component of youth advocacy was added naturally during the training process, as concerns regarding engaging authorities in addressing some of the critical issues affecting youths in the community were raised. An experienced social worker at the Youth Centre in Mbare, Mr Nyamubarwa, who was a guest of honour at the workshop, facilitated on the strategies of youth advocacy as a peacebuilding component. Thus, the AT was equipped with knowledge on ideas and practices pertaining to peacebuilding, social entrepreneurship, and youth advocacy.

**Figure 7.11:** *The Peacebuilding and Social Entrepreneurship Training Workshop*



The training workshop was made up of short lectures introducing key concepts, group discussions and exercises, and scenarios with presentations by the AT to link lessons learnt with daily experiences.

**Figure 7.12:** *A Member of AT Presenting a Scenario and Strategies from a Group Discussion*



The training outline covered the following details, presented in Table 7.3 below:

**Table 7.3: Training Programme Outline**

| Session   | Training Workshop   |
|---|---|
| <b>Session 1: Introduction to Concepts of Peace</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conflict Analysis (Conflict Tree) in Mbare</li> <li>2. Understanding Peace Concepts               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Negative Peace</li> <li>(b) Positive Peace</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. How Do We Build Peace?</li> <li>4. Peacebuilding Tactics</li> <li>5. Group Work               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As youth, identify different factors that cause violence in your community.</li> <li>• What solutions can be engaged to promote and build peace?</li> <li>• How can identified solutions be implemented to transform the society?</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Plenary Discussion               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some of the causes of violence you identified as challenging to address?</li> <li>• What solutions did you identify?</li> </ul> </li> </ol> |
| <b>Session 2: What is Social Entrepreneurship?</b>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who is a Social Entrepreneur?</li> <li>2. Process of Social Entrepreneurship               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Societal Problem</li> <li>• Understanding Business &amp; Business Idea</li> <li>• Planning (Solution architecture; impact framework; value generation; and sustainability)</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Businesses and their social impact value</li> <li>4. Business plan (design; social business impact model; resource mobilisation)</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Section 3: Youth Advocacy for Peacebuilding</b>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is Advocacy?</li> <li>2. The Role of Advocacy in Addressing Challenges</li> <li>3. Advocacy Strategies and Activities</li> </ol>   |

### **7.8.6. Peace Awareness Campaign**

The third and final phase of the action research process that was implemented by the AT was a peace awareness campaign. The process involved the AT going around the Mbare area, particularly in the Mbare Musika (Market) area, sharing and discussing with other young people on the values of peace. They would trigger conversations by asking a simple question: “What is your understanding of peace?”, and then would

follow up with a question: “Do you think your actions are contributing towards promoting and maintaining peace in the community?” The campaign lasted only a few hours; however, the AT considered the activity as an insightful exercise to understanding the knowledge and experiences of peace among youth in Mbare.



**Figure 7.13:**

*A Member of the AT During a Peace Awareness Campaign*

#### **7.8.7. Setting up a Trust as a Social Entrepreneurship Vehicle**

According to Mago (2018) setting measures that address socio-economic challenges that affect young people in urban communities requires a more inclusive and participatory approach through strategic planning and organising. Hence, with efforts to achieve these interests, the action team and I discussed on measures that would be feasible and sustainable to promote and ensure sustainable youth peacebuilding efforts in Mbare. Deliberations by the action team reached a unanimous conclusion that a trust should be registered as a vehicle for facilitating sustainable youth peacebuilding. The team believed that the formation of a formal institution would provide the opportunity to better organize ourselves and apply for relevant funding (Mago 2018). For instance, some members emphasised the importance of having a trust as a vehicle,

Most of the things that are done without proper formal structures here do not last. People are easily discouraged when there is no proper formation that

can help secure funds in a more legitimate and transparent way if any opportunity arises (Shamie, Action Team Member).

Another participant emphasised,

We want something that can help achieve our goals in a legitimate platform because we have come across different informal systems and we have seen that they mostly don't last long because there is no clear direction and encouragement like one might have with a trust deed in place (Last, Action Team Member).

Social entrepreneurship ventures can be done formally or informally, however, the interests of the action team in setting up a formal institution was based on the need for security and confidence a registered entity would bring. They believed that registered entity might attract interest from others and promote motivation towards sustainability. Hence, the potential to create sustainable impact was the driving force behind the pursuit of registering a trust.

To begin the registration process in early 2020, a lawyer was engaged, and agreements were made to raise funds and contribute for the deposit however, the process was challenging due to financial constraints. Considering that this was a research study with limited funding and resources (Ntini 2023), the process was delayed and took almost 6 months to raise initial deposit.

Discussions and drafts of key ideas of what the trust would entail were reached, but efforts were slowed down by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to lockdown restrictions. The pandemic disrupted the ability to hold meetings and follow up with the lawyer, delaying the registration process, lack of self-organisation and poor communication during the period led the whole process to crumble.

When renewed efforts were finally re-engaged after my follow-up with the team, communications with the lawyer were revisited in early 2022, however, a new obstacle was encountered. The government suspended the registration of trusts and Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs). This political event is an example of how the government's policies can impact the success of social entrepreneurship ventures in Zimbabwe (Ntini 2023). This suspension frustrated the efforts to establish a formal institution, and we were left with only the informal structures and organizations that we had created. However, the participants felt that while this was difficult, access to such

opportunities would have had an even better basis if the formal institution took place to organize themselves and apply for relevant funding.

The difficulties we experienced in efforts to register a Trust Deed for the social entrepreneurship venture are not unique to Zimbabwe. Access to finance and credit, inadequate skills and training, and lack of mentorship and guidance are some of the challenges that social entrepreneurs face in the Zimbabwean context. Strategies that promote collaboration, inclusivity, sustainability, and providing access to finance and credit can help social entrepreneurs to overcome some of these challenges.

There is need to come up with a policy environment that is going to support the growth and development of social entrepreneurship, hence answering to the challenges that are presented by this environment. Mhlanga and Ndhlovu (2021) argue that through training and mentorship, a social entrepreneur can be well capacitated with skills and knowledge to carry out a successful venture.

While the suspension of the registration of trusts and PVOs hindered our efforts to establish a formal institution, the informal structures we have created still provide a platform for promoting youth peacebuilding through discussions and informal mobilisations to promote social cohesion, share knowledge and ideas on projects that can help improve income and counter different socio-economic challenges being experienced every day. The action team and I identified that there is need to continue explore strategies that promote collaboration, inclusivity, and sustainability to overcome the challenges that social entrepreneurship faces in promoting youth peacebuilding in the context of Mbare.

## **7.9. Reflections on Action Research Findings**

This section presents findings that were gathered from the action research process. It engages perspectives from interviews and FGDs to provide insight into the key findings that reflect on the experiences, challenges, and potential of sustainable youth peacebuilding in Mbare. Thus, it first unpacks the findings on the outcomes of the intended action processes, followed by challenges to and experiences of the action process, and the potential impact of social entrepreneurship in promoting youth peacebuilding, and agency and advocacy of youth as peace agents.

### 7.9.1. Outcomes of the Action Processes

The outcomes of the project implementation by the AT were measured using a simple scale of “Successful”, “Not successful”, “Neutral” or “In-progress”. The testing outcomes are presented in Table 7.4 below and it also reflects on the barriers and enhancers of the outcomes.

**Table 7.4 : Outcomes of Action Process Activities**

| <b>Proposed Intervention</b>  | <b>Proposed Solutions</b>                                      | <b>Outcome</b>   | <b>Barriers/Enhancers</b>  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Organising youth knowledge sharing initiatives and platforms</b> | Setting up:<br>(a) WhatsApp forum                              | Neutral. Though the platform was developed, it did not serve the expected purpose as participants were not willing to discuss and share reflections on violence and peace on the platform. | Mistrust and fear of having opinions that can be screenshot.   |
|   | (b) Informal youth discussion groups                           | Successful. Five discussion forums were conducted. However, continuity was hindered by Covid-19 lockdown.  | Willingness of the AT to participate in the process.<br><br>AT could not continue the discussions post-lockdown due to failure to self-organise. |
| <b>Need for Peacebuilding Training</b>                              | Training workshop on peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship | Successful. A one-day training workshop was conducted on 9 August 2022.  | Willingness, commitment, and desire by the AT to learn.  |
| <b>Youth employment solutions</b>                                   | Developing business enterprises                                | Not successful.  | Lack of stakeholders to support and fund the process.  |
| <b>Fostering youth peace awareness campaigns</b>                    | Youth awareness campaigns in streets                           | Successful. One day youth peace awareness activity was conducted.  | Willingness to make a difference by AT.<br><br>Intention to contribute towards positive social change.   |
| <b>Engaging community health and drug abuse awareness campaign</b>  | Community campaigns against drug abuse                         | Not successful.  | Lack of organising and poor planning towards the goal.   |

|                       |                                  |   |  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
|                       |                                  |   | Lack of interest and commitment towards the planning process.  |
| <b>Setting up CBO</b> | Engage in CBO formation process. | Not successful. Planning was initiated in 2019, the progress was hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown and the suspension of trusts and PVO registrations closed the opportunity entirely. | Lack of financial resources to conduct the process in time.<br>Lack of self-organising and interest following the lockdown.<br>The suspension of trusts and PVO registrations closed the opportunity to register entirely. |

### 7.9.2. Challenges to and Experiences of the Action Process

The study observed that the action process implementation of various projects had different challenges and experiences. The first critical challenge to the progress of the AT was the unforeseen emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which destabilised the initial plans and timeline of the intervention processes. For instance, informal discussion forums which were being conducted monthly by the AT were cut off when the lockdown began and the training workshop that was supposed to be conducted in April 2020 ended up being conducted in August 2022.

The second critical challenge that was experienced in the study was the lack of interest and commitment to mobilise some of the intended programmes. The AT indicated how some of the programmes, such as drug abuse awareness campaigns, would create problems for them, since some of their neighbours were involved in the business. They failed to realise the critical role of engaging the drug awareness campaign as one of the major issues identified to be triggering youth violence in the community. For instance, the AT were aware that the surveys that were conducted for the study revealed that substance abuse was identified as the leading cause of youth violence in the community by 54.2% of respondents. On another note, the creation of the CBO was not engaged with urgency and commitment due to failure to self-organise and take ownership of the initiative. Thus, while the AT understood the importance of the processes towards the promotion and realisation of sustainable peace, sometimes

they could not shake the idea of the process being “just a study”. Hence, there were instances where lack of serious commitment undermined organisation and planning on business enterprises and engaging stakeholders who could potentially fund the initiatives.

### **7.9.3. The Potential of Promoting Youth Peacebuilding Using Social Entrepreneurship**

While most participants had no initial knowledge of SE, their descriptions and expectations on measures that are required towards promoting sustainable youth peacebuilding in Mbare resonated with the ideas and interests of SE. The study found that participants commented that providing young people with alternative non-politically aligned resources for entrepreneurial support could facilitate a reduction of their involvement in violent practices, since most business ventures in Mbare are dominantly attached to political interest. As one participant explained,

Creating non-partisan entrepreneurship support funding and projects is important in Mbare. There is [a] need for income-generating projects to help address the involvement of youth in violence. Most of the politically associated income programmes such as taxi ranks, all these tuckshops you see, and informal markets are politically sponsored. Therefore, young people need to be liberated from this web which controls their violent behaviour. Given proper education, support networks and incentivising encouragement to do their own independent business without direct political involvement can help youth a lot in leading a peaceful lifestyle. I saw this with some of the programmes that were happening here with the YES I told you about. Most young people had actually begun to reform because they were being guided well. One more thing is that there is also needed to sponsor and promote sporting tournaments which may eventually build unity among people. Sports always bring people together in this community, especially soccer, since we have a stadium close by (Jigzah, male, youth leader).

There was wide reflection on the need for promoting business enterprises and ventures that support sustainable peacebuilding among the youth. The AT acknowledged the extensive need for capacitation of youth through education and incubation processes that shape business planning and management. Thus, one of the leaders in the AT reflected that:

Giving youths support to do proper businesses on their own is important, but we also need to understand that it's not easy. There is need for proper

direction, and if possible, receive proper business trainings that comes with funding and monitoring to ensure growth and development of the projects (Skelo, male, youth leader).

SE was identified a crucial strategy for promoting youth peacebuilding in Mbare, considering the role of socio-economic challenges and business patronage networks in promoting youth violence. However, setting up formal structures and vehicles for facilitating SE remains a challenge both at micro and macro levels. At micro levels, it is evident that youth in Mbare lack self-organisation in the absence of formal systems and close monitoring in achieving their goals. At macro level, the lack of consistent policies in setting up platforms that promote and necessitate SE ventures to thrive remains a huge challenge.

#### **7.9.4. Agency and Advocacy of Youth as Peace Agents**

The study observed that different factors of youth violence were identified to be stirred by manipulation by political elites and other factors such as substance abuse. What was also evident is that youths are drivers of desired key interests whether for good or bad. It would be a mistake to view youth as completely voiceless and as mere executors of other people's interests and will. The fact that youths are identified as the central catalyst for violence implies they can also be active catalysts for peaceful changes and solutions. This means in cases where young people are not presented with alternative insights, they might consider themselves vulnerable. However, in cases where experience and capacitation have been built, unmet expectation for desired change to social inequalities attracts alienation and conflict activities. The goal, therefore, is to shape and capacitate youth in non-violent strategies and organisation to lead positive social change campaigns on community challenges through strategic engagements and advocacy initiatives.

The study established that in Mbare there remains a gap in engaging and mobilising youths towards peace agency and advocacy. In their awareness campaigns in the streets, the AT established that most young people are not very conscious of the impact of their actions towards promoting peace or violence. The AT felt motivated by the significance such a simple exercise could make in getting one to think about how one understands peace and the efforts one is making to promote it. Therefore, it is

crucial to recognise and capitalise on the agency of conducting peace awareness campaigns and how they can trigger youth responses and conduct in their everyday activities. Youth must be seen as essential participants in and contributors to both the present and the future state of peace. Scholars agree that the long-term viability of peacebuilding efforts will depend on how young people interact with them, and particularly how complaints like socioeconomic injustices are addressed (Cardozo et al. 2015; Gounden 2018). Therefore, one should realise the importance of young people as key citizens who need to be properly organised for significant contributions towards shaping and building their communities in a more positive light.

## **7.10. Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter presented and analysed key study findings drawn from the interviews, FGDs and action research process. Five broad themes, namely violence, triggers of youth violence, youth experiences, peacebuilding efforts and the future of peacebuilding were identified and presented with various sub-themes. This was followed by the presentation of action research findings, which involved the conducting of a discussion forum, a training workshop and a youth peace awareness campaign. The key findings of the action research include outcomes of the intended action processes, challenges to and experiences of the action process, the potential of promoting youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship, and agency and advocacy of youth as peace agents.

The chapter discussed various key themes and reflected on the identified factors that are contributing to youth violence which include political factionalism, poverty, and social issues. All these aspects were identified to be playing a significant role in shaping the involvement of youth in violence across Mbare community. It is evident that addressing the problems require a more holistic approach, thus, the findings identified the need to re-think strategies that can be utilised to facilitate peacebuilding in the Mbare. The insights reflected the importance of focusing on awareness campaigns, education, and creating sustainable economic opportunities. Thus, the findings outlined that despite the different challenges leading to youth violence and there is still hope within the community. The chapter revealed that the youth have the

potential to be agents of change, and engaging them can create a peaceful and prosperous future.

The in-depth insights that were presented in this chapter testifies that the use of multi-method qualitative approach which involved integrating interviews, FGDs, and action research plays an important role in advancing peacebuilding research practices. The relationship and reinforcement of themes across these three distinct data collection methods enhanced the depth and validity of the insights surrounding opportunities and challenges to youth peacebuilding in Mbare. The FGDs represented the perspective of the community on larger issues from a collective point of view, and these were complemented in personal layering of narratives and experiences through in-depth interviews. The participatory nature of research validated these findings and gives insights into how these themes play out in real time in everyday contexts. The triangulation of data from these diverse sources thus enriched our understanding, ensuring a more comprehensive and robust analysis. This integrative approach underscored the multifaceted nature of the study's subject matter and reinforced the reliability of the conclusions drawn. The chapter established that there remains a gap in youth peacebuilding in Mbare, and social entrepreneurship could be a perfect strategy to implement positive peace in the community.

The next chapter will reflect on the key theoretical standpoints and reviewed literature to engage a detailed discussion of the study findings.

## **Chapter 8**

# **Discussion Reflections Towards Promoting Youth Peacebuilding in Mbare**

### **8.1. Introduction**

Chapters 6 and 7 presented the results gathered from the mixed-methods data collections and the action research processes. The presented findings provide detailed insight on the need to promote youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship in Mbare. This chapter conducts an in-depth discussion of the study findings through the lenses of theories and reviewed literature. The discussion integrates the quantitative, qualitative and action research findings to provide detailed insights on the relevance and potential of SE in making a difference for the youth. It unpacks perspectives of how the findings of the study compare to other studies identified in the literature. It reflects on the new knowledge that was identified in the study and how it adds to the discussion of social entrepreneurship as a possible means to bring about peace. The discussion will the findings and reflect on the study's gaps.

### **8.2. Youth Violence, Disenfranchisement, and Patronage Traps**

The youth of Africa suffer serious problems that can be summed up by their disenfranchisement and exclusion from the continent's political, economic, and social life (Maina 2012; Rukuni et al. 2017; UN News 2018). Young people in Mbare are disenfranchised, stereotyped as violent and have developed a bad reputation. Interactions with youth revealed that most of them have internalised the idea of youths being a problem, though they are also victims of circumstances. Because of this, they are less likely to make the kind of life-changing, positively impactful decisions that would allow them to make meaningful contributions to society. The descriptions of youth by some of the key informants identified them as "problematic" and "violent". The findings of this study confirmed that the exclusion of youth from key decision spaces is a phenomenon which cuts across from local to global spaces. The study

established that young people in the urban community of Mbare experience high unemployment, poverty, and different socioeconomic challenges. Hence, more young people are idle and vulnerable. Evidence from the surveys revealed that about 41.5% of young people are unemployed, while about 41% claim to be involved in self-employment and informal employment. This has left most young people feeling socially marginalised and more exposed to exploitation and manipulation into political and socioeconomic violence.

Bangura (2016) asserted that youth marginalisation poses a grave threat to peacebuilding endeavours in all societies. Youth violence in Mbare is dominated by political dynamics that have permeated to influence the socioeconomic spaces. Psychosocial tensions and patronage systems remain the conditioning factors and gatekeepers of different livelihood opportunities. The study observed that youth who lack opportunities and resources are susceptible to being manipulated into committing acts of violence in exchange for access to resources. These patronage patterns identified among the youth in Mbare are also expressed across literature to be dominant in rural and urban communities across Zimbabwe (Mhike 2018; Oosterom & Pswarayi 2019). For instance, the historical occurrences of *Chipangano* remained the major point of reference which all the key informants highlighted as the lens used to brand the violent nature of young people in Mbare. *Chipangano* gained quite a reputation during the Mugabe era, especially the 2008 re-run elections, coercing youths and members of the community to vote for ZANU-PF (Mutongwizo 2014; Mutongwizo 2018; Mhike 2018). However, tracing its roots reveals that the movement was purely birthed out of the vulnerability of youth who were desperate for socioeconomic opportunities (Mhike 2018). Therefore, they used brutal and violent tactics, carried out vigilante justice, and created informal economic networks for most unemployed “loyal” youths (Mutongwizo 2014; Mutongwizo 2018). Interactions with participants gave pointers and hints that the networks and ideas created by the organisation are still being applied to keep youths in check and under control by political elites. Thus, the patronage systems they created to access community resources have been preserved and absorbed to keep youth participation in the informal spaces in check. According to the survey, it is evident that over 60% of the respondents believe that there is a direct connection between political violence and

economic gains in Mbare. It was widely agreed by the respondents that providing non-political entrepreneurial support for young people to counter the existing politically aligned access to resources can significantly decrease the engagement of youth in violent behaviours. This research agrees with existing studies that unequivocally confirmed that politically aligned resources are the primary catalyst for youth violence among young people in Mbare (Gukurume 2022; Mhike 2018; Mutongwizo 2014; Mutongwizo 2018). Thus, utilising systemic lenses of peacebuilding was crucial in engaging youth to reflect on the practical solutions that can be used to navigate the challenges affecting youth and promote their agency in sustainable peacebuilding in Mbare.

It is essential to take advantage of the large population of youth in Zimbabwe to foster innovative social change programmes to boost development, address environmental degradation and promote creative interventions that can empower the role of the youth in social, economic and political spheres. Gounden (2018) argues that the increasing youth population in different parts of Africa can be utilised and harnessed towards positive change. He indicates that the population growth of young people in Africa should be considered as human resources that can be engaged to drive the continent's development to boost its "agricultural, industrial, information and fourth industrial revolutions" (Gounden 2018:2). These suggestive views are essential and engage in attractive peacebuilding initiatives that can harness the potential of young people in Mbare and Africa to positively contribute towards sustainable peace and development. The findings from the survey confirmed these similar sentiments as approximately 70.1% of the respondents believed that the establishment of independently owned SESNs by young individuals who are not politically aligned might play the necessary role to mitigate violence in Mbare. This is critical in harnessing the ability of youth peacebuilding to equip young people with relevant navigational skills for eliminating violence in all its forms and transforming societies through training programmes, developing social enterprises to address socioeconomic challenges, and conducting peace awareness campaigns.

Very little effort has been given to exploring the many political, economic, and social alternatives for establishing peace in conflict-ridden African societies (Zvaita & Mbara 2019). The interests of this study sought to reflect on the great need to engage youth

peacebuilding through the practical lens of social entrepreneurship to understand the causes, experiences, and perspectives of youth violence in Mbare. Thus, the findings of the study confirmed existing studies that reflected on how youth violence, disenfranchisement, and the role of political patronage is keeping young people trapped, not only in the context of Mbare but across different Zimbabwean contexts (Rukuni et al. 2017). However, the insights of this study from the sequential exploration of statistical insight, views and perspectives, and action-oriented engagements with young people and key societal stakeholders from Mbare was essential towards understanding the need for youth peacebuilding that are unique to the community. The study established the need for steering the ship of youth positive peace participation through practical and innovative peace initiatives that are driven by young people. The experiences of young people in Mbare reflect a great need for peace agency in the community through hands-on long-term initiatives that educate and empower the young people with practical steps to engage in realising the desired peace efforts. It was evident that the youth cycle of violence can be broken through strategic training programmes, social engagement programmes such as sports, promoting youth advocacy, and instituting entrepreneurship ventures. For instance, most young people reflected on how Mbare has a conducive business environment that most young people must participate in primarily through political patronage networks. Youth reflected that given proper guidance, they can have the opportunity to redeem their reputation through positive initiatives.

### **8.3. Structural Violence Crisis**

Structural violence challenges were identified as the major hindrance to the positive peace participation of youth within their community. Studies reveal that youths in urban areas are often plagued by a plethora of challenges such as poverty, unemployment, poor access to health care, drug abuse, social inequalities, exclusion and exploitation, and lack of access to affordable and quality education (Johansen 2007; Mashingaidze 2010; Sorensen, Joshi & Sivitz 2014; Sinha et al. 2017). These structural conditions are the root systems causing much damage and harm, especially for young people and women, as they expose them to vulnerable situations which erupt in cycles of violence, whether incidentally or by strategic design (Galtung 1990; Burchard 2016;

Rylko-Bauer & Farmer 2016). These aspects across literature were confirmed in this study's quantitative and qualitative findings that revealed how structural violence challenges such as poverty, political manipulation, drug abuse, high unemployment, informal businesses, and lack of sustainable socio-economic opportunities are considered key sources influencing youth violence in Mbare. It was evident that the political, economic, and structural related factors are key aspects influencing participation of youth in political, electoral, domestic and social violence in Mbare, Zimbabwe.

The study identified that the experiences of youth in Mbare are influenced by a complex system of structural violence which has far-reaching consequences attached to political and socioeconomic patronages which have been in place for over two decades, making youths vulnerable to manipulation by political elites, lumpen proletarianism, and risky health behaviours. Hence, different factors make youth a vulnerable group of people. Maina (2012) highlights that youths across Africa are affected by different critical structural marginalising challenges that inhibit their ability to make positive decisions to impact their social, economic and political life. To offer positive engagements that can help these youths to break their limitations and positively contribute towards peaceful social change, peace education and community-based rehabilitation engagements were identified as important foundations towards proper youth peacebuilding.

The study found that Mbare youths are trapped in a cocoon of broken social structures that often deny them opportunities and a platform to be heard, thus exposing them to vulnerabilities. For instance, the analysis of structural violence and socio-political dynamics in Mbare, using ANOVA analysis, provided a deeper understanding of the experiences of young people. The statistical evidence, specifically the p-value of 0.002, suggests a strong correlation between the level of education and how young people perceive factors that contribute to violence. The statistical data revealed that young people with "O" level education have a greater perception of violence compared to those with advanced educational achievements. This could imply that educational attainment influences exposure and resilience to structural violence, highlighting the need for customized approaches to address these disparities. The findings support the existing understanding of the vulnerability of young people in complex socio-

political environments (Bangura 2016; Maina 2012; McEvoy-Levy, 2013). The systemic peacebuilding lens highlights the importance of engaging formal or non-formal educational strategies that can facilitate creative thinking towards desired peaceful solutions to address identified structural challenges. However, most local peacebuilding practices in Africa miss the element of agency, meaning they lack the ability to empower the actors or participants in the process to ensure sustainability (Hancock 2017). Some of the indicated vulnerabilities mentioned include high unemployment, poverty, lack of sound political voices, social marginalisation, lack of access to opportunities and poor economic advantages. With this reality, there is a need for peacebuilding strategies that facilitate creative innovations and solutions to help eliminate the tensions and boundaries that frustrate young people's development and positive participation in Mbare. In addition, most youth participants and members of the civil society interviewed reflected on the urgent need to create independent and non-political economic avenues as sources that can help young people to manoeuvre towards financial and economic freedom. Also, they pointed out the dilapidated state of the environment as an opportunity to create employment and give youth a purpose towards positive engagement.

#### **8.4. The Impact of Training in Promoting Youth Peacebuilding**

Berents and McEvoy-Levy (2015) outline that youth might not always be interested in being side-lined into the local or informal ways of addressing violence and building peace, but need institutionalisation in key decision-making spaces. Such involvement requires proper capacity-building through active interaction in the political space through knowledge-sharing and organisation of how to address everyday experiences through advocacy and community engagement in “response to conflict, violence and exclusion” (Berents & McEvoy-Levy 2015:116).

Training in peacebuilding processes is crucial for capacity-building and shaping advocacy toward triggering positive responses in communities (Abdullahi, Seedat-Khan & Abdulrahman 2016; Cardozo et al. 2015). Many respondents (71.2%) believe that offering social entrepreneurship training and leadership seminars can have a significant impact on promoting community peacebuilding efforts in Mbare. The

sentiments were confirmed by interviews and focus group discussions, where participants expressed the importance of education and training in shaping the youth's engagement in peace practices within the community. The pre-evaluation insights from the peacebuilding and social-entrepreneurship training workshop shed light on the expectations of most youth, who require practical insights to navigate the challenging political and socio-economic environments. These sentiments have their justification and confirmation across existing studies which argue that the equipping of youth with knowledge, and application of that knowledge in identifying and addressing violence factors within communities, helps them to create relevant interventions, establish spaces and platforms for dialogue and facilitate conflict transformation initiatives which promote rehabilitation and recovery of communities and rebuilding of livelihoods (Berents & McEvoy-Levy 2015; McEvoy-Levy 2001; Neufeldt & Janzen 2021; van der Veen & Datzberger 2020). Berents & McEvoy-Levy (2015) highlight that youth peacebuilding training in local communities plays a crucial role in helping capacitate their role in addressing immediate issues and for advocacy preparation in the future.

It was evident that while the idleness and vulnerability of youth can be considered as dangerous, it is essential to note how the same environment presents an opportunity for positive peace agency. Scholars such as Cardozo et al. (2015) and Gounden (2018) reflect on the importance of realising opportunities to engage young people for social change and facilitate positive and sustainable peace engagements through relevant education and capacitation towards addressing socioeconomic ills that affect them in their daily lives. Thus, there is a need to distance peace solutions and engagements from ad hoc programmes, but rather introduce systemic practices that are within the interests of not only the youth, but the broader community and the future. It was evident that interventions that are not seriously focused on establishing sustainable socioeconomic solutions and engagements diminish the efficacy of sustainable peacebuilding efforts in the community.

While the youth indicated a keen interest in participating in peacebuilding, their efforts remain stunted by socio-political instability and socioeconomic challenges, such as high unemployment and poverty. This study found it a great challenge to get young

people to commit to a programme they knew would not have any monetary value. However, this reflected youth possessing some entrepreneurial learning. Some youths were honest enough to indicate that learning for them was useless if the process was not going to end in practical social entrepreneurship endeavours that could be funded. They considered participating in the research programme to be of more importance in making a difference in drawing most young people into peacebuilding programmes. It is evident that the research highlighted the critical role of social entrepreneurship in facilitating community development and alternative livelihoods that promote positive peace, while concurrently pointing out how resource constraints hindered the practical application of the process during AR process.

Nevertheless, the participants demonstrated a commendable eagerness to apply the knowledge acquired and went on to pursue practical skills as per the recommendations from the workshop. For instance, three individuals proactively engaged in practical training programmes such as detergent making and started to operate their small enterprises that are currently operational. They attested that they were inspired by the SE and peacebuilding training workshop which imparted insight to establish income sources beyond political dependencies, which embodied a significant shift for them from theoretical learning to practical implementation. The study underscores that despite resource limitations, integrating social entrepreneurship and peacebuilding training imbued participants with both the insight and the confidence to explore and adopt alternative and positive livelihood strategies. This transition from knowledge acquisition to practical application is pivotal in empowering individuals and facilitate the much-needed sustainable community development. Thus, these insights confirm that training is recommended towards promoting youth peacebuilding in Mbare.

## **8.5. The Role of Social Entrepreneurship in Promoting Youth Peacebuilding**

Social entrepreneurship seeks to build, support and empower the grassroots towards behaviours that seek to transform their communities into sustainable peace (Skoll Foundation 2018). It is a systemic tool for intervention since it promotes interaction

and mobilises the collective in addressing the identified problems in the community (Pillay 2017; Kickul & Lyons 2012). The use of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool provides an interactive platform for participation among people of various backgrounds. It encourages innovative and interactive engagements that can be harnessed to promote dialogue and facilitate mediation, and even healing, amongst foes, victims and perpetrators of violence. Miklian and Hoelscher (2017) propose that there is a need to encourage new peace innovations that can be utilised to resolve, reduce or prevent conflict. The study established that using social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool in the context of Mbare provides the required innovative platform to promote peace through pragmatic processes. It provides important ideas for harnessing social values and relevant social capital to address local structural violence challenges. Hence, this receives valued status as new knowledge in debunking and navigating the contextual challenges of patronage networks and restoring youth's value and positive role in society. Young people demonstrated confidence that, given the relevant resources and proper guidance through social entrepreneurship practices, they can effectively turn their lives towards meaningful efforts that facilitate development, eliminate socio-economic challenges, and promote positive peace practices.

## **8.6. Need for Youth Advocacy**

Engaging and capacitating youth with knowledge to participate positively in their local community is a valuable investment in the future development of a community or nation (Gounden 2018). Youth advocacy is a crucial engagement strategy for facilitating dialogue towards addressing identified challenges in a non-confrontational manner between the community and the local authorities (Conciliation Resources 2021). Thus, engaging young people to self-organise and utilise advocacy strategies can go a long way in facilitating peacebuilding in the community. The study was not developed to examine the impact and need for advocacy. Still, it emerged during the training workshop when participants required knowledge on how to engage local authorities in addressing critical issues within the community in a non-confrontational or -violent manner. It was noted to be of value in initiating practical steps to promote the positive role of youth in addressing societal challenges through peace strategies.

Thus, advocacy knowledge was identified as an empowering approach to promoting the role of youth in peacebuilding in Mbare.

The study's findings underscore the essentiality of skill development in advocacy, peacebuilding training, and resource allocation in promoting effective youth peacebuilding initiatives. It elucidates that the mere promotion of peacebuilding among the youth is insufficient without equipping them with the necessary tools to effectively raise awareness and combat the cycle of violence. This revelation has been particularly enlightening in the Mbare context. The youth participants disclosed a newfound understanding that, through structured organisation and advancing non-political ideas and policies, they possess the potential to engage meaningfully with stakeholders. This proactive approach, they realised, could lead to the development and implementation of impactful youth-centric programmes in their community. Such insights contribute to a deeper understanding of youth agency in peacebuilding and the pivotal role of resource empowerment in facilitating significant and sustainable change in Mbare.

### **8.7. Actionable Knowledge**

The study sought to produce and facilitate actionable knowledge toward youth peacebuilding in Mbare. Cross and Sproull (2004) highlight that every research process should lead to actionable knowledge outcomes that result in the formulation of solutions that provide direction to people and systems which help identify problems, validate information, and legitimise processes. Young people represent the majority of the world's population, and as such, they hold the potential to facilitate change and positive action (Gounden 2018). This means young people must be shaped to engage in positive leadership to challenge the fluidity of conflict that might perpetuate the politics of war and violence within their communities. Ozerdem (2017) underscores that youths should be conceptualised and understood as positive peace agents who can be capacitated to address physical, structural, and cultural violence and facilitate broader social change processes within their communities. They have the potential to “transform violent, oppressive and hierarchical structures, as well as behaviour, relationships and attitudes into more participatory and inclusive ones” (Ozerdem

2017:1). The study provided critical insight into the importance of creating and supporting diverse platforms that promote youth to engage in their local communities, making it easier to facilitate peacebuilding. For instance, the training workshop reflected on social entrepreneurship and advocacy strategies that capacitate youth to establish innovative social solutions and empower them to discover and facilitate pro-peace opportunities to tackle social and institutional barriers within the community (Wils et al. 2006; El Ebrashi 2013; Hancock 2017; Miklian & Hoelscher 2018).

It is evident that most youths are susceptible to socioeconomic setbacks; therefore, these factors inform the need for innovative and systemic engagement of young people in stabilising and building long-term peace. Severing the youth from these normalised patronage networks of violence requires a systemic peacebuilding approach involving social education, awareness, and training that reflects on alternative economic support networks and long-term strategic engagements. While the intervention process engaged in peacebuilding, social entrepreneurship workshops, and youth peace awareness campaigns, there is a huge gap and need for a social entrepreneurship incubation process and funding to sustain and steer long-term programmes that attract young people to make a sustainable impact. Though the findings of the study established that young people in Mbare are highly willing to participate in peace initiatives and meaningful programmes that can lead towards positive livelihood outcomes, the reality on the ground was that their willingness is based on the socioeconomic value the process will add. For instance, some participants informed the researcher that they had been involved with different non-governmental organisations on youth research programmes and had been promised funding that never materialised. Hence, there is a mistrust of researchers and some non-profit work that does not add the socioeconomic value they expect. There seem to be no sustainable, responsive measures by government or non-government institutions to the identified structural challenges. Rather the much-needed socio-economic avenues are politicised, leading to the continuity of violence. While political parties maintain illegal patronage systems where they issue spaces for small businesses in different local markets to youth even though this is against the council by-laws and policy, breaking this cycle requires alternative socioeconomic opportunities for the youth.

## **8.8. Chapter Conclusion**

The chapter reflected on and discussed the findings of the study. With the aid of literature and theoretical lenses, it highlighted how youth violence is being sustained: young people are disenfranchised and trapped through patronage networks in Mbare. The chapter discussed how structural violence is taking place and negatively affecting youth participation in the community. It further indicated the important role of training, social entrepreneurship, and advocacy in promoting youth peacebuilding. It significantly reflected on the new knowledge the study sought to contribute. Finally, it outlined the value of actionable knowledge in engaging youth towards sustainable peacebuilding.

The next chapter concludes and summarises the research and provides relevant recommendations.

## Chapter 9

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 9.1. Introduction

This final chapter offers a detailed insight into the significant contributions of the thesis. It unpacks the opportunities presented towards promoting youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship and the broader contributions to engaging youth in sustainable peacebuilding practices within their local communities. The chapter delves into the thesis suggestions for engaging and promoting youth peacebuilding at a contextual local level. It unpacks the contributions of the study towards youth peace policy and intervention strategies for promoting youth peacebuilding. The chapter outlines recommendations towards improving youth peacebuilding engagements and reflects on the strategies of utilising social entrepreneurship to engage young people into lasting peace. Therefore, the chapter will first provide a brief synopsis of the study findings in reflection on the key study objectives, then present the overall study conclusions and recommendations.

#### 9.2. Synopsis of Study Objectives and Related Findings

The main objective of this study was to promote the idea and role of social entrepreneurship as a tool for facilitating positive peace practices amongst young people in Mbare (Harare), Zimbabwe. The study sought to establish relevant peace solutions using social entrepreneurship lenses to promote positive youth participation in building sustainable peace. The study had four objectives that guided the researcher in conducting the study. Thus, a brief synopsis of how each objective was met and addressed is summarised below.

**Objective 1** sought to explore and understand the political, economic and related factors influencing participation of youth in electoral or wider violence in Mbare, Zimbabwe. This objective was met through a mixed-methods approach which included a review of grey literature, qualitative interviews, focus group discussions and quantitative surveys. The study established that there are socioeconomic, political,

psychological and personal factors that influence the violent behaviours of youth in Mbare.

**Objective 2** sought to *explore positive and alternative peace initiatives, and to facilitate and promote youth engagement in Mbare communities through social entrepreneurship*. This objective was met through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions which helped the researcher and participants to design an action intervention plan and identify training gaps in implementing social entrepreneurship strategies in promoting youth peacebuilding. Youth discussion forums were developed, a training workshop was conducted, and a youth peace awareness campaign was conducted.

**Objective 3** sought to *plan and implement social entrepreneurship initiatives as a tool for building community peace interventions for youth in Mbare*. Only the planning phase and a training was carried out. No social venture could be carried out due to poor self-organising and lack of financial resources.

**Objective 4** sought to *evaluate and analyse the intervention outcomes and the impact of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool*. The intervention outcomes were evaluated using post-reflection comments/interviews with the participants to understand their experiences and what they would do differently with the new knowledge gained.

### **9.3. Conclusions and implications**

The study established that positive participation of youth in peacebuilding is lacking at both global and local scales. Engaging young people is a necessary initiative to facilitate preventive and strategic peacebuilding solutions in the long run (UN Resolution 2250). Most peace solutions seeking to facilitate peacebuilding amongst youth across Africa have lacked incentivising mechanisms (mostly economic), leading to the sustainment of violence, even in a post-conflict or peacebuilding environment. The study generated new knowledge on how social entrepreneurship (SE) can play an effective role as a tool for promoting youth participation in building sustainable peace. It was observed that with the availability of resources and contextual application of social entrepreneurship strategies, the advancement of positive youth

peacebuilding could be a reality. The study identified that social entrepreneurship opens up opportunities to engage youth in other positive and alternative peace strategies that can be useful in addressing structural violence experiences. Thus, the following two major conclusions were reached.

### **9.3.1. The Knowledge Generation and the Role of Social Entrepreneurship in Promoting Youth Peacebuilding**

Though no single social venture was carried out as part of the study, the idea of social entrepreneurship as an effective tool for promoting youth peacebuilding had a telling response from the participants. Perspectives supports that this innovative strategy effectively counters the deep-rooted political stereotypes prevalent in Mbare's socio-political landscape. It was evident that the idea of SE interests many young people given relevant resources and support they can engage significant initiatives. For instance, over 60% of the survey respondents believed that there is a strong connection between youth participation in political violence and economic gains in Mbare. In the same vein, 93.1% agreed that providing young people with entrepreneurial support would reduce their involvement in violent practices. With this insight, and coupled with the interest demonstrated by the action team on the ideas generated through the training phase, the study established that young people in Mbare value the role social entrepreneurship can play, as they consider politically aligned resources to be the main source of influencing and inciting youth violence practices.

In this study, social entrepreneurship was effectively integrated as a tool for youth peacebuilding in Mbare. This approach played a crucial role in facilitating and transforming post-conflict interactions, as well as reshaping perceptions among youths from different political affiliations. The training workshop for social entrepreneurship and peacebuilding, tailored specifically to the needs and interests of Mbare's youth, equipped them with practical skills and knowledge, enabling them to embark on their own entrepreneurial ventures confidently. Establishing platforms where young people with diverse political views could engage in dialogue and work together was another effective step. These platforms facilitated the exchange of ideas and nurtured a sense

of shared purpose in shaping relevant social relationships and development, thus mitigating political tensions and promoting mutual understanding.

### **9.3.2. Preliminary evaluation of SE in promoting youth peacebuilding**

The preliminary evaluation of this study underscores the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship as a tool for youth peacebuilding in Mbare. The SE training workshops garnered positive responses, sparking interest and practical insights into economic independence for young people. Although the initiation of actual SE enterprises was not feasible due to a lack of resources, most of the Action Team participants revealed that utilising the insights from the training to pursue other practical training projects such as detergent making, poultry projects, and tuckshops that have helped them to build the relevant social resilient systems that have no political influence. These projects provided an alternative to politically motivated benefits, thereby reducing their vulnerability to violence. Additionally, the timing of the peacebuilding workshops prior to the 2023 Zimbabwean elections was significant. Post workshops evaluations with the youth revealed a transformative change in their perspectives as they expressed a newfound sense of empowerment and an enhanced ability to cope with the political tensions and manipulations that previously led them into cycles of intimidation. This shift highlights the role of SE and peacebuilding training in promoting resilience and proactive peacebuilding engagement among the youth in volatile political contexts.

### **9.3.3. Positive and Alternative Peace Initiatives**

The process of conducting this research exposed some of the critical strategies that can be utilised to engage and promote the agency of youth peacebuilding in Mbare and other related communities.

Firstly, the study established the value of engaging informal discussion forums as an effective tool that helps youth to reflect on their everyday challenges and reflect with others on positive peace alternatives which they can engage in addressing their problems. Youth in urban communities often gather informally to pass time; however, capitalising on some of these values to assert topical discussions turned out to be a

useful exercise in helping youth to self-organise, plan, and implement solutions to their identified problems through pooling of ideas.

Secondly, the study established the need for and value of extensive training, particularly in capacitating the role of youth in promoting positive peacebuilding. The study established how youth agency can be triggered through peace advocacy training and broadening the scope of peacebuilding mechanisms. The majority of the participants revealed that there remains a huge education gap – particularly when it comes to peacebuilding knowledge, which can help youth to interact with the community in a more positive manner.

#### **9.4. Personal Reflections**

The researcher's personal experience of staying in Mbare between 2009 and 2010 following the famous 2008 re-run election violence, which was mostly perpetrated by youth, motivated the conducting of this study. During that period, the researcher stayed and worked in Mbare, initially in the informal business sector and then as a temporary teacher at a local high school college. The experience grounded the researcher in the structural violence experiences that surround many young people in the community. The researcher witnessed and experienced the residues of a post-conflict environment and feelings and got to understand the patronage systems that kept youths within the grasp of political elites. There are various reports and stories concerning the 2008 episode of violence in the history of Zimbabwe and its effects on the youth and informal economy of Mbare that are well-documented by news agencies, non-profit institutions, civil society organisations and scholars such as Dr Tariro Mutongwizo. For decades, Zimbabwe has experienced a vicious cycle of violence linked mostly to politics, elections and resources, widely involving youth at the centre of it all in both rural and urban communities. Urban and high-density communities such as Mbare, in the capital Harare, are a microcosm of the structural and direct violence trends that involve youth in most Zimbabwean urban communities. This background motivated the researcher to embark on this academic journey to explore alternatives that can be utilised to unhook the youth from the structural bonds of patronage that most young people are connected to.

The politics of the informal economy that dominates in Mbare has been used as a tool by the elites for manipulating and coercing youth into violence in both intra-and inter-party-political interests. Since most young people have no alternative sources of socioeconomic support in a challenging economic environment, they have no choice but to comply with the bidding of these elites. However, social entrepreneurship was identified as a crucial tool and practical approach that could be used to capacitate the social enterprises of youth and promote their positive participation in peacebuilding. Although the intervention process could not materialise in the setting up of social enterprises, due to financial constraints, the interactions and training of youth planted the seeds of positive peace participation. New knowledge was gained, particularly on practical initiatives that can help build and capacitate youth agency in building everyday peace within their local community. For instance, though the training focused on peacebuilding and social entrepreneurship knowledge and practice, an unplanned component of youth advocacy emerged as youth requested practical and non-violent strategies, they could utilise to engage authorities on critical social and health challenges within their communities. The knowledge and strategies of advocacy that were shared by an expert and experienced social worker triggered interest among the youth towards self-organising and resulted in a youth awareness campaign as a pilot practice towards influencing positive peace participation of young people. It is this different kind of thinking and attitude to building peace that the study sought to contribute among the youth in Mbare. Positive engagements of youth as agents of peace can go a long way to unpicking the woven identity of youth as perpetrators of violence. This could help in shaping and restoring the image of youth in Mbare and shaping ideas that can liberate young people from the patronage systems that trap them in vulnerable situations.

The process of conducting this study provided critical lessons for me as a peacebuilder and researcher, particularly in understanding the process and need for promoting peace with youth at a local level. Some of these lessons include:

- (i) I learnt that understanding the contextual experiences and expectations of youth is a key stepping-stone to buying into their interests and strengths to sharpen strategic roles towards promoting peace. This played a crucial role in shaping key topical ideas for informal discussion forums on knowledge-sharing platforms for peace.
- (ii) I also realised that in conducting everyday peace it is important to identify opportunities that arise to capacitate the goal of promoting peace. For instance, the lessons from advocacy knowledge triggered and sharpened the confidence of young people towards youth peace campaign strategies, which had not been thought of in the pre-planning discussions.
- (iii) The process of peacebuilding interventions will never occur in a linear progression; rather, it is a spiral process which requires one to understand contextual issues that might be sensitive enough to jeopardise the work you intend to promote as a peacebuilder.
- (iv) The idea of social entrepreneurship opens up opportunities to engage with young people and introduce them to other key peacebuilding ventures.

## **9.5. Recommendations**

Young people in Mbare have been affected by structural violence that exists in the community and require practical strategies to help them to holistically engage and utilise peacebuilding tools in tackling their everyday challenges. If strategic peace interventions are put in place for youth through conducting peacebuilding training workshops by civil societies and national organs such as the National, Peace and Reconciliation Commission, there is an opportunity for utilising youth energies towards peacebuilding initiatives that empower them to facilitate effective social change interventions to address different structural and community challenges. The potential of youths remains largely untapped and limited due to various social, economic, and political circumstances which have caused them to have more responsive rather than proactive roles in addressing different social challenges. Their participation in politically related activities is often reduced to background support, as underdogs labelled “vanguard”, yet their roles are associated with dirty and violent practices rather than positive and influential positions of leadership to facilitate relevant change. Though the contributions of youth need visible exposure in the upper echelons, it is crucial for civil societies and relevant government institutions to capacitate the conduct of youth through education and training, to capacitate

their role in various peacebuilding capabilities such as advocacy, dialogue, and self-organisation towards community engagements. Therefore, the following recommendations can be crucial in shaping policy implementations and future research:

- (i) Ensuring the reality of sustainable youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship needs thorough training and strategic, non-partisan financial stakeholders by the civil society organisations which include NGOs, Churches, relevant non-profit institutions and government institutions.
- (ii) There is a need to develop a peace education curriculum by the government and civil societies that work with young people to facilitate and promote knowledge and practices towards fostering agency in youth peacebuilding in the community.
- (iii) There is a need to set up and promote informal discussion forums by the municipal council, civil societies, police and the relevant institutions such as the NPRC for youth to share knowledge and strategies in advancing everyday peace within their local communities.
- (iv) Despite the long history of youth violence in Mbare, there remains a huge gap in interventions towards peace, reconciliation and rehabilitation programmes. Hence, NPRC in collaboration with civil societies should conduct peace, reconciliation and rehabilitation programmes in Mbare. There should also engage policy engagement towards such initiatives to ensure the promotion of mental health of youth.
- (v) The action team was made up of young people from different political opinions who indicated their flexibility in participating in the process despite their different political views. Hence, the researcher realised that there is a need to set up more spaces that promote youth cohesion by civil societies for political parties through different activities such as sports, workshops, and community forums, to break the polarisation that drives many youths into violence.

## **9.6. Conclusion**

The study embraced the role of social entrepreneurship as an effective tool for promoting youth peacebuilding at a more contextual level. It endorsed the need for systemic engagement in advancing a sound theoretical approach and practice in peace research. The need for innovative and incentivising ways to continuously

facilitate youth participation in transformational peace initiatives in ending structural violence in local communities was identified as essential. Overall, the study was able to contribute towards the global call by the UN Security Council Resolution 2250, which seeks to empower youth participation in peacebuilding, thus meeting the demands of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure the building of peaceful societies by 2030, and also fostering the potential of a peaceful and united Africa under Agenda 2063, where people drive development, and the potential of youth is stimulated. Some organisations, such as the Berghof Foundation, have engaged in action research which puts into practice several experimental peace research projects through systemic means, with much success.

The use of SCT served to reflect on measures to transform the institutional and systemic violence which promotes unjust systems that exploit the political and socio-economic vulnerabilities of youth to legitimise violence. Social entrepreneurship is increasingly gaining repute as an effective tool for positive transformation. The use of social entrepreneurship as a peacebuilding tool provides an interactive platform for participation amongst people of various backgrounds. It encourages innovative and interactive engagements that can be harnessed to promote dialogue, forge political and developmental spaces, build capacity for youth participation, and facilitate mediation, reconciliation and healing amongst foes, victims and perpetrators of violence so that they can co-exist in a sustainable, longer-term peace.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Letter of Information



### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the Research Study:**

**Promoting youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship in Mbare, Zimbabwe.**

**Principal researcher:** Gilbert Tinashe Zvaita

**Supervisor:** Dr Sylvia Kaye

**Co-Supervisor:** Dr Alain Tshudin

**Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:**

The study on promoting youth participation in social entrepreneurship for community peace has a significant interest in providing alternative peace practices that can help mobilise youth towards positive and sustainable practices that promote peaceful interaction and societal change. It seeks to understand the experiences of youth and engage with them on alternative practices that can promote positive participation in the community through social entrepreneurship to provide sustainable development initiatives.

**Dear participant,**

I'm a doctoral candidate from the Durban University of Technology (DUT) in Durban. My research activities aim to explore and understand youth challenges to promote and facilitate positive and harmonised participation of youth from different political and social backgrounds in social entrepreneurship projects to be agents for transforming communities through peacebuilding practices. Participation in this research is voluntary and any participant is free to withdraw at any time without any adverse effects. Participants are responsible for responding to a questionnaire and participating in interview and focus group discussion. Sampling will be inclusive, considering age variables, gender variables and past experience. The whole duration of this study is one year.

This is a very low risk study and there are no anticipated discomforts to be expected. I will use the following instruments: Survey questionnaire made of structured and contingency questions, face to face interviews (recorded voice interviews with participant's consent) and focus groups (see interview protocol), search conference journals for action research, document collection and analysis for action research. There is no remuneration for you and no form of inducement will be offered for participation

in this study. But, snacks will be provided to the participants. Participants are not allowed to cover any costs of my study. Therefore, if there be any need for transport, the researcher will incur the cost.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed using pseudonyms. Access to data will be limited for study purposes 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. Should there be any study related injury, the psychologist skills will assist the researcher in remediating to the situation.

**Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:** Please contact the researcher +27767155453/ [21855598@dut4life.ac.za](mailto:21855598@dut4life.ac.za) , my supervisor at +27 (0) 11-2680479; +27 (0) 78 155 6337 or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to Prof. C. E. Napier - Acting Director, Research and Postgraduate Support. Contact number is 031 373 2577.

Researcher's Signature

---

**Gilbert T. Zvaita (PhD Candidate)**

Durban University of Technology (ICON)

Durban, South Africa

## Appendix B: Consent Form



### CONSENT FORM

#### Statement of Agreement for your participation in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, **Gilbert Tinashe Zvaita**, 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 |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------|
| ___Gilbert T. Zvaita    | _____ | _____     |

| Full Name of Witness (If applicable) | Date  | Signature |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| _____                                | _____ | _____     |

## Appendix C: Interview Guide



### INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Participant Age:**

**Marital Status:** *Single/ Married*

**Employment Status:** *Formal / Informal (Self Employed) / Unemployed*

**Questions:**

1. Can you tell me about the life of young people in Mbare? What kind of challenges are you facing around the community?
2. How do you cope with the different social, economic, and political challenges around the community?
3. What is your understanding of violence? What kind of violence do people often engage in the Mbare community?
4. Would you consider youth to be the main perpetrators of violence here in Mbare? Please explain the reasons why?
5. What do think are the major causes of violence? What do you think are the factors that drive youth to participate in violent behaviours?
6. Would you consider youth to be a vulnerable group that can be influenced to engage in violence or crime related activities for reward? Please explain.
7. What is your opinion on the way support services (e.g. Police, security or any law enforcement agencies or members of the community) handle the issues of violence? Do you think they put much effort to address violence within communities?
8. Do you know of some youth that have been involved in any form of political or social related violence? Do you think there has been any reconciliation or intervention for forgiveness amongst them?
9. How do you think these conflict related challenges within the community can be resolved? How do you view reconciliation and peace? Do you think it's practical?
10. If you were to be involved in any form of violent confrontation with any of your neighbours/ young people of your age for political or economic reasons that result in you hurting each other. And then an opportunity that can be mutually beneficial for both of you arises with the condition that you have to work together despite the history of violence would you consider reconciling and working together? Please explain your opinion?

11. Do you think people around the community still live in fear of the violence recurring? If so how does this affect the relations and the way people and mostly youth make decisions and conduct their day to day business.
12. What do you think should be done to prevent youth participation in violence?
13. What measures do you think can be put in place to promote positive participation of youth in building the community?
14. Do you think there is need for promoting peace amongst youth and the community at large in Mbare? Would you be interested in participating towards promoting peace initiatives in Mbare if the need arises?
15. If there are any thoughts or comments that you are willing to engage concerning this discussion please feel free to raise them or share.

**Thank you for your participation.**

## Appendix D: Focus Group Discussion Guide



### FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Name of group interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time discussion started: \_\_\_\_\_ Time ended: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant summary: \_\_\_\_\_ Women: \_\_\_\_\_ Men: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Discussion Guide

1. Can you please tell me the challenges that are facing youth in this community?
2. Do you think some of these challenges are the factors that contribute to youth participation in violence?
3. Describe the forms and causes of the violence that occurs in this community?
4. What problems are faced when dealing with issues of violence in your community?
5. Who do you think are the main victims of the violence?
6. How does violence affect relations within the community?
7. Do you think there is a connection between youth violence and economic resources? Please explain?
8. Do you think young people are being properly engaged by various stakeholders such as government, political parties or NGOs in addressing the challenges that affect them? Are there any meaningful results that are being noticed?
9. Would you consider youth to have the key social and political voice in making key decisions with their families, society, business or organisations they participate? Do you think there are other actors who influence the participation of youth involvement in violence? Have you ever heard of situations whereby some key significant actors influenced youth to participate in any form of violence?
10. How do the authorities such as the police or government officials react to these issues of violence? What is done to prevent the violence? What is done to ensure justice?
11. Are there any measures, discussions or initiatives that are put in place to promote dialogue, peace and reconciliation to address the violence? How can these measures and efforts be improved? Are there any support networks that work with youth to help in addressing the problem of violence?
12. What do you think should be done to prevent, manage and promote peaceful participation of youth within the community?
13. Are there any other comments?

**Thank you for your time and participation!**

## Appendix E: Survey Questionnaire



### SURVEY QUESTIONS

#### Title of the Research Study:

Promoting youth peacebuilding through social entrepreneurship in Mbare, Zimbabwe.

#### SECTION A: Demographic Details

1. What is your age range?

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 18 to 22 Years |  |
| 23 to 27 Years |  |
| 28 to 31 Years |  |
| 32 to 35 Years |  |
| 36+ Years      |  |

2. Gender

| MALE | FEMALE |
|------|--------|
|      |        |

3. Marital Status

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Married               |  |
| Single                |  |
| Divorced              |  |
| Living With a Partner |  |

4. Highest level of education reached

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| "O" Level                |  |
| "A" Level                |  |
| Professional Certificate |  |
| Diploma                  |  |
| Bachelor's Degree        |  |
| Post-Graduate Degree     |  |
| Other                    |  |

5. Employment Status

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Unemployed             |  |
| Formally Employed      |  |
| Self/Informal employed |  |

#### SECTION B: Understanding the Nature of Violence in Mbare

6. Have you ever heard about violence or witnessed acts of violence in this community?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| YES |  |
|-----|--|

|    |  |
|----|--|
| NO |  |
|----|--|

7. Do you think youth violence is a problem in this community?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| YES |  |
| NO  |  |

8. Violence is defined differently and has different forms and nature. Considering that violence is the physical act of causing injury to a person or property. Please tick at least (3) three boxes which indicate the nature of violence that young people in Mbare are commonly involved in?

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Political violence  |  |
| Gender Based Violence   |  |
| Sexual violence/ Rape   |  |
| Robbery   |  |
| Disorderly conduct (Causing fights in public, swearing loudly in public)  |  |
| Destruction of private or public property (e.g. breaking of windows)      |  |
| Vandalism (destroying other people's assets such as cars or marketplaces) |  |

9. Have you ever participated in any acts of violence? (i.e. political violence, gender-based violence, sexual violence, robbery, disorderly conduct, destruction of private or public property).

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| YES |  |
| NO  |  |

10. Do you know of someone who participated or is involved in the above-mentioned acts of violence?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| YES |  |
| NO  |  |

### SECTION C: Experiences of Factors Influencing Violence

11. Considering that there are various factors that can contribute to youth violence. Please tick the box that properly represents your opinion on issues that you think are always, sometimes or never the main causes of youth violence in this community.

| Issue                              | Never | Always | Sometimes | Very Often | Rarely |
|------------------------------------|-------|--------|-----------|------------|--------|
| Competition Over Market Places     |       |        |           |            |        |
| Substance Abuse (Drugs or Alcohol) |       |        |           |            |        |
| Politics                           |       |        |           |            |        |

|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Influence by Political or Community Leaders</b>            |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Disgruntlement Against Poor Services by the Government</b> |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Poverty</b>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Peer Pressure</b>  |  |  |  |  |  |

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that youth participation in political violence is connected to economic gains?

| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Strongly Agree</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
|                          |                 |                                   |              |                       |

13. Considering your response to Question 11 above, do you think providing young people with entrepreneurial support which are distanced from politically aligned resources can facilitate to reduce their involvement in violence practices?

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>YES</b> |  |
| <b>NO</b>  |  |

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that young people are often sent by political or community leaders to commit acts of violence against their opponents or detractors?

| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Strongly Agree</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
|                          |                 |                                   |              |                       |

15. Do you think empowerment programmes (i.e. Social entrepreneurship training; leadership seminars) can positively impact youth with alternative voices of peace within the community?

| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Strongly Agree</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
|                          |                 |                                   |              |                       |

16. Do you think that young people in Mbare are actively involved in violence related acts because of different social ills such as poverty, unemployment or any economic related disadvantages?

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>YES</b> |  |
| <b>NO</b>  |  |

17. To what extent do you agree or disagree that sustainable economic support networks that are independently owned by young people are needed to reduce violence in the community?

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
|                   |          |                            |       |                |

**SECTION D: Willingness to Participate in Alternative Peace Initiatives**

18. Do you think the local authorities are doing enough to prevent youth violence in the community?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| YES |  |
| NO  |  |

19. Would you consider participating in any program that seek to facilitate peace activities and interaction in the community?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| YES |  |
| NO  |  |

20. I am willing to participate in any program that seek to facilitate peace initiatives in this community. Should any opportunity arise for such a purpose please contact me.

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| YES   |  |
| NO    |  |
| MAYBE |  |

NB: If you are willing to participate in further activities pertaining to this study please provide WhatsApp or Email contact details.

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

**Thank You for Your Participation!**

## Appendix G: Gatekeeper's Letter



24 Woodholme Road  
Emerald Hill  
Harare

Gilbert T Zvaita (Stu. No. **21855598**)  
Durban University of Technology  
International Centre of Non-Violence  
Durban, South Africa

16 August 2018

**RE: Good Governance Africa Zimbabwe, academic research affiliate authorisation letter.**

Gilbert Tinashe Zvaita (Student No. 21855598) is a doctoral candidate at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) in Durban, South Africa. His research topic is: Promoting youth participation in social entrepreneurship for community peace in Mbare, Zimbabwe. Gilbert is affiliated to Good Governance Africa an independent, apolitical and registered non-profit organization, established to promote better governance in Africa. At the core of good governance on the continent lies the need for democracy, accountability, and transparency, without which citizens are not able to track and evaluate government performance. GGA is also concerned with the promotion of education, innovation, leadership and social values.

The objectives of his study fall in the ambit of the areas which GGA also focuses on namely youth participation. His research seeks to explore and evaluate the extent which youth participation in social entrepreneurship in Mbare can reduce youth involvement in electoral or wider violence. His study aims to promote and facilitate positive and harmonised participation of youth from different political and social backgrounds in social entrepreneurship projects for transformation from violent political and social actors to community peacebuilders.

This study is purely for academic purpose. The participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any questions being asked. The participants will be assured anonymity, and no personal information will be used in the study. His study will be beneficial to several youths in the community since it will provide a platform for interaction which might lead to various opportunities such as training or start-up projects that can foster agency towards building community peace networks around the community. There will be no remuneration paid, and no form of inducement will be offered to participants in this study.

Yours Sincerely

Good Governance Executive Director

Emmanuel Sairosi

16.08.2018

Good Governance Africa, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, The Mall Offices, 11 Cradock Avenue, Rosebank 2196, South Africa  
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(signed by supervisor)