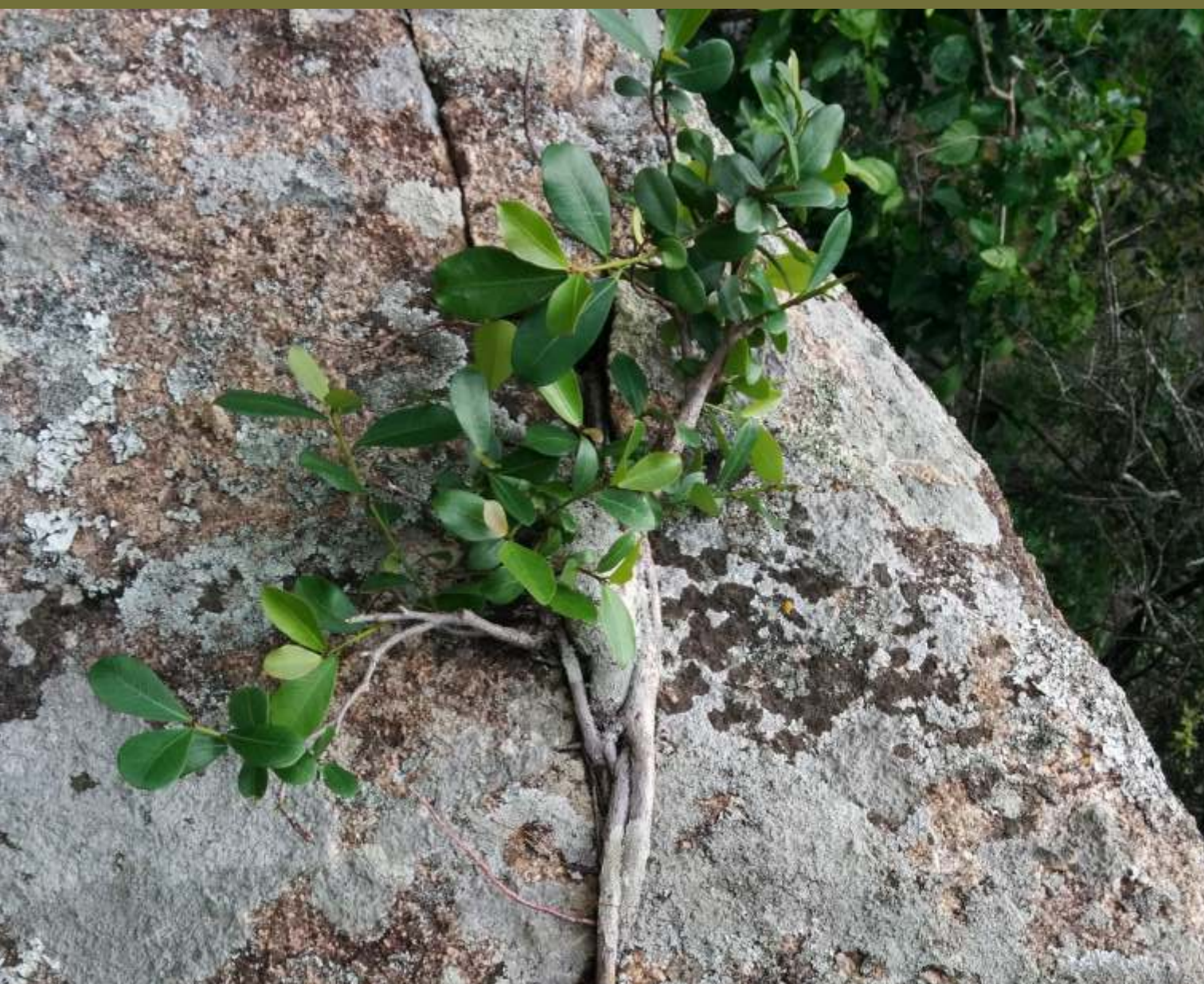




ANNUAL REPORT 2019







Contents

Who We Are and What We Do	2
2019 Overview	3
Chairperson's Letter	4
Director's Foreword	5
Trauma Healing and Empowerment Workshops	7
Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS) Workshops	11
Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) Workshops	13
Collaboration with other Organisations	15
Working with Young People	16
Capacity building for Communities	18
Success Stories	19

Reg No: MA0000900/2010
2 Wetmore Close, Highlands, Harare.
Tel: +263 24 2496643 . Email: info@tolzim.org
Website: www.treeoflifezimbabwe.org

Board Members

Rev. Dr. Ray Motsi, (Chair), Jessica Pwiti (Deputy Chair), Rose-Marie Depp,
Misheck Chipanga-Mlambo, Stella Motsi, Verity Mundy, Robinson Chikowero, Duduzile Ndawana

Cover photography: Lynn Gilmour
Layout design and photography: Charmain Jonker - Graphique Inc
Workshop photography: Tree of Life staff

Who We Are and What We Do

The Tree of Life (ToL) Trust Zimbabwe is a non-governmental organisation whose vision is to **create a healed and empowered society that puts its energy into processes of peace, recovery and reconciliation.** We provide a variety of community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) approaches that help people living with trauma to reconnect with self, nature, family and community. Between 2003 and 2019 close to 20,000 people have gone through one of our two key interventions, the Trauma Healing workshops and the Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS) workshops.

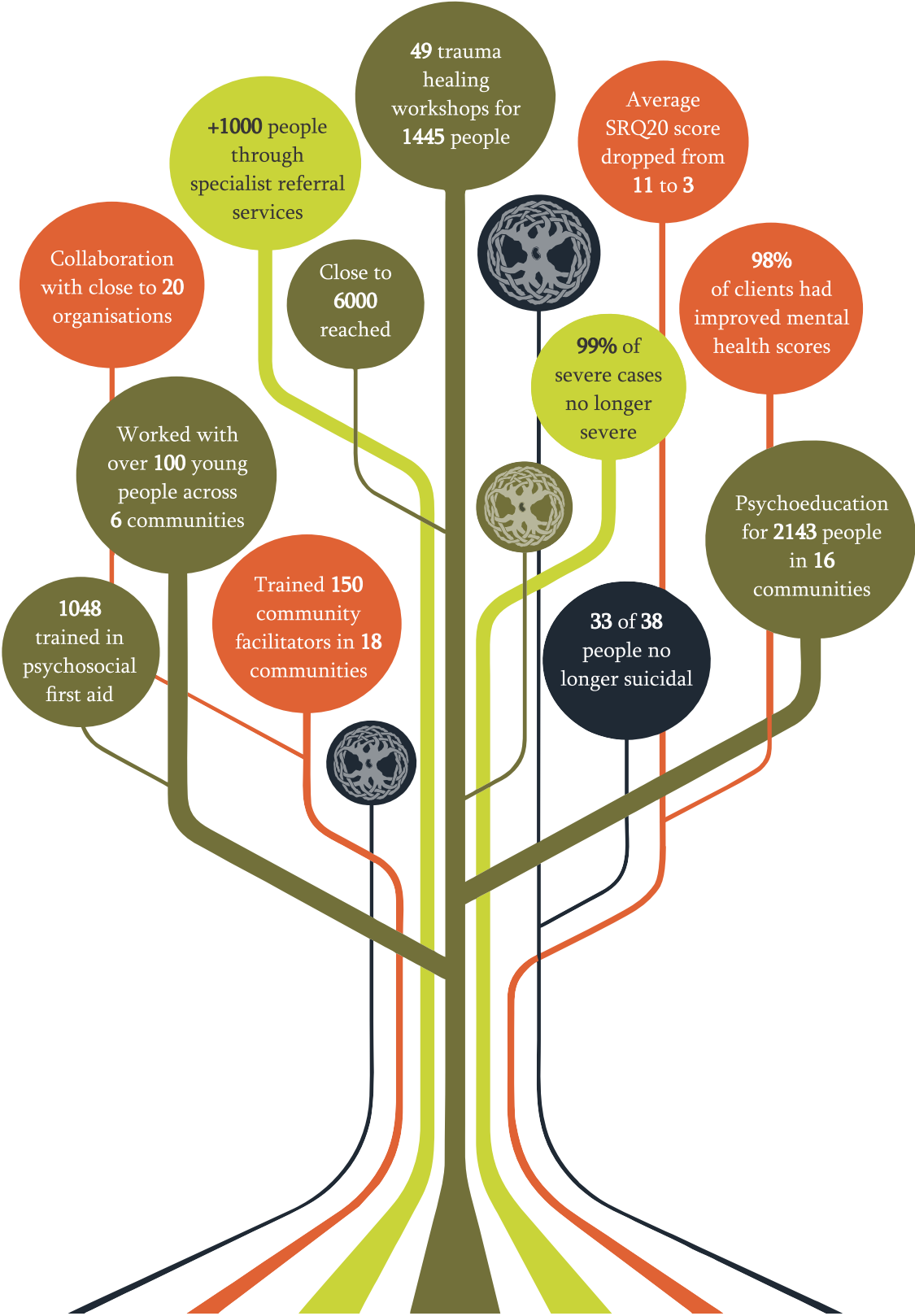
A key goal of the Tree of Life is to create groups of community-based organisations, able to provide psychosocial support to their own communities. As such ToL has an extensive capacity building programme for community-based volunteers. This is to ensure that workshops are done in the community, with the community and by the community, therein ensuring ownership and ultimately, sustainability. Over the last ten years more than 150 volunteer Facilitators have been trained in 18 communities across 8 provinces around Zimbabwe.

What we do

ToL's programme activities comprise:

- Trauma Healing and Empowerment (TH&E) Workshops.
- Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS) Workshops.
- Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) Workshops.
- Capacity Building for Community Volunteer Community-based Facilitators.
- Building Young people's capacity to initiate peace in their communities.
- Pro-peace activities including sports and cultural activities.
- Supporting National Healing and Reconciliation processes.
- Collaboration with other Organisations.





Tree of Life 2019 Overview

Chairperson's Letter

It is with pleasure that I am able to report that 2019 was another busy, productive and successful year for Tree of Life. Despite the many ups and downs of the year, Tree of Life found itself in a situation where the demand for our work, both at community level and from other civil society actors, was rapidly expanding and diversifying.

We believe that the growing interest and demand in our community-based trauma healing work is due to the contextual and cultural relevance of the Tree of Life approach and the result of our work being embedded in the communities. We continue to feel gratitude and humility to work with the admirable network of Community Facilitators that comprise the "Big Tree" and thank them for their commitment to their communities.

These community roots were particularly important in the first part of 2019 when our Community Facilitator network were instrumental in supporting severely traumatised members of their communities to recover from the traumatic events in January. This innovative tool has been commended by community members as being seminal in helping them recover and move forward from these traumatic events.

The growing demand and relevance of Tree of Life's work has meant that, with the support of our funders and partners, the Tree of Life "Small Tree" has grown and diversified. As well as recruiting new Facilitators to join the Programmes team and strengthening the support services, we appreciate the support of two seconded psychotherapy trainers from Centre for Victims of Torture (CVT) who have guided the skills development of the Programmes Team and enabled us to widen our reach to train other organisations. It has also enabled us to be more responsive to individual survivors of severe trauma.

Tree of Life's healing work is also increasingly being acknowledged for its contribution to



building cohesion and connectedness in communities. In recognition of the vital importance this has to the nation, in the coming year we are aiming to further develop this work, not only to benefit the communities and partners with whom we work, but in our commitment to participate in national movements, to build a peaceful and cohesive nation that puts its energies in to peace, recovery and reconciliation.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to extend thanks and gratitude to the Tree of Life core team and the Big Tree of Community Facilitators, for the important work they do with such commitment and skill.

Reverend Dr. Raymond Motsi
Chairperson



Director's Foreword

It is probably true to say that 2019 was one of the most demanding, but also exciting years for Tree of Life. The numerous challenges that the year presented gave the organisation an opportunity to make evident the relevance of our community-rooted approach to healing and community cohesion, and to demonstrate the impact of that approach in the most exacting circumstances.

Tree of Life is now over 15 years old and has been formally registered as a Trust for 10 years. During this period we have developed and refined our community-based model for delivering culturally-appropriate and contextually-relevant healing and well-being programmes for communities affected by trauma. Through this, Tree of Life aims to contribute to peace, resilience and development in the communities in which we work, by facilitating healing, both at an individual level and collectively within communities.

Over a number of years the impact of our approach has gradually been appreciated by a growing number of organisations and during 2019 we found enormous interest in our work from a range of different audiences. As a result, we were challenged to meet this growing demand, and to develop our programmatic work in new directions. As well as continuing to deliver our community-based group healing process in 18 areas of the country, reaching over 5,000 people, we were also approached by numerous civil society organisations either requesting us to work directly with them in complementary activities, or asking for Tree of Life to train them in how to incorporate an understanding of the impact of trauma in their own programming.

In addition, the situation in the country meant that our healing work was challenged to adapt to new contexts and situations. The widespread unrest in January, and smaller episodes of violence throughout the year, meant that our established healing work at the community level

was in great demand, but we also needed to develop our work to respond to the numbers of people affected by severe trauma. As a result we developed a Psychosocial First Aid model where we trained over 1,000 community members with the tools, building their ability to support each other in the healing process in their communities, and to identify people who needed more specialist services. Linked to this we delivered the Tree of Life trauma healing work, and supported affected community members to access medical and psychosocial services.

Tree of Life's work, during this difficult year, has demonstrated that community-based trauma healing work using a group approach, is not only a feasible option for addressing the specific context in Zimbabwe, enabling access to hard-to-reach communities in times of crisis, but that it utilises culturally appropriate, social mechanisms for individual and collective healing which are sustainable and impactful.

2019 also presented numerous economic and logistical constraints. Uncertainty around SI 142 and challenges in accessing cash, fuel and materials for workshops meant that we were forced to suspend our field work several times during the year. Despite this, we were able to meet most of our programme targets, and in some instances, to exceed these targets whilst maintaining the quality and ethical fibre of our interventions. This achievement is testament to the massive commitment shown both by the Tree of Life core team, the "Small Tree", and to the "Big Tree" of Community Facilitators who do so much to support their communities. We also value and appreciate the support and partnership of the many like-minded organisations with whom we have collaborated at community level and thank our funding partners who support this work. Tree of Life looks forward to continuing and developing these important relationships in this next decade.

Lynn Walker
Director

Nketa Poem

on what we have seen, heard, experienced and are expecting in our community

This is not just a poem, But it might be a story about the problems,
That we face in a system, Of a young generation born in freedom,
Who are victims of social issues, That have led us to sink to the bottom of the society,
Like the value of the bond note...

This is not a speech, And I'm not trying to preach,
But this is our time to speak, Because we are the ones with the reach,
We are done with being called kids who weep, For jobs, for money, for love,
They even say we cry for meat, At social gatherings where food and beer is free.

This is not a story, but is a message, That we are not a generation to blame,
We are trying to rekindle the flame, That our peers have lost in shame,
I know everywhere the story is the same,
Drugs, alcohol, parties and crime that's the 'fame'
Being different and standing out is for those that withstand the pain.

This is not a sermon but it's a window to see that pain,
The pain of lost opportunities, The trauma of losing those close to us,
The stress of looking for money and food everyday,
Young people are crying njengamabroiler akhala
from the day ephuma eqandeni until engena epanini (shwaaaaaa)

This is not about frustration,
Yes, everyone is lost in a state of depression and desperation,
But we are saying this is our statement,
We now know that stress is an inevitable temptation,
But we are going to fight it like it's a disease.

This is about healing, how despite the heartbreaks,
The wounds in body and soul we still have feelings,
Despite the critics, the cynics and the ignorant, Our smiles are ever winning
This is about our health,
Despite the empty pockets, the empty pots and empty shops we are satisfied.
Despite empty stomachs, we are psychologically, emotionally and physically wealthy.

This is a story about hope, that as we stand here today we can show,
That we can share what we saw to those that sent us to see,
That we gonna tell them that we have seen the light,
Not the light we see when ZESA comes back after load shedding, no!
But we gonna tell them that we have seen the light
That comes through when we are sitting in the shade of the Tree of Life.

- Constentine Mpofu



Trauma Healing and Empowerment Workshops

Our core intervention is the Tree of Life Trauma Healing and Empowerment workshop. This is a group-based, community-based approach supporting survivors of organized violence, who are still struggling with trauma. Using the tree as a metaphor for life, a healing workshop combines storytelling with healing of the emotions and connections. The process, adapted from the Narrative Therapy approach, involves groups of participants, witnessing each other as they go through a structured healing process. A process of reclaiming personal power and sense of body, and reconnecting with nature, self, family and community. The workshop is facilitated by community-based volunteers who themselves are survivors of violence and torture.

During the workshop, the tree is used as an analogy for the telling of stories, and participants communicate their lives through depictions drawn in the form of a tree. The soil (culture), roots (family), trunk (early development), branches (later development), leaves (significant people), fruits (high points), and scars (disappointments/traumas), provide the frame for sharing stories.

The telling of stories takes place in a circle which offers a step by step process of building trust and respect. It allows participants to share the accounts of their experiences (often given for the first time) in an atmosphere of openness, understanding and empathy. The concept of using the circle was welcomed as very similar to the traditional method of talking about problems within a family or community, known as **dare** in the Shona language. Confidentiality is critical; we abide the circle principle: “what is said in the circle stays in the circle”.

Research into the effectiveness of the method is carried out using a World Health Organisation (WHO) psychiatric screening instrument measuring depression and anxiety. Participants

are also asked for feedback in a structured self-report upon completion of the workshop. In addition, three months after the first workshop, a follow-up visit and assessment is done with participants. In 2019, 98% of participants who were followed up had improved mental health scores.



In 2019, 42 Trauma Healing and Empowerment Workshops were held for 1445 people being 574 men and 871 women. Of these 633 (44%) were under the age of 35 while 812 (56%) were 35 years or older. Of the group 92% had experienced some form of organized violence. As part of our continuum of care and provision of holistic interventions, 6 Special Follow-Up Healing workshops were held for 118 people (19 men and 89 women). Over 800 people were provided with other therapeutic services and referrals for further support.

Some post-workshop follow-up comments:

“I am well since the workshop and have started the process of getting my Certificates. I feel rejuvenated and hope to pick up my life and to bounce back as a teacher. I am no longer bitter about anybody.”

- Entumbane participant, September 2019

“I wish I had done this workshop earlier because (my trauma) was stopping me from doing positive things. Now I am a free soul, I am connected..... I visited my home area and my family for the first time in 20 years. I have forgiven people I vowed I would never forgive. I am moving on with my life.”

- ZIPRA participant, 2019



“The workshop went beyond my expectations. I am able to self-manage my life and family. The problems I have now are those of everybody – economic. I wish I could be recalled for another workshop – Thank you Tree of Life.”

- Entumbane participant, September 2019

“Tree of Life workshop taught me how to manage my problems in my life and assist others when they come to me with their problems, and to be a forgiver to my enemies.”

- Nketa participant, September 2019

“I have moved on with my life. The workshop changed my life and I am now participating in all community activities.”

- Kuwadzana participant, 2019

“I am able to communicate with others in a nice way. I used to ignore people but now I am able to listen after attending the workshop.”

- Epworth participant, October 2019

“The workshop helped me to see myself as a valuable person. I used to look down upon myself, now I know who I am in the community. Keep empowering people!”

- Epworth participant, October 2019

“I benefited a lot – I used to be very stubborn but since the workshop I now behave. I saw another lady who stole matches – people wanted to beat her so I just took my money and I paid for her.”

- Mabvuku participant, October 2019

“My aunt also attended the healing workshop. She had not entered my house for 30 years, but after the workshop she started to visit me. This workshop has helped my family and my community.”

- Nkayi participant, October 2019

“I am no longer bitter about those who wronged me and I even approached some of them to reconcile. I have started a group business with community members to keep myself busy.”

- Goromonzi participant, October 2019





Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS) Workshops

Tree of Life conducts a psychoeducation intervention, the Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS) workshop, for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), community leaders and communities at large, and includes men, women and youth. This is a two-day workshop which can host up to two hundred participants at a time.

Trauma is a major barrier to development. At an organisational level, PACS enables other CSO's to understand how unresolved trauma is often a hindrance to the complete and successful achievement of their outcomes, thereby



highlighting the need to include trauma healing as a parallel process to their work. To date several CSO's have successfully partnered with Tree of Life in order to provide much needed trauma healing to their beneficiary constituencies. PACS also builds awareness of the impact of trauma on resilience and social cohesion and facilitates constructive, systematic dialogue at community level to undertake resolution, leading to peace building and development.

Highlights from 2019

- In 2019 twenty PACS workshops were held for 2143 people, being 790 men (37%) and 1353 women (63%).
- Participants included community leaders, civil servants, men, women and youth
- 6 PACS training workshops were held for 156 PACS trainees

The PACS workshop aims to enable participants to:

- Identify ways of maintaining physical, psychological and emotional health at individual, family and community level.
- Gain knowledge about the causes and effects of trauma and stress.
- Help survivors better understand their own stress responses, and knowledge of coping strategies which provide a sense of control over these responses and reinforce own strengths, resources and coping skills.
- Enhance and strengthen social support and resilience at family and community level.
- Practice self-care through practical exercises such as breathing and relaxation skills
- Supporting and helping others in emotional distress
- Building resilience as individuals, families and communities
- Mapping **small steps** towards a better community using social capital resources.



Excerpt from a PACS follow up report, September 2019:

“As a result of PACS, families were united after years of misunderstandings and fighting amongst themselves. After PACS they were able to sit down and talk about their challenges and are now moving forward together well. Many are now planning together as families and communication has improved, with family members accepting each other's perspectives. At community level people are now tolerating each other but before they used to associate themselves with people who share the same values, for example along belief systems and political affiliations which have been separating people. They are now respecting their leadership and are involving them when issues arise. The PACS workshop brought awareness to participants and they are now able to observe a stressed person and approach him/her and initiate discussion. The community is now able to hold issues of confidentiality, without sharing personal problems to others and their compassion to others has greatly improved. The community is now more aware of mental health issues and how they are handled.

The participants initially had difficulties in taking their desired **small steps** forward, as it took time for them to be accepted and accorded opportunity to share their learnings. They had to spend time talking to others about stress and trauma before gaining respect. There are a lot of positive changes as a result of the PACS workshop as people are now more tolerant with each other, working together and living in harmony, talking and discussing about boundaries openly, which was not the case before. The community is looking forward to holding more PACS workshops to create more awareness around health at all levels.”



Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) Workshops

Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) is built on the premise that if people are supported immediately after a traumatic exposure then this will build resilience. In early 2019 Tree of Life conducted 16 PFA training workshops for 1048 people, being 584 females and 464 males.

Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) training includes:

- Defining PFA in the Zimbabwe context and how to support families and communities;
- Qualities and skills and characteristics of a good Psychosocial First Aid Facilitator;
- Common reactions to traumatic events and how those affected can be supported and empowered;
- The role of PFA to address basic needs and reduce psychological distress;
- Coping skills and connections for support after sudden shocks and traumas;
- Creating and sustaining an environment of safety, calm and comfort, connectedness, self-empowerment and hope - for affected individuals and communities.
- 8 objectives of PFA including:
 1. Human connection;
 2. Ongoing Safety;
 3. Calm and how to orient emotionally overwhelmed human beings;
 4. Supporting people to tell their immediate needs and concerns;
 5. Offer practical assistance;
 6. Connecting survivors;
 7. Support adaptive coping and
 8. Providing clarity on the availability as a helper.

The Tree of Life PFA workshops were designed in a simple and practical way that enabled people who went through the workshops to take what they had learnt back to their own families and communities. The workshops helped to bring out relevant and practical issues that can build resilience on the ground. Each community discussed solutions to dealing with the sudden





trauma, hence leading to community sustainability and empowerment. It brought unity and connectedness within the community after a period of much unexpected distress. Participants were able to identify culturally appropriate and relevant ways of constructive coping such as singing, praying, gardening, and connecting with support systems and so on. They reported that going forward they would - in future - be able to support people affected by sudden trauma with the new skills they learned. Many noted that this was applicable now and the extra 'tool' in their 'toolbox' would enable them to help people in the right way, should future violence or trauma erupt. They also felt that in future their resilience levels will be stronger. Participants pledged to use their skills to create peaceful, loving and caring communities and families. They also went on to identify day to day issues that need rapid response PFA, such as domestic violence and suicidal cases. The PFA workshops also helped community members identify other networks of organisations or people who are working to help communities deal with trauma, including traumatised children.

The workshops helped to bring out relevant and practical issues that can build resilience on the ground.



Collaboration with other Organisations

For sustainable development to be possible, it is essential that Peacebuilding, Livelihoods Development and Trauma Healing are conducted in communities as combined efforts. As such Tree of Life seeks to collaborate with like-minded organisations who are keen to incorporate psychosocial support into their own work. This is done by providing Psychosocial Awareness services to other organisations through PACS, PACS Facilitator training or Trauma Healing and Empowerment for traumatized communities. More recently Tree of Life has developed a Trauma Awareness training kit which will be completed and rolled out in 2020. Alternatively, Tree of Life also believe in learning from others, and as a way of improving our own capacity, we partner with other organisations in order to learn skills that will enable our team of Facilitators to provide the best quality of services to our client base.

In 2019 we collaborated with the following organisations in different ways:

- ACT Alliance
- Adult Rape Clinic (ARC)
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)
- Center for Victims of Torture (CVT)
- Dialogue on Shelter
- Healing of Memories
- Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR)
- Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)
- Island Hospice and Healthcare
- Miracle Missions Shamwari project supporting victims of Cyclone Idai
- Organisation of Rural Association for Progress (ORAP)
- Pan African Reparations Initiative (PARI)
- Trocaire
- Zimbabwe Christian Alliance (ZCA)
- Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP)

Tree of Life actively seeks ways in which to

support the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) in achieving their mandate. In this regard we have been an active member of the NPRC's Victim Centeredness Sub-Committee as well as the Healing and Reconciliation Sub-Committee. In 2019 ToL was able to provide psychosocial support to several survivors who gave testimonies to the Commission. We are also an active member of the Trauma Healers Network and the National Transitional Justice Working Group (NTJWG), both of whom support healing and reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe.



Working with Young People

Youth make up the largest demographic group in Zimbabwe. In reflection meetings and healing workshops with youth held by Tree of Life, the young people participating expressed that they are often excluded and unacknowledged as social agents. They noted that there is very little respect for youth in their communities and that unemployed young people are perceived as being anti-social influences and viewed with fear. They articulated their need to be offered opportunities to become social agents for peace and reconciliation in their communities and to demonstrate their capacity to effectively manage community projects. In 2017 Tree of Life began the Youth Empowerment for Peace Project (YEPP) which includes an array of activities, including PACS workshops for young people, Livelihoods Development and Pro-peace activities.

Youth Engagement for Peace Project

In 2019, under the Tree of Life Youth Engagement for Peace Project, we worked with 6 communities across Zimbabwe, as follows:

- 3 trauma healing workshops were held for 123 people (62 males and 61 females)
- 2 PACS Training workshops were held for 58 trainees (23 males and 35 females)
- 2 PACS follow ups with 45 people (23 males and 22 females)
- 1 Refresher PACS training workshop for 16 people (9 males and 7 females)
- 3 Pro-peace activities were held for 167 youth (87 males and 80 females)
- 1 Positive Peace training for 41 youth (19 males and 22 females)

Achievements

As a result of the work done with the youth, the following were achieved:

- Several youth started their own small businesses in 2019 following livelihoods development training given in 2018. This includes businesses in baking, snack making, selling of handmade jewellery, handmade

handbags and selling of vehicle spares, to name a few;

- Many of the youth teams collaborated with their local councils to conduct clean-up campaigns;
- A participatory session on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights to promote peace through awareness was held with over 85 young people.

Challenges faced by the YEPP youth:

- The challenging economy has made it difficult for most youth to start up their own businesses;
- Frequent power cuts have affected many of the baking projects;
- Youth need more opportunities in facilitation to sharpen their skills;
- Youth are seen as a problem and not a solution;
- Acceptance in their communities.



Lessons learned during the YEPP project:

- Youth-led community activities have been effective in bringing youth together and also in building the confidence of the youth leaders. They have used their own initiative and, at times, their own resources to implement activities. They have demonstrated the capacity and maturity to manage small grants effectively, if offered the appropriate structured support.
- Youth have the ability to start up their own income generating projects when provided with the necessary skills development.
- We need to support young people in the project to find livelihood opportunities so that they can support themselves and feel that they are moving forward with their lives. The YEPP project has facilitated linkages to livelihood possibilities, but the dramatic shrinking of the economy in the past two years has made it less realistic that young people can find meaningful livelihoods without further support.
- Young people wish to be seen as a resource in their communities and not as a problem.



Story from the Field: Serving the Chitungwiza community

As Chiedza youth we have started an initiative where we collect clothes for Bumhudzo Old People’s home in St Mary’s. We also spend time with them, and help with chores such as wash plates or do laundry. Also as part of our pro-peace work of sports and clean ups, we have gotten recognition from the DA’s office, and they have openly appreciated the work we are doing in the community. Some young people also look at us as a source of support. Together with a senior ToL community facilitator, we were able to support a girl who had just lost her boyfriend, and she was suicidal. It is nice to know that some people can come to us for help. We are just happy that as Chiedza youth we were able to do a clean-up campaign without the financial support of Tree of Life, for us this is growth.

We are currently planning a sports day with a theme around drug and substance abuse in Zengeza. We approached our Councillor and our Mayor for support. We gave them a proposal, and they said that they will support us with soccer uniforms, the venue and they also said they would assist by helping to mobilize youths. As Chiedza youths we also sometimes go to Sharon Coin, which is an institution for students that are mentally challenged. We like to go there to hang out with them to show love, and Liveson sometimes plays his music for them.



Capacity Building for Communities

2019 was a very successful year for the training department despite the many challenges in the operating environment. The two Psychotherapist Trainers who were seconded to ToL through the CVT Partners in Trauma Healing (PATH) project gave additional capacity that enabled the development of additional tools and training modules for use by ToL and with partners. Tree of Life continued to get requests from other organisations for training and support in trauma informed care during 2019. Capacity building for the Small and Big Tree Facilitators continued throughout the year which saw huge improvement on the use of referral pathways with other organisations, the Big Tree and the Psychotherapist Trainers.

Training and supervision for the Small Tree (Field Officers)

Training with the Small Tree mainly focused on trauma informed care in Mental Health and Psychosocial support (MHPSS). Ongoing training on clinical skills with support from the PATH project saw the Field Officers mentor and support the Big Tree effectively. Several of the ToL team took part in an online course on Ambiguous Loss, which was conducted through the PATH Program, giving them an opportunity to share experiences on therapeutic work in this area.

Training, Capacity Building and Supervision for the Big Tree (Community Facilitators)

Besides ongoing capacity building on the two main interventions of Trauma Healing and Empowerment (TH&E) and Psychosocial Awareness and Coping Skills (PACS), the Big Tree was trained in Psychosocial First Aid (PFA). The training equipped them with skills to reduce the initial distress caused by traumatic events and foster the development of adaptive functioning and coping. This led to strengthened ongoing support, follow ups and referrals at community level. During the year, a structured supervision with the Community Facilitators was implemented with support from the PATH Project.

Manuals and tools developed in 2019 with support from the PATH Project

- Psychosocial First Aid
- One Day Trauma and Self-care
- Two-day Trauma Awareness and Self-care
- Roadmap for community-based trauma informed care practices and resilience building
- Restorative Debriefing Questions
- Trauma Informed Care principles

Technical support with other organisations

There was a growing demand in 2019 for ToL to provide technical support and training to other organisations. One of the activities that is being supported by PATH is the development of a training module on Trauma Awareness that can be used with other civil society organisations. This module will give organisations working in any sector an understanding of trauma and how it affects their work with the aim of helping them undertake trauma informed programming. The intention is that this will meet two strategic objectives for ToL, firstly raising awareness of trauma informed development interventions and secondly, to increase our reach. We continued to receive referrals from other organisations from communities for PACS and TH&E workshops. Follow ups done have shown huge impact.

Collaboration and exchange visits with other organisations

Strategic collaboration with communities, local and international organisations continued in 2019 resulting in ToL being invited to work in new areas in Matabeland. We continued to participate in the Pan-African Reparations Initiative (PARI) regional network. The team also participated in a workshop that brought together local organisations in order to look at the nexus between mental health services and peace building and find ways of collaborating.

Success Stories

Faith in action!

“Honestly speaking, I was never a confident person and I was the kind of person that looked down on myself. With the support of Tree of Life, I have become a very confident person, and I am always challenging myself. The youth work with ToL has helped me become a more proactive person in my community.



I am now a youth leader in my church, which also carries with it some responsibility. I also started a 'Mukando' project with 20 women in my neighbourhood. Most of the women are young girls like me, but we also have some older women in the group. We started our Mukando project in July. Every Tuesday evening, we meet and members contribute \$2-10 dollars. People are also allowed to borrow money; however, it is at a 30% interest rate. I was trained a long time on how to do 'Mukando', maybe others can also learn from us as it is really helping us as young women. It is also building our sense of confidence and responsibility to self. Thank you ToL for the confidence you have built in me, and making me believe in myself”

- Faith's story, 2019

Martha Inspires the Epworth community

“I used to suffer from ulcers, and also when ToL met me I was actually very suicidal. I was very

depressed and did not really think that the future had anything in store for me. After the processes that I went through with ToL I was no longer suicidal, and now also my ulcers are gone. I now truly believe that no matter what you are going through, you can get through it, because I have. I am constantly trying to help young people emotionally, especially those that continue to take drugs as a coping mechanism. I also have a much better relationship with my parents, I just feel like I am calmer emotionally and I feel listened to.

I am doing beadwork as a way of getting an income. I make up the beads, and then I go and sell them in Bindura, where I have found a market for them. I am very grateful to ToL for teaching us how to make jewellery because it is now a way for me to earn money.

Also as Domboramwari youths, we went into 7 different wards in Epworth doing dialogues on drug abuse and sexual health rights. We did small intimate dialogues with youths so that we could have comprehensive discussions. In total we met with 107 young people from 7 different wards. This was an initiative we did alone as Domboramwari youths, without the support of ToL. On the 12th of October we wanted to consolidate the conversations that we had, and invite everyone who came. Thank you to ToL for the support that you continue to show us and give us.”

- Martha, Epworth Youth, 2019



Moving on despite life's challenges

My name is Chakalisa aged 26 and I stay in Tshabalala. I attended a Nketa Trauma Healing and Empowerment workshop in January 2020. I'm one of the young people who was affected by January 14, 2019 shutdown. I was wrongfully suspected of having looted groceries from the shops around Tshabalala and was arrested and detained at Khami prison for 3 months. When I was released I stayed indoors at home and I didn't want to talk to anyone, because most of my friends are still behind bars. I was living in fear and decided to isolate myself from the community because I did not know who to trust. I was then identified by other community members who attended the Tree of life Healing workshop. I then attended the workshop at the Emthonjeni Pastoral Centre. The Tree of life process helped me, especially learning from the tree. I realised that I must move on even if there are life challenges. I then went around looking for a job. I got employed as a truck loader at one of the NGOs that supplies food aid in the country. Thank you Tree of Life!

- Chakalisa's story, 2019



Liveson's leather creations!

I feel like we as a youth group are being recognised for what we are doing in the community. When we were invited to a stakeholder meeting by the Councillor, to me that really showed that we are being recognised as active members of this community. I was also asked to perform my music, I felt really honoured that they asked me to perform. I feel respected, and I am slowly starting to see the flowers of our work.

After the second beads workshop, I have been making jewellery. I have found my own way of working though. I have found my passion in working with leather, and making jewellery using leather. I take leather off-cuts from a local shoe-maker. However, I have been able to sell some of my jewellery and I am also experimenting making things like wallets. I am very grateful for the learning opportunity that we got from Tree of Life as I am able to have a little bit of money - Liveson's Story, 2019.





