



# Learning to Listen:

Building a Future  
from our Past







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# Foreword

The Processwork Forum was conducted in May 2018, just a month after elections had been gazetted and two months before elections were conducted in Zimbabwe on 30 July 2018. The learning captured in this document from the Forum and the critical space it created for an alternative dialogical platform was affirmed by the tragic and conflict-based post-election events. The intractable positions adopted by political leaders and the divisive and fragmenting effect on communities underscores the need for finding new ways to engage, dialogue and build beyond impasse.

As Gateway Zimbabwe, we are evermore convinced that expanding the ecosystem of peacebuilding actors who are authentically committed to building healthier communities, needs to be rooted in alternative and complementary methodologies which influence national processes and support the momentum towards a Zimbabwe which bridges the divides between gender, ethnicity and generations – all fissures which emerged clearly during the Processwork Forum – and addresses the conflict narratives which have been fueled by structural violence. Gateway Zimbabwe senses the urgency to scale up prototypes such as the Processwork Forum, which bring together people across sectors, across regions, and across communities to invest in an ecosystem of peacemakers who can support national processes to move through hotspots, when we face seemingly intractable situations such as we face right now.

## Overview and Context of Gateway Zimbabwe

Gateway Zimbabwe (GZ) is a collaborative initiative co-convened by Trust Africa, Kufunda Village and ORAP. The initiative strives to awaken personal and collective agency through processes that foster healing, new connections and innovative leadership. The processes enable the people to discover their inherent skills and wisdom and use this knowledge to build and sustain communities and to generate community-led initiatives for sustainable change and work towards the healing of the social fabric in Zimbabwe.

In conversations, deep dialogues and various other fora with over 500 people across Zimbabwe since 2017, what emerged is that we are a multiply wounded society. The major themes emerging from these various engagements include; diminished trust capital, youth exclusion, patriarchal control, public disregard of citizens (corruption, impunity and non accountability of leadership) and a long legacy of state sanctioned violence (Pre-colonial State, Colonial State, Liberation War, Post Colonial political violence).

Out of this inquiry, **Gateway Experiences** has evolved as the initial programmatic arm of Gateway Zimbabwe - recognising the need to bring together people across divides, to learn how to listen deeply, to come together in new ways that are more participatory, more authentic, that acknowledge culture and that allow equal voice to all actors. The challenges of structural violence and fragmentation that we identified in our diagnostic and dialogue interviews are not contained within any one sector or industry. They have to do with our mental models and paradigms, our traumas, and our beliefs about who we are. *Gateway Experiences* aims to provide entry ways into a deeper awareness of the root causes of conflict and responds to the yearning expressed for a return to community, for healing and generative peace. Through transformative and collective experiences of bridge-building and healing, people are invited to join the *Gateway Fellows* program, where they are supported to enable the health, vibrancy and capacity of their respective communities. The programmatic model has the opportunity for impact if the initiative can achieve a wider reach, training of facilitators and documentation of the approach and the lessons. Gateway Zimbabwe is a learning initiative grounded in the local context and aims to complement existing practices and to enable leaders and their respective communities to step through the Gateway into the desired future of an enlivened, vibrant and leaderful country.





‘The iterative nature of the methodology, provided the necessary time for participants to engage the issues in depth and to move beyond superficial assessments to authentic relating and dialogue around hotspots.’





# Gateway Experiences: Beginning with a Processwork Forum

## What is Processwork

Processwork is an approach that invites and facilitates interaction among all points of view to support the emerging potential for system change. *“CFOR [Community Force for Change] facilitates awareness and direct interaction between opposing positions or roles, and works with dynamics of escalation and de-escalation, accusations and issues of power, rank, privilege and communication style. Whereas normally people either avoid emotions around hot issues or fall into these emotions headfirst, CFOR carefully facilitate at such ‘hotspots’ as doorways to a deeper understanding and contact, and to finding creative pathways together.”*

This Forum was designed as an experience to test the utility of Processwork as a tool for Gateway Experiences to work through ‘hotspots’ and conflict areas and into a deeper understanding of the themes and issues which are alive in the Zimbabwe landscape today.

## Why The Processwork Approach

The decision to host a Processwork Forum came from identifying the multiplicity of conflict narratives, mistrust, and stories of hurt and disconnection that emerged through the initial diagnostic and dialoguing consultation process. Additionally, the lack of a platform to express these stories, to hear all the voices and to acknowledge past wounds affirmed the Forum’s potential to meet this need. This forum was a pilot to test how this approach could meet to these needs.

## Who Participated in the Forum

A diverse cross-section of people from Gateway Zimbabwe’s network were invited to participate in an open dialogue to help surface hotspots and to explore possible entry points into beginning to rebuild peace in Zimbabwe.

Forty-six participants attended: 24 men and 22 women. The ages of participants ranged from early 20s to late 60s. Participants came from Bulawayo and the Western regions including Lupane, Umzingwane and the Zambezi Valley; from Harare, from Kufunda Village and from rural communities in Mashonaland including Zvimba, Mhondoro, Seke and Ruwa and from Manicaland – Chiadzwa and Mutare. Participants included people from civil society organisations, student and citizen networks, rural communities, and NGOs.

## Facilitators

Jean Claude and Arlene Audergon of Community Force for Change (CFOR) provided professional facilitation services using the ProcessWork methodology. Jean-Claude Audergon (lic. phil. I) is a conflict resolution facilitator and teaches Process Work internationally. He is a co-founder of Process Work Training Programs in Zurich, Portland Oregon and the UK. He works with the creativity locked within apparent blocks or apparently intractable issues within organizations, and teaches leaders in teams and organizations to do the same. He also has a long-term interest in violence prevention, has supervised and trained teams and organizations within social services, prisons and schools. Jean-Claude is co-founder of CFOR, facilitating forums for communities in conflict and to support creative collaboration and community building. Arlene Audergon (Ph.D.), co-founder of CFOR, is interested in the role of awareness and consciousness in individual and collective change, such that individuals, organisations and whole communities can access their innate capacity to go beneath polarities, support diversity and find creative solutions to societal problems, and for post-war conflict resolution and violence prevention ([www.cfor.info](http://www.cfor.info)).





# Introduction

This learning document has been collectively compiled by members from all the Gateway Zimbabwe consortium partners. As the Gateway Zimbabwe collaborative, we have taken on dual roles as conveners of a process for complex systems change and as participants (not observers) actively engaged in the process of change and learning (Patton, 2011) <sup>1</sup>. This decision is premised in our assumption that the process of building peace, healing and reconciliation cannot be facilitated without immersion in the context.

The focus of our learning document is in direct correlation with our purpose of contributing to reweaving the social fabric by using processes that foster healing, new connections and innovative leadership. This document is thus structured around these three elements:

**1)**

healing

**2)**

new connections and

**3)**

innovative leadership

In addition to a general reflection on the lessons on the methodology used as well as looking to suggestions for moving the knowledge forward. Each of the three is explored on the basis of our **learning questions**:

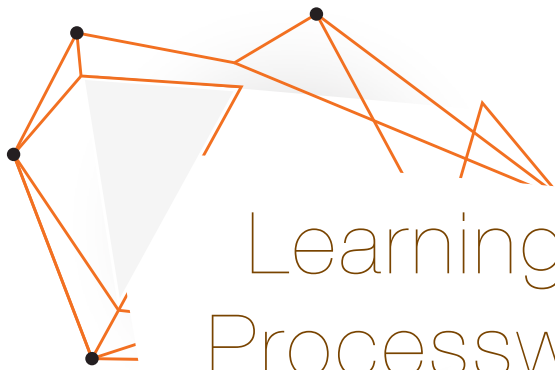
1. How does Gateway Zimbabwe's exploration of new relationships foster connectedness and convergence among an inclusive constituency of stakeholders who traditionally do not interact, let alone collaborate?
2. How can Gateway Zimbabwe cultivate and sustain processes that lead to healing and restoration among a people that has been separated and traumatised through decades of state sanctioned violence?
3. How can Gateway Zimbabwe facilitate leadership development that fosters leaders who have self-knowledge, are creative, collaborative, systemic and able to co-create health and capacity in their communities and constituencies?
4. How do the methodologies and culture of Gateway Zimbabwe propagate to national practices of dialogue, particularly in areas of hotspots, and how can Gateway Zimbabwe help these national stages become more inclusive and generative?

The processes used to capture emerging insights to produce this document include:

- Rapid feedback (on-site evaluations)
- Collective debrief by conveners
- After action review with small focus group
- Co-interpretation of data by members of all three organizations

<sup>1</sup> Patton, M.Q. (2011). Developmental Evaluation. New York: Guilford Press.





# Learning from the Processwork Methodology

Our Gateway Zimbabwe journey has been allowed to unfold as we follow where the voices of Zimbabwe lead us. The facilitation by CFOR followed in the same vein and was deemed by participants to be instrumental to the success of the workshop. The following key aspects stood out to participants on reflecting on what made the process unique:

**a. Co-crafting the agenda and process:** Processwork is premised on following the process of a group - and what it wants to explore together. In line with this, there was no pre-set agenda. The forum created a space where participants collectively defined the agenda and set the priority areas to discuss. This led to a space of openness and safety where participants could show up and communicate in a real and personal manner, opening about some of their trauma and hurt. In a post-Forum small focus group participants widely agreed that co-creating the agenda constituted a critical element of the Forum.

“The approach of allowing the participants define the agenda provided a safe and consensus-based entry point to engage polarised issues and thematic areas.”

**b. Diverse Participation:** The make-up of the forum was intentionally diverse. Each of the three convener organisations - diverse in their own constitution, reached out to a variety of partner organisations and individuals, resulting in a broad spectrum of participants from across Zimbabwe.

“The diversity of participants was key to the unfolding process.”

“The small (focus)group was impressed with the demographic diversity and inclusivity of the participants and noted the importance of this balance.”

**c. Working with roles:** In Processwork, through expressing roles in different scenarios, participants were given intentional space to express themselves with the support of others in the circle to bring out their pain, anger, and frustration. This process allowed people to step in and fully express a role in a space where they were acknowledged and listened to (with a sense of empathy) and was often deeply cathartic. Many times, participants were not aware of the different traumas that other people carry with them and how history has shaped current animosity between different tribes. The process led to a sense of deep connection amongst the group, and relief for those who were able to fully express. Working with roles encouraged active listening by all participants to become more aware of the positions and perspectives of others and towards eventually integrating them.



**d. Participant-Facilitator:** The facilitators were part of the process, stepping in to amplify roles, to notice the sometimes-hidden dynamics of power, rank and privilege and allow these to be seen and worked with. Sometimes when people were not able to apologise for their part in a situation, the facilitator stepped in to hold this role (e.g. Jean Claude apologising to a woman from the perspective of being a man and his role in his own past of not fully honouring women).

‘By allowing the processes to self unfold according to the needs of the diverse group, a space of fair representation and equality was created allowing the individual to lead to the collective unified voice.’

**e. Iterative Approach:** The methodology was iterative, enabling a return to themes over the course of the forum. Working with roles and entering into ‘hotspots’ enabled amplification of aspects not normally shared and therefore not normally heard.

‘The iterative nature of the methodology, provided the necessary time for participants to engage the issues in depth and to move beyond superficial assessments to authentic relating and dialogue around hotspots.’

**f. Welcoming all contributions - no matter how divergent.** The safe space, which was created by the Processwork methodology, enabled participants to experiment with what it means to begin repairing trust. In particular, the approach welcomed every contribution and emphasized that everything that was needed for the dialogue was in the room. The approach demonstrated that what is not expressed remains a part of the problem. The facilitators kept encouraging participants to articulate their contributions in the dialogue, even if they might be seen to be contrary. Difference was welcomed actively into a process that was able to hold all levels of divergence.

‘Processwork proved to be an effective way of helping connect and converge people’

The points of energy which were defined by the participants at the end of the workshop as making this workshop unique and needing to be carried forward included:



- Providing an honest space
- Providing a representative space
- Providing adequate capacity and unique facilitation
- Having a level of flexibility in the process
- The integrity of the conveners who invited participants into the Forum





# Overall Lessons Learned

**Themes:** Through the Processwork forum, Gateway Zimbabwe's learning to date from experience sharing shows that some main priorities to address towards reweaving and enlivening the social fabric of Zimbabwe are:

**Generational division.** Much of the forum was spent exploring the chasm between generations: where the older generation does not seem to want to revisit history, and the younger generation feels burdened by a history they were unfamiliar with.

**Ethnic division.** Revealed by exploring and sharing traumatic experiences incurred during the Gukurahundi massacres and the residual effect on the Shona-Ndebele dynamic.

**Gender roles and equity.** Through an expression of women feeling marginalised even in the exploration of some of the other divisions.

These three themes dominated the Forum, but other hotspot areas were named as conflict narratives including: Resource conflict; Cessation; Operation Murambatsvina and the 2018 election violence.

## LEARNING QUESTION 1

### BUILDING NEW CONNECTIONS ACROSS DIVERSITY

How does Gateway Zimbabwe's exploration of new relationships foster connectedness and convergence among an inclusive constituency of stakeholders who traditionally do not interact, let alone collaborate?

The division between the people of Zimbabwe along tribal and geographic lines is significant. For example, within the participants there were some who had never interacted with a Tonga, Ndebele, or Shona person. Resultantly, groups know each other by their stereotypes and whatever narrative they have heard growing up. The participants reflected on how the distortion of history and the absence of public education around important historical events, fuels tension and conflict by creating a basis for misunderstanding and from genuine ignorance.

How could we GZ succeed in bridging the diversity, and foster connectedness, and overcome the stereotyping and distortion with representation from youth, women, the elderly, and some smaller Matabeleland ethnic groups such as the Tonga and Sotho; different Shona speaking groups from areas including Mhondoro, Rusape, Chiadzwa, Zvimba and Harare city.

**Based on participant reflections, the depth of learning, healing and insight of the Forum was experienced by many in direct correlation to the diversity of its participants.** As mentioned in the reflection on the methodology participants found that “the diversity of participants was key to the unfolding process.” The diverse representation allowed the concerns of the different constituencies to arise and be heard.

The demographic segments whose absence was noted in post-Forum reflections included:“

- Elders” from the Shona population to bridge the knowledge gap for the youth demographic represented from this ethnic group particularly in relation to holding a substantive and historically-based discussion around the Gukurahundi massacres as a hotspot in the future.
- The rural citizen

**Recommendation:** In future, the Forum would be served by creating a demographic checklist to ensure diverse representation from as many of the foreseeable hotspots as possible.

## Impact Stories



### Diversity built convergence

- A young person was able to speak strongly to the Chief (to such a degree that some participants were shocked)
- Shona and Ndebele voices exchanged their grievances on both sides
- A woman disagreeing vehemently with a man who thought he understood the challenge of gender.
- Participants acknowledging how they were afraid of the ‘other’



### Building community

- Sharing meals and staying together contributed to significant unlearning and relearning between participants.
- Hearing each others’ stories, feelings and experiences, deepened understanding, and shifted the ambiance away from polarisation and fracturing to a place of connection and commitment





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### Building commitment

Towards the end of the workshop a man from Lupane stepped forward to share his desire for a dialogue of this kind in his home area. Lupane was one of the hotspots during Gukurahundi. His commitment was to do the groundwork within the community in preparation for a forum, and his request to Gateway Zimbabwe was to find ways to bring people who had been part of perpetrating the violence to join in a forum with them. Although we do not know whether we will be able to attract people who were directly part of the perpetrating group, what was striking was that several participants from Mashonaland stepped forward (in the session and subsequently) to say that they would want to come to Lupane to listen to the people there and to be held to account for what their people had done and caused. It shows the beginning of a deep desire to reconnect and to be accountable for past rifts.

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“Through the purposeful diversity of the group, organic design of the forum without a pre-set agenda, and process work as a facilitation tool, we have learned and continue to learn that our work must be informed by the people of Zimbabwe and the native wisdom and knowledge they bring to the table must feed into and influence the national peacebuilding dialogue.”



## LEARNING QUESTION 2

### HEALING

How can Gateway Zimbabwe cultivate and sustain processes that lead to healing and restoration among a people that has been separated and traumatised through decades of state sanctioned violence?

The conversations throughout the three-day forum gave insight into the specific conflict narratives and trauma that individuals and groups are carrying. Gukurahundi was generally the major hotspot, but the conflict narratives included;

**GENERATIONAL DIVISION:** Young people spoke of their hurt and inherited trauma where they now suffer from the misgivings of the older generation;

**GENDER DIVISION:** Women demanded to be heard;

**ETHNIC DIVISION:** Minority tribes spoke of exclusion, asking that their contributions and plight in the country be recognized and prejudices be redressed. Participants spoke of the anger towards the colonizers who contributed to the tribal division in the country; the Shona spoke of their unresolved anger over the killing of Pasipamire (the medium of Chaminuka's spirit) at the hands of King Lobengula's warriors in 1883;

**STATE VIOLENCE:** Vendors spoke of frustration over not being allowed to work and facing state-based violence each day in a country where there is no formal employment. The students spoke of the lack of space to air their views and the unleashing of state violence on them each time they protest. The people from Chiadzwa expressed anger about not earning anything from the richest minefields in the country.

It became clear that there is an urgent need to let people speak and be heard as a core pathway towards healing. A clear point of energy emerging from the forum is the increased perception of a need to first listen to grief, and where need be, to allow what looks like confrontation in order to come through to understanding.

“Peace comes after listening to the stories of grief, of getting into one another's shoes. Then you come up with a common ground.”

Participants strongly expressed a shift in them in terms of developing their capacity of listening and receptiveness, and how core these capacities are to healing. In a small focus group after the forum, listening was ranked highest as the critical skill developed during this Forum. Participants noticed the importance of deep listening, listening to self and others, and of allowing space to grieve without immediately trying to fix an issue.

“At first I had firm convictions about peace and how to get there but now my attitude has shifted more towards the need for receptiveness and listening to others.”

“I cannot heal if I don't listen. I have learned to take a deep listening”

“By listening on other people's trauma and grief and provide them space in order for them to heal from within the self.”

The need to move through conflict as a way to peace was identified as a key learning from this Forum, and the failure to do this was flagged as a trigger for recidivist tendencies to cycle around national and local conflict narratives. Inclusiveness and story sharing was emphasized as a means to entering into this difficult dialogues. the Shona young participants expressed a deep yearning to learn and understand more fully the story of Gukurahundi.

“Sometimes to achieve peace difficult conversations must be had and paradoxically, what looks like confrontation leads to peace.”

“We need space for people to share wounds, heal and then reconcile.”



**Recommendations:** the way to our future is through a healthy integration of the past.

## Impact Stories

“If you don’t deal with this, it may be your children or your grandchildren who will be left to deal with the effects of this unresolved issue.” (paraphrased)

### The truth of trauma

The Forum exposed the danger of moving on too fast, as a part of us will remain frozen in the past. We realized that part of this impulse stems from the discomfort of having to slow down and face what is really here: the residual hurt, pain and mistrust is not easy to be witness to. This understanding becomes more critical as calls from national leaders indicate a tendency to move on without moving through our conflictive past. At the recently conducted signing of the Peace Pledge on 26 June 2018, Minister Obert Mpofu (representing H.E. President E.D. Mnangagwa), said “we do not need to go back to our past, but should focus on the future ahead of us.”<sup>2</sup> We experienced that trying to move too fast into reconciliation can compound the challenge, and further the sense of mistrust. One woman blew up when she was encouraged to let go of the past: *“Who are you to tell me to move on? Do you know what I have suffered?”* People want to move on - yes - but they also want to acknowledge the past, allow space to move through the conflict and the grief - as opposed to try to sidestep them. Participants in the Forum experienced, in a very tangible way, how when issues are brought to the surface, they can begin to be addressed. They give us clear indications of what needs further work, both within Gateway Zimbabwe and also outside of the Gateway in the larger national peace building context.



### LEARNING QUESTION 3

<sup>2</sup> The propensity by national leaders to follow this path of failing to acknowledge a past which has clearly crippled multitudes in communities, underscores the importance of providing safe fora where processes can begin that not only contribute to healing but also to the construction of an inclusive future. Similarly, the outreach conducted by the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission confirmed the desire of communities to be heard and listened to and to find some form of public restoration.

## FOSTERING INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP

How can Gateway Zimbabwe facilitate leadership development that fosters leaders who have self-knowledge, are creative, collaborative, systemic and able to co-create health and capacity in their communities and constituencies?

Leadership development was not a particular focus of this particular forum, which was more about healing and building new relationships across diversity, and yet the format of the forum (no predetermined agenda, and the deep listening to all view) as well as its deeply transformative nature inadvertently contributed to aspects of leadership development.

Several participants expressed appreciation for the unique approach of the forum that welcomed all perspectives, that was co-creative, and that developed their deep listening capacity. The forum also shifted participants understanding of **peace**, as something needing to come from within each individual as opposed to being an external state. We have included this as an important component of leadership development, especially in Zimbabwe at this time. In pre-workshop questionnaires participants described peace as an absence of conflict, or an absence of war. At the end of the workshop peace was instead being described as coming from an inner spirit, and starting with self. It was a move from quite a theoretical reference point to a deeply personal understanding of peace and of the very personal inner journey required to cultivate it. There was also much more expression of the relationship with others as a key aspect of peace.

“It became clearer how important understanding each other and feeling as one human is if one is to find peace.”

“Peace building is a process and it begins with you as an individual. Peace is freedom of expression and means having a quiet and calm state of mind.”

“Peace is a process of appreciating others in their way of living.”

At the end of the forum many participants asked for training in the Processwork approach as a part of their own leadership development, primarily because they had seen the importance of this kind of dialogue for healing, conflict resolutions and community development. The focus group noted the potential for developing particular leadership skills from the Processwork methodology, namely:

- empathetic listening
- use of role plays
- self-introspection
- facilitated conflict resolution

**Recommendations:** Provide training opportunities to equip participants from this and other key circles, in the Processwork methodology to develop an ecosystem of leaders who can navigate conflict, trauma and healing processes.



## Learning Question 4

### NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROCESSWORK APPROACH

How do the methodologies and culture of Gateway Zimbabwe propagate to national practices of dialogue, particularly in areas of hotspots? How can Gateway Zimbabwe help these national stages become more inclusive and generative?

“Continue these dialogues. Expand the group. Build capacity to host this kind of process.”

This was the call from participants in the Forum. The participants identified three key elements on how to take this process forward: “Where to from here?”

1. **Wider Reach:** The need for this work to have a wider reach across the country and within participants’ local communities.
2. **Training of Facilitators:** A request for learning how to facilitate the process, so more people can help hold this the approach to build community and bring groups back together.
3. **Documenting:** A need to document the approach and the lessons (including around some of the content lessons of a new understanding of our history) to share beyond this group.

#### WIDER REACH

“It would be incredible to see the platform replicated in every province of Zimbabwe so it becomes a national programme that complements the existing platforms.”

A clear point of energy and call from the Forum is the need for the Processwork approach and learning to scale out and filter into the national practices of dialogue.

From the feedback of participants, we are discovering that Gateway cannot operate as a parallel movement but must be a complementary movement that generates, tests, and implements new ways of operating in the national peace building space. The nation needs healing. Experiencing moments of healing during the forum gave participants hope in the process and called for the need to link Gateway’s processes to national processes to facilitate greater systems changing impact. As Gateway moves forward, strategic thought needs to be given to how to influence the systems which are both victims of and perpetrators of conflict drivers. We need to ensure that ensuing processes are rooted in community experiences, which are shared and articulated in such Fora. Participants spoke both to the spread of this approach in community dialogues as well as national forums.

“Spread the conversations to communities countrywide to see if others support and are willing to reconcile. Moderate and provide a space for this to happen. Be part of shaping it and guiding it toward the direction it takes.”

“Everyone needs to be able to hear these discussions and be a part of them...we need to find a way to help them reach as many communities and people as possible.”

We asked the participants who else needs to be involved in future Forums and already saw the potential for an organic expansion of the group and of the reach of our work. Connections exist from this group into the NPRC, the Human Rights Commission, several regional peacebuilding organisations, youth and women’s groups, and more.

## SPREADING TO COMMUNITIES BY TRAINING LOCAL FACILITATORS

Many participants asked for Gateway Zimbabwe to develop a programme to build their capacity to host this kind of dialogue among their own constituencies as well as bringing it to a national level.

A process needs to be developed in the peace and national healing framework, which is not prescriptive of the conflict narratives that need to be addressed, but allows each community to name and address its particular conflict narrative. This speaks to the need to develop and integrate an accessible intentional Training-of-Trainers (TOT) process in future Forums so that concrete skills are being passed on as participants start to prototype with the Processwork methodology in their own communities.

“We each need to take the responsibility of initiating these dialogues in our families and the communities that we work with.”

“It’s good to be flexible and not have one size fit all attitude when dealing with conflicts issues in communities”.

considerable thought needs to put into this aspect. Even in conducting the after-action review with the small focus group, the hotspots were bubbling already quite strongly and in some instances, you could sense the tension around the thematic issues rising again. It will be very important to build solid capacity in people from the outset, so that even as participants continue these discussions outside of a facilitated space, (even informally in their network of influence) they have some capacity to do so without opening wounds or fuelling conflict.

### DOCUMENTATION,

Information sharing and communication of such Forums and the content of such Forums were raised as critical points to consider for scaling up this platform and making it accessible to a more critical mass.

“Documenting and sharing this pilot [will be important]. Inviting more communities. Replicating the process nationally.”

The focus group made a particularly interesting commentary on the roles which information and education play in feeding conflict and the lever that access to information and documentation can be in a healing and reconciliation process.





# Recommendations and Next Steps

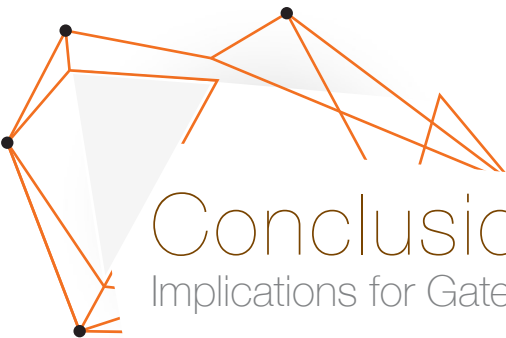
## for the Processwork Forum Prototype

The following outlines the key recommendations for further prototyping and scaling up the Processwork Forum from the insight of this collective learning process:

## Outcomes and Recommendations

1. To host a second forum that includes the initial group of participants and opens up the circle to more peace building organizations and individuals particularly from various hotspot communities. Including the initial group means we will build on the culture and skills built and will enable us to go further and deeper next time. At the same time we will expand the circle to include key missing voices. This conversation can be set in Bulawayo or within the Matabeleland region to signify our diversity intent and to hear the voices of the most hotly contested issue of Gukurahundi and its effects in the region where it was most pronounced.
2. Thoughtful consideration needs to be made around representation relating to the conflict narratives that we know will likely emerge as hotspots. Of course, not every potential dynamic can be provided for, but attention to this representation could deepen the substance of the dialogues. The development of a sample demographic check-list may help contribute more systematically to balance in the composition of Forum participants - a need noted for more Shona elders, etc..
3. Conduct a social network analysis on people who participated in the Processwork Forum and to identify strategic inroads for impacting the peacebuilding sector and linking to national peacebuilding and healing processes.
4. Engagement of government in next steps would be ideal. Rather than being a parallel movement we can seek to act in a complementary manner with the government institutions that already exist. As part of our second conversation these can begin to join us and they include the NPRC, Human Rights Commission, office of the president on national peace and reconciliation, and others.
5. Capacity building is required in going forward with the work. The conveners and inner circle of future partners in this work need capacity to lead dialogue, resolve conflicts, and develop bridging leadership. Part of the CFOR facilitation model is to offer facilitation training following a large forum if that is required. A CFOR intensive is being conducted in London in September 2018, and 3 participants from this forum will be supported to attend and participate subsequently as co-facilitators in local mini-Forums in their communities. This will develop capacity beyond the convening team to be able to hold this type of work.
6. Community mobilization is also important as our conversations must feed into and influence the national dialogue on peace building. With improved capacity, Gateway Zimbabwe can hold conversations throughout the country with the aim of national healing. For example, ORAP already has been engaging in such conversations but with a focus on development dialogue. Such conversations can now formally learn from Processwork and begin to feed in to Gateway Experiences and to the national discourse. There are community mobilisation processes being developed that use the processwork methodology. Gateway Zimbabwe can benefit from exploring and testing these.
7. There is a genuine need to build historical content and knowledge as well as find ways to build platforms for Zimbabweans to show and celebrate diversity together. Finding ways of documenting the content knowledge of these processes must also be a part of the work of the Gateway going forward.





# Conclusion:

## Implications for Gateway Zimbabwe's Emerging Theory of Change

In drawing implications for Gateway Zimbabwe's emerging theory of change we are looking for the things that made a difference in the forum. If we examine anything that is working well it should be congruent with what our Theory of Change predicts. The strongest theories of change are developed from what is working, pointing the way to how to generate further change. The similarities between all successes can then further inform our theory of change.

The following is written on the basis that our currently emerging theory of change is premised on the potential of:

1. Self-organisation - Freeing people to co-create a coherent system from shared purpose and principles rather than from top down control and;
2. Emergence - "When separate, local efforts connect with each other as networks, and then strengthen as communities of practice, a new system emerges at a greater level of scale."

**Gateway Experiences** are intended to be the way people enter into Gateway Zimbabwe, through a transformative and bridging experience. These experiences are informed by our Purpose and Principles<sup>3</sup>. Through the Experiences we identify leaders, who are then supported by us to develop local (or trans-local) initiatives. The diverse individual ideas and capacity for application of what is being learnt increases creativity and intelligence of our overall Gateway system. Through the Forum we already saw affirmation of our self-organising premise. Over half the participants requested further training to take this approach and apply it in their context (vendors association, student union, women's association, rural and urban communities, etc.). The diversity and creativity with which they were already describing how they might apply it affirmed the theory of self-organising and began to give an indication of what might be possible with emergence - of these separate efforts connecting as communities of practice.



- 3 Gateway Zimbabwe Organising Principles
  1. Primacy to local: We give primacy to local knowledge, experience, tradition and community
  2. We tend to the health of relationships
  3. We live the culture we are inviting others into
  4. We honour and engage people in their wholeness and diversity
  5. We speak truth grounded in our purpose
  6. When we encounter dissonance, we pause and think things through together

Additionally, we found several of our organising principles deeply affirmed by the process namely:

1. **Primary to Local:** The individual stories are in a sense a primacy to the most local. In shifting from the generalised narrative to the personal based on lived local experience we created deeper understanding and connection.
2. **We tend to the health of relationships:** The whole forum was built on the premise of listening to the full array of perspectives towards creating healthier relationships, even in the intentional inclusion of moments of communing together over meals etc.
3. This linked with the principle of **speaking truth grounded in our purpose.** The different experiences of truth were not spoken to incite further separation, or to hurt someone else - they were spoken and expressed and encouraged as a pathway to healing and integration.
4. It directly connects also with **honouring and engaging people in their wholeness and diversity.** Each person's diversity of experience, background and view was welcomed, needed, and called forth. Even challenging perspectives were given time to be further explored.
5. **When we encounter dissonance, we pause and think things through together.** This is a Gateway Zimbabwe principle, but seems to also be a Processwork one. When things heat up, in processwork the response is to slow everything down. It was key to the shift from polarity towards connection and so is an important lesson and principle to carry forward.

The following key principles/insights are emerging as complementary to our existing ones:

1. By expanding who is in the conversation something new becomes possible. We moved from distortion and prejudice to new understanding by bringing the polarities into play. Our diversity is needed to find our way forward and it will be critical to Gateway Zimbabwe's evolution to expand beyond the convener circle as a matter of priority.
2. We can heal and reconnect when we take time to listen, which links to our principle around dealing with dissonance.

Overall the Processwork forum affirmed our initial description of our Theory of Change, although more work is needed and the deeper change will only occur over time. More importantly it deeply affirmed our core organising principles and gave us new insights into how these can be lived out.







# ENDNOTE

## EXPANSION ON LISTENING TO LEARN REFLECTIONS

### **A brief definition of ‘hotspots’**

Forum interactions are usually intense, emotional and meaningful as key issues are brought to the surface. We facilitate awareness and direct interaction between opposing positions of roles, and work with dynamics of escalation and de-escalation, accusations and issues of power, rank, privilege and communication style. Whereas normally people either avoid emotions around hot issues or fall into these emotions headfirst, we carefully facilitate at such ‘hot spots’ as doorways to a deeper understanding and contact, and to finding creative pathways together.

Out of these interactions, a deeper understanding emerges.

### **Referring to page 10, how did we know there was a shift in ‘deepened understanding’, and “shifted polarisation”?**

Pre and post workshop evaluation forms were completed which gave some indication of shift in understanding. We also shared experiences within the workshop around shifts in understanding and polarisation. One example is that of a young woman who shared her initial feelings of nervousness to find she was the only Shona speaker in the womens’ dorm and how anxious this made her, to the point where she was unable to respond more than absolutely superficially even to greetings. During the course of the workshop she shared her initial fear and the internal shift towards understanding that this polarisation has been ‘created’ by our narratives. During the workshop she felt much more able to relax and to talk and share with the others on an equal basis. There were other similar examples, and a session during our time together that explored this.

### **Referring to page 11 and ethnic division, who are the minority tribes described and did people describe themselves as a “tribe”?**

We mentioned Sotho and Tonga as examples of minorities. The word tribe was used but not sure that this is how people described themselves. We were talking of minorities, of polarisation, of language groups, of marginalised groups.

### **Further detail on page 11 reference to the deeper collective work which was done in the context of Gukurahundi, NPRC, and other national restoration processes**

Gukhurahundi and the relationship between people and the NPRC were two issues that surfaced as ‘hotspots’ during the forum. On day one a participant from Lupane told a story he remembered from Gukhurahundi, of how he was frozen, without words to speak the whole story. We moved through this issue on the subsequent days slowly surfacing layers of assumption and suspicion and uncovering stories that many of the younger people had never heard. The iteration is part of the process - moving slowly and continuing to uncover.

In the case of the NPRC it quickly became clear that there was resentment and mistrust towards it. Participants took up the roles of people on the one hand and the Commission on the other and came to a stalemate where the facilitators pointed out we were in a situation that could be stuck for 20 years. The process illuminated much of the deeper mistrust. It might be worth going back to the video recording of this session to lift further themes.

### **Further description of the shift described in the last paragraph on p.11, “participants strongly expressed a shift...”.**

This comes from the focus group reflection and the questionnaires as well as reflection during the workshop. Listening intensified during the three days and in the post evaluation questionnaires which participants



completed, indicated that deep and empathetic listening was the key quality they had learned. In addition to the questionnaires, and reflections, it was a visceral and palpable experience for those of us who were present - how the group during the three days moved into a deep listening and quiet that allowed for the different themes to fully unfold.

**Full list of rankings referred to in the last paragraph of page 11**

1. Empathetic listening
2. Use of role plays to explore conflict safely
3. Self-introspection
4. Facilitated conflict resolution

**Description of the “tangible way[s]” participants experienced issues brought to the surface as referred to on page 12**

This was derived from the pre and post Forum questionnaires. Participants referred to *‘using conflict to shift something’, ‘invite all expressions including grief and rage, acknowledge past mistakes and wrongdoings to enable healing to take place.’*

There were also moments during the workshop itself, where big issues were brought to the surface: Like when a woman confronted a man during a conversation about the need to move on past our hurt. Or a young person confronting a participating chief. Both these examples were quite explosive, but also very cathartic. A few men afterwards expressed their gratitude for some of what the woman had been able to say in challenge to the man, which was broader and deeper than being between those two. It came to represent a gender exchange that resonated beyond the two of them. Similarly, participants reflected on the importance of a young person being able to speak truth to the powerful institution of a chief. Both these processes were held carefully and were guided through to a natural completion. This completion does not mean the problems or challenges are solved, but that the group came to a natural point of resolution for now. All of the hot spots that were explored will need far more on-going facilitation.

**In reference to the second sentence of paragraph two on page 13 where it reads “the forum also shifted participants understanding of peace”, below is a description of what these understandings were before and how they changed and how we know they change.**

We believe this is captured in following text - i.e. from the questionnaires completed pre and post Forum?

*“In pre-workshop questionnaires participants described peace as an absence of conflict, or an absence of war. At the end of the workshop peace was instead being described as coming from an inner spirit, and starting with self. It was a move from quite a theoretical reference point to a deeply personal understanding of peace and of the very personal inner journey required to cultivate it. There was also much more expression of the relationship with others as a key aspect of peace.”*

More examples of these expressions were also described in the questionnaires.

**Description of the “key missing voices” referred to on page 16 under recommendation #1**

The focus group reflection noted missing voices as the rural voice and the older Shona generation – particularly to provide historical narrative when discussing the Gukurahundi context. It is important to note, that there was actually substantial representation of the rural demographic, but the rural voice was quieter within the workshop. In smaller groups people also noted the absence of younger white people and mixed-race people.