

# The Involvement of People Living With Disabilities in Peace Building Initiatives in Zimbabwe

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## Abstract

This study sought to investigate the involvement of people with disabilities in peace building initiatives in Zimbabwe. The stratified random sampling method was used to select sixty respondents who constituted the sample group. A sample of 20 PWDS and 40 able bodied people were chosen as respondents. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from the respondents. The study revealed that most people with disabilities are not involved in peace building initiatives in Zimbabwe because they are regarded as incapable people. Government policies on disability and culture do not give a level playing field for people with disabilities to be actively involved in peace building initiatives in the country. Lack of suitable equipment and facilities to use affect the involvement of people with disabilities (PWD) in peace building initiatives (PBI) in the country. The government should have a clear policy on PWD and domesticate these policies. A quota system should be used by Government to ensure that in every peace building initiative, PWDs are involved. Government buildings and all public places should be accessible to PWDs to enable them to participate fully in national issues including in peace building (PBIs).

**Key words:** People, disabilities, peace-building, involvement

## 1. Introduction

Years of violent conflict have left a mark on the people of Zimbabwe. The country has experienced a number of conflicts since attaining independence in 1980. These conflicts include the Gukurahundi, Operation Murambatsvina and election violence. These conflicts have left the country socially and politically divided. Various peace building initiatives have been tried to bring peace and harmony in the country. These peace initiatives include among others, the 1980 reconciliation process, the 1987 unity accord, the 2009 Global Political Agreement (GPA) which culminated in the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU), the establishment of the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) in 2009 and lately the setting up of National Healing and Reconciliation Commission (NHRC0 in 2013. People with Disabilities (PWDs) in Zimbabwe have been excluded most of the time in these peace initiatives. Chimonyo et al (2014:07) posits that “disability carries multiple stigmas that are the basis for exclusion from society”. Thus this study intends to investigate and stir debate on the involvement of PWDs in peace building initiatives in Zimbabwe.

## 2. Background to the study

According to Cappa and Locke cited in Choruma (2006:10) “10 % of the world’s population consists of people with disabilities (PWDs) and in Zimbabwe 1,9% of the population are PWDs”. This means that PWDs constitute a very big percentage of the world population. Under normal circumstances PWDs should make a very big impact in the development of world economies. However society tends to disregard them. Mpofu (2000) asserts that people with disabilities have been regarded as a powerless group that has been culturally and economically victimized. According to Anscow (2003: 08) “this position has been perpetuated by attitudes of society which give rise to the perception that PWDs are weak and semi-competent”. This attitude has led to the exclusion of PWDs in many important national activities, chief among them in peace initiatives in the country.

In 1999, the British government initiated a peace agreement after a bitter war between the blacks and the whites in Zimbabwe. The Lancaster House Conference which was between the leaders of the black liberation movements (ZANU PF and ZAPU) and the white minority government led to the signing of a peace agreement. This led to the independence of Zimbabwe. It is interesting to note that in this important peace initiative no PWDs were involved.

Zimbabwe has its own traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that include the chief’s *dare* and the kangaroo courts. According to Muriri (2006) the chief’s *dare* is a Zimbabwean dispute resolution and reconciliation mechanism that involves both men and women. Through a public assembly called *dare*, made up of a council of elders (both men and women), conflicts are resolved.

In the disputed June (2008) elections in Zimbabwe traditional chiefs, the SADC region, the African Union (AU) and even the European Union (EU) made great efforts to resolve the Zimbabwean crisis. Yet in all these peace building initiatives very few, if any PWDs have been involved despite the impact these conflicts have on the PWDs. This prompted the researcher to investigate the involvement of PWDs in peace building initiatives in Zimbabwe.

## 3. Research questions

- What is your understanding of peace building?

- To what extent are PWDs involved in peace building initiatives?
- Why should PWDs be involved in peace building initiatives?
- What can be done to improve participation of PWDs in peace building initiatives?

#### 4. Review of related literature

According to Galtung (2013:18), peacebuilding is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing the root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building, political and economic transformation". This consists of a set of physical, social and structural initiatives that are often an integral part of post conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Peace building is a long term process. Kroc (2012:81) argues that 'peace building is a process of creating self-supporting structures that remove causes of wars and offer alternatives o wars in situations where war might occur". Conflict resolution mechanisms should be built into the structure and be present there as a reservoir for the system itself to draw upon, just as a healthy body has the ability to generate its own antibodies and does not need ad hoc administration of medicine (Galtung).

#### 4.1 Peace building initiatives

Peace building initiatives are strategies that are used to bring sustainable peace. According to the Conflict Information Consortium (2009) these strategies eliminate the root causes of conflict. In the event of a conflict, peace building strategies are used to resolve the conflict. Peace building strategies are also used in post conflict situations to prevent a relapse into conflict. This peace building initiatives should be in place before, during and after conflict.

Some of the peace building initiatives include reconciliation, institution building, conflict resolution mechanisms, and political as well as economic transformation. Mitchell cited in Dodo et al (2010:26) argues that "peace building is a process which takes years and slowly, it cannot be achieved from efforts by a single individual or a team". Instead it involves a variety of people working at different levels and focusing on various aspects of the conflict.

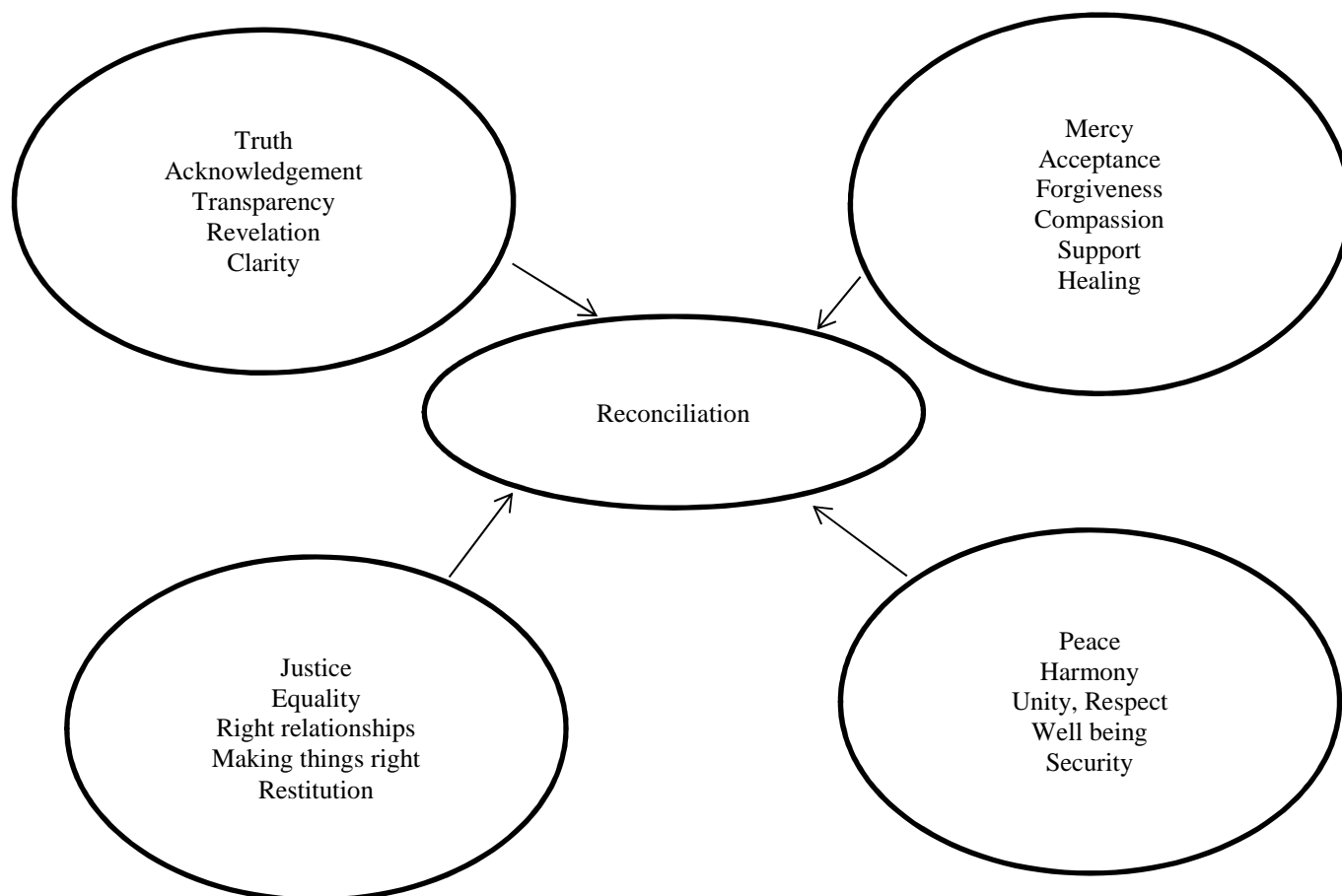
##### a) Reconciliation

Baregil (2001:39) asserts that "reconciliation is the coming together of people who have been alienated from each other to rebuild a community". Ideally, reconciliation prevents once and for all the use of the past as the seed of renewed conflict. It consolidates peace and breaks the cycle of violence.

According to Bloomfield et al (2003:21), reconciliation is "the rebuilding of relationships finding a way to live with a vision, coming to terms with past acts and enemies, society wide, long term processes of deep change, voluntary and cannot be imposed"

Reconciliation has elements that help it work and bind: honest and acknowledgement of the damage; sincere regrets and remorse for the injury done; preparedness to apologize, forgive and let go of all the anger and bitterness commitment not to repeat the harmful actions; and show efforts to compensate for the damage and get into a completely new and progressive relationship (Baregu ed. 2001).

Lederach (1997) came up with four poles that support the process of reconciliation. These four poles are:



Lederach (1997) posits that reconciliation encourages an encounter between the open expression of the painful past on one hand and the need to find a long term peaceful future on the other hand. Reconciliation also provides a place for truth and forgiving where people are allowed to air their innermost painful feelings of what relationship to emerge.

Hayner (2001) argues that reconciliation recognizes the need to give time and place to both justice and peace, with the envisioning of a common, connected future. Reconciliation cannot be forced from outside, it needs to be motivated from within by those who would have seen the need for it. It should be done for the purposes of identifying perpetrators for revenge purposes. Bodo et al (2010:33) asserts that 'reconciliation requires God's guidance since it occurs in life and death matters'.

In 1980, Zimbabwe employed the concept of reconciliation successfully. After the 1979 Lancaster House Conference, the belligerent parties, ZANU PF led by Mugabe, ZAPU led by Nkomo and Rhodesian Front went to polls. ZANU PF won the elections. According to Chideya and Chewana (2010:47) in his proclamation of reconciliation, the Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe said, 'If yesterday I fought as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you, it is not fully, therefore, that in these circumstances anybody should seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the post? The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten'.

According to Bodo and Chawana (2010:33), 'Ian Smith, the colonial Prime Minister finally died naturally without experiencing any harassment from the new regime or its freedom fighters because of the success of the 1980 reconciliation process'.

However, the reconciliation process of 1980 was short lived. According to the Centre for Peace Initiatives in Africa (CPIA, 2005), the 1980 peace initiatives in Zimbabwe were short lived because they were elitist and did not address problems at grassroots level. The political leaders at the time were the ones who were actively involved in the reconciliation process. Most of the important stakeholders in the reconciliation process such as the victims and perpetrators were left out. People with disabilities (PWDs) were also left out. The guilty were covered by a general amnesty and escaped justice.

People with disabilities (PWDs) had also been equally affected. Just like the able bodied people, the

PWDs had either been killed, tortured, raped, maimed, displaced or traumatized but they were not much involved in the 1980 reconciliation process.

Between 1982 and 1986, Zimbabwe experienced an intra-conflict between the Nbebeles and the Shonas. The intra conflict was called Gukurahundi. According to Wikipedia, 'Gukurahundi' means the early rains which washes away the chaff before the spring rains'. In the conflict, gruesome massacres were carried out by the government's fifth brigade, a North Korean Trained Army. Dodo et al (2011:28) posits that 'most of the targeted victims were supporters of Joshua Nkomo of ZAPU, the founder father of nationalist struggle for independence of Zimbabwe. The violent disturbances left people with psychological and social problems. According to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCUP, 2013) in Zimbabwe, the effects were individual, familiar or community as the conflict left more than 20 000 people from Matabeleland and Midlands died or disappeared.

The violent disturbances were only stopped in 1987 after the rival parties ZANU and ZAPU entered into a unity agreement that culminated into the signing of the 1987 Unity Accord.

The church played a major role in facilitating peace talks between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU. The CCUP was instrumental in initiating dialogue between the two parties. According to Alexander (2000:18) 'church leaders from Christian Organizations approached the late former President of Zimbabwe in 1980, Canaan Sodindo Banana to act as a mediator'. The talks began in 1983 and ended with the signing of the Unity Accord on 22 December 1987. According to the Centre for Peace Initiatives in Africa (CPIA), the accord was elitist and failed to deal with the effects of the Gukurahundi era especially at grassroots level. The accord was initiated and signed only by churches and political prayers. PWDs played an insignificant role in the peace initiative.

After the general election of 1985 that were contested by ZANU P, ZAPU PF, African National Congress (UANC) and the minority white dominated party, ZANU PF won the elections. According to Chawana et al (2010:28), "ZANU PF supporters' unleashed violence on defenseless supporters of the other parties particularly ZAPU PF". This affected the peace and tranquility in the country, fear and mistrust gripped the nation.

The 2002, 2005 and 2008 elections were a duplication of what happened in 1985. After these elections, violence erupted between supported of contesting parties. Chawara et al (2010:49) posits that "after the June 2008 election, ZANU PF set up torture camps to systematically beat and torture suspected Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters". Biti cited in Dodo and Muteura (2010:41) report that "the 2008 election left over two hundred and fifty people dead and over fifty thousand (50 000) internally displaced people (IDP)".

The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) came up with a peace initiative to resolve the conflict in Zimbabwe. According to Augsburg (2013:110) "SADC appointed Thabo Mbeki, the former South African head of state to mediate in the crisis". Mbeki brought to the negotiating table the major political parties in Zimbabwe that were contesting the outcome of the elections. ZANU PF, The Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC T) and the smaller Movement for Democratic Change led by Welshman Ncube (MDC N) were invited to the peace talks.

Yaacor (2004:101) reports that "Patrick Chinamasa from ZANU PF, Tendai Biti from MDC T and Arthur Mutambara MDC N represented their respective parties at the negotiating table". No PWDs were involved in these peace initiatives.

The protracted negotiations with the help of Thabo Mbeki, the mediator, culminated in the 2008 Global Political Agreement (GPA). On September 15, 2008, Zimbabwe's three political parties ZANU PF and the two MDCs signed the GPA, a settlement aimed at resolving the country's political and economic crisis. According to Vava (2013:18) "in signing this agreement, all the parties fully committed themselves and agreed to work together to create genuine, viable, permanent, sustainable peace in Zimbabwe.

This meant that all the parties to the agreement had to work together to implement reforms encompassed in the GPA for sustainable peace, Vava (2013: 20) posits that the GPA encompassed reforms to lead us to free and fair elections, reforms that lead to economic recovery (Article 3), sanctions (Article IV), a new constitution (Article 6) and media reforms. All these reforms ensured sustainable peace in the country. However, despite this peace initiative (The GPA), the PWDs again were not overly or ever involved in the process.

#### **b) The Musasa project**

The Musasa project is a non – governmental women's human rights organisation that assists more than three thousand women victims of domestic and sexual violence and women living with HIV/AIDS (Daily news, 2000). The Musasa Project provides counseling, legal support and refuge to women experiencing violence. According to the Daily News (1August 2001:16)" The Project conducts public education to raise awareness about domestic and sexual violence.

In 1999, the Musasa Project advocated for a Law, the Domestic Violence Act (DVA). This law came into effect and it has helped to protect women from domestic violence in the country. According to the Daily

news (1 August 2000: 10), "a forty six year old woman stated that she owes her life to the intervention of Musasa Project, ... her H.I.V positive husband has a suspended custodial sentence hanging over him if he ever beats her again.

Thus the Musasa Project (MP) has been involved in bringing peace to women through other women. However, in all these peace endeavors the PWDs have not been actively involved.

#### **4.2 African Traditional Conflict Resolution And Reconciliation Mechanisms.**

##### **a) The Shona Dare In Zimbabwe.**

The Shona *dare* is a traditional conflict resolution mechanism used to settle village or familial disputes. According to Peter (2003:13), the village dare in Zimbabwe are informal means of solving disputes around issues concerning land use and rights, cattle, marriage, inheritance rights, loans, damage to properties caused by one of the parties or animals and petty theft. The village of the chiefs dare is intended to sanction the notation of rules that are shared by the community, with the sole objective of reconciliation through restoring harmony and social order and reintegration of the person who has the source of disorder. Additionally compensation is awarded to the injured party, Shonhiwa (2017:104) argues that "the reintegration of suspects back into the community and the truth telling network of confessions after hope for reconciliation."

The dare occurs at a meeting that is convened by elders whenever there is a dispute between individuals or families in a community and is settled only with the agreement of all parties. The village headman or the chief presides over the disputes. He is assisted by the elderly members who are of good standing in that community. Elderly women and men are free to attend the court sessions which are normally held under a tree or a carefully chosen neutral venue.

PWDs are allowed to attend the court sessions and give contribution. They are allowed to preside over issues under discussion as village heads or chief. Hizkias (1990:100) argues that the Zimbabwean traditional conflict, resolution mechanism do not discriminate women and the PWDs on gender or ability lines, rather they consider the ability of the incumbent in resolving disputes and promoting peace and harmony. However, most of the PWDs who do not have facilities to use to get to the venue of the discussions are left out as they do not have means to get there. Chimonyo et al (2014:10) argues that "the PWDs are left out of most important social, economic and political issues because they have no means to fully participate in these activities". Gates (2007), also posits that the blind, the physically and mentally challenged are most affected as the blind often do not have aids to take them to venues where disputes are being resolved.

#### **4.3 Why should PWDs be involved in peace building initiatives.**

Chimonyo et al (2014:04) argue that "disability carries multiple stigmas that are the basis for exclusion from society and its activities". Exclusions of PWDs in societies activities results in their concerns getting very little, if any attention in national debates. After every conflict the most affected are the PWDs, the women and children are subjected to torture experiences like witnessing the destruction of their homes, killing of loved ones or being victims of rape, torture or other atrocities". Those people who have experienced suffering often experience lasting trauma. Thus during any peace initiative, PWDs should be involved so that they articulate their problems and also proffer solutions to their problems, according to Hermen (1992) trauma victims should feel that they have control over their lives again and the involvement of PWDs who have been victims of violence will help them to heal, feel safe and reintegrate into the mainstream society.

The basis for involving PWDs in peace initiatives in the country falls under the laws of Zimbabwe as exposed in the current Constitution of Zimbabwe, Section 22 of the New Constitution of Zimbabwe, which focuses on PWDs cited in Chimonyo et al states that the state and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must develop programs for the welfare of PWDs especially work programs consistent with their capabilities acceptable to them or their legal representatives.

Chimonyo et al (2014:69) argue that "PWDs tend to work more efficiently when given tasks to prove a point that disability is not inability.". Dodo et al (2010:65) concurs with Chimonyo et al "when they argue that for generations PWDs have served as peace educators, both in their families and societies". They have been instrumental in building bridges rather walls. If PWDs are given their position in society, they have been crucial in preserving social order when communities have collapsed. Mainstreaming and promoting peace therefore requires PWDs equal participation in decision making.

## **5. Participants**

The stratified random sampling method was used to select sixty participants in the study. The population consisted of six hundred (600) prospective respondents. Out of the total population, sixty (60) respondents were chosen in the sample. The respondents were made up of twenty (20) PWDs and forty (40) able bodied people (A.B.P) the sample of the respondents was chosen based on the gender of the respondents.



## 6. Results

In order to answer the main research questions the study had four sub-problems which stood as research questions.

### **What is your understanding of peace building initiatives?**

From the findings, it was observed that the majority, 55 (90%) of the respondents had sound knowledge of what the concept entailed. Most of the respondents indicated that peace building initiatives entails the establishment of durable peace and the prevention of the recurrence of conflict through addressing root causes and effects of conflict, through institution building, reconciliation, good governance, the observance of human rights, promotion of justice delegitimizing violence and building conflict resolution mechanisms structures in the country as a reservoir to deal with conflict.

The responses were supported by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013:18) who argued that peace building includes activities designed to prevent conflict through addressing structural and proximate causes of violence, promoting sustainable peace, delegitimizing violence as a dispute resolution strategy, building capacity within society to peacefully manage disputes and reducing vulnerability to triggers that may spark violence!

To further establish their understanding of peace building initiatives (P.B.Is), the respondents were asked to give some of the traditional peace in their community. The respondents mentioned abantu and the different conflict resolution mechanisms they use in the event of a conflict. The respondents mentioned abantu, the village, the chief's dare and reparations (kuripa ngozi) as some of the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (T.C.R.Ms) used to resolve conflict their community. The responses were a clear testimony that the responses understand what peace building entails.

### **To what extent are PWDs involved in peace building initiatives?**

All the twenty (20) 100% PWDs in the sample group indicated that they were not involved in peace building initiatives in either their community or at national level. To further establish the involvement of PWDs in peace building initiatives (P.B.Is), at local level and national level the respondents were asked if they were involved in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (T.C.R.Ms), all the twenty (20) indicated that they were not involved because the community thinks that they are incapable.

When the respondents (the PWDs) were asked if they were involved in peace building initiatives at national level 18 out of the 20 (90%) of the respondents indicated that they were involved. Only 2 of the respondents indicated that PWDs are now getting recognition in peace initiatives to a very small extent as was shown by the inclusion of Jesse Majorrie, a disabled parliamentarian in the organ on national hearing reconciliation and integration during the tenure of the inclusive government in 2008 to 2013.

To further establish the involvement of PWDs in peace building initiatives, the respondents were asked to identify the various peace building initiatives that were once undertaken in Zimbabwe and how PWDs were involved. They identified the 1980 reconciliation process proclaimed by President Robert Mugabe and the 1979 Lancaster House agreement. All the respondents 60/60 (100%) concurred that no PWDs were involved in the 1979 Lancaster House Peace Agreement and the 1980 reconciliation process.

When asked if PWDs were involved in 1987 Unity Accord between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU, all the respondents 60/60 (100%) agreed that no PWDs were involved in the 1987 Unity Accord between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU.

Forty out of 60 (68%) of the respondents agreed that when the Global Political Agreement (GPA) was signed in 2009, a few PWDs were involved. The respondents noted Elton Mangoma (the former minister of Energy and Power Development in the inclusive Government) and Tracy Mayome as some of the PWDs who were actively involved in the GPA that ushered in a Government of national unity (GNU) between ZANU PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Parties. Blaskal cited in Nagler (1999) supports the respondents as he argued that there has been a shift in humanism practice which was superseded by the one of empowerment. The new philosophy of empowerment enables PWDs to overcome biases and barriers. This is why in the GPA, PWDs began to be involved in peace building initiatives.

The respondents were also asked to give the extent to which PWDs are involved in traditional peace building initiatives. 58 out of 60 1979 respondents indicated that PWDs were not involved in traditional peace building initiatives (T.P.B.Is). In support of the respondents, Lang and Charowa (2007) argue that PWDs in Zimbabwe constitute one of the most poor, magnetized and society excluded group.

### **Why should PWDs be involved in peace building initiatives (P.B.Is)?**

All the respondents 60/60 (100%) concurred that PWDs should be involved in PBIs. Asked the need to involve the PWDs is one of the groups most affected and their experience makes them good peace builders. To support the above assertion former United Nations General Annan (2000) pointed out that people who know the

price of conflicts so well are also so often better equipped to prevent or resolve conflict. 10 out of 60 respondents (17%) argued that PWDs still should be involved in PBIS because the inclusion of PWDs in all the important national activities.

All twenty (20) PWDs selected in the sample group indicated that PWDs should be involved in peace building initiatives as their involvement will allow them to articulate their concerns, prejudices and proper solutions to some conflicts, in support of the respondents the united nations commission on the role of women children and PWs in conflict prevention urged government to improve the collection analysis and inclusion of information on women ,children and PWDs part of conflicts prevention early warning efforts. 10 (ten) PWDs in the sample group also indicated that all PWDs should be involved in peace building initiatives because the Zimbabwean constitution forbids discrimination on grounds of disability.

Fifteen out of 20 PWDs in the sample groups indicated that they should be involved in PBIs because they should be involved in PBIs because they also contribute to the development of a nation. The respondents argued that there is no development that takes place without peace in a country, so their involvement in peace initiatives will help in the development of the country, In support of the respondents, Dodo et al (2010:7H) posit that peace cannot be divorced from development and vice versa, it is a fallacy for any position or development technician to dream of development without peace, as peace dividends begin to show, development also begins to show signs”

### **What can be done to improve participation of PDWs in Peace Building Initiatives?**

When the respondents were asked what they think should be done to improve participation of PWDs in PBIs they came up with strategies shown on the table below:

#### **Strategies needed to improves participation of PWDs in PBIs**

Strategies	Numbers	Percentage%
1. Use of quota system in PBIs	60	83
2. Crafting of legislation that caters for PWDs in PBIs	58	97
3. Advocacy	40	67
4. Awareness comparisons on the importance of involving PBI s	55	97
5. The setting up of a ministry responsible for the PWDs	60	100
6. Peace education in schools	45	75
7. Appointment of special advisor on disabilities	60	100
8. Empowerment of PWDs	100	100

Out of the 60 respondents 50 (83%) indicated that a quota system should be used in all PBIs to cater for the interests of PWDs. In support of the respondents, Wassermann (2008:119) argues that “PWDs should be given equal representing in key decision making positions in conflict resolution and peace building processes. This will help PWDs to articulate their issues problems concerns worries prejudices and how to solve them”

Fifty eight of the 60 respondents indicated that the government should enact progressive legislation and policies that ensure representation of PWDs.

Forty out of 60 respondents argued that PWDs should fight for representation in PBIs. Gaya (2010) concurs with the respondents when he insists that “it is particularly important that PWDs groups identify their common priorities and from them develop a strong unified agenda through coalition building and influence peace negotiations.

Fifty five out the 60 respondents (92%) indicated that the government in collaborations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and PWDs should conduct awareness campaigns using various forms of media on the importance of involving PWDs in national issues especially in PBIs. Chimonyo et al (2010) argue that some of the African cultural beliefs have led to the alienation of PWDs so there is need to campaign for a new social order and perceptual new of the PWDs. Lang and Charowa (2007) register the concerns of the former president of the world bank in2002, Who declared that unless disability issue were addressed, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets would not be met.

All the respondents concurred that the Government should create a ministry specifically tasked with the setting of responsible of looking into the welfare of PWDs. The respondents also indicated that the ministry should appoint a special advisor on disability to the president and cabinet ,The advisor will then articulate issues on disability to the president and cabinet.

Forty five out the 60 respondents indicated that peace education should be introduced in school

curriculum and should be taught as a subject at schools. Mucheriwa (2011:18) supports the respondents as he argues that “inclusive education should have a component of education to allow for peaceful co-existence between able bodied and disabled children” The respondents argued that the teaching of peace education will help the nation to understand the issues to do with PWDs and where possible include them in national issues.

All the respondents indicated that PWDs should be empowered for them to be involved in national issues, among them in PBIs. All the respondents (100%) argued that the empowerment should start with education. The respondents argued that this will capacitate them with knowledge to participate in national building issues including in PBIs, when it comes to economic issues he respondents said PWDs should be given assistance to start projects in line with the ZIMASSET, Zimbabwe’s economic blueprint after the ZANU PF’s election victory in 2013.

To help them carry out their economic activities without hindrances, all the 20 PWDs in the sample (100%) agreed that the government should upgrade facilities in many buildings for them to be user friendly to PWDs. In support of the respondents, Mandipa (2013) argues that in Zimbabwe many government work places, courts of law and state recreational facilities are inaccessible to PWDs. As an example in Zimbabwe it is very difficult if not impossible for PWDs to access government office’s, Used at the at the Government complex in Harare and Gweru given the fact that there are no guiding rails, the elevators (if they are working elevators at all) have no recorded voices for people with visual impairments and too narrow to accommodate wheel chairs, the toilet cubicles are too for PWDs.

## 7. Conclusions

From the findings above, it is concluded that

- whilst the 2013 constitution has an affirmative policy on the right of PWDs to fully participate in national issues without discrimination, PWDs in Zimbabwe are marginalized socially and economically excluded group;
- government policy on PWDs is clear but it lacks implementation;
- there is no level playing field for the PWDs and able bodied people (ABP) in the 60<sup>th</sup> the social and economic environment;
- the building and other amenities in the country are not user friendly to PWDs to fully and effectively participate in National activities;
- PWDs are not empowered to fully participate in national issues;
- society views PWDs as incompetent and incapable members of the society;
- PWDs benefit a lot from inclusion in PBIs; and
- the nation benefits a lot from inclusion of PWDs in PBIs

## 8. Recommendations

In view of these findings, it is recommended that:

- the government should use the quota system for PWDs to be represented in all national issues including in PBIs;
- the government should implement legislation on PWDs so that they are involved in all national issues;
- PWDs in collaboration with government and NGOs should hold awareness campaigns to change the national view on the ability of PWDs;
- the infrastructure in the country should be user friendly to the PWDs for them to be able to carry out the social and economic obligations;
- there should be an explicit affirmative empowerment policy on PWDs in Zimbabwe;
- the government should set-up a ministry to look into the welfare of PWDs in Zimbabwe. In line with the ministry responsible for PWDs the government should appoint special advisor and disability technicians to the president and cabinet;
- the school curriculum should have peace education from primary to tertiary education to promote peace for the community to accept and appreciate the role played by every member of a community even the PWDs in the development of a country;
- government should avail affordable education to PWDs from primary o tertiary education as this helps to capacitate PWDs to be of economic and social importance to the community they come from; and
- PWDs should form groups to advocate for their involvement in PBIs

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