



Mid – Term Evaluation TYZ Program

Evaluation Dates: 20 to 31 January 2014

Period Covered by the Evaluation: January – December 2013

1. Executive summary

The Trusting in Youth in Zimbabwe (TYZ) program is based on the premise that if Zimbabwean youth are able to cooperate across lines of division to positively change their communities and improve their lives, they will less likely engage in violence. The polarized political context that Zimbabweans are currently confronting can be a fertile breeding ground for conflict, and may result in multiple challenges that impact negatively on all aspect of development in the country and beyond. The TYZ program therefore seeks to address the risk factors that lead the young men and women to join violent groups and/or participate in violent activities. Key interventions of this program are:

- a) Creating livelihood opportunities for youth to reduce financial pull of violent groups
- b) Enhancing the capability of communities including the youth to detect warning signs of conflict as well as situations where youth will be likely to engage in negative coping mechanisms
- c) Fostering positive social connections through utilization of peer networks as well as creating opportunities for youth engagement with government and other critical non-state actors.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation plan for this program this mid-term evaluation was conducted to establish how the first segment of the program was implemented, what was done well, what was not done well and how the remaining segment can be re-engineered to enhance program efficiency and effectiveness.

2. PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

The mid-term evaluation of the TYZ program was designed as a participatory process led by an internal facilitator. The process-oriented evaluation provided opportunities for learning, growth, and reflection for Mercy Corps and their implementing partners' staff and stakeholders. Below is a summary of the purpose of the mid-term evaluation exercise:

- To critically examine the methodologies and approaches used in key activities for effectiveness, quality of programming and the likelihood of the impacts being sustained.
- To assess the relevance of the mix of interventions in light of the current operating context in Zimbabwe.
- To enable Mercy Corps and our partners to re-direct our future activities according to the needs and requirements.

Research methodology

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews were used to collect data for the mid-term evaluation. The FGDs targeted the youth who were registered for the program during the first year (those who were trained and participated in the program activities during the year 2013) and other non-participants. A total of 8 FGDs were conducted in (4 in Chitungwiza and 4 in Buhera); 60% of the FGD participants were females. Key informant interviews were conducted with heads of relevant Government stakeholders such as Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises, Agritex, Ministry of Women's Affairs, and the Rural District Council. The selection of key informants is based on their involvement in the TYZ program during the first year of implementation. The information from both FGDs and key informant interviews was combined with monthly, quarterly and training reports to produce this mid-term evaluation for the TYZ program.

3. KEY FINDINGS

The findings are organized by objectives to provide an overview of the key messages from the youth and the key stakeholders on program components and institutional arrangements that support delivery of the program.

Goal: Zimbabwean youth are able to cooperate across lines of division to positively change their communities and improve their lives.

Change in youth who report engaging in or who think that political violence is justified.

Generally, it was observed the youth who were registered under the program were respecting each other regardless of their political differences. For instance, in both Chitungwiza and Buhera some members who participated in the FGDs testified that they used to fear some of youth who were also registered under the program because of their violent tendencies. These people have long changed their behavior and are now working well with them, visiting each other, sharing ideas and belong to the same Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) group by the time of the evaluation. Some young men indicated that the program taught them to respect women as they were equally important ISAL members or business partners and could make better contributions during trainings. This changed their inferiority perceptions about females. Some women had the perception that working with men was difficult as they thought men would exploit them. The peace building and business trainings, and how they were involved in exchange visits and the labor market assessment, made many women feel equally important. One young woman in Buhera reported that she is now more confident to work with male group members when she realized she was performing better than some of her male counterparts during the youth-led market assessment. Some participants highlighted that they realized they could work well together with anyone regardless of their political and religious affiliation as the peace building training taught them to celebrate their differences and leverage each other's strengths.

From the FGDs with the youth during the evaluation, it was revealed that only 10% still feel that there are circumstances when the use of violence can be justified. Although there was an improvement from the baseline prevalence of 24%, efforts were made to establish the circumstances in which youth feel violence is justifiable. Failure to pay back loans or debts was the major circumstance the youth felt was justifiable to use violence. It was clearly shown that more males than females were still inclined to the use of violence to recover money owed by a bad debtor. In both Chitungwiza and Buhera, it remained a popular way of forcing someone to be responsible to their credits as the legal way was reported to be very ineffective and costly.

In Buhera, witchcraft was another reason a few youth felt would justify the use of violence. They reported that some men suspected of using witchcraft (*zvikwambo*/goblins) to be successful in business usually end up involved in violence as family members will eventually team up to confront the suspected person. It emerged that this type witchcraft was entrenched within the African traditional belief system of the people in Buhera. Issues to do with witchcraft can be formally reported but the courts were said to be very inefficient due to their demand for concrete evidence which is difficult to provide under witchcraft issues. Some believe beating up or threatening the witchcraft suspect can deter witchcraft practices although there was no agreement amongst the FGD participants on the effectiveness of violence in curtailing witchcraft. It was also established that some witchcraft allegations were baseless, difficult to prove and were

grounded in jealousy. It was also shown that people who are productively occupied are less superstitious and usually less inclined to the beliefs of witchcraft.

It was also established that even churches were involved in violence following leadership disputes and assets sharing by splitting churches—all, allegedly, driven by the desire to make money through churches. It was highlighted that the challenge with religion-related violence was the fact that the perpetrators will be driven by the belief that they are doing a service to their gods. Political violence was not very common in both areas although it was source of conflict between 2000 and 2008.

In Chitungwiza, some youth still felt that having an affair with someone’s wife or husband justifies the use of violence. However, there was consensus among the youth that even if there are circumstances that can be accepted by the community as precipitants of violence, there is room to invoke peaceful ways to resolve all the problems and the belief that the use of violence will only help to perpetuate conflicts and violence. The majority of youth acknowledged that the peace building training helped them to have peace in their homes and were cascading the peace gospels to their relatives and neighbors. They were helping in the resolution of domestic and street violence using the knowledge they gained from the interventions they participated in through the TYZ program.

Objective 1: Increase youth's ability to be resilient and plan for the long term by working together on livelihood’s initiatives.

1.1.1 The Number of young persons completing USG-funded workforce development programs.

Business Management Training

A total of 113 youth (55 female and 58 male) participated in training sessions that aimed at developing their life, business and psychosocial skills (Table 1). The distribution of the participants by district The first training held focused on “Generate your Business Idea” while the other two were follow-up trainings where youth were imparted with practical skills of developing individual business plans. Mercy Corps adapted the ILO-developed “Generate Your Business Idea” training modules to address the needs of the youth in the project areas.

Table 1. Business training participants

AGE	BHR			CHT			BOTH DISTRICTS		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
18 -20	9	3	12	5	4	9	14	7	21
21 – 25	6	3	9	8	12	20	14	15	29
26 – 30	4	6	10	5	12	17	9	18	27
31-35	8	6	14	13	9	22	21	15	36
Total	27	18	45	31	37	68	58	55	113

Generally the surveyed youth felt the business management training was simple and easy to understand by most. The topics covered under the training were practical which made it easy for

them to apply the acquired knowledge in their businesses. Only a few youth in Buhera complained that there was limited use of the local vernacular language (*Shona*) in the training, as the trainers favored English, and this affected their comprehension of critical elements of the training. Nevertheless, those who were already engaging in some businesses found the training inspiring. In both Buhera and Chitungwiza, the youth expressed that the training helped them to effectively price their products. Prior to the training most of them were not factoring in transport and labor costs into the products they were selling which made it difficult for them to effectively calculate their profits and losses of their businesses. One sculptor in Chitungwiza said, “I used to just randomly set prices of my goods without considering the cost incurred to get the good, now I calculate all the costs and put my mark-up to determine the selling price.” Some youth in business also reported that the issue of promotions they were taught in the business training was already paying off as it was attracting new customers as well as enhancing customer retention for the products they were selling.

One important aspect that the youth learned from the business training was the need to reinvest the profit made instead of using the profit for daily consumption on other non-business related expenditures. One lady said “I used to spend my profit carelessly [without] tracking, I was taught that even one dollar would make a difference in boosting my business, now I am careful on how I use my profits.” One small item that was affecting their saving culture was the buying of airtime which was taking away at least \$2 every day; for those who were into petty trading, \$2 was a major proportion of their profits which if reinvested could make a huge difference in their businesses. The business trainings also helped them to tame the impulse to buy airtime using daily takings. One woman said, “I used to haphazardly buy airtime for \$1 every time I got some money, not knowing that I was reducing the amount I should be investing in the business, now business money is treated differently from personal money.” This saw her graduating from selling one box of margarine per week to selling 3 boxes of margarine by the time of the evaluation as she embraced the culture of reinvesting her profits into her business. In Buhera one young woman who was into clothes trading used to sell clothes worth \$150 but had boosted her stocks to \$300 and was happy with her business.

It was interesting to note that the youth in Buhera, who were into horticultural production, learned to be demand driven in whatever business they were doing. This helped them to devise market driven cropping calendars, which saw them growing tomatoes during the early summer whose harvesting time coincides with the festive holidays and the summer months when tomatoes were scarce and costly. They were excited that the business management training helped them to identify and exploit opportunities; by the time of the evaluation one young man in ward 15 was selling a bucket of tomatoes at \$10 which used to sell at \$3 before December 2013.

The business training also helped them to keep records of whatever they were doing in business. For the majority of them, recordkeeping was not in their culture. Adopting recordkeeping practices was helping them to see whether or not they were making profits, tracking creditors and other business proceedings. One young man in Buhera, expressed that recordkeeping has become a barometer for success in his business portfolios as records show him the volume of sales, type of good in demand, times of the month when demand is high and profitability of the business undertaking.

However it was revealed that the business training raised some hope that the program was going to avail some funds for the youth to start some businesses. This was not because the project officers promised them but that as one of the youth in Chitungwiza pointed out, “with the practical detail the training provided, we thought it was not going to end as training but possibly with some links to capital for business start up to make the training a reality.” In both Buhera and Chitungwiza, it was reiterated that the program could have effectively unleashed the potential of the youth if the business training was integrated with a financial inclusion component for the youth. The ISAL groups attempted to bridge the missing link but fell short of what is needed for normal business start-up. The youth led market assessment had also suggested that the youth were excluded from the main stream financial market due to lack of collateral requirements and both the youth and the stakeholders felt the TYZ program could have become more relevant if it had facilitated the financial market inclusion of the youths.

As part of the business training, the youth were taught how to write a good project proposal and as part of the assignment each person was supposed to write his/her proposal to prove that the art of proposal writing was well understood. Unfortunately it was not well understood by about 25% of the youth as they thought the written proposal if rated good would be financed by Mercy Corps or some finance institution linked to Mercy Corps. During the business training, the youth reported that they were made to believe that a bank official from CABS was coming to orient them with the loan application process and requirements, but that was never done. The team has learned that there is always a need to manage the expectations of the youth so that their hopes are not raised unnecessarily.

Youth-led Market Assessment

Eighteen youth (9 female and 9 male) were trained in conducting a market assessment using tools developed with the assistance of Mercy Corps’ Technical Support Unit (TSU) for Economic and Market Development. Participating in the youth-led assessment provided the youth an opportunity to interact with government officials, business leaders and other influential community members. The youth that participated in the FGDs expressed that the market assessment helped them to see the reality about the job market and the business opportunities in the country and their respective areas. They realized the job market was absorbing a few people which left them with no option but to start their own businesses.

The market assessment in both areas encouraged youth (both those who participated as research assistants and those who participated in the FGDs) to be problem solvers by giving them the opportunity, knowledge, skills, and attitudes to objectively examine problems and opportunities in markets to identify and capitalize on opportunities for themselves. Young people who participated in the survey as research assistants felt an increased sense of empowerment and self-worth. For the majority of them that was the first time they have been involved in such fact finding missions and the first time they realized that they have valuable experiences and opinions of their own to contribute meaningfully to their community. In Buhera, all the people who participated in the market assessment reported having sent some complaint to the local authorities over issues affecting them in different spheres of life. In Buhera, one youth sent a complaint regarding the council’s decision to outlaw one of their flea marketing stales, and in Chitungwiza the youth sent a proposal to ease water woes through sinking boreholes and pumps to reduce their dependence on Harare water. Some youths went to Chitungwiza town council

asking for help to have an illegal dumping site cleared to give way for their brick molding project. These examples reinforced the market assessment finding that the youths who participated in the assessment were indeed empowered to meaningfully engage with authorities.

Horticulture training

Fifty two youths (23 females and 29 males) and ten adults over the age of 35 (7 females and 3 males) received horticultural training in Buhera. This practical training in horticulture focused on helping them deal with stubborn diseases affecting vegetables especially the stubborn red spider mites in Buhera. They were also taught to make fertility beds which helped them to preserve both soil and moisture. It was an eye opener for these budding farmers as some of them learned about the growing of high value crops like butternut squash and cucumbers for the first time. However, the District Agritex officer felt the 3 day horticulture training was not enough as they used to do it in 7 days for it to be more comprehensive. For him, crash training programs do not usually work well when training semi-literate farmers whose rate of raptness and assimilation can be poor and need more time to explain and demonstrate the different practices. To address this concern, the program will offer follow-on training to the youth who will be participating in community gardens activities. This time the training will have practical orientation as it will be held on site with the youth actually putting to use the knowledge acquired.

Livestock production and management training

A total of 152 youths (83 females and 69 males) and 18 adults over the age of 35 (6 females and 12 males) received training on livestock production and management in Buhera. This training was well received as highly relevant and well-timed as most of the youth were coming from families with some livestock. They were taught how to preserve stock feed for livestock to feed during the dry season, basic livestock breeding and fattening, and disease prevention. The district livestock development officer expressed that although the training was highly relevant to the youth in Buhera, especially those owning or expecting to own livestock, for the resource poor youth, he hinted that there was need for such trainings to be followed up with stocking the trained youth through a livestock pass-on program even for small livestock like chickens which do not cost much. He explained that this should be done in the future as there is need to target the committed youth who would have demonstrated need for support. This training was a stand-alone training which for some youth just created demand without the post training practical reinforcement of the acquired skills. It was generally felt that the training in livestock development should include the people over 35 years of age who own livestock but lack knowledge to manage them effectively. The district livestock development officer remarked that this training was more relevant to the older generation than the resource poor youth without any funding to start the livestock business.

One businessman in ward 7 of Buhera suggested that the TYZ program could have become more effective if older people (over 35 years of age) were included in the program to neutralize some political stigmatization of the youth in a highly polarized community like Buhera. This would promote some inter-generational synergetic linkages that could benefit the poorly resourced youth. The same sentiments were echoed by some youth who felt the inclusion of their parents in the training was critical as the gap of knowledge between them and their parents (the cattle owners) had the potential to bring disharmony. For example the logic behind selling a certain

fraction of their cattle to buy veterinary chemicals and supplementary feeds to serve the rest of the stock needed the understanding of the cattle owners.

Nevertheless, TYZ is a youth program and the fact that some farmers beyond 35 years of age were included in the livestock and horticulture training, few though, was commendable as a display of innovativeness, sensitivity and situational leadership skills on the part of the concerned project staff. Most adults who participated in the TYZ program activities represented the community leadership such as village heads and by virtue of their participation, youth easily gained access to these leaders and start the process of constructive engagement with them. Therefore the project created a platform for youth to interact with their leadership.

1.2.2 Youth-led businesses initiated

Sixty percent of the youth who participated in the FGDs during the mid-term evaluation had started their own business. The businesses ranged from cross border trading, petty trading, gardening, brick molding, livestock rearing and vending. It was revealed in the evaluation that what inspired most of the youth to start businesses was the training in business management and their participation in the ISAL groups. The business training, according to the youth gave them the confidence to start their own businesses as they were made to realize that starting businesses does not require a lot of money, but they can start at a low level and then incrementally change scope and volume of business with time. They also learned of common pitfalls in business and how to circumvent them. The ISAL training and participation in groups gave them access to the start-up capital to start businesses and the push to vigorously conduct their businesses in a professional way to maximize profits as they were expected to payback the borrowed money with interest, and to remain with some money to take the business forward. Some testified that participating in ISAL groups disciplined them to get out of some spending addictions like airtime for cellphone calls which if not tamed could wipe all the returns generated in petty trading or related micro enterprises.

Although some budding farmers in ward 15 of Buhera were doing some gardening activities before the program, the business training challenged them to venture into high value crop production. It also jettisoned the subsistence mindset that was entrenched in the budding farmers and inculcated a sense of business in their farming operation. When surveyed, they were evidently choosing high paying crops, following market driven cropping calendars, calculating basic profit and loss accounts as well as keeping records for their farming operations.

Anecdotal evidence showed that those who were already in business were reporting better incomes owing to improved customer care and good business practices obtained from the business training. For example, one lady who was involved in the buying and selling of vegetables reported that she used to sell one box of tomatoes in 3 days but was now able to sell 2 boxes in 2 days as a result of improved customer care, sensitivity to customer needs and quality requirements as well as better investment decisions. They were also taught to follow up on credits, to avoid dealing with the middlemen/women as much as possible in business transactions and instead buy directly from producers and/or manufacturers. This lowers transaction costs and enables them to have a customer friendly pricing system.

One man who was doing some wire fine art since 2006 indicated that the business training facilitated by the program helped him to be organised with his work, to effectively cost production expenses, to plough back the profits into business and effectively pricing his products factoring in his labour input to the product. After the training he realised that he was overstating his profits as his profit and loss accounts were not well done an aspect he worked on after the training to improve on his record keeping.

1.3.1 Percentage change in the number of youths demonstrating positive long-range ‘personal planning’ reaching beyond the duration of the program (disaggregated by gender).

At baseline 84% of surveyed youth demonstrated positive long range personal planning. During the mid-term evaluation, youth were asked what they would prefer between “being given \$100 today or \$180 at the end of the month.” Ninety percent of the participants preferred to be given \$100 today arguing that they would spin the money and generate more than double the amount in a single month. Ten percent thought with the uncertainty in some of their business ventures, given \$180 after a month would be better for them as they might not be able to generate \$80 within the month in their businesses. One young woman who had just graduated from interior décor training expressed that if given \$100 today, she would buy cloth material to make curtains which, within a month will give her over \$280 dollars. After 6 months she was sure to have raised almost \$1000.

Also, the fact that the youth were able to utilize the knowledge gained from business, horticultural and livestock management training to start their own businesses without any financial assistance from the program was a clear demonstration that the program emboldened the youth to embrace long range personal planning beyond the program lifetime. One young man who started goat and sheep rearing soon after the business training had a vision which would see him owning over 100 sheep and goats in the next 2 years. Fears of failure in business were reduced by the business training and the youth were free to plan for their future.

1.3.2 Percentage change in the number of youth who are able to save money. Disaggregated by gender

More people surveyed at the mid-term evaluation were able to save money than those surveyed at baseline (40%) as 60% were at least able to save an average of \$57 per month. One young woman attributed it to the business training where the youth were urged to separate business money from money for personal or household use. This encouraged them to save the money they were making in business, “We were taught not to eat into our profits but to save and reinvest business money.”

Eight savings and loan groups formed after 43 youth (30 female and 13 male) were trained in the ISAL methodology in Chitungwiza. Six savings and loan groups formed after 53 youth (30 female and 23 male) were trained in the ISAL methodology in Buhera; youth organized themselves into groups of 5 to 10 members after the training. In Chitungwiza all the ISAL groups were still in existence, although 30% of them had some functionality problems by the time of the evaluation. In Buhera, 90% of the formed ISAL groups were in existence by the time of the mid-term evaluation although 35% of them had functional problems. Besides the savings reflected in the ISALs, it was shown during the FGDs that 95% of the youth had embraced the

culture of saving, some through Eco-save (a mobile banking platform) and some in bank accounts, while there are some Buhera youth who were investing their savings in livestock (chickens, goats and cattle). This savings culture was attributed to both the ISAL training and the business training.

The training of the youth in ISAL was done after the business and peacebuilding training which, according to the youth, was well timed after the youth were taught how to start up and conduct business professionally. The peacebuilding training had already helped them to embrace group dynamics, celebrate difference and how to harmoniously work with each other. The business training had created demand for capital for business start-up and expansion of existing businesses. This gap was partially filled with ISAL through the group lending and the culture of savings inculcated by the ISAL trainings. The ISAL methodology came in to address a critical need amongst the youth (capital), which was also highlighted during the youth market assessment conducted during the final quarter of 2013, as the major constraint for business startup for the youth.

ISALs were operating well in both Buhera and Chitungwiza. Individual members were saving between \$5 and \$15 per month. The members had already started some small businesses using money borrowed from ISAL. The businesses started using money from ISALs included buying and selling of corn-snacks (*maputi*), drinks (*maheu*), margarine, and vegetables, while those who were already running their businesses were using the money to boost their business, like buying more raw materials for dressmaking, carpentry and tuckshop stock. For many it was the sole source of capital as banks, micro-finance institutions required collateral the youth could not provide, while money lenders were charging very high interests.

The business training and the ISAL training inculcated a saving spirit amongst the youth. According to the youth in Chitungwiza, ISAL trainings also instilled a sense of hard work and resourcefulness in search of money. One man said, “ISAL forces one to work hard and to do meaningful income generating activities, as the money from ISAL has to be returned with interest.” The youth in both areas reiterated the fact that participating in ISAL groups was also bringing people together and was helping them realize the importance of their neighbors, who could be a potential group member to make the ISAL group work, or a customer for the products they are trading—even if they might have some social, religious and political differences.

One young man in ward 14 of Buhera used the money he borrowed from his ISAL group to boost his cross border trading business. He started with one bale of clothes and by the time of the evaluation, he was importing 4 bales of clothes at a time. One student from Midlands State University joined an ISAL group in Ward 14 (Buhera) and started selling airtime and eggs, and within 3 months he managed to pay for his own school fees. In Ward 15 of Buhera, some young women started fish (*matemba*) trading and in Mukondomi Ward 7 there is a group of youth who used the money from the ISAL group to start a goat rearing business—all reported being happy that the program opened a new chapter for them in their lives.

In both Buhera and Chitungwiza, some youth testified that before their involvement in TYZ program activities, they had some ISAL groups which had long collapsed due to the lack of knowledge on how to run the groups. The fact that the ISAL trainings facilitated by the program

were preceded by a thorough training made them effective and more sustainable. They were trained on how to draft constitutions to model their behavior and to proactively work with cases of dishonesty and how they should be conducting their businesses. To give the ISAL constitution more weight, it was stamped by the Zimbabwe Republic Police. The involvement of the police in the ISAL groups' constitutions was also a way proactively engaging the police to recover misused funds by deviant members and a way of communicating the zero tolerance to dishonesty by members.

ISALs were praised as a cheap and user friendly source of saving and lending money. One young woman said, "it's a bank that doesn't levy bank charges." There are no stringent requirements, such as collateral or proof of residence, and this is what made ISAL groups more inclusive than other sources of money such as banks and local money lenders. More importantly, the ISAL groups were gaining new value as they were also helping in social support for the group members—some ISAL groups were raising and reserving money for social needs like funerals and weddings, and this was helping to unite the youth participating in these groups.

Anecdotally, ISAL groups were removing the youth from all forms of violence as they would be productively occupied. ISAL groups were also deterring the youth from negative practices such as drug abuse; one young woman from Ward 5 in Chitungwiza testified that because she had no money and had nothing to do, before she joined an ISAL group, she used to find solace in using drugs. Ever since she started these business trainings and joined an ISAL groups, she has stopped using drugs because she is always busy and is now able to raise her own money for better things. One woman who used to engage in prostitution said, "due to lack of better sources of money, I would get money for business startup from prostitution," but now, being involved in the program and participating in an ISAL group she has developed skills for self-sustenance. Instead of prostitution and drug use they are now engaged in businesses to raise capital for petty trading businesses.

It was revealed in the FGDs that when one is involved in an ISAL group they are forced to treat customers with care to boost sales in order be able to repay loans on time. ISAL groups helped the youth to appreciate the fact that everyone is important regardless of whatever differences they might have; the person next to you can be your customer, a business partner or a fellow ISAL group member, giving even more reasons to stay at peace with those nearby.

The few ISAL groups that were not very successful in Ward 7 of Buhera had members who were not engaging in any meaningful economic activities, making it hard for them to return the borrowed money. One group in Chitungwiza collapsed because the members were not making use of the constitution they had put in place. In Chitungwiza Ward 5, some of the ISAL groups were composed mainly of close relatives who made the enforcement of the constitutions very difficult. For example, the constitutional provision that the defaulter should have their properties attached was not easy with such members who were closely related but irresponsible.

In Ward 7 of Buhera, one businessman lamented the exclusion of some adult members (over 35 years) who to him could add value to the ISAL groups as most of the youth were resource poor. It was also an opportunity for the youth to learn a lot from older members of their respective societies. For Ward 7 of Buhera, this was also suggested as better way of doing business as the

Ward was not only highly polarized but the youth had gained a very poor reputation during the 2008 national elections where they were perpetrators of violence. Roping in some older people would give the program a new image making it more acceptable. It is also a sustainability measure as these elderly will be left with youths after the project end. The value of including the older generation was confirmed by one of the most successful ISAL groups in St Mary's Ward 4 of Chitungwiza where 3 members of the ISAL group were older women in their 50's and 60's. To the group, the cultural impacts of the older women being involved helped to stabilize the ISAL group as the youth were encouraged to be more committed and honest.

1.4.1 % change in number of youth achieving greater economic independence as a result of income generation activities.

It was revealed during the evaluation that 70% of the youth had become economically independent because of the businesses they started in the 9 months preceding the evaluation. As previously highlighted, the ISAL groups enabled a number of the youth to start some business and the business training capacitated them to run the businesses professionally—the youth were increasingly enjoying economic independence. A number of married female youth indicated that they had become financially independent from their husband and has significantly reduced incidences of domestic violence in their household. This is interesting anecdotal evidence as 63% of the youths who were participating in the ISAL groups were females.

1.4.2 Percentage change in the number of young people in target communities who feel they have something to lose if violence breaks out.

All the youth in both Buhera and Chitungwiza (100%) felt they had something to lose if violence breaks out in their respective areas against a baseline of 78%. As was shown in the quarterly assessment in December 2013, many indicated that violence would not permit them to do the business they have started, some feared loss of livestock to thugs, loss of lives, no time to feed kids, and loss of creditors. Sixty six percent felt that women will have a disproportionate share of trouble in case of violence, as they are the ones who spend most of the time with children, care for the sick and the injured during the violence, and there will potentially be more school drop-outs for girls, than their males counterparts, during violent phases.

Objective 2: Strengthen capacity of youth, communities and local government to protect their communities

A consultant was hired to assess the feasibility of setting up an Early Warning Early Response (EWER) system in Zimbabwe as part of the TYZ program. The consultant held discussions with UNDP supported Church and Civil Society Forum, representatives of government ministries, NGOs and youth from both BHR and CHT. At a general level, this assessment found out that without government support an EWER system would not been effective in Zimbabwe and therefore recommended that the project discontinues pursuing an EWER system that monitors violent conflicts and support a community hazards monitoring system.

2.2.2 Number of people trained in conflict mitigation/resolution skills with USG assistance.

Two training tool kits on Youth Peace Building and Youth Advocacy were developed. The toolkits consist of a standard collection of concepts and techniques, which will be applied in implementing the peacebuilding and advocacy trainings under this project.

A total of 108 youths (57 males and 51 females) were trained through a three-day Peace Ambassadors' peacebuilding training in both districts. The training was aimed at enabling participants to identify the causes, types and stages of conflicts which happen within their communities; equip participants with conflict and stakeholder mapping skills in their communities; and, equipping participants with knowledge and skills of how best they can respond to conflicts that occur within their communities.

It was interesting to note that some of the youth who benefited from the program were already initiating or involved in peace building initiatives in their respective operational jurisdictions. Some trained youth have written several interesting peace building poems, some of which were recited at community gatherings.

The youth strongly felt that, by being trained and encouraged to be productively occupied, the program was indirectly building peace as that ensured that youth would mind their own business instead of being bribed into violent activities. It also made people realize that every person is important, as a customer, as a supplier of goods in business, as a landlord or business partner.

More importantly, the youth registered under the program in Buhera were making peace keeping initiatives. One youth in Ward 7 reported that he counselled one lady who had suicidal tendencies and she has since become a changed person. Some reported that they were reconciling longtime enemies in their respective communities and families using the knowledge they acquired from the program.

One FGD participant testified that he used to fight in streets through a gang but after the peace building training they learned to shun street fighting and he has realized that aggression does not help anything. Now he has learned to forgive even those who were not able to apologize after offending him. Instead he was helping to resolve disputes amongst fellow community members, he said, "I became a peace broker between disputing in-laws. I talked to both parties until they were in agreement. I just had the feeling that the dispute should end. They are currently living in peace. I had never done that before." The young man used the knowledge that he had acquired from the peace building training to amicably resolve the conflict. One woman testified that she used to enjoy watching street fighting even amongst school children, but after the training, she is impelled to stop fights and edging conflicting parties to resolve issues amicably.

In Buhera, the training came a few months before the elections and for the youth in Ward 14 reported it to be a "miracle." There was not a single incidence of violence in that ward during the elections, and they attributed this to the peace building training which gave them the individual social responsibility to stop violence. They could all remember such phrases like "Peace begins with you" which were used during the training. One young man said, "we took advantage of all community gatherings and, at times, political rallies to spread the gospel of peace and it paid off." According to some youth, the training was more appealing to them as they were usually the perpetrators and victims of violence in all the previous national elections and people had no idea how this culture was to be ended. The training came in at the right time and at the right place giving it a greater impact than it would have if it was done some other time. In both areas, the trained youth were, anecdotally, streamlining peace building at their workplaces and homes. In Ward 13 of Buhera, 2 youth confessed that before the peace building

training, they were sworn enemies as they belonged to different political parties, but became best friends after the training. The training was behavior change oriented, to which it was very successful and effective.

2.3.1 # of community protection mechanisms in targeted communities supported with USG assistance

A leadership and advocacy training to develop youth leadership and communication skills was conducted for 82 youth (46 female and 36 male) in both Chitungwiza and Buhera. The purpose of this training was to equip participants with knowledge and skills to enable them to build up their personal leadership and advocacy capacities. Participants were equipped with the basic skills of how to develop advocacy campaigns and how to engage with policy makers within their local community. The participants were also equipped with planning tools to use in developing advocacy campaigns. Under leadership training, the participants were helped to refine their understanding of the concept of leadership and were exposed to personal leadership skills such as time management, goal setting, and defining a vision for one's life. They were also equipped with knowledge and skills on developing goals based on their life vision and how to break down each goal into smaller action steps that they can work on daily.

The program also helped the youth to work in ward-based groups to undertake community projects from the project identification, seeking approval and assistance from the local authorities and the documentation and submission of the proposed community project for Mercy Corps consideration. This together with the mixture of interlinked intervention in the program helped to constructively bring the youth together and to represent others.

2.3.2 Percentage change of the number of youth engaging in risky behaviors (drinking, drugs, and transactional sex).

It was noted that drug abuse was still common in about 3% of the households with the use of prohibited drugs like ZED, *Lawizani* and marijuana although it was not reported amongst the youth registered under the program. Thirty two percent of the FGD participants reported that transactional sex (prostitution) was still prevalent amongst the youth. This was attributed to poverty, works of evil spirits, laziness, exposure to pornographic material in cell phones and internet as vagaries of modern technology. In Chitungwiza, prostitution was more rampant than in Buhera and some of the sex workers were paid as low as \$0.50 as the industry was reportedly oversubscribed. It was sadly noted that even the school going age groups, below 18 years, were entering beer halls although they are prohibited by the law. This was predisposing them to prostitution, use of drugs and violent behaviour.

Youth involved in the program through the business and peacebuilding trainings and community projects have become productively occupied, limiting idle time which could be a window for violence. It also emboldens them to streamline peacebuilding initiatives in all aspects of their lives. The program also helped them to value people of different sex and general community members as they could be their customers for the different businesses they started. The business training also helped them to effectively manage their time which made them realize that they had no time for violence.

Objective 3: Increase youth ability to constructively engage their communities and government (both local and national) on issues that affect them.

3.1.1: Number of youth who have completed USG-assisted civic education training programs

A total of 60 youth (42 females and 18 males) were enrolled for vocational skills training at Young Africa Skills Centre in Chitungwiza. The skills included carpentry, catering, cutting and design, hair dressing, interior decorations and welding. Eighty percent of the females were trained in catering, cutting and designing, hair dressing and interior decorations. The trainings were highly relevant as it was shown in the youth led market assessment that, many youth lacked skills which was affecting their chances of becoming employed and their ability to start businesses (Mercy Corps Market assessment, 2013). The youth who participated in the market research indicated that since they discovered that the industry or the job market was not employing a lot of people and most of the small-scale manufacturers were encouraging the youth to start own business, the program, by engaging the youth into skills development, was responsive to this need, capacitating the youth to start their own businesses.

All the graduates were under industrial attachment and were happy that their lives were taking a new meaning. Most of those who took catering courses were attached at Makoni, Munyoro Foods. In addition to the theoretical skills they received from the college, they reported that they were now learning how to work with the public, how to use big machines and some complex catering tools. For some, the industrial attachment was inspiring them to start their own businesses. For those who did welding they pointed out that the attachment was very important as they were gaining more skills, customer care and an appreciation of how much it costs to do certain jobs. More so, the certificates they would get after the training will help them to secure operating licenses from the City Council (as licenses are only issued to practitioners with certificates). Those operating without licenses usually had running battles with the municipal police and acquiring this license will enable them to get settled and plan for meaningful business. One young man in Chitungwiza indicated that if it were not for the vocational training he could have been loitering in the street doing nothing or getting drunk before midday. This finding reinforced the idea that the vocational training helped the youth avoid a culture of drug abuse.

The program had a gender break through this quarter as one female (Tryfine Kashangura), successfully and meritoriously completed a training in welding. Welding is widely believed to be a masculine business, but Tryfine did not only complete the training but she was the best student in her class passing the exams with distinctions and out-competing everyone in a male dominated class. Judging from the responses of prospective employers, Tryfine expects to get a job more easily than her male counterpart as everyone seems interested to employ a woman to be unique in a male dominated industry. Tryfine was not the only person sent for training who passed with distinctions; Anna Dandara did as well, and she was trained in hairdressing.

The training only targeted the youth who were between 18 and 30 years leaving out those who were over 30 years of age. This did not only dampen the spirit of those who were restricted after having supported the program from inception but also negatively affected the output of the training program as some of the young youth, 18-20 years old, were less committed to the training which culminated into unacceptable levels of drop outs. Some were still experimenting

with their options and were not wholly set to commit themselves to the trainings, thinking there could be better things to do.

The Principal of the Young Africa College expressed concerned over most youths (especially those between 18 to 22 years of age) that were enrolled at the college by the program who were not very committed to their studies and ended up dropping out. The first group of 20 youth, who were supported by the program, only 40% graduated and the rest failed to complete their trainings. She attributed the trend to lack of buy-in by the trainees as they were not contributing anything towards tuition fees. The youth were only required to contribute supplementary training materials and travel costs to the training Centre for the duration of the training. Having little to lose was attributed to the high dropout rates. For some who would have completed the course, most of them were so bogged in a dependency syndrome that they could not muster the initiative to unleash their potential. For example, Young Africa is offering \$200 loans for their graduates for business startup and the majority of the youth were not applying for the funds expecting NGOs to give grants instead. Statistics have indicated that more females than males were borrowing the money. Some expect NGOs to find employment for them; it was suggested that, the prospective trainees should be made to contribute at least something (even as little as \$5 per course) so that they would attach some value into the vocational training. This will also improve the chances of recruiting committed youth.

3.2.2 Number of community-based reconciliation projects completed with USG assistance

Mercy Corps' partner, YETT, facilitated a meeting between youths participating in the project and the Organ on National Healing (ONHRI). This meeting was held in the form of a potluck which was held at YETT's offices in December 2013. Participants had the opportunity to interact with an official from and asked her questions they had about what ONHRI is, how they can work together with ONHRI and where ONHRI is located. A total of 64 youths (31 male and 33 female) participated in this activity. These included youths from Buhera, Chitungwiza, Chinhoyi, Domboshava and Ruwa. Eight members of staff from both YETT and Mercy Corps also participated in this activity. With support from other donors, YETT is also working with ONHRI in Domboshava, Chinhoyi and Ruwa. Hence, participants from these areas also participated in this meeting as a way of promoting wider sharing of experiences among youth from different parts of the country.

In Buhera, it was interesting to note that 20% of the youth had joined some youth related groups in the 9 months preceding the assessment. The groups included the Young People Network on Sexual and Reproduction Health, promoting responsible sexual behavior amongst the youth, and the Anti-Domestic Violence club, responsible for reducing the prevalence and effects of domestic violence. Some youth are linked to the Musasa project against domestic violence. Some are becoming instrumental in mending relations between disputing couples and relative due to the peace building training they received.

3.3.1 # of youth involved in youth-led advocacy campaigns targeted towards policy and public investment decisions.

It was revealed during the evaluation that budgetary consultation for the local councils in the year 2013 was attended by more youth from the targeted wards than the years before. The youths were influenced by the program to make meaningful contributions towards their community

well-being and that the budget consultation was an opportunity for them to add their voice in the development of their community.

Youth in Buhera had the opportunity to engage with the Ministry of Youth in their district. This engagement took place in the form of a meeting which was held at Murambinda growth point. The meeting was aimed at increasing the ability and opportunities for youths to engage with government (at both local and national level) on issues that affect them. A total of 53 youth (29 male and 24 female) participated in this activity.

The community projects facilitated and supported by the program, made the youth engage the local authorities. Youth could not complete the project without first informing the local authorities and the relevant Government department. This removed from the youth, the mythological perception that local authorities were hostile and unapproachable. They also learned proper channels that can be used to approach council. In Chitungwiza, some youth approached the council to remove garbage from the area that they needed to use for brick molding and 2 months after they had filed their request, the place was cleaned. During clean up campaigns they had to approach local authorities for approval of the activity and support. These procedures made them realize that the local authorities can be approached by anyone and they were not difficult to work with. By the time of the evaluation, the youth were working together with their local leaders in repairing of potholes in roads, water and sanitation issues (Chitungwiza) and clinic building in their areas to improve their communities (Ward 13, Buhera). In Ward 14 of Buhera, the youth were working with relevant authorities to construct a dip tank although the project now has been stopped due to lack of funding. The initiatives cited here are not directly supported by the project but youth are using skills and knowledge learned from participating in TYZ to maneuver their environment in order to fulfill the needs of their communities.

3.4.1 Percentage change in number youth who believe that they can contribute positively to the development of their communities. Disaggregated by: gender

At baseline, 60% of the youth felt they could personally contribute a great deal to improve the conditions within their communities while 63% reported having been involved in community activities. By the time of the evaluation, 95% of the youth registered under the program were demonstrating that could contribute positively towards the development of their communities by participating in the youth-led community projects in all the 8 wards targeted by the project.

Some youths approached the Buhera Rural District Council over their removal from where they were selling second hand clothes to areas far away from the business center which was affecting their business. Although the decision was not reversed, the fact that the youth were following legal grievance procedure to vent out their grievances was commendable. It was revealed that the youth were generally taking up issues with their local authorities in both Buhera and Chitungwiza. After complaints from the youth that the local mining company, Shawa mine, was recruiting casual workers outside the area the councilor for ward 15 took the Mine management to task. Consequently, some youth from the ward were recruited as casual workers.

In Chitungwiza, some youth in ward 5 approached the City Council Engineer to consider the option of drilling boreholes in Chitungwiza and give a lasting solution for water shortage

problems in the city as part of their community service project. Although the City Council officials were a bit surprised by the fact that youths are now demanding space to contribute positively to the betterment of their communities it was intriguing to note that the youth from the program were making such responsible efforts to research about a technology and how it could be implemented to serve a large number of people in Chitungwiza. In Chitungwiza it was revealed that the youth never used to care much about the environmental issues in their area before the program. After the program, especially the peacebuilding training and leadership trainings, the youth mobilized themselves filled up road pot holes in their area, especially in the Mangoromera Ward 3. This is an example of a local initiative where the project material resources were not put to use.

Following the business training where the youth were taught to engage in demand driven businesses, some youth in ward 15 of Buhera identified shortage of vegetables in the area and started a garden project. They were, by the time of the assessment, supplying tomatoes and vegetables in their community. For this project, they were not only getting money but have become respectable community members as the community is depending on them for supply of vegetables.

Government stakeholders

By the time of the evaluation, the Ministry of Youth indicated that they were operating on a zero budget and most of their efforts to support needed skills development projects, such as the potato production, were rendered fruitless because of lack of funds to purchase seeds and to sponsor the training. The Ministry of Youth reported that they could not effectively supervise the activities of the youth due to lack of resources like motor vehicles. The Ministry commended Mercy Corps for keeping them informed of anything that happens in the targeted ward and their ceremonious involvement of the district officers in the day to day activities. This was not only helping them to access the youth and learn from the trainings and Mercy Corps' portfolios of activities but was also making ward based youth officers more accountable in their work.

Implementing partners

The youth in both areas were expecting to get certificates of attendance each time they completed a training facilitated by the program. These certificates have turned out to be a major motivator for the youth as they had nothing to show off as proof that they ever had such trainings in their lives. The youth were also questioning the lean visibility of YETT after what they called a spectacular show-up in the peace building trainings. To them more value could be added by frequent visits by YETT to establish the impact of the training, instead of a one-time arrangement.

Cross-cutting issues

Gender issues were mainstreamed in the program. During the formation of ISAL groups, members tried to exercise gender balance by voting for some women to become leaders in ISAL groups. It emerged that the level of participation for female youths in urban and rural areas was relatively higher than their male counterparts in most project activities under review. Most of the male youths were keen to participate in the activities that focused on income generating activities which enabled them to access some income quickly. On the other hand the female youth were prepared to take longer times in learning new skills and then implementing various activities

using the knowledge gained. It was also interesting to note that some female youths were now interested in vocational skills training which used to be male dominated and vice versa for the males. Kudzai Sandu is one of the females who were enrolled in the metal fabrication field (welding, which is male dominated) and Valentine McDonald Katora was one male youth who enrolled in the interior decoration vocational skills training (a vocation which is female dominated) and both fully participated in the training and are pursuing their respective fields. This has shown that the community is starting to accept that career development and income generating activities can be carried out by anyone in the community irrespective of their sex.

It was shown that sustainable environmental management was well streamlined in the program. People were also reporting that they were exercising some restraint in the cutting down of trees as they fence their garden and to make sure their gardens were sited 30 meters away from streams to prevent soil erosion. Community projects like digging of a borehole, and other environmentally sensitive project were to be preceded by an environmental impact assessment to determine whether the project is environmentally friendly or not.

4. Recommendations

- It is always necessary to emphasize that Mercy Corps is not providing direct financial resources under this program in-order for youth to realign their expectations to the provisions of the project. It was highlighted that the project's intervention were highly relevant to the contextual needs of the youth as they addressed critical needs affecting the youths. For example the lack of skills addressed by the business training and vocational trainings, polarization addressed by the peace building training, and the ISAL training addressed the youth's exclusion from the mainstream financial market. These activities need to be strengthened and scaled to reach more youth.
- In highly polarized wards like Ward 7 of Buhera it is recommended that sporting activities be promoted to bring the youth together and indirectly market the peace building agenda. Sporting activities are being introduced as part of project activities gradually and this will enhance participation from highly polarized wards.
- It was well expressed that although the youth were trained in business startup and management, the program did not address the fundamental problem affecting the youth, to avail capital to start projects or to boost ongoing projects. At this juncture the project is unable to provide such support. However as future projects are being designed mechanisms of funding of youth enterprises should be looked into.
- It is recommended that the prospective trainees for vocational skills should be made to contribute at least something (even as little as \$5 per course) so that they would attach some value into the vocational training and to improve the chances of recruiting committed youths into the training program. The modality used in the previous phases were youth were required to contribute in kind towards their own training needs further tightening for the project to recruit committed youth for skills training activities.
- The training and other interventions of the program should also include a small percentage of the older generation in-order to promote some intergenerational synergetic linkages for the benefit of the resource poor youth. This may also neutralize some stigma associated with the youths in highly polarized wards.
- If possible YETT should increase their visibility to give backstopping support, on the youth in advocacy, leadership and peace building initiatives. Participants feel that though

Mercy Corps is doing all they can, they still want to continue to interact with YETT on a more regular basis.

- The trained youths who attended different trainings facilitated by the program requested certificates of participation. The program should consider addressing this need resources permitting as this boosts the confidence to the youth and allow them to venture into some community voluntarism which has become a stepping stone for accessing employment opportunities.