

# Inspiring Change

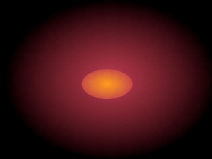


- **Speech by Netsai Mushonga**
- **Director of Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe**

# **I am going to speak to you**



- **As a Zimbabwean**
- **As a proud woman**
- **Woman rights activist**
- **Peace activist**
- **Optimist**
- **Change agent in my country**



# Structure of my presentation tonight



- **Case study of political and humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe**
- **Explain how opposition and civic society contributed to change the tragic circumstances in Zimbabwe**
- **Touch on the roles that Zimbabweans have to sustain the changes**

# Inspiring to change- A case study of Zimbabwe



- **1890 – Zimbabwe colonized by the British government**
- **1890 -1980 lived under colonial rule**
- **Colonial government promulgated unfair laws which resulted in discrimination and exploitation of citizens**

# Zimbabwe 2



- **1963 liberation war started**
- **1980 independence from colonial rule and ZANU PF government took oath of office**
- **1983 Gukurahundi – 20 000 ndebeles thought to have been killed**
- **1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2008 political violence happened and grew worse with each election**

# Other violence during independence



- **Access to information and Protection of Privacy Act**
- **Public Order and Security Act**
- **Operation Murambatsvina**
- **Operation Chinyavada**
- **Operation Chipo Chiroorwa**
- **Dictatorship took roots**

# Culture of violence



- **“A revolution ceases to be one when it begins to eat its children.”**
- **Culture of violence born in 1890 and has remained in Zimbabwe**
- **State abuses citizens and women bear the brunt of violence**
- **Choices limited since opposition is attacked and government rigs elections effectively**

# **Chinja Maitiro, Maitiro Chinja**



- **1999 New political party MDC born from the civic society**
- **The leaders are from the largest worker's union and worked with the National Constitutional Assembly**
- **(Change the way you have done things) refuses to use violence under whatever circumstances**



# Chinja maitiro 2



- **Are rumoured to have won the 2000, 2005 and 2008 elections but ZANU claims victory for all elections**
- **ZANU PF calls itself a “liberation war party” and MDC calls itself a “development party”**

# March 2008 elections



- **Civic society including women campaigns vigorously for peaceful elections**
- **During International Women's Day theme for WCoZ is "Vote in Peace vote for Peace"**
- **WCoZ sends a petition for peaceful elections to all political parties**

# March 2008 elections 2



- **The elections happen with much less violence and women are overjoyed**
- **Its clear that the opposition has won since results are posted outside each polling station**
- **ZEC announces results at 6 constituencies per day!!**

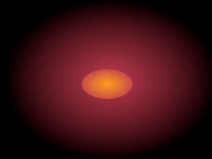
# March 2008 elections 3



- **Gvt refuses to announce presidential results**
- **Finally released after six weeks of tempering with them**
- **Civics and many international players refuse to accept results**
- **The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission announces new run off presidential elections in six weeks**

# Liberation War Tactics



- **ZANU PF devises national strategies to force the population to vote for it**
  - **Recruit youth militia and rural chiefs, pay them and arm them with torture tactics**
  - **Rest is history**
- 

# Results of the terror campaign



- **Officially 25 000 people are displaced (UN)**
- **200 are killed (MDC)**
- **10 000 are treated for serious injuries (ZDHR)**
- **About 70% of the population is heavily intimidated**
- **All required to vote for ZANU PF and they requested to write down the serial numbers of their ballot papers**

# Terror campaign 2



- **MDC pulled out of the elections**
- **ZANU PF won a landslide victory!!!**

# **Civic during violence**



- **Violence areas sealed off but women went and recorded violence**
- **Spoke out against it**
- **Sent reps and documents to UN, AU and SADC presidents and embassies in the country**
- **Mitigating with displaced women and children, clothes, shelter, counselling, security, food, health**
- **Made sure SADC and AU observers saw the displaced people since gvt denied any violence**



# The good infiltrates the bad!!!



- **MDC agrees to join ZANU PF in a Government of National Unity 15 September 2008**
- **13 February GNU formed**
- **Confidence levels in the government dramatically go up**
- **Suddenly some of the industries open and begin producing goods**
- **Government employees return to work in solidarity with the government**
- **Zimbabweans in the diaspora also return in large numbers**

# Schools reopen



- **Teachers return to work in solidarity with the government**
- **The allowances are not enough but working for change**
- **In 2008 school children in public schools had had only 21 days of uninterrupted education**
- **The education department marks 2008 exams and begin releasing results**

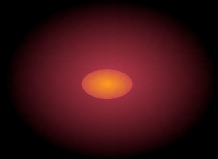
# Changes happening



- **Funding partners begin to support health sector**
- **Health centres which had been laying idle begin to open up**
- **Women access reproductive health care and primary health care**
- **Health workers return to work in solidarity with new government**

# **Food and other commodities become available in the shops**

- **Previously empty shops fill up with goods**
- **Rare items like mealie meal are found in shops**
- **Meat, juices, cooking oil, soaps, margarine back in shops**
- **Its now possible to fill up a basket with Zimbabwean goods!!**



# **Levels of violence reduced significantly**



- **The ZANU Torture machinery crumbles slowly**
- **However it rears its ugly head once often especially when the Prime Minister's dies in a very suspicious car accident**
- **CIO and other agents routinely phone and threaten civic society activists**
- **Scale of violence much smaller and has no funding!!!**

# Role of women in the transition



- **For Zimbabweans this cycle of change needs to be completed**
- **Necessary to get the country through transitional justice and peace building phase**
- **Start with truth telling at village, province and national level**
- **Documentation of violence incidence done and needs collated**

# Window of opportunity 2



- **Secondly women and civics lobbying for a justice process where the perpetrators of violence receive sentences, even if they are later pardoned.**
- **Women are insisting that perpetrators of politically motivated sexual violence should never be pardoned in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1820**

# Window of opportunity 3



- **Thirdly there should a reparation process to pay back what survivors lost**
- **It can never be enough but an effort should be made as part of the healing process**
- **After the reparations communities can then begin the process of healing**



# National Healing and Peace building



- **Women are taking their role seriously in this process**
- **Zimbabwe lived with a strong culture of violence**
- **Need to break from culture, change it for the good, get society to a culture of peace, tolerance and nonviolence**

# Community rebuilding



- **Need to rebuild community trust under girded by the term UBUNTU**
- **All communities needs awareness in civic and human right education**
- **Process can be started by women during this window of opportunity**
- **ZANU PF taught people that it was criminal offence not to support it!**
- **Communities need to know what is right and proper**

# Zimbabwe women



- **Those who remained proud and optimistic Zimbabweans**
- **The country has enough wealth and if run properly is self sustaining**
- **Prepared to continue the struggle**
- **Our goal is to get constitution that guarantees our rights as equal citizens**
- **50% women in decision making – revolution we want and a friendly electoral system**

# Inspiring change in your setting



- **Believe in what you want to do**
- **Hope and optimism is critical in any situation**
- **Recruit more people to your cause – find the allies**
- **Contributed in various ways towards this goal**
- **Get influential people as your allies**
- **Aim for the change you want to make and one day it shall be done**
- **Never doubt that a small group of people can change the world – its been proven over and over again**
  
- **I thank you**