

AN EXAMINATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SHONA POETRY TO PEACE BUILDING IN ZIMBABWEAN COMMUNITIES

✉ Norman Chivasa¹ & Phillipa Mutswanga²

¹Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Peace, Leadership and Conflict Resolution at Zimbabwe Open University, Harare, 263, Zimbabwe.

²Snr Lecturer, Department of Disability Studies and Special Needs Education, Zimbabwe Open University +263, Harare, Zimbabwe,

ABSTRACT

Poetry is one of those methods that have traditionally been used for addressing interpersonal conflict across cultures. Taking Shona micro-communities as a point of reference, this paper interrogates the contributions of poetry to peace building. For purposes of this paper, two types of poetry are examined: poetry to rectify social ills (nheketerwa in Shona and ukulamula in Ndebele) and bembera in Shona and ukugona in Ndebele (the language of public accusation, complain and protest). Results showed that, at its basic level, poetry negates violent confrontation. It mirrors peace both as a means and an anticipated outcome. Furthermore, poetry is a nonviolent means of addressing conflict. The paper recommends that modern Shona communities should invoke this cultural heritage, expand and blend it with contemporary diplomatic processes such as negotiation and mediation, can together serve as resources for building peace.

KEYWORDS: Peace, Peace building, Poetry, Shona, Zimbabwe.