

**STREET ART TO PROMOTE REPRESENTATION  
AND EPISTEMIC JUSTICE AMONG  
MARGINALIZED RURAL ZIMBABWEAN YOUTH**



## RESEARCH TEAM

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*Designed by Allan Ndondo Jnr*

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Focusing on youth between 18 and 25 years of age, the project was conducted in rural Binga, a significantly underdeveloped rural district in Zimbabwe lying on the fringes of the Zambezi River along the Kariba dam on the western border with Zambia. The area is mostly inhabited by the Tonga people, who have been subject to various forms of marginalisation, dating back from the pre-colonial era, when there was displacement from the Zambezi valley in 1957 to make way for the Kariba dam. The villagers, including youth, form part of the secluded, hard to reach communities in Zimbabwe whose narratives are often not heard. Although Binga district is often characterized by isolation, Tonga culture has survived the influence of its surrounding dominant ethnic groups, they are known for fishing in the Zambezi River and their craftwork, particularly weaving and basketry.

The project sought to document narrative of youth in the district through participatory street art with the aim of encouraging social cohesion, making their experiences and knowledge visible, and contributing to epistemic justice. Another objective was to generate democratic space by giving the youth an opportunity to tell the stories they value and doing research with Tonga youth rather than on them with a shared concern of bringing social and personal change.

## RESEARCH AIMS

- Voice the aspirations of the marginalised youth to address the social powerlessness they hold.
- Identify how youth and CSOs can work together to address social cohesion and epistemic injustices.
- Bring the issues of marginalised youth to the attention of the policy-makers, local stakeholders, discuss the role of participatory arts as an intercultural learning tool for deconstructing the bias against such groups.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the social, political and economic experiences of Tonga Youth?
- How can participatory art-based methodology contribute to social cohesion and epistemic justice among disadvantaged populations, and inform youth and development policies?
- How can NGOs and art-based organisations collaborate with the youth afflicted by conflict to i) reduce inequalities ii) strengthen local and national partnerships for bottom-up initiatives iii) promote peaceful relations?

## METHODOLOGY

The project used graffiti-on-board because of the compatibility of the method to the context. The project collaborated with the Batonga Community Museum and Basilwizi Trust, youth-focused NGOs based in the Binga community. Both NGOs were actively involved in identifying the youth, as well as in designing and co-producing artefacts. The two NGOs collaborated in communicating with stakeholders and organising the workshops. With the help of the researchers and two hired professional artists, the NGOs were useful in facilitating exhibitions and dissemination of artefacts. We started with a five-day workshop involving rural youth (12 young peo-

ple with equal gender representation), representatives from Basilwizi Trust (a local NGO), and representatives from Batonga Museum to discuss challenges experienced by Binga youth.

The project was divided into two phases. The first strand focused on the creative process of making the graffiti artefact that was a build-up from a series of activities, and the second strand was a multi-city exhibition of the artefacts. The first one and a half days of the workshop were used to discuss the challenges and opportunities experienced by Tonga youth as a minority tribe in Zimbabwe. Ice-breaking games and activities such as the River of Life were used during the workshop.



Collectively, participants identified themes for art training and discussed how to portray these themes through

paintings. Various themes such as child abuse, early marriage, poverty and gender inequality were identified by Tonga youth during the workshop through a discussion process on the challenges they experienced. The youth later used the identified themes to paint their graffiti. On the second day, the two professional artists started with the graffiti training, and this was followed by the creation of individual graffiti boards. On the final day of the workshop, there was an in-house discussion and photoshoot of the graffiti. We also conducted exit interviews with the youth after completion of the graffiti, as well as interviews with representatives from the NGO and the Batonga Museum.

In the second phase, all the youth participated in exhibitions held at the Bulawayo National Art Gallery, the Midlands State University, and at the Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences in Harare. Firstly, there was an indoor exhibition at National Gallery of Bulawayo, with the artefacts displayed for two days. This was followed by a one-day public exhibition at the Bulawayo City Hall car park. After this, there was a two-day exhibition at Midlands State University. Finally, the artefacts were displayed at the Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences in the capital city of Harare.

## Where to find Binga in Zimbabwe



Binga district is in Matabeleland North Province, northwest west of Zimbabwe. It lies on the fringes of the Zambezi River along the Kariba dam on the western border with Zambia. The district is inhabited by the Tonga, who are the third-largest ethnic group in Zimbabwe.

District: **Binga District**

Country: **Zimbabwe**

Province: **Matabeleland North**



**Taidal Muleya**

**Title of Artwork: Lwiiyo Kumwana Musimbi (Education to a girl child)**



**Tonga**

Mufanikisyo oyu utondezya bana bachisimbi babili bajisi bbuku lila mutwe wamakani wakuti “Lwiiyo ninguzu”. Mulimo oyu ulagwasilizya mukumwaya mulumbe kubana boonse bachisimbi bali mu Bboma laya Binga kuti bajatilile kuchisiko chalwiiyo. Lwiiyo lutegwa lulagwasya maningi mukupona kwamwana wachisimbi kwiinda amukweta lusumpuko. Tunsiyansiya twaba Tonga tudyamizya mwana wachisimbi

munzila yakuti bana bachilombe mbabo kupela banga bakusika kulwiiyo lulajulu. Mifanikisyo eyi ilagwasilizya kukugwisya tunsiyansiya tudyamizya bana bachisimbi. Bana bachisimbi bala konzya kwiinda bana bachilombe mukkilasi mulizyalwiyo.

**English**

The drawing shows two girls holding a book titled “Lwiiyo ninguzu” Education is power. The artwork is meant to drum up the message to all girls in Binga District, Zimbabwe to hold the branch of education tightly. Education is believed to be an important ingredient in social capital development of a girl child. Tonga culture side line education of a girl child in such a way that only boys complete secondary education. The graffiti above will act as an alibi or assist to break the cultural belief of Tonga people which oppress a girl child. A girl child can underperform boys in class as long they are supported adequately by their parents.



**Bona Ngwenya**

## **Title of Artwork: Stop Child Abuse**

### **Tonga**

Ndakachita mu fanikisyo wangu ula mutwe wamakani “Atuleke kujata bana buzike”. Ndiya ndakumwaya mulumbe kubantu bapati bajata bana buzike kuti belede kusungwazya bana bayinke kuchikolokuti babe abumi buli kabotu kwiindilila mulwiiyo pepe kufwaba. Kujata bana buzike takujaniki mu Binga kupela pesi, bamwi bana baka penga mumizezo mpawo bamwi bali mukukwatwa buche akujatwa buzike abantu bapati. Echi tachili kuchitika mu bbooma lya Binga kupela pe pesi chilajanika muma dolopo woonse ali muchisi. Bwalino ndiyanda kuti mulumbe oyu umwayigwe mu Zimbabwe kubantu boonse bamulaka usiyene siyene. Bantu boonse bamu Zimbabwe belede kujatana kuti bamane penzi lya kujata bana buzike nkambo tesi chintu chibotu pe. Tweelede kuti twachileka kuchitila kuti bana bapone buumi buli kabotu.

### **English**

I did my graffiti on “Stop child abuse”. I just want to pass the message that elders should stop abusing children. They must encourage them and take them to school so that they might have a better future through education not suffering. Child abuse is happening in Binga, some end up getting mentally disturbed and some get married early and some get impregnated and abused by elderly people. This scenario is not only in Binga, it is happening also in urban areas. I want this message to spread to all people in Zimbabwe, different colours, language. We as Zimbabweans we should unite to stop child abuse. Child abuse is not a good thing. We have to stop it so that children have a happy future and health.



Iyi Simugwagwa

Title of Artwork: Press On (Endelela anembo)



### Tonga

Mufanikisyo oyu utondezya mwana uchikula ujiisi zibelesyo zyakuyaka. Ujisi mutwe wamakani “Mubono” kachamba mubono mulamfu. Bana bachikula ba muBboma lya Binga be- lede kuti babe amubono mulamfu kuti bazwidilile kuli zyoonse nzibachita. Kuzwidilila kuzwa mukubeleka achanguzu mbuli kuchita muntu uyaka n,anda. Ulapa majwi akusungwazya kuli- bachikula bamu Bboma abamwi balikuunze kuti bata konzyi ku- zwa mumibono yabo. Mugwagwa ulakonzya kuba amyotokala a meja (Maamvwa) pesi umwi ulajana zilangililo zyakwe kufumb- wa kala mubono.

### English

The picture shows a Youngman holding building materials (trowel and spirit level). It has a title “Mubono” a vision. Youth in Binga rural district should have a vision for them to succeed in their own endeavours. Success can be attained by hardwork- ing like what a builder does. It gives a word of encouragement to youngsters in Binga District and outsiders to stick on their visions. With a vision one cannot bump into anything. The road can be flooded with cars and hedges of thorns but he or she can reach the intended destination.

**Primrose Munenge**

**Title of Artwork: My Vision (Mubono mulamfu wangu)**



### **Tonga**

Mukuyu oyu umenede abbwe, asi ula matu asokwe tyetye amichelo. Awa ndilikwezuya kubonesya bantu kuti bazibe kuti na zintu zyayuma biyeni, muntu ula konzya kuzichita. Bantu bamu Binga bazibikene kuti bazwa mubuyumuyumu, mbuli oyu mukuyu umenede abbwe asi ula michelo iligwa abantu bamu Binga. Katupa mukozyanisyo kubana bachikula bamu Binga, bamwi bantu bayeya kuti bachikula takope nzibakonzya kuchita zyendelana ambabo, kakuli bo balakonzya kuchita zimwi zigwasya mubumi bwabo.

### **English**

This fig tree is germinating on a rock, but it has green leaves and figs. I am trying to show people that no matter how hard the background is, a person can still make it work. So people of Binga are known to come from a bitter background, like this tree is germinating on a rock but it has fruits which are even a source of food to people in Binga. Relating this to the youth of Binga, some people think Binga youth can't make it but relates to them, how they can still make something important in their lives.

**Future Munenge**

**Title of Artwork: Youth Achievement (Kuzwidilila kwabachikula)**



**Tonga**

Mufankisyo wangu wamba bubotu bwalwiiyo akuti bana bachikula bamu Bboma Iya Binga bazwidilile. Bana bachikula baswanana abuyumuyumu maningi, kubikkilizya akweenda musinzo mulamfu kuya kuchikolo. Mubufwifwi ndamba kuti nikuba kuti bana aba baswanana amapenzi ali bobu, baleezya nzila zisiyenesiyene kuti bajane nzibayanda akubeleka changuzu kuchikolo.

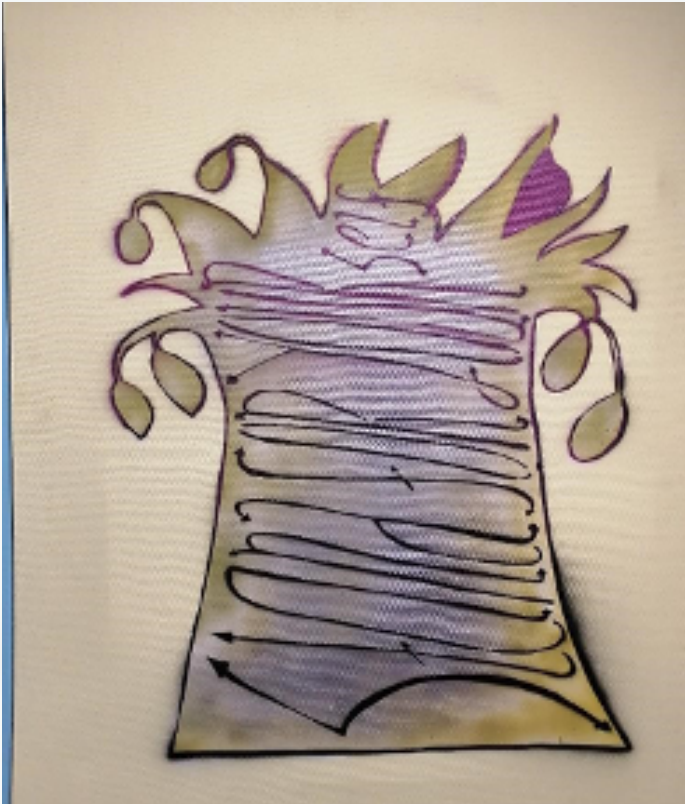
**English**

My drawing expresses the importance of education and how Binga youth can succeed and reach their goals. There are many challenges faced by Tonga youth in Binga, the first one is walking long distances to schools, so in these words I express that even though they face these challenges, they try by all means to reach their goals, they try to work hard at school.



**Olivia Mudenda**

**Title of Artwork: Stand for Yourself (Lyimikilile)**



### **Tonga**

Bana bachikula beelede kulyimikilila kulizyoonse nzibachita mubuzumi bwabo. Tabeelede kwimikilila bazyali babo kupela pe. Buumi bwamazubano buyanda kuti mwana waziba kulitwida akulisebela, kuchitila kuti na waswekelwa bazyali takoyobona mapenzi mapati pe kuli oyo muntu unga wamulela. Buumi buyanda kuti muntu ula liseela mbuli muntu useya bwaato mulwizi. Bana beleede kukonzya kuyandula mali yachikolo, akuchita milimo iipa mali kuti balelusye bazyali babo mikuuli.

### **English**

Youth in Binga District, Zimbabwe should be able to stand on their own feet in times of difficulties. Life is full of ups and down. They should not entirely depend on their parents alone. Nowadays, youth should be able to do things on their own so that if he or she loses one or both parents he or she can be able to live without much help from the guardian or caregiver. They should be able to paddle their own canoe in life. The youth should be able to fetch money for school fees as well as doing work or participate in income generating project to reduce burden from their parents.

## Chiyubunuzyo Mpendi

### Title of Artwork: Promoting Equal Rights between a Boy and Girl Child (Kusumpula zyeelelo kubana balombe abachisimbi)



#### Tonga

Muzeezo uli amufanikisyo oyu ngwakuti bapati bazibe buyumuyumu bujana bana bachikolo. Mu Bboma lya Binga tula bana baledede batali kweenda pe kuzikolo ankambo kakubula lugwasyo kuzwa kubantu belede kuti baba gwasye. Mu tawindi, bana bali bobo balajana lugwasyo kuti bajane lwiiyo. Alubo bana bachisimbi mumasena amulindiswe bana bachisimbi taba jatwi bweelene pe a bana basankwa akambo kakuti chiindi bana bachisimbi bakali kwambwa bumbi, bachilombe bakali kuchita milimo mibotu mpawo bachisimbi kaba chita

milimo yan'anda. Awa impalamo yangu njakobola abo balangene abana kuti basike mubusena bwesu bape zyiyo kubaziyali besu aku bana kuti bazibe bubotu bwachikolo a zyeelelo zyabo

#### English

The idea behind this graffiti is that I wanted to let the responsible authorities know about the challenges which learners are facing at school. In Binga we have disabled people who are not going to school because of a lack of support from responsible people, unlike in towns where such people are being supported which can make them acquire education. Also, girls in our community are not treated equally to boys because of the stereotypes from long ago, whereby only boys were shown doing better jobs while girls were shown doing home chores. So, my aim is to encourage the responsible people to come to our community, educate parents and students about the importance of education and about their rights so that they all know that they have a right to education.



**Carrington Mugande**

**Title of Artwork: Hard work Changes Future (Bwajuunza bula nchiincha akubeleka achanguuzu)**



**Tonga**

Ezi zila chakwita akulwana buchetei. Kubeleka achanguuzu kupa kuti lya juunza lyasu lichinche. Ezi zilapa kuti iswe nitubana bamu Bboma lya Binga tube achi-yandisyo kuti tuchite zintu zilikabotu mubumi bwesu akuti twendelele kunembo azyakwiiya. Ankambo kabuchete tatulo kukonzya pe kuti tujane lwiyo, ndachita obo kandiyanda kutondezya nzitumvwide nitubana baku Binga anzi tukonzya ku-

chita kuti tulwane buchete mbutulabo. Tatwelede kutobelezya buchete pe mbutu labo, asi twelede kubulwana kuti tubuzunde akuya kuchikolo na akuchita mabbisimusi. Kuli zyakwiiya twelede kuba amyeenya yakuya kuzikolo zyajulu. Ezi ziyanda kubeleka anguuzu kuti uzwidilile, na takwe kubeleka anguuzu, tako zyeenda pe

**English**

This is about fighting poverty. Hard work determines and changes the future. I did this so that as Binga youth we have a lot of interest to do something better in life and even to go into higher education. But just because of poverty we are barricaded, so I did this in order to express how we are feeling as Binga youths and what can we do in order to overcome that challenge. As youths in Binga we should not just follow the poverty we have, we should try by all means to fight and overcome it, it may be by schooling or by doing business. In terms of schooling we might have a chance to go to higher education. It also needs hard work for you to succeed, if there's no hard work, there is no success.

## Chasombwa Mandatambo

### Title of Artwork: Stop Child Abuse (Amuleke kujata bana buzike)



#### Tonga

Bana bachikula biingi muBboma lya Binga bali kumitisigwa buche. Bana bachisimbi mbali mupenzi pati loko nkambo ngabazikukachilwa kumanizya chikolo muchindi chelede. Mapenzi aya ali kubwedezya musule lwiiyo kubana bachisimbi mu Bboma lya Binga. Bana bachisimbi bali kujatwa buzike loko mumaanda omu, mpawo bazyali abendezezi bamuchisi tabatoli ntaamo pe kuti bamanisye mapenzi aya atuswaya muBboma lyasu.

#### English

Most of girls in Binga fall in pregnancy at tender age and they fail to complete their secondary education. Endemic of poverty, peer pressure with their peers, cultural beliefs and lack of education are among factors contributing to high level of pregnancy in Binga rural communities. The cases of child abuses are contributing to reverse development and education to a girl child. Girls are being abused at home. Parents and leaders are not taking measures to fend off child abuse in Binga district particularly early pregnancy to a girl child.

**Luleleko Mugande**

**Title of Artwork: Overcome (Zunda)**



### **Tonga**

Ezi zitondezya kuti kuzwidilila takusikili muntu pe, pesi iwe lwako welede kuti waluma mulomo wansi kuti ujane nchuyanda mubuzumi bwako. Nkikako nchikulembedwe kuti “destination” kumajinkilo kuzwa mumapenzi kuyo sika kumichelo a matu. Mbubobu mbutulangwa nitu ba Tonga abamwi bantu. Mu Binga ulamujana mwana kamba kuti “ime ndili mwana wamachala, tandikwe bazyali pe alubo tandikwe muntu pe ukonzya kundipa mali yakuti ndiye kuchikolo, asi ezi tazikwe kuti pe ndili mwana wamachala asi zila chakwita akubachiyandisyo ilwako kuchitila kuti ubekabotu mubumi bwako.

### **English**

This is to show that success will not bend down for you but you have to climb up high for you to get to where you want to go. That's why it's written destination; from the hardships to your destination where there are fruits and leaves. This is who we are, we are being seen as the Tonga people, not deserted as we usually are. In Binga you find a child saying “I am an orphan, I don't have my parents and so I don't have anyone to fund me to go to school”, but it's not all about being an orphan, it is about having the desire to better oneself and be a better person in life.



**Willard Muntanga**

**Title of Artwork: Zambezi River (Kasambabezi)**



**Tonga**

Kasambabezi mulonga upa buumi kubaTonga bakkala mu Bboma lya Binga. Kuteya baswi mbumwi buvubi bujisi bantu bachiTonga bakkala munkokkosi lya mulonga wa Kasambabezi. Kuti twatobelezya tunsiyansiya twaba Tonga, kwambidwe kuti ba Tonga mbimbababu bantu kupela bakonzya kuteya baswi. Kuteya baswi koobola

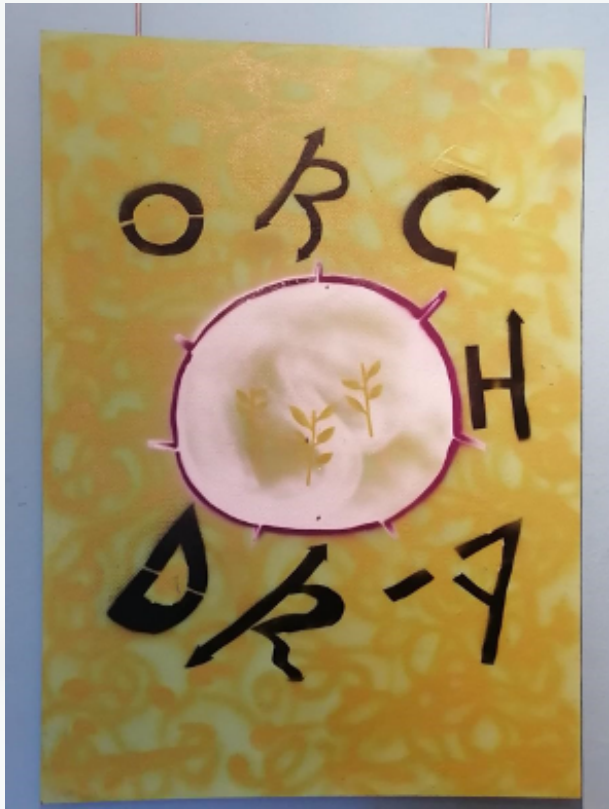
Bantu bazwa kumasena asiyenesiyene mbuli Gokwe, Bulawayo aku Harare kuti bazikuule baswi bakusambala. Bantu bateya baswi baabukonzya kutola na kwendesya bana babo muzikolo kumali njibajana kuzwa mukuzya baswi. Mutayiga nguwo kupela muswi mwiingi muli kasamababezi.

**English**

Zambezi River is the source of life for Tonga people in Binga Rural District. Fishing is the mainstay or lucrative livelihood option which is practised by people living along Zambezi River. Culturally, it is believed that Tonga people are the only people who know how to do fishing. Fishing industry has attracted fish traders from Gokwe, Bulawayo and Harare to buy fish in Binga for commercial purposes. Fishers are now able to take their children to school with money obtained after selling fish locally and outside Binga. Tiger is one of the common type of fish which is found in Zambezi River.

**Equinox Twatalya**

**Title of Artwork: My Life (Buumi bwaangu)**



### **Tonga**

Simweengi wakeenga mufanikisyo kayanda kupandanuna buumi bwakwe kuti bweendede biyeni. Bazyali bakwe balimide micheelo miingi loko kayisiyenesiyene. Bantu biingi bazwa ku Bboma balasika kuzowula micheelo kuti baka sambale. Bazyali bamulombe oyu tako pe mulimo ngubabeleka wakuti ngola bapa mali kumana kwamweezi pesi bachita milimu yamaboko ibapa mali yakuti batole bana babo kuchikolo. Chilili chamicelo chibapede kujana buumi amuunzi alimbabo.

### **English**

Here the artist is describing his life diagrammatically, using an orchard. His parents have an orchard which has variety of fruit trees. Most of people from Binga centre (town ship) visit the orchard to buy fruits of different types for selling. His parents do not raise a finger to work on a payable job but they are able to take their children to school with money obtained by selling fruits from the orchard. The orchard in his family is the major source of life, without it life could be unbearable to him and people around.

**Johan Mutale**

**Title of Artwork: Binga Source of Life (Nzila yakupona muBboma lya Binga)**



**Tonga**

Oyu mufanikisyo utondezya nziila zyakupona azyo, anziila bantu njiba jana mali yakuti bawule chakulya a mali yakuchikolo. Kula tondezya alubo buyumuyumu bujana bantu bamu Bboma lya Binga kuti bapona buumi buyumu loko manaingi kuli zyakuteya baswi, nkambo tabako zibelesyo pe a mali yakuti bajane zibelesyo zyakasika mazubano kukuteya baswi. Akambo Kama penzi aya ambidwe awa, ku-

teya baswi takulomede loko pe.

**English**

What is being displaced here has something to do with source of life, the way we generate income as a source of food and where we get money for our school fees, get what we were and everything else that we depend on. The challenges that you face in the district of Binga, especially in the fishing industry one of it is lack of resources and it includes not having financial support and the use of modern equipment to participate in the fishing industry. Also because of these financial constraints I think the fishing industry is being underutilized.



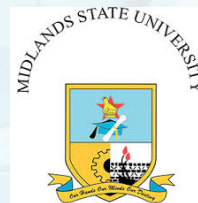


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**CHANGING  
THE STORY**