

#COMMUNITY IS THE ANSWER NEWSLETTER

Volume 2 October 2020

GATEWAY FELLOWSHIP DISCOVERING NEW WAYS TOGETHER

The Gateway Fellowship is the flagship program of Gateway Zimbabwe, which brings together seemingly-ordinary citizens from different backgrounds who are answering to the call of living extraordinary lives and making an impact in their community towards a better Zimbabwe for all.

Why a Fellowship Program:

Connecting Local Impulses Across Zimbabwe

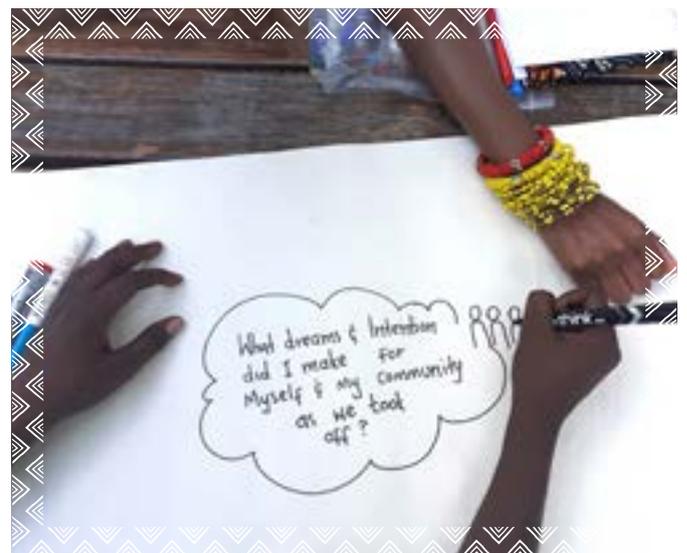
As Gateway Zimbabwe, we see this time as an opportunity to imagine how we can design our society differently for a more sustainable future. It is time to self-organise around the future we long for from the grassroots up. Gateway is supporting fellows and community leaders by providing safe spaces for connecting, for generative dialogue, learning and collaboration across the social, economic and political spectrum and polarities.

Fellows are drawn from communities across Zimbabwe that would not usually interact or work together. One of our key strategies is to link this ecosystem of local leaders **trans-locally** so our cohorts span across the country. The current cohort consists of fellows based in five communities, namely Lupane (Matabeleland North), Chikukwa and Chiadzwa (Manicaland), Arcturus (Mashonaland East) and Epworth (Harare province).

The communities from which the fellows come are undeniably diverse in culture, language and custom, yet over the course of the 18-month fellowship journey, Gateway Fellows have found how much similarity and commonality among them. Sharing challenges they've encountered in their communities and individual lives, they've discovered that through looking at the world with "fresh

eyes" and applying the knowledge gained by others through their own experiences, they're able to have a positive impact, affirming that indeed #CommunityIsTheAnswer. This journey also feels like it is reviving the values of Ubuntu - coming together with a shared purpose for the common good of humanity and of the land.

During the five modules of the Gateway Fellowship, the fellows cultivate knowledge of social technologies, inner work practices and community facilitation processes together with a deepening understanding of political economy, constitutionalism and active citizenship in the Zimbabwean context. These approaches support the fellows in facilitating improved dialogue and understanding towards sustainable transformation alongside their respective communities. ➤



GoDeep game used during the Gateway Fellowship to help create safe spaces for connecting, learning and collaborating as communities

IT'S US AND IT'S NOW: WHATEVER THE QUESTION COMMUNITY IS THE ANSWER.

The Fellows had 3 in-person modules in 2019 and 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, modules 4 and 5 will likely be conducted online. One of the key features of the fellowship program is deep accompaniment to the fellows on this journey. We know that due to our historical cycles of polarization, exclusion, colonization, oppression and silence that have driven many to “check out”, we need to “scale deep” as we scale out, and do the fundamental work of attending to the inner condition of community leaders who wish to co-create any meaningful change where they are. Gateway place-based fellows are accompanied by a circle of apprentice facilitators who are further accompanied and supported by a circle of convening facilitators.

During the COVID-19 period we’ve taken this deep accompaniment to the virtual space. WhatsApp has enabled cohorts to remain connected enough to process the disruption collectively and become a resource in their community.

“Checking in regularly has helped us share our inner feelings, to know ourselves more and to be a fountain of hope and knowledge for each other which has contributed to our mental health and stability.” - Chikukwa Cohort during COVID-19

Beyond staying connected, vibrant discussions stimulated by COVID-19, have been hosted by the fellows’ group on topics including the re-adoption of traditional diets and medicinal remedies as ways of taking charge of our health during a health crisis. Another important discussion has centered on what is sustaining us in this time which has reinforced the inner work practices which fellows have been developing. Other discussions have explored the role of education in different communities and what education could be. They’ve also explored fellows’ memories and appreciation of our traditional ways in Zimbabwe from which we can learn and build.

The relationships and friendships formed during the fellowship are building circles of solidarity and unity across the fellow cohorts. At Gateway Zimbabwe we are guided by a relational theory of change where everything is premised on developing authentic and inclusive relationships. In a country that has - for a very long time - been led out of woundedness, the fellowship program is proving to be critical in inviting fellows and community leaders into generative and healing ways of relating to one another.

We trust that when we can meet each other afresh in our communities, in our richness and in our brokenness, we can then begin to reweave our social fabric and build the future we wish to see for our country.



In the Art of Hosting Conversations that Matter, fellows come together to find new ways of being together and co-creating collective ways of addressing challenges in their communities.

IMPACT STORY:

Samantha (Nyasha) Mandiveyi
...A lifelong Fellow

Samantha Nyasha Mandiveyi- Founder and Managing Director of the [Digital Spaces Lab](#) has journeyed with Gateway Zimbabwe since our inception as a collaborative.

After interviewing one of the Gateway convenors for another project she was working on, she was invited to take part in the 2017 Deep Dialogue Interviews as an interviewer. During this process we discovered that she was working as a producer, but had a dream of being a documentary filmmaker. As she joined the pool of interviewers in harvesting and processing the stories and themes emerging from the first batch of interviews of 100 citizens from across Zimbabwe, Samantha was surprised by the insight she gained into historical events and dimensions that exist in Zimbabwe which she never knew about. As a millennial in Zimbabwe, these were unspoken realities that could have completely eclipsed her.

Then in 2018 she participated in Gateway Zimbabwe's ProcessWork Forum which was an open exploration of conflict hotspots in Zimbabwe. "For me that was just amazing...the process that we did on ProcessWork, understanding how history repeats itself until we do something or interject through healing and reconciliation and truth-telling... things that I wasn't fully aware of could be done."

As Samantha participated in more Gateway Zimbabwe processes like the Art of Participatory Leadership Training where she was excited by World Cafes, her interest was piqued to listen to and understand different perspectives from people about their own experiences of Zimbabwe and what they felt were some of the key issues that needed to be addressed in our country. "It was amazing to start to understand my fellow-Zimbabweans and some of the issues that they are facing."



Through her exposure to alternative ways of engaging communities, exploring and transforming conflicts in Gateway Zimbabwe, Samantha went on to participate in the Peace/Warrior program in Brazil in 2018. At this point she was sold, and she wanted more. She was thirsty to learn and understand more about the role our stories can play in healing our society. A particular relationship she developed through Gateway, with an elder from the Western region of Zimbabwe opened her eyes to the unspoken historical conflict and untold stories in Zimbabwe. Together they planned how they could capture these stories using the indaba circle storytelling format, before a generation of historical testimonies was lost. Sadly, the timing never matched up to bring this project to fruition. But, later in 2018, on the recommendation of Gateway Zimbabwe, Samantha was accepted into the "[Accountability and Historical Dialogue Fellowship](#)" at Columbia University. This experience was life changing for Samantha. "This...literally changed the trajectory of my career". She shifted her career focus from a general interest in documentary filmmaking to a focus on documentary filmmaking exploring memory preservation, historical dialogue accountability, transparency, human rights.

“It changed the trajectory of how I use my creativity; I didn’t know that you could combine creativity and human rights, I just thought it was for the (arts or film) industry, but that’s what I’m doing now.” Even now, when you hear her introduce herself in public settings, like the recent launch of the Accountability Lab Zimbabwe (in which she is a partner organization), she speaks of herself confidently as a digital storyteller exploring historical accountability in Zimbabwe. From contacts during the AHDA fellowship Samantha was finally able to secure funding to develop her own project in 2019. [Digital Spaces Lab](#) is “a digital platform that brings together artists, writers, journalists and creatives to collaborate on various storytelling projects for sustainable community impact and national discourse.”

Just two months ago, Gateway Zimbabwe invited Samantha to the Healing Stories Workshop as part of the Gateway cohort. She was fascinated by “how we can apply psychology to ProcessWork and to healing histories, and the idea that ProcessWork

deals with current history and social issues and multi-generational issues passed on through families”. She resonated deeply with the idea of psychological inheritances in Zimbabwe and silenced histories which fuel ethnic conflict in different regions. This program also “ helped me to understand more about some of the issues that we are facing today as millennials, especially with social media and our inability to have dialogue with people from opposing sides...our level of intolerance and our inability to have dialogue and I feel like these processes are an important way to help us, especially as future facilitators of such things”.

Samantha will always be a lifelong fellow in Gateway Zimbabwe, as we hope many others will continue to stream in and out of Gateway processes, taking with them the essence of what they learn and discover along their Gateway journey and feeding it back into their communities. This is one type of Gateway-ing that we hope to see living across our communities in Zimbabwe.

CHIKUKWA COHORT

The Chikukwa cohort of Manicaland has been an inspiring point of light, demonstrating resilience even in the face of the devastating effects of Cyclone Idai, with innovative and creative ideas for developing a sustainable community. This is why Gateway chose to host the 2nd Module of the Fellowship in Chikukwa as a site of resilience in the national landscape from which other fellow cohorts could learn.

With a supportive Chieftainship that has valued cohesion and protected the community from political division, this community has been able to change their landscape by integrating permaculture practi-

es in each of the six villages in the area, without any top down decision.

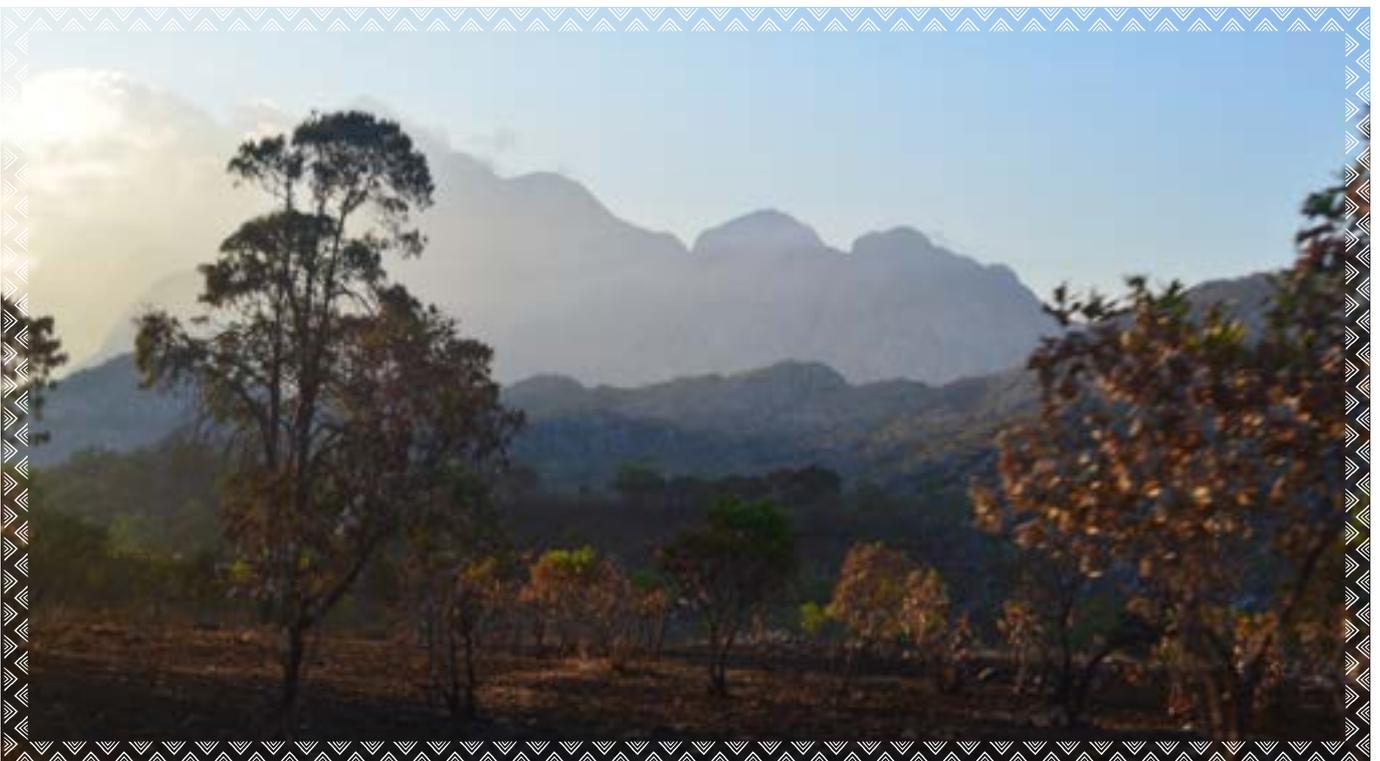
Despite Chikukwa having the fewest fellows, this cohort has had great impact in the surrounding community and has been sharing stories of community building, such as the recent building of a fence at the Cultural Centre and provision of clean water to a village in need. After hosting a GoDeep process which resulted in a community vision, the Gateway fellows in Chikukwa have continued with circle practices which have unified community members in using their collective resources towards a common purpose.

“Through the Go deep and appreciative inquiry we have managed to come up with a community vision. Part of that vision was providing clean water to the people in Chitekete village and we managed to source funds to set up 5 water tanks that are servicing 160 households with clean water.

We have managed to create a space for people with gifts to showcase their talents such as artists, those who do stonework and landscaping and many others. The process brought us together and harnessed our skills and talents” - Cohort Reflections, Sept 2020



Cultural Centre fence *The Chikukwa community recently completed putting a fence around their cultural centre, a project very close to the hearts of our Chikukwa Gateway Fellowsm Betty and Zeddy.*



Held by the Land *Breathtaking scenery of hills and valleys in the mountainous regions of Eastern Zimbabwe, where Chikukwa village is situated.*

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MEET THE CHIKUKWA FELLOWS:

Zeddy Chikukwa is from the Chief's family in Chikukwa. He aspires to develop a youth leadership programme for rural youth in his area and has established a culture centre that hosts mens', womens', youth and Arts and Crafts circles to encourage safe spaces for dialogue and creativity and to identify challenges in the community and co-create solutions.



Betty Chikukwa is a mother of four who is passionate about traditional culture and women's empowerment. Her vision is to share and preserve the practice of her traditional culture with future generations. Betty facilitates womens' circles, teaching inner work practices such as meditation, the preservation of culture and the use of skills and talents such as pottery as tools for improving the lives of women and girls and to build a healthier community.

Betty has found Gateway to be a place of love and unity and hopes to feed the same spirit of love and oneness into her own community in Chikukwa Village.

COMING SOON » 3rd National Citizens Convention

Running under the theme

#NoneButOurselves - Reimagining the Future After COVID-19

Towards a New Convergence Around The Social Struggles in Zimbabwe of Constitutionalism & Participation; Ownership and Distribution; and Sustainability

SAVE THE DATE: 4-6 NOVEMBER 2020

Sessions will be on Zoom and live-streamed on Citizens Manifesto Facebook Page

Register to participate at <https://bit.ly/3kvqGa0>

* only registered participants can participate in these zoom sessions

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4-6
NOVEMBER

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