Stories of Change

Documenting the Impact of ACT Ubumbano

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ACT UBUMBANO

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Acknowledgement

List of Abbreviations

AWET	Apostolic Women's Empowerment Trust
CCM	Christian Council of Mozambique
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ELCSA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
FBO	Faith -based Organisation
F2A	Faith to Action Network
GBV	Gender-based Violence
IAM	Inclusive and Affirming Ministries
KZN	Kwa-Zulu Natal
LGBQTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
OH	Outcomes Harvesting
PACSA	Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action
SAFCEI	Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
WWSOSA	We Will Speak Out South Africa
ZIMCODD	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development

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Introduction

ACT Ubumbano is a network of Southern African and European organisations working collaboratively towards the goal of achieving economic, gender and environmental justice. Its genesis goes back to 2016 when four European donors – Christian Aid, Norwegian Church Aid, Bread for the World, and Act Church of Sweden, together with their partners in Southern Africa, decided to explore the development of new models for solidarity and partnership in the region. This commitment to a new way of working and managing partnerships in Southern Africa was enshrined in ten principles adopted by the four agencies in March 2017, known as the Kopanang Principles.[1] The shift was informed by a number of factors, including a growing movement to the right in global politics and society, and mounting pressure on development funding for countries classified as "middle-income" countries by northern funding agencies:

This is a process of change initiated by European development agencies and their partners in South and Southern Africa. It is looking to find new ways of managing partnerships and development, and of doing social justice work within the region…
It is a response to global political shifts and to shifts in funding within European agencies, to see how they can continue to work in solidarity with organisations and people in the South.[2]

In February 2017, a month prior to this, three European Protestant development agencies and members of the ACT Alliance joined forces with Southern African partners to explore new models of solidarity and collaboration between European and Southern African development and faith-based organisations. The discussions, debates, and outcomes of this first Solidarity Platform are vividly captured in a comprehensive report on the conference.[3]

Since 2017, the work of ACT Ubumbano has been focused on three pillars for transformational change: 1) economic justice; 2) environmental justice/climate change; and 3) gender justice and SRHR, with the combination of all three contributing to the implementation of the SDGs, notably SDG1 (no poverty), 3 (good health and well-being), 5 (gender equality), 10 (reduced inequalities), 13 (climate action) and 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) in Southern Africa. Since 2017 ACT Ubumbano has been actively implementing this approach with a range of partners and collaborators in Southern Africa and Europe who form part of a learning by doing solidarity hub or network.

In March 2021, ACT Ubumbano commissioned an Outcomes Harvesting (OH) process to capture the outcomes of its programme strategy and interventions for the period 2017 to 2021. The purpose of this exercise was to surface outcomes (significant areas of change or impact) derived from the reflections of partners and collaborators who participated in the ACT Ubumbano journey since it became operational. In alignment with the ACT Ubumbano ethos and approach, the report is structured around the voice (the stories) of social actors interviewed for the OH, including their recommendations regarding future engagement for ACT Ubumbano to consider, with minimal analysis and interpretation from the voice of the external "harvester" or evaluator. The OH process, undertaken between May to July 2021, used a dialogical process, based on some guide questions,[4] between the "harvester" and a number of selected ACT Ubumbano partners and collaborators (the social actors) from the faith sector and civil society located in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.[5]

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1 See Annexure 1
2 Melanie Judge, 2017, *Inequality and the Struggle for Humanity in Southern Africa: Documenting a process of Solidarity Building Page 3*
3 IBID
4 See Annexure 2, Guide Questions for the OH
5 See Annexure 3, List of Participants

The ACT Ubumbano Strategy and Programme

The future state is unknown when you begin and is determined through trial and error as new information is gathered. You cannot "manage" transformation with pre-determined, timebound and linear project plans - the change process must "emerge" as you go. The future state is so radically different that the leaders and workers need new mindsets, behaviours, and worldviews to invent it, and then to operate the new future[6]

ACT Ubumbano is the result of the initial efforts of members of the global ACT Alliance. It is a network of Southern-African faith-based and civil society organisations and European funders working collaboratively on making change happen with respect to economic, gender and environmental justice issues. This is achieved by facilitating critical reflections on social justice practice, listening to the voices of those most affected by injustice, and supporting innovative and collaborative solidarity initiatives that address unjust power relations globally. To reach this goal, ACT Ubumbano adopted an adaptive change approach, based on "learning by doing" rather than a "blue-print" one that anticipates outcomes at the design stage of a project or programme, based on identified strategies and interventions. This emergent approach is captured in an initial "programme design" that articulates a vision for "transformative change" and identifies five broad strategies for change, with accompanying objectives and interventions or, "activities listed in table 1 below:

Table 1: ACT Ubumbano Programme Design

Strategy	Objective	Actions
Promoting community voice and action	To equip communities with tools to lead and execute their struggles for change	Scoping study to showcase practice for learning /database for collaborative opportunities/ Ubumbano voice app for voice, social mobilizing and advocacy /media and publicity work around local struggles
Learning from our practice	To deepen knowledge of change through sharing experiences of activists and communities	Local and thematic learning events with content determined by participants / exchange visits between organisations
Protecting the defenders	To protect human rights and women's rights defenders who are at risk of physical harm	Collaborate in resourcing facility to do this/use faith institution's infrastructure for places of refuge
Connecting people globally	To deepen solidarity between communities in the global north and south	Collaborative advocacy on themes at global level / linking local communities and parishes in European and Southern African countries for sharing and support / South-South Solidarity initiatives
Resourcing solidarity	To find alternative funding sources for CSOs in the region	New joint funding proposals / establish new relations with private sector and philanthropic community / continued E8 support

6 *Quoted in the ACT Ubumbano Programme Design*

While not prescriptive, ACT Ubumbano has identified five broad outcome areas or areas of significant change: an emerging model for solidarity in action; deepening of solidarity; deepening of knowledge; deepening, or improved practice; and new forms and ways of working to achieve systemic transformation

A key element in this exploratory process is the incremental building of a Solidarity Hub as a focal point for interaction, learning, and dialogue amongst local and international partners and collaborators. The higher-level goal is to develop new forms of action for social justice that contribute to the transformation of structures of injustice and inequality by accompanying and supporting communities in their struggles. This is based on the working assumption that social change happens when there is increased community agency, mobilisation, and voice. ACT Ubumbano aims to achieve systemic transformation in collaboration with faith institutions, civil society organisations, community activists and partners from across Southern Africa and Europe with three focal social justice sectors: gender justice, economic justice, and environmental justice and climate change.

The Outcomes Harvesting Process

OH is a relatively new evaluation method. Unlike most evaluation methods, it does not measure progress towards predetermined outcomes or objectives. It collects evidence of what has been achieved, working backwards to determine whether and how the particular project or intervention contributed to identified changes in behaviour, practices, relationships, and actions that were influenced through participating in the particular programme.

The approach usually adopted comprises six steps: 1) design the harvest; 2) review documentation and draft outcomes; 3) engage with change agents; 4) substantiate; 5) analyse and interpret; 6) support the use of findings. This OH process uses a relatively formalised approach in which selected social actors take part in a joint workshop where they identify significant outcomes, write these up as outcome descriptions, and participate in categorising these along a set of criteria. In the case of this OH a modified version of the above was used for a number of reasons:

1. The OH was running in parallel with a separate "documenting of outcomes" process, as well as an external evaluation of the ACT Ubumbano Programme in which outcomes would be identified, meaning that all three when read together could present a broad spectrum of outcomes viewed through separate but interlinked processes for ACT Ubumbano to triangulate.

2. The nature of the OH engagement with the social actors for the OH was largely pre-determined by the TOR which called for individual interviews with a list of social actors selected by ACT Ubumbano for the review, all of which would have to be held online given COVID.

3. The emphasis was on facilitating a conversation that allowed the social actors to identify significant areas of change derived from their working relationship and participation in various ACT Ubumbano activities and processes.

4. The role of harvesting significant areas of change or influence, as well as their significance and specific contribution of ACT Ubumbano and others was left to the "harvester" to discern based on the interviews conducted for the OH review.

In light of the above the methodology used for this OH consisted of:

a. a desktop review of selected documentation

b. the formulation of framing questions for the OH and a set of Guide Questions, based on the existing OH template, for the one-on-one interviews

c. conducting online interviews with 19 social actors

d. the transcription of all interviews, synthesis, analysis and writing up of stories that contained outcomes or areas of change or influence

e. the drafting of outcome descriptions, their significance, and contributing factors

f. the analysis, and interpretation of outcomes harvested

g. drafting of the Final Report and Annexures

h. revision of the OH template based on lessons learnt for ACT Ubumbano to consider.

At a conceptual level the OH trawled "the stories" shared during the interviews for changes in thinking or mind-sets (individual and institutional), behaviour, practice, solidarity relationships, and resource mobilisation influenced by an engagement with ACT Ubumbano's intentional methodology, practice, and related interventions that demonstrate the effects of the programme's intentional efforts. These areas of potential change were linked to the main objectives identified for ACT Ubumbano at its inception which did not specify pre-determined outcomes or results but indicate a potential roadmap for a process of change with the potential to achieve transformational change. Within this conceptual framework outcomes can be minor or preliminary compared to others, but all are deemed important since the significance of the outcome is often its relationship to other outcomes. For example, new knowledge may create a mindset change which in turn informs a behaviour change and improved practice at the level of an individual, an institution, a constituency or at community level.

Methodology

The Terms of Reference (TOR) called for: the further development and fine-tuning of the Outcomes Harvesting template used in compiling earlier reports; conducting interviews with a minimum of 20 individuals and/or organisations who had participated in ACT Ubumbano processes over the past 3 years; writing up and analysis of feedback from interviews conducted; and the compilation of a final report with recommendations to inform future strategies. The OH covered the following steps:

Documentation review:

This comprised a review of selected reports, documents, and publications made available or retrieved from the ACT Ubumbano website, to get an overview and understanding of the genesis, design, and scope of its programme, journey, and activities since 2017. The review included some background research on institutions linked to specific social actors in preparation for the interviews; and an initial refinement of the OH Template in the form of Guide Questions to be circulated to the social actors in preparation for the OH interview.

Participant interviews:

Interviews were preceded by a relatively lengthy scheduling process, largely due to the COVID work from home context in which most people are busy with their own online meetings. Eventually 19:23 social actors selected for the OH were interviewed. Two never responded to the meeting request, despite a number of follow up emails. Another one declined due to being unavailable whilst travelling. In a number of cases, interviews had to be rescheduled two or three times due to unforeseen changes in workplans or late cancellations. Guide questions to frame the interview were circulated before the interview which lasted an average of 45-60 mins, depending on the status of internet coverage, loadshedding, and nature of the interview. The interviews allowed for free discussion on significant areas of change. Most people interviewed were more than willing to describe the impact of the ACT Ubumbano journey on themselves as individuals, shifts in institutional and individual practice, changing relationships, and changes taking place at the community level.

Write-up of interviews and classification:

During this phase the interviews were transcribed, lightly edited, and analysed for outcomes that were then classified to align with the strategies and broad change areas identified by ACT Ubumbano during its initial design of the programme. This was another lengthy exercise that included the drafting of short outcome statements or descriptions based on outcomes harvested from the interviews, along with their significance and stated contribution attributed to either ACT Ubumbano or its collaborating partners. This body of work was then used for an analysis and interpretation of the key findings and drafting of the Final Report.

Analysis and interpretation:

During this phase the outcomes were refined and classified into categories that broadly align with framing questions for the OH as set out below:

- Who or which social actors or where is ACT Ubumbano influencing change?
- To what extent do the outcomes represent progress towards the strategic objectives of the ACT Ubumbano programme?
- In what way did the ACT Ubumbano programme contribute to the outcomes through its way of working and chosen activities – solidarity hub, learning events, Voice App, resource mobilisation?
- To what extent do the outcomes achieved by ACT Ubumbano indicate that its work is locally, regionally, and globally rooted?
- To what extent do the outcomes show linkages between the changes harvested and progress towards transformational change in the social justice sector?

Substantiation:

The ability to verify the outcomes that surfaced from the interviews requires a much more rigorous process of engagement and follow up than time allowed for this OH process. However, the following criteria can be used to substantiate the veracity of the OH findings:

- The significant areas of change identified emerged from information derived from the stories the social actors shared for the OH that they were knowledgeable about
- The social actors agreed to go on record with the information they provided about outcomes.
- The outcomes can potentially be triangulated with the findings of the parallel "outcomes documenting" process and external evaluation.
- Specific data, re dates of workshops and participants, can be used by ACT Ubumbano to expand upon and verify information shared during the interviews.

Limitations of the OH Review

A major limitation for the OH was the inability, due to the constraints imposed by the pandemic, to engage with the participants other than online, either one-on-one or in a workshop context. While the online interviews were rich in content, nothing can replace the value of doing in person interviews or workshops. This constrained an ability to delve more deeply into areas of change identified. This could be remedied through a further sharing and deepening of findings (sense-making) with participants and could be something for ACT Ubumbano to consider. In retrospect, it may have been preferable to have the participants identify key areas of change beforehand, share these with the OH facilitator prior to the interview, and then work through these in more detail during the interview. But at the same time, this more formalistic approach might have inhibited a more free-flowing conversational approach for the sharing of stories and reflections during interviews.

Acknowledgements

The success of any evaluation process is dependent upon those who are participate in the process and how much they share with the evaluator. Everyone who participated in the OH review openly shared their stories, reflections, and ideas on how ACT Ubumbano has shaped and influenced change at an individual, institutional, or wider constituency level. This openness and mutual sharing gave rise to a rich understanding of their journey and respective areas of change. It was a privilege to engage with all of you and your openness is much appreciated. And, last but not least, thanks to the ACT Ubumbano staff for their support and giving me the space and time to produce what I hope will be a useful report that ACT Ubumbano can draw upon as it charts the next phase of its learning journey.

Findings

This section presents an overview of findings from the OH. These are presented at a general level and in more detail as the outcomes and analysis of stories" shared by ACT Ubumbano's partners and collaborators during the interviews. The detailed analysis includes: a short outcome description; the significance of the outcome in relation to the overall intention and objectives of the programme as set out in the Programme Design and related Act Ubumbano documents; the contribution - which activities and outputs contributed to the change described in the outcome; and the source – the person(s) and where relevant specific documents.

General findings

A total of 39 outcomes or areas of change were harvested from interviews conducted with 19 participants in the OH review. The changes identified are deemed to be broadly representative of changes achieved by ACT Ubumbano for the review period.

Location

The work of ACT Ubumbano straddles national, regional, and global boundaries. The social actors participating in the OH reflect this reality. The majority (9) are partners and collaborators from South Africa, 8 are from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Malawi, and one is from Europe (See Table 2)

Table 2: Breakdown of interviews by location and organisation or role

Mozambique	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Malawi	South Africa	Europe
2	4	2	1	9	1
10.50%	21%	10.50%	5%	47%	5%

The social actors

The social actors are broadly representative of ACT Ubumbano's social base, with the majority (10) based in the faith sector and 9 located in civil society, either working in organisations or community activists. One social actor represented the views from the perspective of a consultant/facilitator of activist training. The majority are active in the Gender Justice sector, reflecting the major focus of ACT Ubumbano's programme activities since 2017.

Table 3: Overview of social actors by category and or focus

Faith Sector	Institution	ACT Ubumbano Sector/Focus
Matthias Brucker	Faith to Action Network (F2A)	SRHR and Gender Justice, Funder, and Collaborator on faith sector in Southern Africa
Rev Zelda Cossa	Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM)	Gender Justice – SRHR, GBV
Hanzline Davids	Inclusive and Affirming Ministries (IAM)	Gender Justice - LGBQTI+
Hope Dunira	Apostolic Women's Empowerment Trust (AWET)	Gender Justice – SRHR, GBV
Francesca de Gasparis	Southern African Faith Communities Environmental Institute (SAFCEI)	Environmental Justice
Daniela Gennrich	We Will Speak Out South Africa (WWOSA) and Anglican Diocese of Natal Gender Ministry	Gender Justice – SRHR, GBV
Ashmeer Joseph	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA)	Gender Justice - SRHR/GBV Deputy Chairperson, ACT Ubumbano Board
Bishop Absalom Mnisi	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA)	Gender Justice - SRHR/GBV
Matthews Msiska	ACT Alliance Malawi / Churches Action in Relief and Development	Gender Justice - SRHR/GBV
Sostina Takure	ACT Alliance Zimbabwe	Gender Justice - collaborator
Civil Society Sector	**Institution**	**ACT Ubumbano Sector/Focus**
Shamiso Chigorimbo	Lioness.org	Gender Justice- Gender Task Team
Nompilo Gcwensa	Phepisa	Gender Justice - GBV
Michael Malinga	PACSA (Former staff person)	Economic Justice
Angellah Mandoreba	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD)	Economic Justice - Communications. Moderator of Voice App
Janet Zhou	Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD)	Economic Justice
Pharie Sefali	Lulibo Project	Gender Justice, GBV, LGBQTI
Other Sector	**Institution**	**ACT Ubumbano Sector/Focus**
Mmabore Mogashoa	Activist, collaborator	Environmental Justice, Heritage,
Tomas Queface	Consultant	Mozambique animator on activist training
Njabulo Togane	PACSA (former staff person)	Youth activist

Areas of significant change or influence

The outcomes harvested reflect the unfolding nature of the ACT Ubumbano "experiment" since 2017, with evidence of an incremental progression on the part of its partners (individuals and institutions) and collaborators towards more transformational change. For the purposes of this OH, the outcomes are categorised in broad alignment with the objectives of ACT Ubumbano's programme design. While all social actors reflected a deepened understanding and shifts in practice, only those who explicitly expressed these have been captured as direct outcomes of the OH. The most significant areas of change harvested are related to new knowledge/insights and improved or deeper practice derived from being part of the ACT Ubumbano journey.

Areas of change took place at the level of individual, institutional social actors, collaborators and within constituencies and communities where the social actors work.

Table 4: Areas of change per category

Deeper knowledge/ mindset changes	Behaviour	Improved or deepened practice	Solidarity partnerships	Resourcing solidarity	Policy change
12	6	14	5	2	1
30%	15%	35%	12.50%	5%	2.50%

Table 5: Impact level of outcomes harvested

Area of change	Impact level	Number
Deeper knowledge/ mindset change	Individual	6
	Institutional	6
Behaviour change	Individual	2
	Institutional	2
	Community	2
Improved or deeper practice	Individual	3
	Institutional	11
Solidarity partnerships	Individual	1
	Institutional	3
Resourcing solidarity	Institutional	2
Policy formulation for change	Institutional	1
Total		39

Significance

Although most of the points made with respect to the significance of areas of change are reported in the Specific Findings of the Report (see below), a number of others emerged that need to be highlighted. At a general level they reflect the sequential nature of outcomes and overall influence ACT Ubumbano and its collaborators have had on mindsets and ways of working across the ACT Ubumbano solidarity network. These take place at individual and institutional level, opening up spaces for:

- new knowledge and mindset changes, especially in relation to gender justice and the LGBQTI+ community
- behaviour and attitudinal change, especially within the faith sector
- new ways of working amongst faith leaders and community activists who participate in the solidarity hub and other learning events
- the building of solidarity partnerships amongst and between individuals and institutions in the solidarity network
- opportunities to mobilise resources from ACT Ubumbano and collaborators to support social actors in their solidarity network
- the strengthening and formulation of policies linked to gender justice and SRHR

The outcomes reflect that social actors value the design of ACT Ubumbano learning spaces as safe spaces for dialogical and challenging exchanges between social actors from diverse contexts and sectors across Southern Africa and beyond. In other words, for the social actors who form part of the ACT Ubumbano solidarity hub or platform, how you design or construct safe spaces, as well as content, and with who, matters.

While not an explicitly expressed objective of the ACT Ubumbano programme design, an aspect derived from the OH is the role that ACT Ubumbano and its way of working has contributed towards the formation of a cohort or cadre of "new thinking and doing" activists within the faith community and civil society across Southern Africa. This is viewed as highly significant and essential for driving a transformational change agenda going forward.

The OH has unearthed the elements, contours, and value of an emergent way of working or model for change driven by ACT Ubumbano and its partners on the road towards transformational change in Southern Africa and beyond. Its potential contribution towards further regional change is highlighted in a number of the interviews and outcomes harvested for this review as well in the reflections and recommendations of the various social actors.

Contributions

The reflections and stories of the social actors who participated in the OH highlight the significant role that ACT Ubumbano, through the Voice App, storytelling workshops, solidarity, and learning hubs, has played in achieving the outcomes harvested and described in this report. While some, like ELCSA, acknowledge that ACT Ubumbano may have been only one of a number of contributing factors towards their gender justice work and appointment of the first woman bishop in the ELCSA, all attribute their individual and institutional outcomes to their partnership and collaborative working relationship with ACT Ubumbano.

Answers to the framing questions

Who or which social actors or where is ACT Ubumbano influencing change?

The OH indicates that Act Ubumbano has influenced change at both an individual and institutional level for social actors from the faith sector and civil society who participated in the OH review.

To what extent do the outcomes represent progress towards the strategic objectives of the ACT Ubumbano programme?

The strategic objectives of the ACT Ubumbano Programme as outlined in its programme design are:

- To equip communities with the tools to lead and execute their struggles for change
- To deepen their knowledge of change through sharing experiences of activists and communities
- To protect human rights and women's rights defenders who are at risk of physical harm
- To deepen solidarity between communities in the global north and south
- To find alternative funding sources for CSOs in the region

With the exception of the strategic objective related to the protection of human rights and women's rights defenders the outcomes harvested provide evidence of progress made towards achieving all other aspects and strategic objectives of the ACT Ubumbano Programme. With respect to the objective of finding alternative funding resources for CSOs in the region, some additional resources have been mobilised for some CSOs (Phepisa, Lulibo, PACSA) and the faith sector.

In what way did the ACT Ubumbano programme contribute to the outcomes through its way of working and chosen activities – solidarity hub, learning events, Voice App, resource mobilisation?

The interviews indicate the substantial contribution made by ACT Ubumbano in its way of working to achieve outcomes harvested for this review.

To what extent do the outcomes achieved by ACT Ubumbano indicate that its work is locally, regionally, and globally rooted?

The outcomes harvested to date from this review have impacted unevenly at local, national, regional, and global levels.

To what extent do the outcomes show linkages between the changes harvested and progress towards transformational change in the social justice sector?

The outcomes harvested indicate a clear linkage between the outcomes harvested as being incremental steps towards achieving the higher-level objective of systemic or transformational change.

Specific Outcomes

Change Area: Deepened knowledge and mindset changes

We were involved with gender work before we got involved with ACT Ubumbano, but they took our work to a new level. ACT Ubumbano helped us to get our processes in order and broaden our thinking which, for a church, is very difficult, given its very patriarchal way of thinking. But we have become more inclusive of women. For example, we elected the first female bishop in the Lutheran church in Southern Africa, a major milestone for us in terms of our gender work.

Outcome Description 1: Faith leaders in the ELCSA are more open-minded towards gender justice issues, especially sexual reproduction, and health rights (SRHR) issues.

Relevance: Changing mindsets, becoming more open-minded, is a pre-condition for becoming active on gender or social justice issues. While the ELCSA had an existing gender programme and gender equity policies (2014), gender sensitivity was not widely internalised amongst its faith leaders and congregants prior to becoming part of the ACT Ubumbano solidarity network and inter-faith dialogues. Under the leadership of Bishop Mnisi faith leaders in the ELCSA in eSwatini became actively involved in a process of conscientisation and discussions across its internal structures on issues related to gender equality, teenage pregnancies, and sexual orientation.

Contribution: While the deepening of knowledge on gender justice and resultant mindset change of faith leaders within the ELCSA is not solely attributed to the role of ACT Ubumbano, it is viewed by Ashmeer Joseph as a major contributing factor in taking the gender work of ELCSA "to a new level" through its participation in interfaith dialogues and learning hubs facilitated by ACT Ubumbano.

Sources: Interview, Ashmeer Joseph, June 2021; Interview, Bishop Mnisi, June 2021; ACT Ubumbano Case Study: From Policy to Practice Evangelical Lutheran Conversations to Better Serve Girls and Boys in eSwatini 2019; Interfaith Brief on Sexual, Reproduction and Health Rights

The interfaith briefs have a perspective which is adapted to the faith community, with divine quotations related to the Christian and Muslim and other faiths. The interfaith briefs on sexual reproductive and health rights were an eye opener that empowered the faith community to preach sexual reproductive rights to the faithful. They made a deep impact on us.

Outcome Description 2: Evidence of changed mind-sets with respect to SRHR amongst faith leaders who are members of ACT Alliance Malawi following their exposure to the interfaith briefs, which, in turn, resulted in more open preaching about sexual reproductive rights in the Malawian faith community.

Relevance: Malawi is considered to be a relatively conservative and patriarchal society, especially with respect to gender and sexual rights. Given this context, the mind-set changes and inclusion of messages on SRHR and gender justice in the sermons of faith leaders in Malawi is viewed as a significant outcome that is aligned with ACT Ubumbano's "theory of change" objectives.

Contribution: ACT Ubumbano directly contributed to this outcome as a partner to ACT Alliance Malawi and facilitator of the interfaith dialogues on SRHR that they participated in during 2018-2019.

Sources: Interview, Matthews Msiska, June 2021; and the Interfaith Brief on Sexual, Reproduction and Health Rights

The Zimbabwean faith community is very closed and conservative, whereas the South African faith community is more open to talking about LGBQ. When we started working together we had discussions about how to improve access to reproductive health rights, even for youth.This helped us to facilitate difficult conversations with young people about reproductive health rights in a Zimbabwean context.

Outcome Description 3: Faith leaders in in the ACT Alliance Zimbabwe faith community became more open-minded and sensitised to sensitive topics in the Zimbabwean context as a result of working with more open-minded faith community members in South Africa

Relevance: In the emergent ACT Ubumbano model, new understandings and mindset changes are catalysts for behaviour change and active engagement on social justice issues. The foundation for this was built in this context through a shared learning approach.

Contribution: Sostina identifies ACT Ubumbano as playing a key role in facilitating this mindset change for faith leaders in Zimbabwe, by facilitating safe spaces for sharing ideas and perspectives from different contexts.

 Source: Interview, Sostina Takure, ACT Alliance Zimbabwe, June 2021

We are addressing issues that have to do with sexual reproductive and the health rights of youth, especially within the apostolic churches. Research shows that the Apostolic Church has the highest rate of child marriages. It is taboo to talk about issues like that nut we have managed in a way to open up the minds of people within apostolic communities to look at this and find ways of addressing it.

Outcome Description 4: Opening up the minds of people [a mindset change] within apostolic communities in Zimbabwe to acknowledge gender justice issues like child marriage and, as importantly, to potentially act to identify relevant solutions.

Relevance: Recent research indicates that the Apostolic Church in Zimbabwe has the highest rate of child marriages and high rates of teenage pregnancy. Within this context creating opportunities to share new knowledge and understandings on "taboo" topics like sexual reproductive health and the rights of the youth can be viewed as a significant paradigm shift within the apostolic faith community in Zimbabwe.

Contribution: The partnership with ACT Ubumbano, as well as Faith to Action Network, especially in relation to the interfaith dialogues, played a contributing role in fostering this mindset change.

Sources: Interview, Hope Dunira, AWET, Zimbabwe, June 2021 and Matthias Brucker, Faith to Action Network, June 2021

I got exposed to gender activists through ACT Ubumbano, and to wider struggles and solidarity, in particular the struggles of the LGBQTI community, through the interfaith dialogues. I come from the rural areas in Kwa-Zulu Natal and grew up believing that people with a different sexual orientation were possessed by ancestral spirits. This is how I was socialised. But, through ACT Ubumbano I met comrades from the LGBQTI community who challenged my thinking and changed me. I became more open and saw the importance of affirming these rights, standing with the weak and vulnerable, and openly defending them.

Outcome Description 5: Change in Michael's former belief and mindset regarding the LGBQTI community.

Relevance: Changing beliefs is always difficult. Michael describes his mindset change as a life-changing moment in his life, his identity, and focus as an activist. It marked the beginning for him becoming open, fearless, and committed to stand in solidarity with the LGBQTI community and expanded his social justice activism to embrace gender justice in KZN. The influence of the diverse and intersectional nature of Solidarity Hubs and various learning events of ACT Ubumbano is evident in this outcome.

Contribution: Michael directly attributes this mindset change to his participation in various Solidarity Hubs and dialogues convened by ACT Ubumbano where he interacted with activists from the LGBQTI community.

Source: Interview, Michael Malinga, activist and former staff member of PACSA, June 2021

I was just going to write music. But now I write about things that are happening to people because I know that people listen to my poems and to my music. Once they do, they hear the message. What matters is the message of the music and because I know that it is teaching people.

Outcome Description 6: Deeper knowledge and mindset change led to Mmabore using her artistic talents to become a cultural and heritage activist.

Relevance: This mindset change led Mmabore to change the content (messages) in her poems and songs from ones about love to messages about heritage, culture, and environmental justice. In other words, it led her to use her talent as a tool for sensitising her audience on cultural and social justice issues. The progress from mindset change to activism on social justice issues is a significant outcome on the road towards transformational change.

Contribution: Mmabore directly attributes this mindset change to her participation in and exposure to activism on social justice issues at an ACT Ubumbano storytelling workshop where she was challenged by the facilitator to integrate her passion about heritage and environmental issues into her poems and songs.

Source: Interview, Mmabore Mogashoa, June 2021

In 2019 I was exposed to a lot of activists, not only working on sexuality and gender but also on climate justice, mining justice and the integrity and protection of the environment. It was wonderful to hear and understand the intersectional work that people are doing through the intersectional approach that ACT Ubumbano has explored.

Outcome Description 7: Deeper knowledge and understanding on the intersectionality and cross-cutting nature of social justice issues across Southern Africa.

Relevance: The ACT Ubumbano approach of bringing a diversity of activists from the faith community and community activists together to share their knowledge and experiences across sectors and contexts, acknowledged by Hanzline, influenced the thinking of most social actors who participated in the OH process.

Contribution: The approach and methodology adopted and practiced by ACT Ubumbano at its solidarity hubs and storytelling trainings between 2019 and 2020.

Source: Interview, Hanzline Davids, IAM, June 2021

The ability of ACT Ubumbano to convene diverse spaces for inter-action has been very valuable. There was one occasion where they convened a space that brought together community-based and NGO leaders where there was an interesting exploration of the tension between the two. I thought this was very interesting and not something that is the focal point of many of our meetings at SAFCEI. We work with faith leaders, but we do not often talk to them about the fact that they are volunteering their time, whereas in the NGO world we are paid as professionals to get or share information or do reports on developments. For most of us this is our career.

Outcome Description 8: New insight gained regarding different positions, perspectives, and relationships that exist between leaders from voluntary CBO structures and staff from NGOs.

Relevance: The ability to put oneself in the shoes of the other, to empathise, is one of the essential elements for building deeper and improved organisational practice. The ACT Ubumbano practice of bringing diverse individuals and groups together to dialogue with each other changed Francesca's thinking on the different position of CBO leaders versus that of NGO staff at the learning event.

Contribution: Act Ubumbano Solidarity Hub on Community Organising held in 2017.

Source: Interview, Francesca de Gasparis, SAFCEI, June 2021

ACT Ubumbano facilitated engaging with faith leaders and faith NGOs on issues that are outside of our normal remit, like the sexual harassment training with ACT Ubumbano that was led by Melanie Judge. This training was excellent and informed my understanding of sexual harassment and the relevance of that for our sector.

Outcome Description 9: Deeper knowledge and insights regarding sexual harassment and its relevance for environmental justice in the faith community.

Relevance: For Francesca the exposure to issues like SRHR not only deepened her knowledge and understanding on the issue but allowed her to reflect on its relevance for the practice of SAFCEI in the environmental justice sector.

Contribution: Inter-faith dialogue on sexual harassment convened by ACT Ubumbano.

Source: Interview, Francesca de Gasparis, SAFCEI, June 2021

Being part of ACT Ubumbano expanded our way of thinking. It confirmed the need for patience and tolerance towards others, creating a sense of empathy and openness to the acceptance of issues related to SRHR and different sexual orientations.

Outcome Description 10: A deeper understanding on gender justice and SRHR issues shifted mindsets and influenced behaviour change within the ELCSA faith community in eSwatini.

Relevance: This shift in thinking and understanding within faith leaders in the ELCSA created a shift in behaviour (patience and tolerance) towards SRHR issues and people with different sexual orientations, reflecting progress towards transformational change.

Contribution: Bishop Mnisi directly attributes the shift in the mindset and practice within faith leaders in ELCSA in eSwatini to being part of various learning activities facilitated by ACT Ubumbano.

Source: Interview, Bishop Mnisi, ELCSA, June 2021; Case Study: From Policy to Practice Evangelical Lutheran Conversations to Better Serve Girls and Boys in eSwatini 2019; Interfaith Brief on Sexual, Reproduction and Health Rights

One of the important things we did was to bring people from different backgrounds together. One of the objectives of the workshop was to provide an environment for sharing stories. It was interesting for them because they started to learn about problems they never thought existed in Maputo. Reaching different perspectives on different problems was one of the gains of the workshop.

Outcome Description 11: Sharpened analytical skills through an exposure of activists to diverse experiences faced by different communities across Maputo.

Relevance: The storytelling workshop which used the "see, judge, act" methodology, included the intentional selection of participants from diverse places in Maputo. This created an enabling environment for the cross-pollination of knowledge, observations, and experiences. As a result, the youth activists began to identify the root causes of problems across various communities in Maputo. In other words, the activist training provided them with some of the skills and tools needed to move from "seeing" and "judging" to potential action in their own communities. This outcome demonstrates a progression from deeper knowledge, to sharpened analysis, towards potential improved practice.

Contribution: The activist storytelling training workshop was facilitated by ACT Ubumbano in collaboration with the Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM).

Source: Interview, Tomas Queface, Activist Training Facilitator, June 2021

The one area that has been beneficial has been the work with the interfaith policy briefs process. They did not necessarily contain anything especially new for gender activists in the faith sector but what was new was that there were diverse religious leaders agreeing on some fundamental things and when one has been a gender activist in the faith sector for a long time and there is so much pushback that was really exciting. Because We Will Speak Out is a faith sector coalition this exposure to other faiths and the issues that they are struggling with has been invaluable in helping us.

Outcome Description 12: Deeper knowledge and understanding within WWOSA on the kinds of challenges facing other faith communities in different contexts.

Relevance: The generation of new knowledge and insights amongst those who participate in the solidarity hub is a central objective of the ACT Ubumbano "theory of change". Sharing this knowledge across other faith networks like the WWOSA coalition expands the outreach and influence of ACT Ubumbano.

Contribution: Participation in the interfaith dialogues convened by ACT Ubumbano and other partners.

Source: Interview, Daniela Gennrich, WWOSA, June 2021

Change Area: Behaviour change

We have communities in Zimbabwe that are more conservative than others. We have taken them to South Africa for seminars, and discussions and there is a lot of behaviour change happening where the leaders of those churches are now openly speaking about child marriages. I think these are very positive steps as a result of our working together.

Outcome Description 13: Perceived behaviour change on the part of some faith leaders in the more conservative churches in Zimbabwe.

Relevance: Changing attitudes and behaviour with respect to gender justice and sexual rights issues amongst more conservative faith leaders in Zimbabwe is viewed as significant, even if happening on a small-scale.

Contribution: This outcome is directly attribute to the partnership between ACT Ubumbano and ACT Alliance in Zimbabwe, especially in relation to participation in the interfaith dialogues.

Source: Interview, Sostina Takure, ACT Alliance Zimbabwe, June 2021

The reports we are getting from behaviour change facilitators on the ground is that in most communities, people are afraid to marry children because they don't know who's going to report them. People know that there is a toll-free line with someone they can actually call at the office, and that someone will follow up on that through the referral processes and pathways. This is very significant.

Outcome Description 14: Emerging evidence, based on reports received from AWET's behaviour change facilitators (BCFs), indicates behaviour change taking place within apostolic faith communities where AWET is active.

Relevance: Improved opportunities for raising voice and monitoring by AWET has contributed towards a perceived behaviour change in apostolic communities, especially in relation to child marriages. This combination of giving voice and behaviour change at a community level is aligned with the ACT Ubumbano "theory of change".

Contribution: Hope directly attributes this behavioural change to insights and tools learnt through participation in the ACT Ubumbano solidarity network and related learning and training activities.

Source: Interview, Hope Dunira, AWET, June 2021

I became more active in gender work and began to see that the real problem in GBV was the men. It is time to talk to the men who are the perpetrators of rape, domestic violence, and abuse. I was part of a campaign in KZN to stop Men's Month in July 2020. Why should we celebrate men when they are the perpetrators, the rapists, and murderers? When we distance ourselves and do not speak out, we strengthen the violence.

Outcome Description 15: Michael's mindset change influenced him to become an advocate for change on gender-based violence in KZN in 2020.

Relevance: The active participation of Michael in the campaign to stop Men's Month in KZN in 2020 is an indication of a direct link between the gaining and internalising of new knowledge (consciousness) and translating this into advocacy and activism on gender-based violence issues. The outcome is significant as it demonstrates the iterative nature of change derived from new ways of working.

Contribution: Michael directly attributes his gender and sexual rights activism to the mindset change he underwent through his participation in various Solidarity Hubs and dialogues convened by ACT Ubumbano.

Source: Interview, Michael Malinga, activist, former staff member of PACSA, June 2021

The trainings that I participated in with ACT Ubumbano were on storytelling. This stimulated my own interest and now I find myself often sharing short stories on the ZIMCODD platform on social justice issues. And in my own work, because of my engagement with Act Ubumbano, I am conscientizing activists in the Zimbabwean context to do the same. It may not be exactly the same but to stimulate their interest in sharing their stories of struggle, as well as participating in key actions around economic and environmental justice.

Outcome Description 16: Angellah built on her role as a moderator for the Voice App to become actively engaged on social justice issues within her own institution and wider Zimbabwean context.

Relevance: Moving from knowledge and understanding to active engagement on social justice issues is an essential element in the ACT Ubumbano "theory of change". Through her role as the moderator for the Voice App in ZIMCODD Angellah deepened her own understanding and critical consciousness on social justice issues to become a change agent within her own institution and Zimbabwean context on economic and environmental justice issues. The formation of change agents in the faith community and communities is one of the "unintended" but highly significant outcome areas for ACT Ubumbano that is not captured in its "theory of change".

Contribution: There is direct co-relation between Angellah's raised consciousness and role as a change agent within the Zimbabwe context and her role as the moderator of stories collected from partners and collaborators in the ACT Ubumbano network, using the Voice App.

Source: Interview, Angellah Mandoreba, ZIMCODD, June 2021

We realized the importance of listening. People follow if you spend more time listening to them. Collectively we were able to identify people in the field with leadership potential and empowered them to become young leaders and activists in their communities and in the church.

Outcome Description 17: Faith leaders from ELCSA changed their behaviour from one that focused on preaching to one of listening, resulting in empowering young leaders and activists to play a leading role in communities and in the church in eSwatini.

Relevance: Behaviour change on the part of faith leaders in ELCSA resulted in youth leaders becoming active change agents. They played a major role in conscientizing the ELCSA congregants and their communities in eSwatini around SRHR and gender justice issues, including teenage pregnancies and gender-based violence.

Contribution: Solidarity Hubs and participation in the Interfaith Dialogues facilitated by ACT Ubumbano

Source: Interview, Bishop Mnisi, ELCSA, June 2021; Case Study: From Policy to Practice Evangelical Lutheran Conversations to Better Serve Girls and Boys in eSwatini 2019; Interfaith Brief on Sexual, Reproduction and Health Rights.

Gender-based violence is now high on the church's agenda. We have many support groups that are building on and expanding our HIV/AIDs work. This has resulted in less stigma, more people disclosing, and women getting involved in food gardens to improve their nutrition. It made it easier to talk to parents, especially parents and the girl-child, about loving the child and not to chase them away, even if they fall pregnant as teenagers.

Outcome Description 18: Changes in attitudes and improved relations observed between pregnant teenagers and parents and parents towards the girl-child.

Relevance: The expansion of ELCA's gender programme led to the establishment of more support groups on GBV, building on HIV/AIDS work of ELCSA, resulting in behaviour and attitude changes within the ELCSA faith community and local communities, especially in the behaviour of parents towards teenagers who fall pregnant. Changing social relationships and behaviour is a difficult thing to achieve, especially with respect to gender justice. This outcome is significant for the progression towards transformational change.

Contribution: Bishop Mnisi directly attributes the placing of gender justice, especially SRHR, as a central part of the ELCSA's overall ministry as directly related to its partnership and collaboration with ACT Ubumbano.

Source: Interview, Bishop Mnisi, ELCSA, June 2021; Case Study: From Policy to Practice Evangelical Lutheran Conversations to Better Serve Girls and Boys in eSwatini 2019; Interfaith Brief on Sexual, Reproduction and Health Rights

Change Area: Improved practice

Last year we developed some policy briefs, grounded in the sacred texts, with ACT Ubumbano. The briefs were really helpful not only in advocacy, but also in training faith leaders on how to use their usual source of information to say this is what gender violence is and it is your responsibility as a faith leader to ensure that lives of women and girls are safe. Now faith leaders see themselves as active participants in ending gender-based violence, taking practical action when they get reports of gender-based violence. A lot of our faith leaders are now working with victim friendly units at police stations to ensure that this happens.

Outcome Description 19: A number of faith leaders in Zimbabwe have become active agents of change to end gender-based violence in Zimbabwe, with some of them "working with victim friendly units at police stations to ensure that this happens".

Relevance: This shift from a mind-set change to behaviour change to activism for change on the part of faith leaders in Zimbabwe is linked to new knowledge gained from the interfaith policy briefs. This is an example of the incremental influence and impact of the ACT Ubumbano approach and "theory of change" on the work of its constituent partners.

Contribution: Sostina directly attributes this outcome to the partnership an working relationship of ACT Alliance Zimbabwe with ACT Ubumbano, especially its impact on knowledge and methodologies learnt through the interfaith dialogues and activist trainings.

 Source: Interview, Sostina Takure, ACT Alliance Zimbabwe, June 2021

We strengthened feedback mechanisms within communities to ensure that they have a voice and ensured that the referral pathways are open. After our engagements we receive many calls via our toll-free line, as well as feedback via our suggestion boxes and other platforms. We attribute this to the process that we went through with ACT Ubumbano. We learnt that whenever you have a program, you have to get feedback to ensure that what you have done in the communities has made some positive change in the way people have been behaving or in their way of thinking towards a certain aspect.

Outcome Description 20: Evidence of improved and deepened practice on the part of AWET staff in the way they now engage with apostolic faith communities on gender justice and sexual rights issues.

Relevance: AWET have used feedback mechanisms like the toll-free line to their office and suggestion boxes to make it safe for people to report on gender and sexual abuses and, when they do report, have referral pathways to offer. This shift from moving from new knowledge to improved practice is in alignment with the core objectives of the ACT Ubumbano approach and "theory of change".

Contribution: Hope directly attributed this improved practice to the partnership between AWET and ACT Ubumbano, especially new knowledge and ways of working gained from participation in its various learning events and solidarity hubs.

Source: Interview, Hope Dunira, AWET, Zimbabwe, June 2021

In PACSA we had moved away from food parcels to focus on livelihoods. But when COVID and the hard lockdown came we applied the "see, judge, act" methodology and saw that the waste pickers, people who sell food, and street kids had no money to buy food. At first the staff donated maize and food and were able to make 40 food parcels, but this wasn't enough. As an act of solidarity, ACT Ubumbano donated R10 000 for posters etc and we were eventually able to feed 700 families. What is important is that we did not distribute the food parcels (act) the way government does, sometimes leaving the food parcels on a soccer field. We went door to door and where there was a need we gave food and did not use a list. If the family had food, we would ask them to donate something for another family. This is an example of how we learnt to do things differently from ACT Ubumbano.

Outcome Description 21: Improved practice amongst the staff from PACSA to address food security in communities during the level 5 lockdown in 2020.

Relevance: Doing things differently is one of the key objectives of the ACT Ubumbano "theory of change". Michael describes how PACSA staff applied the "see, judge, act" methodology they learnt to analyse the rising levels of hunger in Pietermaritzburg and, on the basis of this analysis, developed new ways of working that placed human dignity and agency at the heart of PACSA's practice.

Contribution: Michael directly attributes this way of working to lessons learnt from PACSA staff's participation in various ACT Ubumbano Solidarity Hubs and learning platforms where "we learnt to do things differently".

Source: Interview, Michael Malinga, activist and former staff member of PACSA, June 2021

In 2019, I attended a workshop where we were taught how to approach a problem. Sometimes we think that if there is a problem we just need to talk to the people. But in that workshop, they helped us to work out what you need to do to solve a problem. You must find out what the problem is, who the person is that has been affected, and in that way, they also helped us on how to do reports. Another time we learnt how to make a video which helped a lot. Now when there is a problem, I know what to do.

For example, last year in my village we didn't have water. I went to the traditional council to find out what the problem was and also called the counsellor to tell him that we had no water and he said that he would check it out. He lives in the same area as me, but he did not even know that we had no water. When he went to the water site, he found that the pump machine was broken and found someone to fix the problem. If I did not know what to do and just waited, we would have been without water.

Outcome Description 22: Mmabore contributed to solving a water problem in her village when she applied the "see, judge, act" methodology to the problem in her village.

Relevance: Mmabore applied insights and lessons learnt to systematically investigate, analyse, and advocate for a solution to a local water problem. Seeing that this "way of working" or practice can lead to tangible results is important for activists who have participated in the ACT Ubumbano training workshops. This outcome demonstrates the link between evidence-based social agency and change, a clear objective of the ACT Ubumbano "theory of change".

Contribution: The storytelling workshop where Mmabore was introduced to the "see, judge, act" methodology and tools like the Voice App, facilitated by ACT Ubumbano.

Source: Interview, Mmabore Mogashoa, June 2021

Currently in ZIMCODD we have a project on community resource monitors or agents. We are basically applying the "see, judge, act" methodology for community-based public resource management and issues related to public resource abuse and corruption. Whether deliberately or not we borrowed the concept from ACT Ubumbano for the project that falls under what we call Strengthening Accountability in Public Finance Management in Zimbabwe.

Outcome Description 23: ZIMCODD internalised the ACT Ubumbano approach and methodology and applied it to implement its Strengthening Accountability in Public Finance Management Programme at community level in Zimbabwe.

Relevance: Improving and deepening practice is one of the key objectives of the ACT Ubumbano journey towards transformational change. In this case ZIMCODD used lessons learnt from being part of the ACT Ubumbano process to adapt the design and methodology of one of its programmes.

Contribution: The ACT Ubumbano "see, judge, methodology" directly contributed to this shift in programme design and methodology at ZIMCODD.

Source: Interview, Angellah Mandoreba, ZIMCODD, June 2021

Some of the stories that we shared have led to action and, in this case, got the attention of the local municipality to act. PACSA was working with a group that had identified a spring to harvest water. We supported the process by gathering some resources for them, but they also contributed with their labour and own money and other community members got involved. We documented the process and other communities who heard about this came to PACSA looking for similar support. This led to us contacting experts from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Engineering Department to test the feasibility of the process. In the end all the labour to harvest the water from the spring came from the community - digging the trenches and installing the pipes. PACSA was able to financially pay for the project, but we didn't to allow the process of ownership and protection of the infrastructure to come from the community who contributed half of what was required to complete the project.

Outcome Description 24: Improved practice by PACSA staff, using the Voice App and a different way of working to facilitate and accompany a community-based and owned process that resulted in improved access to water at a local level.

Relevance: This is an example of moving from the sharing of stories to action on the ground by grassroots communities with an intentional shift in PACSA's community development practice to one of accompanying a community-based initiative.

Contribution: Njabule makes a direct link in the shift in practice by staff from PACSA to their participation in the various solidarity hubs and learning platforms convened by ACT Ubumbano, especially the Solidarity Hub on Community Organising.

Source: Interview, Njabulo Togane, June 2021

We were just focusing on us, as survivors, but now we advocate for the human rights of women and children. We now have the confidence to not only advocate within our communities but even sit in the Premier's office to ensure that decisions taken are survivor centred. This was a challenge before, but all the trainings had an impact. We own our stories, and we make our advocacy visible and strong ensuring that we engage with our stories so that our issues can be addressed.

Outcome Description 25: Improved practice by Phepisa with respect to gender-based violence in KZN.

Relevance: Nompilo's story reflects a deepening of consciousness and use of tools of analysis to advocate for change at a community level, something that is central to the ACT Ubumbano "theory of change" and methodology. Reframing Phepisa's role and practice beyond a purely internal focus on survivor support is also viewed as a significant outcome.

Contribution: There is a direct co-relation between the improved practice of Nompilo and Phepisa and participation in ACT Ubumbano workshops on storytelling and social justice issues.

 Source: Interview, Nompilo Gcwensa, Phepisa, June 2021

In one of our areas, they did not have a victim-friendly centre inside the police station. This was re-traumatising the victimisation of survivors because they had to retell their stories in front of everybody. We went every day to the police station to record how everyone was treated, using voice and video. Then we took the issue to the Colonel and made sure that we had the clips where survivors were not treated well. The more we did this the faster the process moved towards a solution. We made sure that we recorded how the survivor reported the case, how they were treated, and how they would eventually decline the case. Sometimes it was the trauma of how they were treated that made survivors drop their cases. We gave them the reasons why women were coming to report cases but then were declining to take the case further. In some incidences the cases also take too long. We made sure that everything was well documented from our side, to make sure that our plea was grounded and supported by evidence.

Outcome Description 26: Phepisa successfully advocated for the establishment of a victim-friendly centre at the local police station using "see, judge, act" and storytelling methodologies.

Relevance: The systematic way in which Phepisa activists went about documenting the root causes of non-reporting or lack of follow up by survivors of gender-based violence at a local police station is an impressive example on how to apply the "see. Judge, act" and storytelling methodologies to make a compelling argument for change to happen, in this case the establishment of a survivor-friendly support centre.

Contribution: Nompilo attributes the growing confidence of Phepisa activists to engage in advocacy in communities where they work, as well as in places where decisions are made affecting survivors of gender-based violence, directly to the knowledge and skills gained from being part of ACT Ubumbano training on storytelling and other learning platforms

Source: Interview, Nompilo Gcwensa, Phepisa, June 2021

In 2019 I attended a workshop in Johannesburg that was hosted by ACT Ubumbano to explore using the Community Voice App. I was interested because I have a particular interest in documenting stories using videos and photos, exploring different angles, emotions, and people's thought processes. If one looks for examples on how the Voice Community App built our skills, there was an occasion where our staff were given training at a workshop held in Cape Town with other organisations. The training helped our staff members to improve their reporting on the work that they are doing using social media. And because we are working in a vulnerable sector it is great hearing feedback from people within our sector. Like, I saw that you did that event with those clergy or those activists and you incorporated a snippet of what people have said, a quote. Community feedback and impact is definitely important.

Outcome Description 27: Improved practice in documenting their work within the LGBQTI community.

Relevance: There is evidence that the Voice App was used by IAM staff to give voice to the stories of community activists and, alongside this, that the methodology improved their reporting and monitoring skills. Taken together they improved and deepened the practice of the IAM staff.

Contribution: Hanzline attributes the outcomes to his participation in the ACT Ubumbano storytelling workshop in Johannesburg and the IAM staff's participation in a Cape Town workshop on the use of the Voice APP, organised by ACT Ubumbano.

Source: Interview, Hanzline Davids, June 2021

The ACT Ubumbano methodology and way of doing things impacted on us. For example, the dialogues were facilitated as safe spaces and they taught us, by doing it, how to create a safe space. After that we internally reflected on what had happened in the dialogues in Southern Africa and tried to put down on paper how to facilitate a safe space within an interfaith setting and also integrated it into our methodologies. We formalized what we had seen and experienced there, who the facilitators should be, and what kind of criteria you use to select them, like understanding different faiths and the topics that will be discussed. The skills of the facilitators are important but it also who they are, their self-awareness, and being explicit in their own biases. Being aware of how they interact with people and power and their facilitation techniques. They used a lot of different facilitation techniques and had the ability to bring together diverse people and encouraged discussions, even on challenging topics. We had done a lot of workshops and dialogues before, but we were never so explicit. It was a model for creating interfaith safe spaces which has fed into other things that we are doing now.

Outcome Description 28: The Faith to Action Network adapted its methodology to align with the ACT Ubumbano way of working through observing the various elements it used and integrating these into its own practice, especially for creating safe spaces for interfaith dialogues and learning events.

Relevance: Doing things differently lies at the heart of the ACT Ubumbano "theory of change". In this story Matthias articulates the elements of an emerging way of practice and how it has been internalised into the practice of the Faith to Action Network. In other words, how practice from the south has influenced the practice of a global partner and collaborator.

Contribution: Matthias directly attributes this insight and adaptation of the F2A methodology and practice to lessons learnt from observing and participating in various interfaith and faith dialogues and platforms convened by ACT Ubumbano.

Source: Interview, Matthias Brucker, Faith to Action Network, June 2021

ACT Ubumbano gave Lulibo a grant to raise awareness in the Eastern Cape around gender-based violence. We were trying to create focus groups led by traditional healers as potential change makers in their communities around GBV and hate crimes. Because traditional healers, to some extent, are close to the perpetrators, we thought it was best to give them the platform and be the ones to change the narrative in their own communities and areas. We went to seven different rural areas and into the villages. They had never engaged in such topics, and it was tricky because there were women traditional healers, men, and also those who identify as men. The power dynamics were real and when a male figure spoke, all the women would be silent. We had to find ways to separate the male figure traditional healers from the women traditional healers and that was when the conversations started. But patriarchy in those places was deep and we learnt that we needed to invest more time in those spaces because when given the platform, people have the ability to make changes in their own community, it is just that they do not know how. They don't have platforms because they don't have the resources to do engagements like this within their own communities.

Outcome Description 29: Volunteers from the Lulibo Project adapted their way of working in the deep rural villages of the Eastern Cape, listening rather than leading conversations, resulting in an openness from traditional leaders and traditional healers to engage with them and discuss gender justice issues.

Relevance: The activists from Lulibo were given an opportunity to "walk the talk" and apply lessons they had learned from participating in workshops and learning hubs about new ways of seeing and acting. They explored taking their gender activism into the deep rural areas of the Eastern Cape and saw the value of mutual learning through deep listening and understanding.

Contribution: This shift in approach is directly attributed to participation in various learning platforms facilitated by ACT Ubumbano, as well as resources it mobilised for the fieldtrip to the Eastern Cape.

Source: Interview, Pharie Sefali, Lulibo Project, June 2021

Each week we go to different churches and afterwards we sit down to share our findings on communities that we visited to see that if they are using the messages that we trained them on. The activists are given 5 to 10 minutes to talk about gender-based violence within a safe space so that people come out in their communities to share. Where it is beyond our capacity, we take issues raised to the authorities to deal them. We can see that the church is starting to take responsibility when it comes to gender-based violence.

Outcome Description 30: Evidence that churches in Mozambique are beginning to take responsibility and are active in curbing gender-based violence through awareness raising and mobilisation in safe places for disclosure.

Relevance: Rev. Cossa argues that the storytelling and activist training facilitated with resources and support from ACT Ubumbano and the Faith to Action Network expanded their ability to conscientize faith communities in Mozambique on gender justice issues, with youth activists playing a key role. This outcome demonstrates a shift in the practice of the CCM.

Contribution: Interfaith dialogues and activist training workshops organised by ACT Ubumbano with the support of the Faith to Action Network.

Source: Interview, Rev Zelda Cossa, Christian Church Council of Mozambique (CCM), June 2021

I want to highlight training, especially the training on writing stories. What stands out and makes the difference in terms of the ACT Ubumbano approach is the sequencing of things in the methodology – you see, you judge, you act. I think that approach changed my way of seeing things in terms of my own narrative. It does this at a very personal level and the approach gave me agency. Usually, we see, we judge, and then we do nothing about it. There is no call to action. But this approach taught me to act, to have some agency. This has really improved the way we engage with citizens and communities at an organizational level because whatever we do it ends with a call to action. I think that is the greatest influence for me from being part of Act Ubumbano.

Outcome Description 31: Improved social agency at an individual and institutional level.

Relevance: The "see" "judge" "act" methodology used at the storytelling workshop introduced Janet and ZIMCODD to a specific approach used by ACT Ubumbano that outlines the steps needed to arrive at a plan of action for addressing identified challenges. In other words, it contributed towards a deepening of practice for Janet as an individual and for the working practice of ZIMCODD. This outcome highlights a progression of change from an individual to an institutional level.

Contribution: Janet attributes ACT Ubumbano for achieving this outcome through its approach and design of the storytelling training workshop she attended.

Source: Interview, Janet Zhou, June 2021

I was asked at the first policy brief workshop to share the work of the Anglican Diocese of Natal as a case study because we had already done a bit of gender justice work. Just being asked to do that made me sit back and reflect on how far we had come and where we got stuck. And while I was asked to share a good practice, I realized as I shared it that it had such a long way to go and that it was not really a good practice but rather in the school of a kind of a learning practice, a learning journey. I had not been given an opportunity to reflect on our journey and it was more like an example of what can happen within a church context and that forced me to become much more reflective about our own process in the diocese. This is just one example of why I am saying it is not so much the content of those briefs, although that was really valuable and important, for me it is more about the process. Being part of that influenced how we have worked from then onwards as the Anglican Diocese of Natal Gender Ministry.

Outcome Description 32: Improved practice in relation to gender work as an outcome of reflections on existing gender practice within the Anglican Diocese of Natal.

Relevance: Sharing the story of existing practice within the Anglican Diocese in Natal highlighted the fact that it was more of a learning journey than good practice for Daniela.

Contribution: The first interfaith dialogue on the policy briefs convened by ACT Ubumbano.

Source: Interview, Daniela Gennrich, June 2021

Change Area: Resourcing solidarity and community mobilisation

As a coordinator I have to sit in my office and negotiate with donors to develop funding proposals. Because of the interfaith briefs, I was able to develop proposals for implementing projects focusing on gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, and sexual reproductive health rights, and we managed to get funding. If we didn't have the capacity building manual on sexual reproductive rights, we would have only been focusing on the usual thematic areas. But now we have a mindset change and the funds to implement projects as ACT Alliance in Malawi. This has made it possible to reach out to many people in Malawi and with the same messages we have been able to scale up the project.

Outcome Description 33: ACT Alliance Malawi mobilised additional resources that enabled it to scale up its gender justice work, expanding its thematic focal areas to include SRHR.

Relevance: Resourcing solidarity with new or alternative funding sources in the region is one of the key objectives of the ACT Ubumbano "theory of change". Following a mindset change on SRHR, ACT Alliance Malawi held resource mobilization meetings with various donor partners resulting in DanChurchAid (DCA) funding a project to implement interventions on gender-based violence and teenage pregnancies in Malawi. ACT Alliance Malawi also mobilised funding from Christian Aid for a project to develop a framework for implementing gender justice activities over three years.

Contribution: As a key partner in the formulation and raising awareness on the interfaith policy briefs through interfaith dialogues on SRHR, ACT Ubumbano made a valuable and direct contribution towards this outcome.

Sources: Interview, Matthews Msiska, June 2021; Interfaith Brief on Sexual, Reproduction and Health Rights

Some of the funding enabled us to do road shows. Almost all the clergy in the diocese have signed the safe and inclusive church protocols, where they commit to their own conduct, promoting safety, and exposing any conduct that threatens safety. This is a huge coup. We have also been continuing our work with the Mothers Union and, almost all the executive members have also signed the protocols. That work continues and has all grown out of this whole process that led us to become much more self-reflective in terms of our work in the diocese, starting with that very first meeting. The funding has also allowed us to open up to the whole province, 28 dioceses in five different countries, where we are developing a platform for people to report safely, even if they don't have access to the internet, or can't negotiate how to go on a website.

Outcome Description 34: Resources mobilised by the Anglican Diocese of Natal Gender Ministry, through its partnership with ACT Ubumbano, gave the Diocese the ability to expand its gender justice work across the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

Relevance: In this story Daniela describes a combination of factors like reflective practice and solidarity partnerships, backed by resources, that have enabled the Anglican Gender Ministry to expand its gender justice work and outreach across 28 Anglican provinces in five different countries.

Contribution: The ability to mobilise additional resources to expand the outreach and practice of the Anglican Gender Ministry is attributed by Daniela as having grown out of this whole process – being part of the ACT Ubumbano journey and emerging model of practice.

Source: Interview, Daniela Gennrich, June 2021

Change Area: Global connectedness – solidarity partnerships

With these learning hubs and meetings that you have with ACT Ubumbano you get a very different perspective on what is going on in the world. And when you sit and reflect on what is going on in your own organisation you can see a lot of similarities. I think this has been my greatest experience with ACT Ubumbano, bringing in fresh ideas and opening our eyes to the fact that the problems that we are experiencing are not ours alone. Everybody is experiencing the same thing, but we are all afraid to talk about it and we struggle on our own in our own little corners.

Outcome Description 35: Building a sense of global connectedness and solidarity partnerships, despite different contexts, is captured in this reflection by Ashmeer Joseph.

Relevance: One of the key objectives of the ACT Ubumbano way of working is to build solidarity partnerships with a diversity of partners and collaborators from across Southern Africa and globally through participation in various learning hubs and events. For Ashmeer, participating in these processes not only sharpened his own knowledge and understanding of commonalities across different contexts, but an ability to also reframe specific ELCSA challenges and, as importantly, strengthen solidarity partnerships with individuals and institutions from across Southern Africa and globally.

Contribution: The ability of ACT Ubumbano to access a diverse range of individuals and organisations through its Southern African and global networks has contributed towards building a stronger sense of global connectedness and solidarity partnerships for Ashmeer and the ELCSA.

Source: Interview, Joseph Ashmeer, June 2021

Act Ubumbano has managed to mobilize communities in Southern Africa, whereas before it was non-existent. Faith communities were not working or coming together. They did not even know each other. Once we started having meetings with faith communities the first big thing was to simply agree that we are going to work together on gender justice, climate change, and galvanizing community activism. The coming together of heads and agreeing on working together was a success insofar as mobilization was concerned.

Outcome Description 36: Solidarity platform and network built between faith communities in Southern Africa, linked to a shared vision and agreement to work collectively on gender justice, climate change issues, and foster community activism.

Relevance: Sostina argues that before they were brought together by ACT Ubumbano the various faith communities who were part of ACT Alliance across Southern Africa did not know each other, so did not work together on agreed upon common issues or objectives.

Contribution: The mobilisation of faith communities across Southern Africa through the interfaith dialogues and solidarity hubs organised by ACT Ubumbano between 2017 and 2020 is viewed as a major contribution towards the establishment of a solidarity platform.

Source: Interview, Sostina Takure, ACT Alliance Zimbabwe, June 2021

In the 2017 workshop the approach was one of saying that we are actually all on a journey, and that none of us actually knows exactly where we are going or has the answers. And, opening up those spaces and be invited to say that we are all in a process, on this journey, and still confused and unclear about where we are going. That process allowed for journeying, and to be sharing on a journey that is imperfect, an imperfect journey That a story in itself has value and connects with other people's stories. It really opened things up when you see your own journey in a context of other people's journeys. And it also helps you to see some of your blind spots that you might not otherwise see. It helps you to affirm that what you are doing is okay. There is a sense of connection and I suppose that is what solidarity means, just that we can walk together in our imperfections. We can run things past each other, we can argue out things and then finally say what it is that we do agree on. That was really important for me and the way that this resulted in an offer to continue to accompany each other.

Outcome Description 37: Solidarity partnerships built from being part of a learning solidarity platform and network with a shared understanding and approach to solve social justice challenges.

Relevance: The approach and methodology adopted by ACT Ubumbano of being on an open and learning journey towards new understandings and ways of working to achieve transformational justice created new insights for Daniela and contributed towards a deeper understanding of the meaning of solidarity and value of building an trusting in an imperfect and learning solidarity network or hub.

Contribution: ACT Ubumbano Solidarity Hub in 2017

Source: Interview, Daniela Gennrich, June 2021

ACT Ubumbano has a deeper understanding of Southern Africa, and how different this space and the situations are compared to Eastern Africa or Central Africa. It got us to do a lot of thinking about how we can create more exchanges between our faiths, our organization, our members in other regions and the SADC region. And, how we could leverage on what is happening in the SADC region to inspire others, both in terms of motivating them on the things that are possible, but also in terms of triggering ideas and change... I think, there is a more of a revolutionary environment, in a way, maybe through history so, there is much more challenging of things, you know, challenging of ideas, there is a big culture of dialogue and dissenting on issues, and challenging issues. There is also a much broader diversity of ideas, and diversity. It has more in terms of, for example, sexual reproductive health and rights and women's rights. There are policies around on sexual minorities, LGBQTI people and discussions you would never have in East Africa, for example. It sounds a bit abstract, but all of this has impacted on the Faith to Action Network.

Outcome Description 38: Strengthened and expanded Global-South and South-South partnerships for the Faith to Action Network.

Relevance: The exposure of Faith to Action Network staff to a more open culture of dialogue and critical questioning and discussions with faith leaders and activists from Southern Africa made them aware of the potential for faith leaders from Southern Africa to play a pivotal role in sensitising more conservative faith communities in Eastern and Central Africa.

Contribution: Solidarity Hubs and Interfaith Dialogues facilitated by ACT Ubumbano

Source: Interview, Matthias Brucker, Faith to Faith Action Network, June 2021

Change Area: Policy development for implementation

We participated in the development of the interfaith briefs. When the copies arrived in Malawi last year, we started utilizing them. That is when we had a major breakthrough that led to the strengthening of our internal policies to address sexual reproductivity, and adolescent and youth policy on sexual reproductive advice for one of the congregations which is a very busy congregation, the Blantyre Synod with an estimated two million members.

Outcome Description 39: Improved internal policies and practice in the faith community in Malawi through expanded sensitisation on the interfaith policy briefs.

Relevance: Transformative change, guided by policy, is a major outcome of any programmatic agenda. ACT Alliance Malawi regards the fact that the interfaith briefs impacted on the strengthening of internal faith policies as a "major breakthrough" directly linked to its ability to share the interfaith briefs with congregations across Malawi. The adoption of policies related to sexual reproductivity, adolescent and youth policy on sexual reproductive advice by the Blantyre Synod, with an estimated membership of 2 million, is viewed by Matthews as highly significant in the scaling up of sensitisation to gender justice issues in Malawi's faith community. This impact on the gender justice policies of the faith sector in Malawi is an important milestone towards additional outcomes along the ACT Ubumbano progress towards change.

Contribution: ACT Ubumbano is attributed with playing a major role in the formulation and dissemination of the interfaith briefs across Malawi in partnership with ACT Alliance Malawi.

Source: Interview, Matthews Msiska, June 2021

Conclusion

Between 2017 and 2020, ACT Ubumbano explored a new way of working within the faith sector and civil society organisations working on social justice issues in Southern Africa. The outcomes harvested and presented in this report reflect the results of the first phase of the ACT Ubumbano intervention. The interviews conducted with partners and collaborators for the OH surfaced a range of significant changes at an individual, institutional, and constituency level. None of them are less important than the other. Some of them are further along what I am calling "a continuum of outcomes" that move from the acquisition of new knowledge and exposure to new ways of working to deeper and

improved practice and, in some cases, evidence of impact at a community or systemic level. Taken as a whole, they have established a strong foundation for taking forward the higher-level objective and vision of transformative change. In addition, the processes have created a cohort or cadre of agents of change within the faith sector and civil society with commitment and the ability to drive the ACT Ubumbano vision and emergent model of practice towards the higher-level goal of transformational change in Southern Africa and globally.

Recommendations

During the course of the OH interviews participants were asked to share their thoughts and ideas, based on their own observations and experience, of ways in which ACT Ubumbano could consolidate work and offer support going forward. For the purposes of the report these have been prioritised and streamlined to align with ACT Ubumbano's overall strategy and objectives.

Promoting community voice and action:

While the Community Voice App and other social media platforms have played an invaluable role in amplifying and disseminating community voice (stories) and action, there is a sense that the use of social media could be improved going forward

Recommendation 1: ACT Ubumbano to undertake or commission a short assessment (research or workshop) or across the solidarity network to identify ways to consolidate and address emerging challenges and opportunities related to the Voice App and other social media platforms. Some thoughts and ideas on this have been captured and documented as part of the OH review.

Learning from practice:

ACT Ubumbano's solidarity hubs and learning events have played a central role in creating intersectional and safe spaces for learning and sharing experiences across the solidarity network. They have also played a key role in building a cohort of activists with a shared vision and understanding of what is needed to pursue the objective of transformational change in the faith sector and civil society. The OH surfaced a number of ideas on how to strengthen this aspect, as well as consolidate and introduce new topics into the network.

Recommendation 2: ACT Ubumbano to consider establishing a regular Learning from Practice Forum with a focus on strengthening the knowledge and skills of activists (faith sector and civil society) through a regular sharing of lessons and challenges emerging from practice. Information sharing can be complemented by knowledge inputs on key issues and critical skills training, some of which have already been identified from the OH process. Topics identified include the intersectionality of social justice and livelihoods, gender and economic justice, community activism and law, local government, activism in a COVID context, and advocacy training.

Global connectedness – solidarity partnerships:

Global connectedness (North-South and South-South) and solidarity partnerships lie at the heart of the emerging ACT Ubumbano model for transformational change. A strong sense of connectedness and solidarity already exists. At the same time, the OH process surfaced new opportunities to build upon or strengthen the solidarity network going forward.

Recommendation 3: ACT Ubumbano to facilitate regular Global Solidarity in Action Hubs to share knowledge regularly on emerging North-South and South-South contexts, key challenges, explore key and cross-cutting strategic issues, and identify ways to engage in regional and global solidarity in action across the solidarity network.

Recommendation 4: ACT Ubumbano to facilitate ad hoc Solidarity Hubs, on request from its Southern African partners, to strategise and plan for regional solidarity in action related to country-specific issues.

Resourcing Solidarity:

Finding alternative funding sources for CSOs (and FBOs) to resource solidarity remains a critical challenge for ACT Ubumbano partners and collaborators. This ranges from programme and project funding at institutional levels to accessing funds to enable activists to participate in community-based activism (airtime, data, transport). Taking the emerging model forward, including the above recommendations requires the scaling up of resource mobilisation.

Recommendation 5: ACT Ubumbano to prioritise the development of a funding strategy, based on a scoping of potential funding sources, to enable it to expand and consolidate its emerging solidarity model for transformational change, including the expansion of its internal capacity.

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