Most Significant Change with Mobile Community Zimbabwe:
Learning About Changes Brought About By
Mobile Community Zimbabwe Trainings

Executive Summary

In November 2016, Free Press Unlimited conducted a short evaluation with project partner Mobile Community Zimbabwe (MCZ) who have provided mobile citizen journalism trainings to over 150 alumni over the past three years. Alongside the general contribution of the project, what was of specific interest was how the most recent group of alumni participated in a specific gender fellowship (ZWM3).

This research is part of the *Stories to Learn* pilot at Free Press Unlimited, where the Most Significant Change (MSC) method is used to collect, analyse, and learn from stories of change shared by, in this case, alumni of MCZ. Thus, the objective of the evaluation is two-fold: 1) to pilot the MSC method with MCZ and 2) to evaluate the contribution of the MCZ project. The MSC methodology consists of story collection, pre-selection, and a final selection discussion. The stories of change were collected by asking one central question: What is the most significant change in your life since you participated in the MCZ trainings and why?

Prior to collecting the stories of change, a training in MSC was provided to MCZ staff by the Free Press Unlimited Knowledge & Quality team. This was to introduce the method, as well as to train two MCZ assistants in conducting interviews. During the field research, a total of 26 interviews were conducted with alumni from around Harare, Gweru, and Bulawayo. In each city, a pre-selection took place to ensure that what the alumni saw as significant was brought to the final selection discussion. The final selection took place with MCZ staff and two external stakeholders working in the same field, with a total of 11 collected stories of change. This resulted in a top 3 being selected (*Voice for the Unheard; Empowered Women; Professionalised Storytelling*). All of the change stories collected, were used to facilitate fruitful discussions.

The main learning point for MCZ staff was the fact that it became evident that what the alumni find as important is precisely in line with the objectives of the project. These can be summed up in the following change categories:
- Changes in the subject of news stories – being able to give a voice to the community was pivotal
- Changes in the perception of gender (in)equality in the media – providing opportunities for women
- Changes in the professionalism (skills, resources, confidence) of alumni
- Changes in the links with tertiary institutions – filling a necessary gap
- Unexpected change observed in the importance of social change
- Change in monitoring impact, a system to monitor social change is needed

The change stories reinforced beliefs that MCZ staff had, but had never investigated. Furthermore, MCZ staff was not that aware that social change or impact was as important for alumni as it was for them, which lead to a realisation that social change needs to be monitored more closely.

The alumni provided some suggestions of their own too. These included: branding MCZ more as its own entity, finding means of accreditation, using more external knowledge during trainings, discussing expectations around resources required, and lastly, to try going a level deeper with the trainings such as going into the newsroom perhaps. Although these suggestions are easier said than done, they do remain relevant.

Lastly, the Free Press Unlimited Knowledge & Quality staff provided some recommendations for MCZ and Free Press Unlimited based on their experience of facilitating the MSC process.
1. Be proud of the changes that MCZ has brought about!
2. Mobilise the alumni network more often.
3. Expand on the gender fellowship.
4. Develop a closer link with tertiary institutions.
5. Systematically monitor social change.
6. Consider using MSC once a year.
7. Practically, read the compilation of *all* stories collected.

Overall, this process of MSC resulted in a realisation that the objectives that were originally created by MCZ are in line with the changes that the alumni are experiencing: MCZ contributed to change.

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To read all the change stories collected as well as reasons for and against selecting them, please see the document: MCZ Alumni Change Stories.

If there are any questions, please contact the Knowledge & Quality Coordinator at the following email: kqc@freepressunlimited.org

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we [Knowledge & Quality] would like to thank Mobile Community Zimbabwe for all of their cooperation throughout this pilot. We very much appreciate your active participation in this, and not just during the days when we were in Zimbabwe but also the planning phase. A special thank you to Ketty Nyoni and Zelipah Mitti for joining us during the story collection – we hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

Furthermore, we would like to thank all the alumni that went out of their way to speak with us and share their story. Some of you had to travel to meet with us, some of you were in the middle of exams, and some of you took time at the end of a work-day. In any regards, thank you on behalf of Free Press Unlimited.

In the end, we hope that this will provide insight and ideas for the future for Mobile Community Zimbabwe and Free Press Unlimited.

Introduction

The Most Significant Change (MSC), a participatory story-based monitoring and evaluation method, was piloted by Free Press Unlimited as part of the *Stories to Learn* program. This was to reflect systematically about projects that are developed with partners. MSC was selected so that learning about the contribution of projects in relation to processes of change can take place. The MSC pilot was conducted with three different projects (in 5 countries) using the cross-cutting theme of gender (see **Table 1**).

Table 1: 2016 MSC Pilot

	Zimbabwe	**Mrs. Project (MENA)**	**DRC**
MSC Trainer	FPU Knowledge & Quality team	International consultant team	International consultant
Type of project	Citizen journalism training (gender fellowship)	Gender programming (online)	Gender media monitoring
Partner	MCZ	Various	UCOFEM
Respondents	Alumni	Journalists	Media representatives
Interviewers	FPU Knowledge & Quality staff + trained MCZ staff	Consultants + partner staff	Trained interviewers in UCOFEM network
Type of interview	One-on-one; 1 focus group	Focus group	One-on-one

One of these countries was Zimbabwe, with the project Mobile Community Zimbabwe (MCZ). The MSC pilot in Zimbabwe focused on MCZ's citizen journalism training[1]. The trainings give (aspiring) journalists a platform to develop their skills. Since 2013, over 150 people have been trained by MCZ in mobile citizen journalism, of which a certain amount is still active alumni. This includes 10 women who have just participated in a specific fellowship focusing on gender (ZWM3[2]).

The MCZ program coordinator and MCZ trainer have both seen different impacts from the trainings such as alumni winning awards, the production of news items in alumni's own media houses, to a curriculum being developed at Midlands State University that incorporates MCZ training material[3]. However, what do the alumni themselves see as the most significant change since they participated in the MCZ training? Using the MSC method, change stories were collected based on the following question: *in your point of view, what has been the most significant change in your life since you participated in the citizen journalism training from MCZ?*

The objective of the visit was two fold: 1) to conduct the MSC method pilot with Free Press Unlimited's project partner MCZ and 2) to evaluate if the changes experienced by MCZ alumni are in line with the project objectives. Both of these objectives focused on one point: learning.

This consisted of four activities: a) training in MSC with MCZ project staff, b) conducting 26 interviews, c) pre-selection discussions per city, and d) a final selection with MCZ staff and relevant external stakeholders.

The following chapters of the report will firstly provide background information regarding the MCZ project and Zimbabwean context, followed by a brief description of the MSC methodology and how it was developed for this project. Then the analysis of the changes experienced by MCZ alumni will be outlined as learning points for MCZ and Free Press Unlimited. This includes suggested improvements by the alumni themselves as well as recommendations from the Knowledge & Quality team at Free Press Unlimited.

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1   Http://mobilecommunityzim.com/
2   ZWM3 = Zimbabwean Women Making Mobile Media
3   Interview with MCZ Coordinator & MCZ trainer. November 2, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe

Background Information
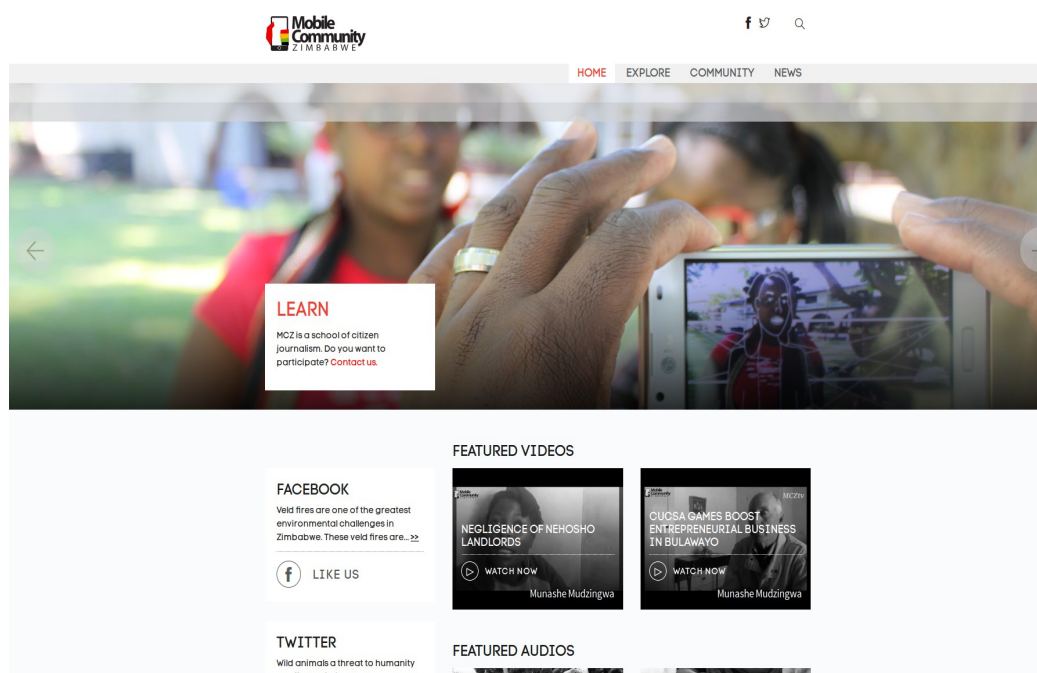
Mobile Community Zimbabwe

Free Press Unlimited has been active in Zimbabwe for over 10 years, often with Zimbabwean media operating in exile. Then, in 2013, focus shifted to training young and aspiring journalists working with Radio Dialogue, a well-known local community radio station. During these trainings, it became evident that there was a void of information about life in Zimbabwe that these citizen journalists were filling. Based on the insight gained and lessons learned, Free Press Unlimited wanted to further develop a training programme that directly leads to the empowerment of young Zimbabweans and local communities whist contributing to the output of items on Zimbabwean daily life. Thus, Mobile Community Zimbabwe came to be.

 The original objectives of Mobile Community Zimbabwe (MCZ) were to:

> *"Contribute to plurality and diversity of news and informational content in and from Zimbabwe by promoting citizen journalism that will empower young Zimbabweans to have a voice, enable uncensored information on and from different localities in Zimbabwe and engage local communities in the discussion about issues that affect them"[4].*

Especially in the polarized context of Zimbabwe, this was seen as highly relevant: training journalists from all over Zimbabwe in citizen journalism. After an initial pilot of the MCZ trainings, the project was continued and objectives were added. This included linking with tertiary institutions (universities) and focusing on gender equality in the media. In 2016 a group of 10 women that had previously been part of a MCZ training participated in a specific gender fellowship (ZWM3). An unexpected objective of the trainings was that they economically empowered young people to get paid (or get employment) because of the stories they made for the MCZ training[5]. Especially in the current context of Zimbabwe, the MCZ trainings were seen as critical because they give the ordinary person a platform; a voice[6].

Currently, MCZ is busy with strategic planning for the future, in which a validation will take place in The Netherlands at the end of November 2016.

The Mobile Community Zimbabwe (MCZ) website, with a list of alumni, trainers, and items made (https//mobilecommunityzim.com)

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4   MCZ Terms of Reference 2013 (internal unpublished document)
5   Interview MCZ program coordinator. November 2, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe
6   Interview MCZ trainer. November 2, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe

Zimbabwean Media Context

"It [the media in Zimbabwe] is not free, especially with access to information, but the law has been made redundant by digital storytelling because it is a crime to broadcast and publish without a license, but the Internet does not require a license. People now go online and people can see you and follow you. This is the dawn to a new era. This thing in itself is a niche market; MCZ is tapping into a sphere which has been less serviced"[7].

MCZ alumni mentioned that the media landscape in Zimbabwe is not seen as free; it is seen as highly polarized[8]. Furthermore, the media is seen as serving and/or being highly related to politics and Harare-based. Especially now, with the 2018 elections coming up, this is a great concern. Thus, plurality of news sources is limited. There is a gap of stories from Zimbabwean communities outside of the capital. These are often not told. The restricted media environment in Zimbabwe has greatly inhibited citizens from accessing balanced, fair and independent information to assist them in decision making[9]. Lastly, a very relevant development in Zimbabwe that has an impact on the media context is the economy.

"...the economy has been hit so hard. Many media organisations are down. Salaries are pathetic. Our moral commitment to journalism is not safeguarded. There is no innovation in media newsrooms. Old school management does not value digital media"[10].

Political unrest in the country is growing due to the fact that the economy has almost come to a complete standstill with an acute cash crisis. This crisis imposes limits on daily cash withdrawals to, for some banks, $30 USD. There are people waiting all day at the banks to withdraw money, and in some cases to be disappointed, as cash has run out. Then it was announced that bond notes were to be introduced by the National Reserve Bank, which many see as the beginning of the return of hyperinflation similar to that of 2008. This has a devastating effect on all people and sectors, including the media sector, which remains to be dominated by state owned/controlled media.

Essentially, these factors make press freedom in Zimbabwe not favourable for citizen journalists, but makes them all the more necessary.

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7   Interview MCZ alumni. November 3, 2016. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
8   Freedom House status of press freedom in Zimbabwe in 2016 is "not free" (https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/zimbabwe)
9   MCZ Terms of Reference 2014 (internal unpublished document)
10 Interview MCZ alumni. October 31, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe.

Methodology

This pilot consisted of using the Most Significant Change method, a qualitative monitoring and evaluation method based on stories. What is crucial to the method is that it is a systematic way to learn and review about a project. This method, developed by Rick Davies and Jessica Dart[11], is one that does not use previously defined indicators. Rather it uses stories from the main characters of a project – in this case the MCZ alumni. It consists of collecting qualitative changes, both expected and unexpected that focus on contribution, outcomes and impact rather than just outputs and activities.

Stories are used as they are a universal form of communication and are easy to understand. Stories, especially stories of change, can deal with complexity and describe a context in a memorable manner. People remember stories, no matter how involved with a project somebody is. The essence of the method is that stories of change are collected by answering 4 questions:

1) How did you first get involved with project x and how are you currently involved?
2) What is the most significant change in your life since you participated in project x?
3) Why is this significant?
4) How did partner x contribute to this change?

Significant does not mean the biggest change; rather the most important change to that respondent – be it negative or positive. Although there are four crucial questions, one may need to ask several questions to get an appropriate answer. These are collected through semi-structured interviews or focus groups. The input is then utilised to facilitate a discussion and select what the partner sees as most significant. In Zimbabwe the methodology consisted of four major steps: MSC training, story collection, pre-selection, and a final selection.

MSC Training

First, a training in the MSC method was given by Free Press Unlimited Knowledge & Quality staff (project officer and trainee) to the four MCZ staff members (coordinator, trainer, project assistant, and digital media assistant). The objective of the training was to introduce the project partner staff to the method as well as train the two assistants in conducting interviews as they helped in the story collection phase. The training consisted of sharing expectations, describing the MSC pilot, introducing MSC, and lastly, practising story collection and selection. This included describing challenges and rewards of interviewing, which provided the first lessons learned to this whole pilot (see **Table 2** below).

Table 2 – Challenges and Rewards of Story-Collection (MSC Training with MCZ)

	Challenges	Rewards
Conducting Interview	- Getting the main question answered sufficiently as it is a big question to ask - Keeping up with the interviewee when taking notes	- Get to know respondent better; really talk
Being Interviewed	- Feeling pressured to answer immediately - Worried I was talking too much, too fast	- A self-reflection process - Having the format to even just look at - Talking, comes very easily

Story Collection

Following the MSC training, story collection took place through semi-structured interviews and one focus group. In total, 26 stories of change were collected from MCZ alumni. This sample was based on years the alumni participated in the trainings (2013-2016), sex, and geographical location (Harare, Gweru, and Bulawayo).

In Harare, 10 alumni (5 female, 5 male) were interviewed that were based around the capital. Interviews were conducted at Moto Republik (the MCZ office) and one was done per Skype, as the

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11 Original MSC guide: http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf

respondent could not attend last minute. Of the 10 people that were interviewed in Harare, three had participated specifically in the ZWM3 gender fellowship. The general theme of the change stories in Harare was individual empowerment or confidence building, especially in terms of being able to find employment and be relevant in the media sector.

Another 11 interviews were conducted in Gweru (8 female, 3 male). One respondent came from Kadoma, two respondents came from Kwekwe, and 8 were students at Midlands State University (MSU). At MSU the students were in the middle of exams, so the lecturer arranged a focus group discussion at the university campus. Each student filled in a story-collection format and was then split up into smaller groups so the interviewers could ask more questions to complete the stories. The rest of the interviews were conducted at a cafe and at the university campus. Of the 11 interviews, two respondents had participated in the ZWM3 gender fellowship. It became evident what the added value was of conducting interviews in a different geographical setting as most of the change stories collected in Gweru focused more on amplifying community voices whereas in Harare they focused more on the individual.

Lastly, in Bulawayo the intention was to collect 10 stories of change but in the end only 5 (2 female, 3 male) interviews were conducted. This was because several people did not show up, despite having confirmed and calling them to reconfirm. Two of the 5 respondents had participated in the gender fellowship. Similarly to Gweru, the stories of change from Bulawayo also focused more on gaining the ability to tell stories from their community.

Pre-Selection

During the MSC training, the MCZ program coordinator mentioned that she saw a challenge of the method being the level of significance of a story, as she would look at the story strictly against the project objectives. This point was addressed by having pre-selections with the alumni in each city where change stories were collected. During the pre-selections a title was given to the stories by participating alumni to help facilitate the discussion. The objective of the pre-selections was to systematically ensure that the change stories the MCZ staff were to discuss at the end were based on what alumni value as significant. A total of 26 stories of change were collected (15 female; 11 male) and 11 stories (6 female; 4 male) were pre-selected (see **Table 3**).

Table 3 – List of 26 Change Stories collected including sex (M/F), participation in ZWM3 (*), and pre-selected (bold).

1. New Media [M]	11. The Training That Changed Everything [F]	**19. Studio In My Pocket* [F]**
2. Complete Journalist [M]	12. Skills Yes, But It Could Have Been Better [F]	20. MCZ Creates More Easily Accesible Content* [F]
3. The Beauty of My Phone [M]	**13. With MCZ, The Story Got Real [M]**	**21. MCZ Made Me A Trailblazer [M]**
4. Empowered Women* [F]	**14. MCZ: New Dimension To News-Gathering [F]**	22. Opportunities [M]
5. Gained Skills, Lost Phone [F]	15. They are Newsworthy [F]	23. Migration From Traditional To New [M]
6. The Transformation* [F]	16. Inspiration [F]	**24. Liberating Citizen Journalists [M]**
7. Professionalised Storytelling [M]	17. Diversified Journalist [F]	**25. Job Opportunity* [F]**
8. Self-Drive* [F]	18. Skills Gathering [M]	**26. Voice for the Unheard* [F]**
9. Competitiveness [F]		
10. Stepping Stone [M]		

In Harare, the pre-selection took place with two alumni (1 female, 1 male), which was less than anticipated. The 10 stories were read aloud and then 4 stories were selected as most significant (stories 3, 4, 7, and 8 in Table 3). The reason why these were selected was because they all talked about a discovery of something new; a realization that a mobile phone could be used for so much more. In line with this, they were also selected because they were seen as depicting the Zimbabwean context clearly, and how the training made a difference, something that the other alumni could relate to.

The pre-selection in Gweru took place with two alumni (2 male) of whom one was a student at MSU and the other a journalist. All 11 stories were read aloud and discussed one-by-one. Just as in Harare, four stories were pre-selected (stories 13, 14, 19, and 21 in Table 3). This is because they were identified as tangible, real-life testimonies of change whereas the other stories were more generalized experiences.

Lastly, in Bulawayo, three stories were pre-selected as fewer stories were collected in general (stories 24, 25, and 26 in Table 3). These were selected by three alumni (1 female, 2 male) studying at NUST (National University of Science and Technology). The stories were pre-selected because they depicted how communities were now being served, making the impact of the MCZ trainings clear.

Selection MCZ

The last, and most essential step was the final selection meeting with MCZ program staff. The objective of the MSC method is for program staff to understand and learn from changes experienced by beneficiaries of a project in a participatory and systematic way. Thus it is during selection that this is facilitated. The MCZ program coordinator and MCZ trainer participated in the selection discussion as well as two external stakeholders from organisations that were closely affiliated to MCZ (The Source and Magamba Network). The external participants were invited as they are working in the same field as MCZ. This brings an outsiders perspective to the discussion, which can provide more input in relation to the Zimbabwean context without only thinking in project objectives. The Free Press Unlimited Knowledge & Quality staff facilitated the selection discussion and kept detailed notes. The interviewers from MCZ were invited only as observers to the discussion as their own bias could sway the discussion.

Just as in the pre-selections, the 11 pre-selected stories were read aloud by the participants and discussed in terms of what was seen as important or not. Then a top 3 was selected, with the reasoning behind these choices and what was learned throughout the process. The three selected stories were: *Voice for the Unheard, Empowered Women*, and *Professionalised Storytelling* (number 26, 3, and 4 in Table 3). Two of the three stories selected were from alumni that participated in the ZWM3 gender fellowship. The reasons for the selection will be discussed in the following section as main learning points.
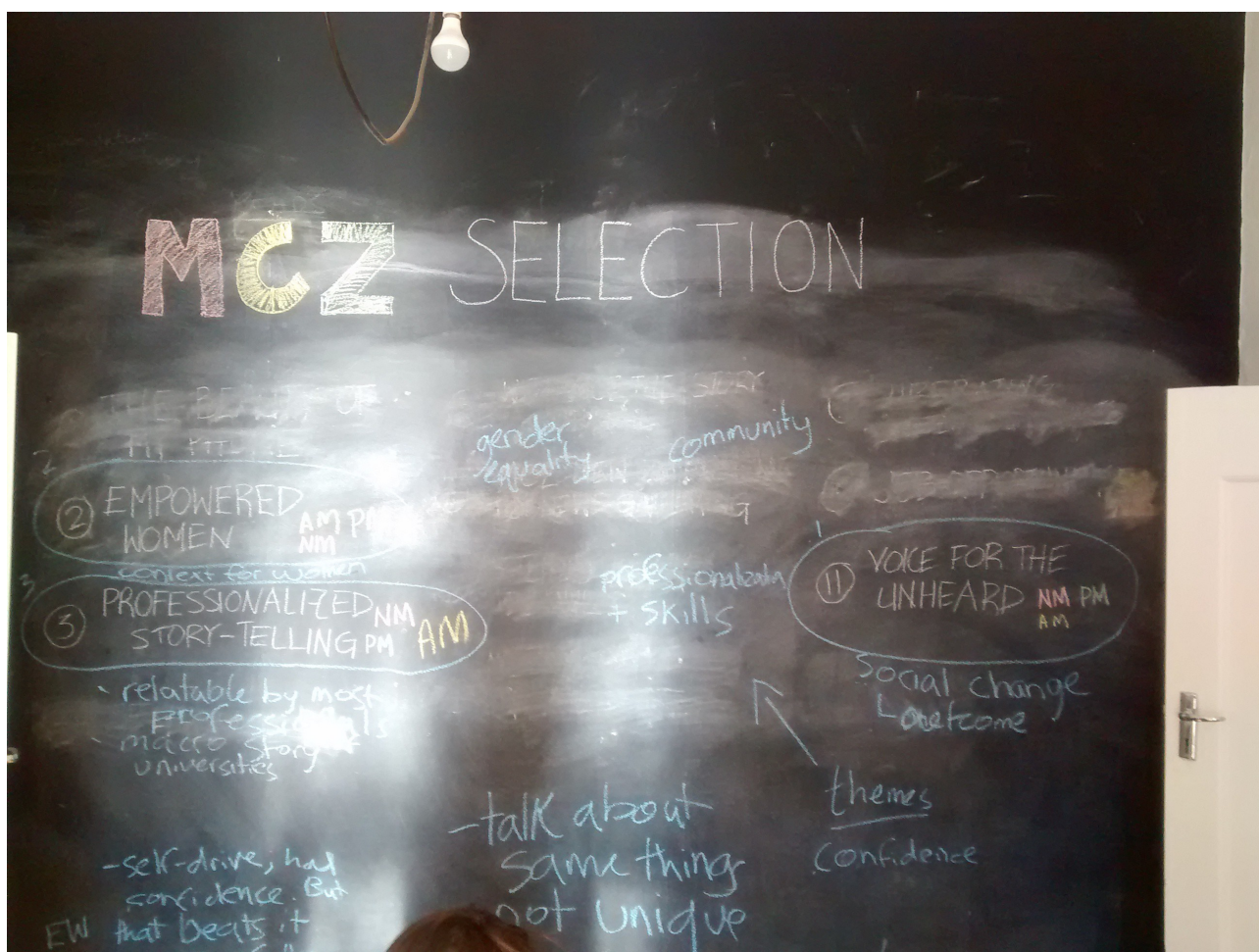
Changes to Learn From Based on Alumni Stories

"These stories [of change] encompass all the objectives of MCZ[12]"

The above quote summarises the main learning from this MSC evaluation. This is that the objectives MCZ is trying to reach in the project are evident in the changes that the alumni are experiencing. The final stories selected were *Voice for the Unheard*, *Empowered Women*, and *Professionalised Storytelling*. They were selected because they highlight the changes the objectives of MCZ want to address: changing the type of news distributed by giving a voice to the marginalised, changes in the opportunities provided, especially for women, in the media, and lastly changes in the professionalising of skills by filling a gap between journalism and tertiary institutions (universities). It became evident to the participants of the selection discussion that these changes that MCZ envisions are not just seen as important to program staff, but even to the alumni themselves.

Overall, the main changes observed in the alumni were in relation to the way citizen journalism was perceived, the way people told stories, the empowerment and skills people received, and lastly being able to share stories of the marginalised (women and communities outside of Harare). During the selection discussion, this led to the following main learning points:

- **Changes in the subject of news stories:** MCZ should not underestimate the extent to which the trainings prepare the journalists in giving a voice to communities that are under-represented in mainstream Zimbabwean media. Many of the alumni mentioned that an important change for them was that they had gained the ability to be a voice for the community. The MCZ program coordinator mentioned that MCZ believes that this objective of bringing an alternative voice to the media was achieved as there were stories being told from the communities[13]. However, whether this was seen as important by alumni as well had not been noted before.

  Amongst the selection participants there was a unanimous decision to select the story *Voice for the Unheard* (see **Table 4**) as it highlighted this change – an important one in the Zimbabwean context. This was not only because of its strong focus on how the citizen journalism training provided somebody with the tools to tell stories from their community but how it actually focused on the aspect of social change; impact. MCZ was able to facilitate that the subject of news stories changed to include stories from communities, which came back as most significant in other change stories as well.

Table 4 – *Voice for the Unheard*

Name: Hazel Mrimbiza; Sex: Female; Age: 23; Occupation: Student; Other Information: ZWM3 fellow   *Interviewer: Ketty Nyoni Date: 03/11/2016; Place: Bulawayo, Zimbabwe*
I first got to know about MCZ when our lecturer at NUST was trying to sell us the idea of participating in this project. I was interested in taking part as I knew then, that I was being given an opportunity to give a louder voice to those that were being marginalised by our mainstream media. I am still connected to MCZ as one of the ZWM3 fellows and here and there when they do calls for stories I do contribute.   *As a student who was still in school with zero experience when it comes to practicals, I had no confidence. Also with the lack of equipment at our school there was no way we could have done it right without the input from MCZ. Now I can safely say that I'm totally a different person from the person I was when I was first trained. I'm now confident enough to approach anyone without fear.*   *Through the use of the skill I have gained from this training I have managed to change the lives of some of the people in my community with the stories I have done about them. One example is the story I did about women in Matopo who are earning a living out of making jam. When this story was published, the MP of that area approached those women and offered them a place where they can work freely and some chickens for them to expand their businesses.*   *This story reflects on how something that some people might want to call a simple mobile phone training, has changed not only my life but that of the people in my community. This story has made me realise the great opportunity I was given, to give those being marginalised by the mainstream media a voice to speak for and about themselves.*   *There is no way I could have been able to give these people in my community a louder voice, and a platform where they can air out issues affecting them as well as their success stories, if it was not for this training and maybe the phone itself.*

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12 MCZ Trainer, Story selection discussion. November 7, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe.
13 Interview MCZ program coordinator, November 2, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe

- **Changes in the perception of gender (in)equality in the media:** A strong learning point was how some alumni, especially those who participated in the ZWM3 gender fellowship, valued the addressing of gender equality as most important. The addition of the gender fellowship is new to the track record of MCZ but evidently this was a point that alumni deem as critical. One of the stories that was selected during by MCZ was *Empowered Women,* where the reality of being a female journalist in Zimbabwe was described as not favourable to women, and yet because of the training they were: *"able to be my own producer as women. Now I can take my own news, video, and audio and share it"*[14]. This was just one of the stories that referenced the importance of this change to the women.

  During the selection discussion, participants mentioned that this point of changing perceptions of gender equality in the media was critical. The story *Empowered Women* was selected as it references how often people do not think that this happens to women journalists in Zimbabwe; there is denial in the media. As the MCZ coordinator put it *"I feel this person is alluding to a problem but not knowing why this is"*[15], and this was not only linked to gender quality in the newsroom but also to the fact that the alumni had never used a camera prior to the training, even though she studied to be a journalist. This relates to the following changes as well.

- **Changes in the professionalism (skills, resources, confidence) of alumni:** A change that was most commonly mentioned by alumni, which MCZ could not ignore as a learning point, was a change in the professionalism of the alumni. These were individual changes in professionalism, meaning skills that were developed because of the training, resources (such as a mobile phone) that were discovered, and most importantly, confidence that was built.

  Although this was commonly referenced, it was still seen as one of the most important changes during the MCZ selection. It was seen as one of the most important changes to learn from, as clearly this is what many alumni also saw as most significant from the trainings. The story, *Professionalised Storytelling* was selected (see **Table 5**) as it encapsulates exactly what the MCZ staff learned: that although citizen journalism is shunned in Zimbabwe, many people can relate to the fact that a skills gap exists in the media in Zimbabwe. *"It is an important thing for anyone who wants to fund this project; an explanation as to why this project is important*[16]*".* This clear gap of skills, resources, and confidence that is linked to the professionalism of these journalists is an important change that must not be disregarded – it represents an important attitude change.

Table 5 – *Professionalised Storytelling*

Name: Joseph Munda; Sex: Male; Age: 35; Occupation: Multimedia editor at 263chat   *Interviewer: Zelipah Mitti Date: 31/10/2016; Place: Harare, Zimbabwe*
I was introduced to MCZ through Natasha, the project coordinator. She asked me if I would be interested in such a project and encouraged me to apply. I was part of the first group to undergo the training in Zambia. I was interested in the mobile feature of the training. It was a unique experience for me and it filled the gap between trained an untrained journalists who wanted to learn a new skill. I am still involved in the MCZ network and work as a mentor when it is needed because it is simultaneously a teaching and learning opportunity.   *I would say that 98% of what I do [multimedia editing] is attributed to the training I received from MCZ. I received no formal journalism training prior to the MCZ digital storytelling training, I just knew that I loved to tell stories. The training made me realise that professionalised storytelling was an option for me. It was a journey of self-discovery and a defining moment that developed my skills as a professional story-teller. I went from being someone who just loved telling stories to someone who was head-hunted by the biggest online platform in Zimbabwe for my storytelling ability. Before the training I didn't care much about publishing my stories, I just wanted to create them. Now I can create a story and sell it too. MCZ gave me the confidence and skills to make that possible.*   *There is a lot of content being produced out there. Anyone can film something and publish it as news. The professionalisation of storytelling skills adds influence to my stories. It is significant because it has given me and my stories credibility. Additionally being identified as a mentor for upcoming storytellers is one of my greatest achievements.*   *MCZ opened up a lot of networks for me. I see MCZ as an institution that not only teaches mobile storytelling skills but also creates a content- and skill-sharing community. MCZ brings people together and instead of the usual rivalry seen between media professionals, MCZ cultivates a spirit of growing together; we help each other out.*

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14 Story of Change MCZ Alumni. *Empowered Women.* October 31, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe
15 MCZ program coordinator, Story selection discussion, November 7, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe.
16 MCZ program coordinator, Story selection discussion, November 7, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe.

- **Changes in the link with tertiary institutions:** Although MCZ made a choice to provide trainings for students at tertiary institutions (universities), whether or not these specific university alumni experienced any different changes had not been previously documented. However, through this process of MSC many of the stories, including all the ones selected (see **Table 4 & 5**), mentioned a gap in studying to be a journalist and not having ever had the practical experience of using a camera.

  "I am a journalist, so then you would think that I should be able to be a journalist. Someone that is a journalist should be able to do these basic skills of audio, video, and production. I didn't learn this at school but now I know I can make this and use audio or video.[17] "

  During the selection discussion, it was mentioned that the stories describing a lack of practical experience in universities was something that every Zimbabwean journalist could relate to: *"I graduated but I had never touched a camera or seen an editing suite. Someone who is a journalist should be able to have the skills. The program [MCZ] is adding value simply by giving these skills. Often your degree is no use whatsoever.[18] "* MCZ is and can continue to be the bridging agent between tertiary institutions and professional journalism. This was already an important point for MCZ staff, but this reiterates that even the alumni consider this as vital.

- **Unexpected change observed – importance of social change:** An unexpected change that came out of this MSC process was in regards to the importance of social change. In many of the stories, but especially *Voice for the Unheard* (**Table 4**), social change within communities is indicated as just as important for the alumni. MCZ staff indicated that they try as much as possible to follow impact; it is one of the biggest objectives of the project, to bring social change. This was also one of the main reasons that *all participants unanimously selected Voice for the Unheard*: it described a social change that even MCZ staff hadn't heard about. They were aware of the news item the respondent referred to but were unaware of the impact it had brought about. *"A story is nice on its own but it should bring change. I just regret that I don't have knowledge yet to keep track[19] "*. Evidently, the unexpected learning point is that the alumni view social change (impact) as important as MCZ staff does; there is an untapped potential to systematically monitor this.

- **Change in monitoring impact, a system to monitor social change is needed:** In relation to the previous point, although it may seem obvious that social change or impact is important to monitor, undergoing this methodology was an eye-opener for MCZ staff. It was clear how important it is to have a systematic way to monitor social change as it can contribute to project design, fund-raising, as well as gaining evidence into why an organisation exists; why they do what they do.

Overall it can be said that, based on this systematic story collection and selection, the objectives of the MCZ mobile citizen journalism trainings are in line with the changes the alumni experienced. The stories may have been overall quite positive, but they nonetheless reaffirm the relevance of the MCZ objectives.

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17 Story of Change MCZ alumni, *Empowered Women*. October 31, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe.
18 Magamba Network project officer, Story selection discussion, November 7, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe.
19 MCZ Program coordinator, Story selection discussion. November 7, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe

Suggested Improvements to MCZ Trainings by Alumni:

Besides the most significant change stories, MCZ alumni also indicated what they believed could be possible improvements to the program. The original intention was not to collect this, but as the alumni mentioned quite some relevant points, they have been included in this report. First and foremost, the alumni were very grateful for the time and energy that was invested into them.

Branding MCZ: Becoming its own entity
The alumni mentioned that it was not clear if MCZ was an independent organisation or not. One alumnus described that it seems that MCZ is a branch organisation of Her Zimbabwe (an online blog for women's issues), also based in the same building as MCZ. However, some alumni clearly stated, *"the people who started it [MCZ] want it to stand alone and be visible, but right now it is not. MCZ should be called MCZ, period. It exists now as a virtual office.[20]"*. By doing this, the roles and expectations between MCZ and Free Press Unlimited will become clearer. As understood, MCZ is in a process of strategic planning with Free Press Unlimited, including the issue of MCZ becoming a registered organisation. Evidently, alumni also suggest this point.

Accreditation
Other alumni mentioned the issue of accreditation – that according to them, MCZ has the capacity to accredit trainers and trainees *"that I can carry a card of MCZ that shows MCZ has brought up a child and it is grown now[21]."* As a pioneer in digital storytelling in Zimbabwe, MCZ can take the lead in making a difference in how people view citizen journalism.

Use more external knowledge
In every interview, the respondents stressed the positive influence and contribution of the MCZ trainer. Nonetheless, the idea of having more trainers, especially external trainers was a suggestion[22]. Participants of the gender fellowship mentioned that having external speakers such as a lawyer, gender experts, etc. contributed a lot to the training.

Discuss expectations around resources required / used
Especially amongst the university students, the issue of having to return the mobile phones at the end of the training was a point of concern. The general consensus was that it was difficult to use the learning acquired during the training if you did not have the resource[23]. Some of the alumni that mentioned that they got to keep the gadget did mention it as an advantage whilst others mentioned that having an app that did not fully function was a disadvantage[24]. But what is maybe even more relevant is the point mentioned by another alumni about the resources when writing a story. "*The challenge is when we are doing the stories, in terms of resources, while you may have a phone, you need to travel...You are going through a lot to get the story but you get nothing for it.[25]"* Perhaps this means that expectations around resources should be discussed more elaborately.

Try going a level deeper; into the newsroom perhaps
The last suggestion for improvements by the alumni was about how the trainings could go a level deeper to address the Zimbabwean media context more. For example, one alumni mentioned that at trainings there are often many female students, but in the newsroom there are barely any – so there is a clear gap[26]. This links to what another alumni mentioned that *"knowledge was lost when I tried to teach my colleagues. The impact could have been greater if the entire newsroom was trained. Right now some think it is extra work, or that a phone is not good enough."[27]* Although this may be easier said than done, it does highlight the reality for the professional journalists that participated in the MCZ training.

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20 Interview MCZ alumni. November 3, 2016. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
21 Interview MCZ alumni. November 3, 2016. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
22 Interview MCZ alumni. October 31, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe
23 Interview MCZ alumni. November 3, 2016. Gweru, Zimbabwe
24 Interview MCZ alumni. November 3, 2016. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
25 Interview MCZ alumni. November 3, 2016. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
26 Interview MCZ alumni. October 31, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe
27 Interview MCZ alumni. October 31, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe

Recommendations by Knowledge & Quality:

There have been lessons learned shared based directly on the change stories collected from alumni and suggestions have been given by the alumni themselves regarding the MCZ trainings. Lastly, the Knowledge & Quality staff from Free Press Unlimited has some recommendations based on their experiences facilitating this MSC process.

1. **Be proud of the changes that MCZ has brought about!** First and foremost, having undergone this MSC process it became evident that the MCZ trainings have indeed impacted people's lives in some manner. This varies from giving individuals a sense of confidence to making a difference in a community by giving them a voice. Regardless, this must be acknowledged and celebrated. MCZ has created a network of citizen journalists that have in fact experienced an attitudinal change and are proud to be within this network. This deserves recognition. Free Press Unlimited and MCZ should be proud of the change the project has created in people's lives.

2. **Mobilise the alumni network more often.** As previously mentioned, MCZ has created a network of over 150 citizen journalists. Although the degree of activity within the network varies per individual, most alumni are proud to say that they are part of the MCZ alumni network. As the MCZ program coordinator said *"the fact that we have a network of over 150 alumni across the country which can be moved and that we are going into elections means we are only going to need more of this[28]"*. This reiterates how in the coming year, this will be even more relevant. With any membership group, such as the MCZ alumni network, active mobilisation can create even more impact. It is important that the alumni still feel that they are part of this network. Although the original activities of the project focused on training citizen journalists and linking with universities, an additional activity of the project should be to mobilise this already existing network of citizen journalists through knowledge and story sharing, exchange, or peer review.

3. **Expand on the gender fellowship.** All the alumni that were interviewed that participated in the ZWM3 gender fellowship mentioned how this had a lot of added value to their own self-development. Most women viewed these as an advanced training, meaning they could develop their skills even further. It was also evident that in the Zimbabwean context, the focus on women in the media is one that is desperately needed. Therefore, MCZ could help fill this gap by continuing to train more alumni with the same set-up. Quite a few women also mentioned that they do think men should partially be involved in the fellowships as gender equality is not just a battle for women; it involves both men and women. An idea to address this could be to have some of the women who participated in the ZWM3 training teach and share what they learned in ZWM3 to other alumni (including men). This would mobilise the network, facilitate more learning and sharing between alumni, as well as address gender equality in the Zimbabwean media.

4. **Develop a closer link with tertiary institutions.** Although working with universities and tertiary institutions may be difficult, it has clearly contributed in addressing a huge gap in the Zimbabwean media landscape – graduated journalists do not have any practical skills. MCZ can help bridge this gap. Of course working with students in university requires a different approach than if you are working with already graduated journalists. Nevertheless, the partnerships with the tertiary institutions should be a top priority of the MCZ project, but with a very close look at how the partnerships are set-up including managing expectations, regular communication, and clear role division.

5. **Systematically monitor social change.** Systematically monitoring social change or impact is something that all organisations struggle with, including MCZ and Free Press Unlimited. How exactly this should be done must be further investigated. Nonetheless, the scope of the methodology would have to go beyond the alumni; perhaps viewers and communities should be included. A first step could be to make an inventory of all news items that contributed to a social change. By having a call for the 2016 MCZ Awards, a first step has been made to make an inventory of the different social changes brought about by the various news items produced. If this has not already been done so, there should be a written inventory of the social changes including: the news item, the alumni and which year(s) they took part in the MCZ training, where it took

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28   Interview MCZ program coordinator. November 2, 2016. Harare, Zimbabwe

place, what the social change is, and when it took place. By having this basic data, follow-up can be done by approaching the alumni to understand how or why this change came to be. This could also be a valuable resource for further fund-raising.

6. **Consider using MSC once a year.** In an evaluation survey sent to MCZ staff prior to the research, it was mentioned that the most significant change method was *"a really enlightening experience… there had been no deliberate process to achieve this [track and collect data of social impact stories]. Collecting stories in this way was useful for getting information we would otherwise not get easily[29]".* MCZ (and Free Press Unlimited) should consider conducting a short MSC evaluation once a year by collecting around 10-15 change stories from alumni followed by a story selection. This could also be specified to focus on the changes in relation to lessons learned from this year. For example, stories of change collected around the theme of community changes, or changes regarding gender equality, or changes specifically for the university students to compare the differences with the regular trainings. The beauty of the method is that it can be tailor-made to whatever theme you want to analyse. Just remember the different roles that are needed: a facilitator of the method, interviewers, and note-takers during the selections.

7. **Practically, read the compilation of *all* stories collected.** This last recommendation is more a practical one for Free Press Unlimited and MCZ. Take the time to go through the change stories collected. Although some stories may have been pre-selected, each one is unique and shares a different viewpoint. Some of the stories that were not pre-selected include changes that are still relevant to consider and provide lessons to be learned.

A last concluding remark from Knowledge & Quality is that it is evident that MCZ has definitely influenced many people's lives. What started off as a pilot in 2013 has become a vast network of 150 citizen journalists. When looking at the context of Zimbabwe, as well as the world in general, the role of citizen journalists is going to continue to become more and more relevant and significant.

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29 MCZ staff. Evaluation MSC pilot. November 17, 2016.

Appendices

Appendix A – List of Respondents

	Name	Sex	City	Year Participated in Training
1)	Theophilus Chuma	Male	Harare	2015
2)	Tapiwa Zivira	Male	Harare	2015
3)	Tafadzwa Tseisi	Male	Harare	2015
4)	Sharon Sigauke	Female	Harare	2013, 2016 (ZWM3)
5)	Sharon Mawoni	Female	Harare	2015
6)	Ketty Nyoni	Female	Harare	2015, 2016 (ZWM3)
7)	Joseph Munda	Male	Harare	2013
8)	Daphne Jena	Female	Harare	2013, 2016 (ZWM3)
9)	Chido Sibalo	Female	Harare	2013
10)	Boldwill Hungwe	Male	Harare	2015
11)	Constance Kasiyamhuru	Female	Gweru	2016
12)	Senzeni Ncube	Female	Gweru	2016
13)	Providence Maraneli	Male	Gweru	2016
14)	Linda Mswati	Female	Gweru	2016
15)	Leonorah Ncube	Female	Gweru	2016
16)	Prudence Mapito	Female	Gweru	2016
17)	Chengeto Jani	Female	Gweru	2016
18)	Munyaradzi Gumbo	Male	Gweru	2016
19)	Irene Kalulu	Female	Kwekwe	2013, 2016 (ZWM3)
20)	Priscillah Mupfeki	Female	Kwekwe	2013, 2016 (ZWM3)
21)	Patrice (Trice) Chisamba	Male	Kadoma	2013
22)	Bakidzanani Dube	Male	Bulawayo	2013
23)	Jeffery Muvundusi	Male	Bulawayo	2015
24)	Witness Tavarwisa	Male	Bulawayo	2013
25)	Linda Mpofu	Female	Gwanda	2013, 2016 (ZWM3)
26)	Hazel Marimbiza	Female	Bulawayo	2015, 2016 (ZWM3)

Appendix B – MSC Training Participants – October 31, 2016

	Name	Sex	Position in MCZ
1)	Ketty Nyoni	Female	Project Assistant - interviewer
2)	Zelipah Mitti	Female	Digital Media Assistant - interviewer
3)	Privilege Munshanvari	Male	MCZ trainer
4)	Natasha Msonza	Female	Project coordinator
5)	Nava Verboom	Female	Free Press Unlimited - Knowledge & Quality
6)	Dennis Bednar	Male	Free Press Unlimited – Knowledge & Quality.

Appendix C – Alumni Involved in Pre-Selection

	Name	Sex	Year Participated in Training	City
1)	Ketty Nyoni	Female	2015, 2016 (ZWM3)	Harare
2)	Ashton Bumhira	Male	2013	Harare
3)	Lovemore Zigara	Male	2015	Gweru
4)	Munashe Mudzingwa	Male	2016	Gweru
5)	Bathabile Ndlamini	Female	2015	Bulawayo
6)	Sineke Sibanda	Male	2015	Bulawayo
7)	Walter Ndlovu	Male	2015	Bulawayo

Appendix D – Final Selection Discussion

	Name	Sex	Position in MCZ
1)	Privilege Munshanvari	Male	MCZ trainer
2)	Natasha Msonza	Female	Project coordinator
3)	Alfonse Mbizvo	Male	Agent for *The Source*
4)	Munyaradzi Dodo	Male	Project Officer Magamba network
5)	Nava Verboom	Female	Trainee Free Press Unlimited
6)	Dennis Bednar	Male	Project officer Free Press Unlimited

Introduce yourself and introduce research (interviewing alumni, to see what has changed since you followed the training by MCZ; idea comes from Free Press Unlimited in Netherlands and FPU staff)

Explain the use of data: will be analysed by us and shared with MCZ + FPU staff. It will be used for learning purposes, not to collect only good stories. Want good and bad experiences. Anonymity, if they would like it. *Reminder: probe for answers; try not to ask leading questions; give time/space to answer. Make sure to write notes for all these questions. MSC questions are in* **bold**

I Background Information
1) Can you tell me a bit more about yourself? What is your current occupation? What does this include?
2) Can you tell me about how the media is in Zimbabwe? What is the context like for journalists?
3) How is the situation like for men and women journalists in Zimbabwe? Are there differences?

II MCZ Training
4) **I understood you participated in an MCZ training. Can you please tell me more about this?**
   1. When was this training?
   2. Where did it take place?
   3. How many people were involved?
   4. What was the focus on? What did you learn during this training?
   5. Why did you decide to join this training?
5) **How are you currently involved with MCZ?**

III Changes Experienced Since Participated in Training *(try to get it as a story)*
6) Now I want you to look back in time, since you participated in the training with MCZ staff, what has changed in your life since you participated in the training? *(Get them to list a few)*
7) **From your point of view, based on these changes, could you describe a story that describes the MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE in your life since you participated in the MCZ training?** *(Change in behavior, actions, community, etc.)*
8) **Why was this significant to you?**
9) **How did MCZ contribute to this change?**

IV Concluding questions
10) How do you believe these training influenced the role of journalists in the media landscape of Zimbabwe in general? Specifically the role of women journalists. *Remember this is a very subjective question so it is an optional question.*
11) IF THEY PARTICIPATED IN THE GENDER FELLOWSHIP, what was the added value of participating in particularly the gender fellowship?

Do you have any questions for me? Thank for interview. Make sure to describe how the story will be shared + follow-up. Remind about pre-selection session; ask if they can attend. Give contact details if necessary.