



Working in Partnership:

**A local approach to strengthening
safeguarding systems**



Zimbabwe Institute of Systemic Therapy

3 November 2022

Introduction

By

Dennis Mudede



About CONNECT

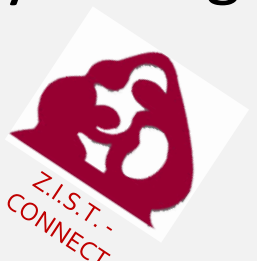
- **History**

- A membership organisation founded as a local non-governmental organization in 1983; Registered with the Ministry of Social development in July 1985.
- CONNECT believes that people should be connected to each other in the fight against social ills.
- Started off as a counselling organization, later extending its activities to include training of counselors, research and consultancy services using the Systemic approach.

- **VISION**

- Peace and harmony in individuals, families, communities and society at large.

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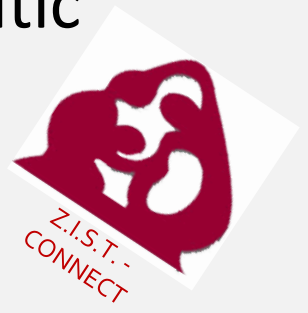


About CONNECT - continued

- **Objectives**

- To promote counselling for low income families from Zimbabwe and neighbouring countries so as to overcome a wide variety of social problems.
- To train a broad range of health, social services and community workers in family counselling and systemic management techniques.
- To offer consultancy services to communities and organisations in the application of general systems theory in order to solve social problems and promoting positive change.
- To develop through research and evaluation, indigenous therapeutic management and training techniques and materials.

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Confidentiality.



INTEGRITY

VALUES

Gender Sensitivity

TRANSPARENCY &
ACCOUNTABILITY

EQUALITY & RESPECT

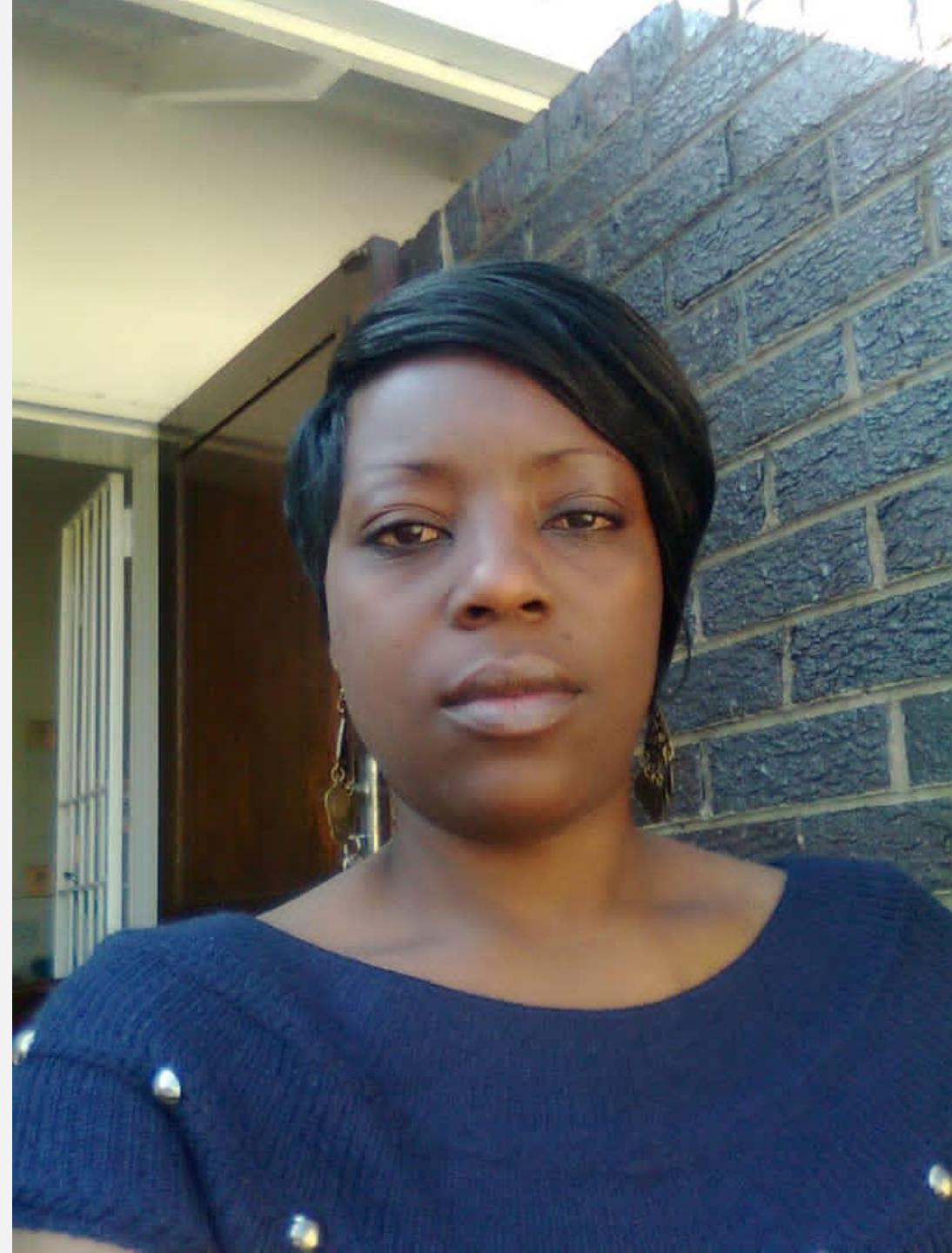
inclusiveness



Safeguarding administrative issues

By

Ennet Matanda



CONNECT's safeguarding experiences.

- Safeguarding was and is still one of the most important factors to consider in CONNECT's work. Why:-
 - Guided by counselling ethical principles of doing no harm to clients.
 - CONNECT's values which promote inclusiveness and protection of clients.
- Therefore capacity building for the organisation in safeguarding issues improved and strengthened its practices.

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Challenges

- No systematic monitoring and evaluation of CONNECT's performance in respect to safeguarding
- More focus was on checking past performance and protection of CONNECT assets without considering the risks associated with employing without conducting thorough checks and balances.
- There was no accountability
- Board was not concerned about protection of clients unless there were adverse issues raised
- Community work – the organisation did not appreciate the importance of safeguarding program participants.

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What was different about this initiative?

- Safeguarding added more value to CONNECT's work, thereby improving quality of service provision.
- Resulted in CONNECT staff participate in mainstreaming sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA201)



The main impact – Policy reviews

- Safeguarding helped us relook at issues so that we add value to our programming
- These policies are reviewed annually and modified to reflect changing circumstances:
 - Section 11 of the safeguarding policy was reviewed. It reflects the grievances record keeping through the use of a complaints log sheet.
 - Ensuring safeguarding of program participants during times of emergencies and crisis.



The main impact – Safe recruitment

- Reviewed recruitment practices to ensure that we recruit employees who have a clean record of child abuse, exploitation and corrupt activities.
- Review was in the following areas:
 - Verifying employment history of each candidate before placement.
 - Seeking for police clearance – our SG policy explicitly states that we do not employ people with a record of child abuse
 - Assess potential employees' knowledge in safeguarding issues (on interview checklist form)
- All our officers are held accountable for issues to do with child protection.

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The main impact – Code of conduct

- It includes a set of guidelines and regulations by which CONNECT administers and manages staff grievances and complaints.
- These are:
 - Grievance handling procedure – informal and formal grievance handling.
 - Opened up space for staff, clients, students and beneficiaries to communicate their issues, resulted in a safe space for reporting any grievances and complaints.
 - Measures to be taken as a result of misconduct – fair, consistent, effective and expeditious always.



Safeguarding and program issues

By

Winnet Manyadza



The main impact – Safeguarding activities

- Safeguarding focal persons in the organisation:-
 - Two at board level – both females
 - One at secretariat level – female
- Safeguarding refresher sessions for Board, Staff and project participants resulted in a lot of insights to the participants and motivated them on the significance of SG.
- Safeguarding as an agenda issue during monthly staff communications meetings, management meetings and Board meetings. This is an element of monitoring and evaluating our performance.
- Staff training in sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA201)
- Inclusion of safeguarding component in proposal development
- Gender sensitivity – female leaders feel comfortable and confident in their roles.

Awareness raising with staff and program participants

- Safeguarding commitment statement in all offices, at the foyer, in counselling rooms and in training rooms.
- Safeguarding flyers which are distributed to CONNECT's clients and program participants. The flyer is available in vernacular language.
- In house training of board and staff on safeguarding
- Refresher sessions on safeguarding during meetings.
- Training of participants in SG at community level



Complaints handling mechanisms

- Complaints are reported to the CONNECT SG focal person through:
 - Community based safeguarding focal person
 - Safeguarding suggestion box
 - Direct reporting of safeguarding issues through phone calls to the CONNECT safeguarding focal person using toll-free.
- Feedback is provided through
 - Direct engagement with the complainant
 - Focus group discussion on the raised matter
 - Staff engagement on the raised complaint
- All complaints raised are logged on to the complaints log sheet.

Recognising good practices already in place but not labelled as 'safeguarding'

- Post evaluation from students, clients and project participants after receiving services.
- Mainstreaming safeguarding in consultancy work.
- Open door policy.

Next steps – action plan

- Budgeting for safeguarding trainings.
- Give safeguarding lead or focal point(s) the opportunity to regularly update at board meetings, staff meetings and other meetings.
- Ensure that women and girls (and other at-risk individuals) are involved in mapping safeguarding issues in a particular context.
- Ensure the organisation's annual report or equivalent has a safeguarding section.
- Safeguarding continues to be part of the sustainability plans in CONNECT's work
 - Sensitisation of staff, clients, students
 - Sensitisation of community gatekeepers – on safeguarding issues and equipping them with conflict resolution skills.
 - Ensure that there is a safeguarding focal person in each project ward.
 - Add SG role to the student representative in each training group
 - Review of counselling training curricular to include safeguarding.

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SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT STATEMENT



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CONNECTS' VISION

Peace and harmony in individuals, families, communities and society at large.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

CONNECT is committed to safeguarding programme participants and beneficiaries, course participants and counselling clients from all forms of exploitation and abuse, and expects all staff members (full time and part time), third parties including, volunteers (both professional and community based), visitors and consultants to share this commitment.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all parties to:

- Model and promote respectful behavior
- Create an inclusive environment
- Promote an environment that is open to hearing concerns
- Report any concerns immediately to the contacts below

SAFEGUARDING FOCAL PERSONS

To make a complaint contact the safeguarding focal person:

Executive Assistant
Ennet Matanda
Cell: 0772 806 353
Email: admin@connect.org.zw

About CONNECT's Commitment to safeguarding
The Executive Director:
Dennis Mudede
Cell: 0712 616 927
Email: dennismudede5@gmail.com,
dennis@connect.org.zw

18149 Ganges Road Cnr Convair Road
Ridgeview, Harare

Website: www.connect.org.zw

Email: admin@connect.org.zw

Facebook: [Connect-Zimbabwe Institute of Systemic Therapy](https://www.facebook.com/Connect-Zimbabwe-Institute-of-Systemic-Therapy)

Twitter: [@zistConnect](https://twitter.com/zistConnect)

SAFEGUARDING POSTER AND FLYER

CONNECT SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

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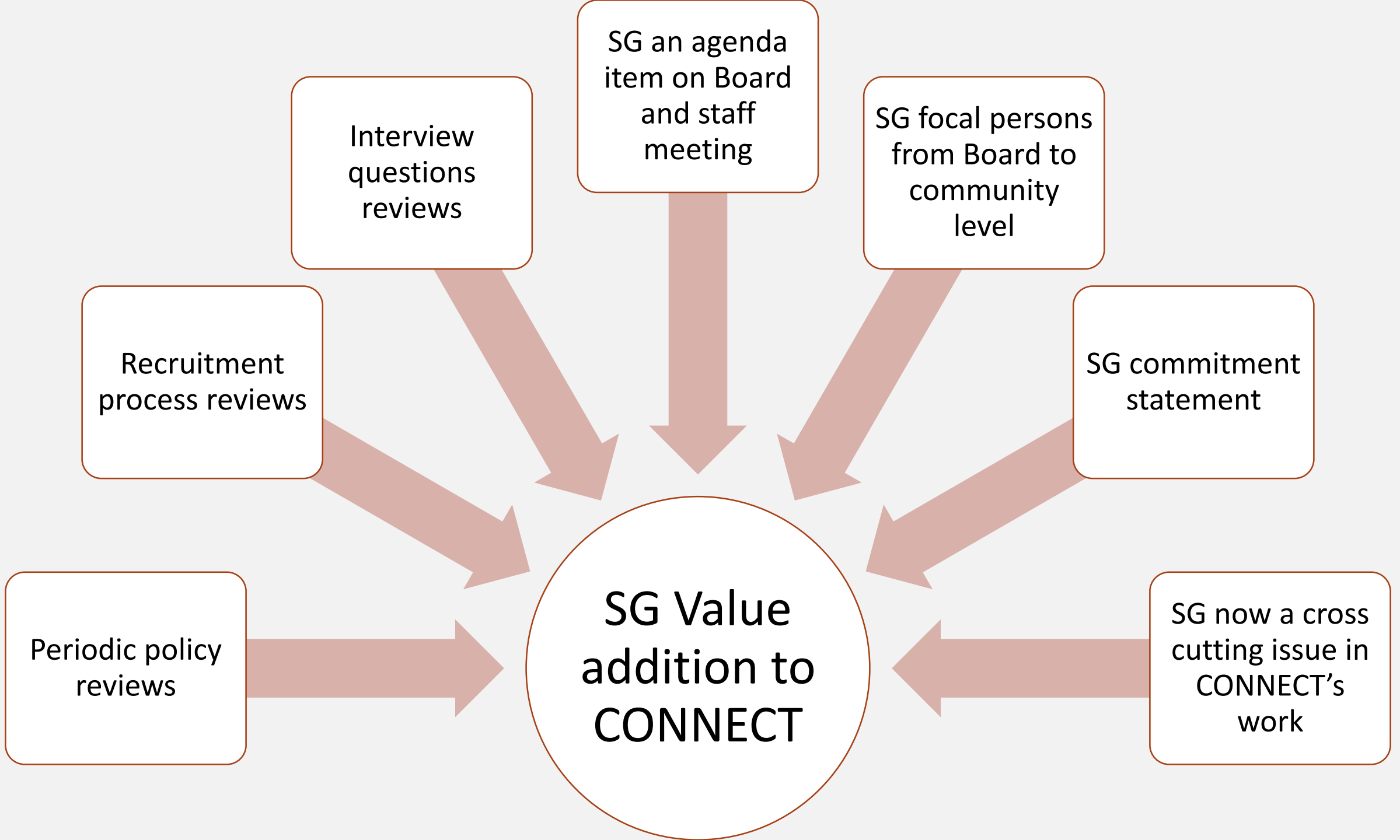
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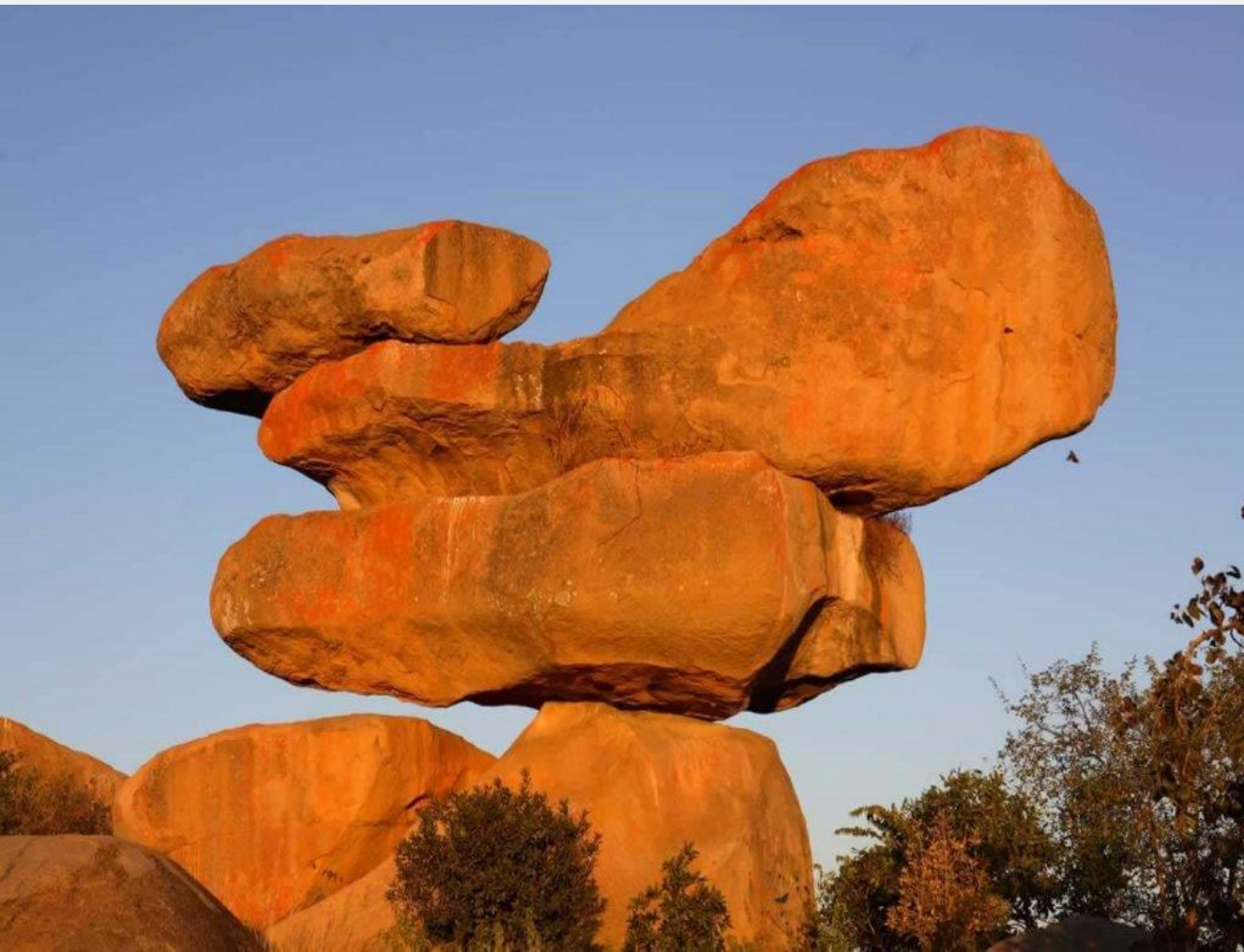
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**Thank you
for
listening**

