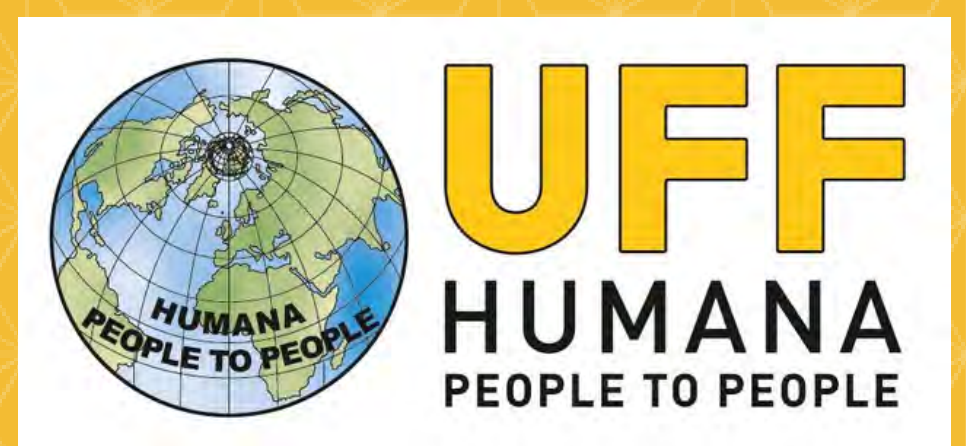


YOUNG GIRLS FROM BINDURA AND MAKONI DISTRICTS TELL THEIR STORIES OF CHANGE



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INTRODUCTION

Young girls in Zimbabwe face numerous challenges, including limited access to education, early marriages, teenage pregnancies and economic vulnerability. These challenges hinder their ability to reach their full potential and contribute to the country's development.

To address the challenges faced by young girls, Development Aid from People to People (DAPP) Zimbabwe's HOPE Bindura project received financial support from UFF Humana to award scholarships to ten vulnerable girls, eight from Manhenga Ward 10 in Bindura Rural District, Mashonaland Central province and two from Makoni District, Manicaland province. The scholarship covered tuition fees and accommodation for the girls at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College, enabling them to pursue short vocational courses lasting up to eight months. The courses consist of four months of theoretical and practical training at the college, followed by four months of attachment. Currently, some girls are in the theoretical phase, while others have already begun their attachments.

The scholarship is crucial in empowering young girls with skills, knowledge and confidence to improve their socio-economic status. By providing financial support, HOPE Bindura and UFF Humana are bridging the gap in access to education and skills training, enabling these young women to break the cycle of poverty and vulnerability. The scholarship program is a significant step towards promoting gender equality and empowering young girls to take charge of their lives and futures.



TINOVIMBA GAMBE



My name is Tinovimba Gambe, but everyone calls me 'Tino'. I am an 18-year-old young lady from Bindura Rural, Mashonaland Central Province. Growing up, life was not easy. My relationship with my father and stepmother was strained and I also struggled in school due to social and economic challenges at home. I was on the brink of dropping out, but everything changed when I joined the HOPE Bindura's Young Girls empowerment program funded by UFF Humana.

The program transformed my life. I learned to see my stepmother in a new light and regained hope for a brighter future. HOPE Bindura paid my school fees and provided support until I completed my Ordinary Level exams in 2022. Although I did not score well, I did not give up. I re-enrolled in Form 3 being financially supported from home but had to drop out again due to my father's illness.

With financial support again from UFF Humana through HOPE Bindura, I enrolled at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College to study Beauty Therapy. During my four months period at the college, I gained skills in Anatomy and Physiology, Skincare, Makeup Application, Hair Removal, Massage Therapy, Beauty Business Management and Client Consultation and Communication and Sanitation and Hygiene. Currently I am attached at Ebony Hair Salon in Harare for four months.

I believe beauty therapy is a realistic, sustainable and lucrative career path that will enable me to support myself and my family. My goal is to build a successful career. Thanks to the Young Girls' Program because I have gained confidence and a positive outlook on life. I am excited to be on this path and make a difference in my community.

MIRIAM ZEBEDIA



My name is Miriam Zebedia and I am a 31-year-old lady from Maganyani village in Bindura rural district, Mashonaland Central province. I lost both parents in a tragic accident at the age six and was raised by my maternal grandparents, who relied on rain-fed agriculture for income and food. However, unpredictable weather patterns affected our harvests, leading to financial struggles forcing me to drop out of secondary school due to unpaid fees.

Determined to survive, I worked as a housemaid in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city. However, the workplaces were unbearable and I returned home and started selling tomatoes and vegetables to earn a living. During my free time, I participated in DAPP HOPE Bindura activities that focused on Sexual reproductive Health and skills development on young girls . The encouragement and financial support I received from HOPE Bindura motivated me to enroll in the Garment Construction program at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College from September 2024 to April 2025.

During my four-month learning period at the college, I learned pattern making, garment construction and seam finishing techniques. I was then attached at Home Industry in Bindura for four months where I gained hands-on experience in handling customers, sewing and mending various items. With these skills, I am now sewing and selling petticoats to women in my community, using the income to cover my basic needs.

My future in the garment construction industry looks bright. I plan to utilize a free sewing group in my area with modern sewing machines to continue improving my skills, gaining experience, penetrate markets and continue generating income. Thanks to the support from HOPE Bindura and UFF Humana, I am confident that I will achieve my dreams and build a brighter future for myself.

SIBONGUMUSA DUBE



My name is Sibongumusa Clariss Dube and I am a 20-year-old young lady from Nyanhewe village in Bindura Rural, Mashonaland Central province. After losing my father at a young age, my mother became our sole provider, working as a farmer to ensure our survival. Despite financial challenges, I persevered and completed my primary and secondary education. However, I did not perform very well in my Ordinary Level exams and I stayed home idle.

My mother and I used our limited savings to start an indigenous chicken production business, but it did not succeed as planned, further straining our household economy. However, everything changed when I got an opportunity to enroll at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College, thanks to financial assistance from UFF Humana through the HOPE Bindura project and I chose to study Bakery and Confectionery.

Over four months, I learned basic baking techniques, cake decorating and bread making. The training not only equipped me with skills but also boosted my confidence and self-esteem. I am currently attached at Popular Bakery in Mt Darwin, where I am applying my skills in a professional setting. After completing my course, I hope to secure employment in a bakery in Bindura town close to my home.

With newfound confidence and skills, I am determined to build a brighter future for myself and my family. I am grateful for the support from HOPE Bindura and UFF Humana, which has given me a chance to pursue my dreams.

BELINDA MANDAZA



My name is Belinda Mandaza and I am a 21-year-old young lady from Mhizha village in Bindura Rural, Mashonaland Central province. Growing up, I saw my parents struggle to make ends meet through buying and selling tomatoes and vegetables, a livelihood vulnerable to market fluctuations and crop failures. Despite financial challenges at home, I managed to obtain four Ordinary Level subjects. However, due to financial constraints, I could not pursue further studies and ended up staying idle at home.

I was awarded a scholarship by HOPE Bindura, with financial support from UFF Humana, to study a short course in Motor Vehicle Maintenance at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College. I enrolled in September 2024 and completed the course in April 2025. Over four months at the college, I gained knowledge in vehicle maintenance, repair and diagnostics. My practical training at Home Industry in Bindura was a testament to my determination, as I proved myself capable and outperformed some of my male peers despite initial doubts.

After completing my studies, I will start a small business offering car maintenance and repair services in my community. I am driven to succeed and prove that women can thrive in male-dominated fields. With hard work and dedication, I am confident that I will make a difference and become a role model for young ladies in my community.



PRIVILEGED GUNYERE



My name is Privilege Gunyere, a 21-year-old living in Bindura Rural, Mashonaland Central province. I stay with my 74-year-old grandmother. After my parents separated, my father went to South Africa seeking better opportunities and my mother remarried. Life with my grandmother was tough, so I joined my father in South Africa mid 2022. However, I found he was struggling even more than my grandmother and my presence added to his burden. After a year and a half of not being idle in South Africa, I returned home

After returning to my grandmother, I joined the Young Girls program led by the HOPE Bindura project which provided training and guidance on income-generating projects, life skills and career development. The program awarded me a scholarship to pursue a short course of my choice. In September 2024, I enrolled at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College to study Confectionery and Baking, thanks to financial support from UFF Humana.

During my four-month training at the college and four-month industrial attachment, I acquired skills in pastry making, cake decorating and dessert creation. I also learned the importance of self-motivation and teamwork. With my passion and training, I am confident that starting a baking business selling scones, pies and doughnuts in my community will enable me to earn a living and take care of my grandmother. I am grateful to UFF Humana and HOPE Bindura for giving me a life changing opportunity.



NYASHA SAINI



My name is Nyasha Saini and I am a 25-year-old lady and who is a last born in a family of four. I live with my elder sister in Mutandiri village, Manhenga area, Bindura District, Mashonaland Central province. After losing our parents, my father in 1999, the year I was born and my mother in 2004 – my sister took on the responsibility of caring for me. Despite facing challenges as a widow, my sister ensured my well-being. However, her financial struggles forced me to end my education at primary level.

Determined to build a better future, I avoided early marriage and held onto hope that I would finish my education. My dream took a step forward in 2024 when I was awarded a scholarship by HOPE Bindura, with financial support from UFF Humana, to study a short course of my choice. I enrolled in the Beauty Therapy course at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College. Initially, I struggled with theoretical aspects due to my educational background, but my teacher and colleagues encouraged me to persevere when I felt like dropping out. With time, I started grasping the concepts and developed a passion for the course.

Currently, I am attached to Beautiful Salon in Harare, focusing on braiding and weaving. I have gained skills in hairdressing, hairstyling, hair and scalp treatments, as well as socialization, time management, and customer service. After obtaining my Beauty Therapy certificate, I plan to work as an apprentice at my sister's salon and eventually open my own salon in Madziwa township one day.



EMMILDA MAKWANYA



My name is Emmilda Makwanya and I am a 19-year-old young lady from Makwanya Village in Makoni District, Manicaland province. After losing my parents in grade seven, I became the caregiver and breadwinner for my younger sister. Life became tough and we struggled to continue our education and afford basic necessities. In desperation, I turned to sex work to survive, facing risks to my health and safety.

Everything changed when I joined DAPP's Building Community Resilience through Climate Change Adaptation Actions in Makoni District. I gained valuable farming skills and market linkage skills, which helped me start a new chapter in my life. DAPP's support did not stop there, they offered me a scholarship with financial support from UFF Humana to study Confectionery and Bakery Studies at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College. The eight-month course, accredited by Bindura University and Science Education (BUSE), included four months of theoretical training and practical training at the college and four months industrial attachment.

After completing my theoretical training, DAPP helped me to secure an attachment at Panmart, a local supermarket in Makoni close to my siblings. I am now applying the skills I have learned to bake a variety of products, from rock buns to cakes. My future looks brighter, and I am hopeful that after completing my studies, I will secure employment and earn a steady income to support my siblings.



PRUDENCE KABAYADONDO



My name is Prudence Kabayadondo and I am a 24-year-old lady from Mupoperi Village, Makoni district in Manicaland province. Growing up as an orphan was challenging, but my life took a positive turn when I joined DAPP's Building Community Resilience through Climate Change Adaptation Actions in Makoni District, Zimbabwe. As one of the 50 smallholder farmers in Mabvazuva garden, I gained skills in growing food for consumption and surplus for sale, which improved my livelihood.

In 2024, I was awarded a scholarship from DAPP with financial support from UFF Humana for an 8-month short course of my choice at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College. I chose Confectionery and Bakery. The course equipped me with baking skill, cake decorating, pastry making, dessert creation and I also learned entrepreneurship skills.

During my attachment at Panmart Supermarket, I applied my skills in a real-world setting, learning best practices in commercial baking, customer service and inventory management. The attachment provided me with hands-on experience, allowing me to improve my techniques, work efficiently and meet customer demands. I am now able to bake a variety of products, including bread, scones, cakes and pies, to high standards.

After completing my attachment, I look forward to starting a baking business in my community, supplying local people with freshly baked goods such as scones, buns and doughnuts. I am also eager to train other less privileged youths in my community with bakery and confectionery skills, empowering them to improve their livelihoods and become self-sufficient. With the skills and knowledge I have gained, I am confident that I will earn a living for myself.

MEMORY MANGURENJE



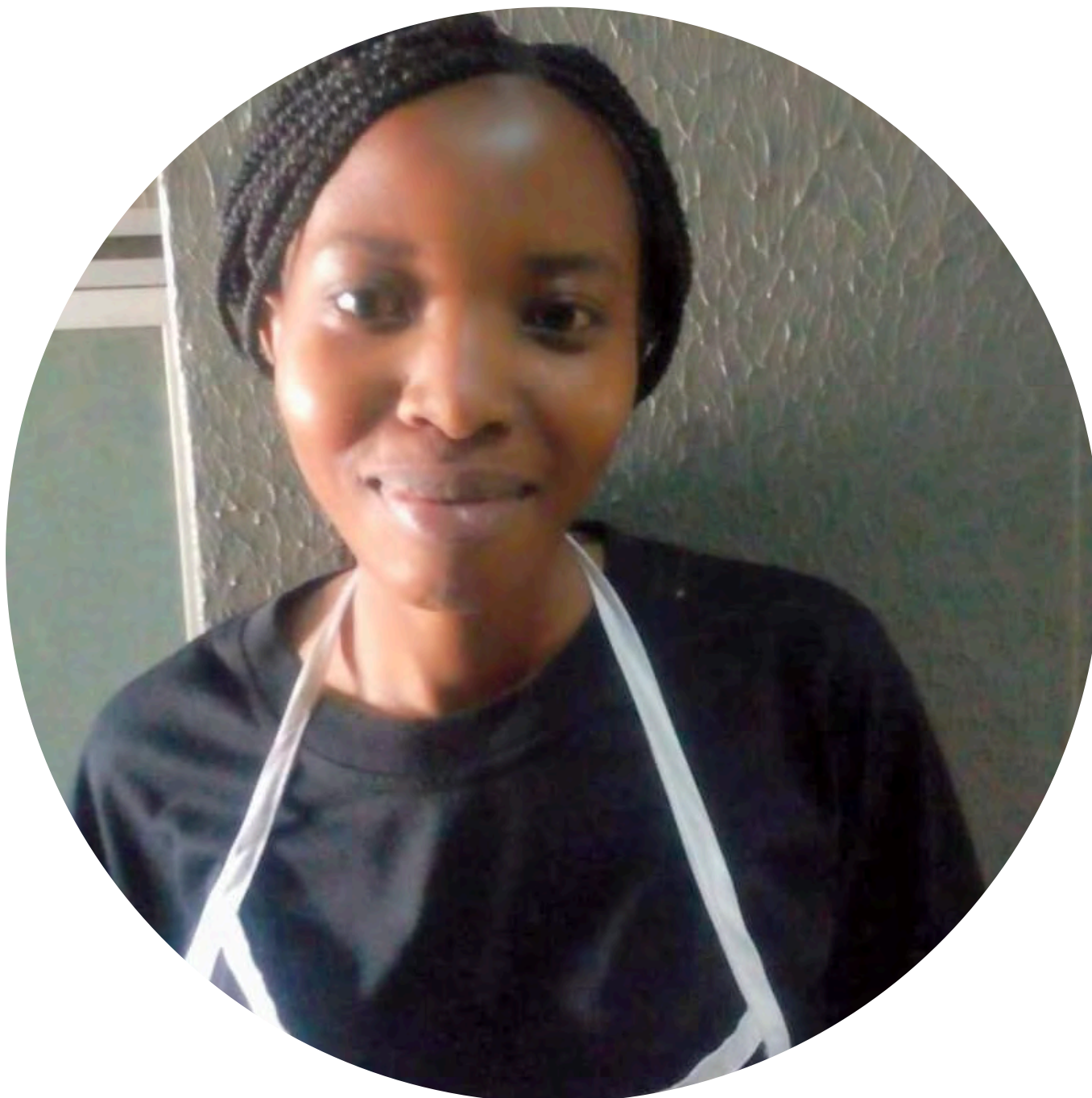
My name is Memory Mangurenje and I am a 20-year-old lady living with my mother in Chiveso village, Bindura rural district, Mashonaland Central province. After my biological father was tragically killed, my mother took care of me. I was fortunate to be part of the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) program, which supported my education until I completed my Ordinary Level in 2020. Unfortunately, I did not pass and due to the program's limitations and financial constraints, I stayed home idle.

However, in 2024, I was awarded a scholarship by the HOPE Bindura project to study an 8-month short course at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College. I chose Confectionery and Baking. During the first 4 months, I learned theoretical and practical aspects, including marketing, food safety and hygiene practices. My industrial attachment provided hands-on experience in confectionery baking skills like pastry making, cake decorating, bread and doughnut making.

I believe that all the skills I have gained will open doors for me, whether through employment or starting my own business. I am also excited to share my knowledge with other girls in my community, teaching them how to bake and empowering them with new skills.



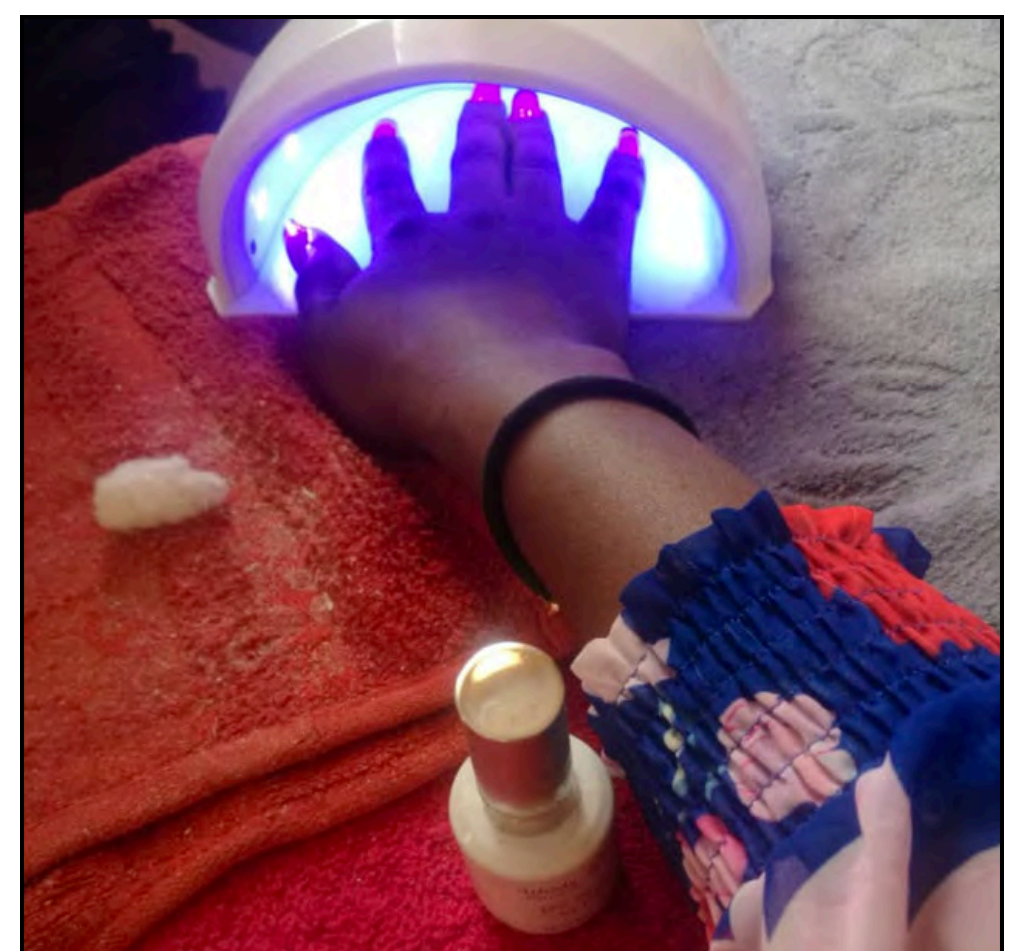
CHRISTABEL MPOFU



My name is Christabel Mpofu and I am a 20-year-old young lady from Mhasvi village, Bindura Rural, in Mashonaland Central. Growing up, I saw my family's livelihood affected by climate shocks, impacting my father's rain-fed agriculture. The stress at home took a toll on my education and I passed only four subjects in my Ordinary Level exams in 2022. Despite financial constraints, I found solace in assisting my mother with hairdos and plaiting, which sparked my interest in Beauty Therapy.

In 2024, I received a scholarship from HOPE Bindura to study a short course and I seized the opportunity to pursue Beauty Therapy at Ponesai Vanhu Technical College. During my first four months, I gained skills in socializing with people, skin care routine, makeup application and nail technology. My attachment at a salon called 'Your Beautiful Saloon' in Harare further broadened my expertise, where I learned body treatments, massage therapy and laser and light therapy.

With the experience I have gained, I aspire to specialize in skincare and makeup, empowering myself to build a successful career in Beauty Therapy. I am determined to turn my passion into a profession, creating a brighter future for myself and my family.



LIFE EXPERIENCE AT THE COLLEGE



"My highlight from the college was definitely the 'Morning Gathering'. It was a weekly tradition where students and staff would come together to share plans for the week, discussing goals, actions and expected outcomes. This experience taught me to be more social, confident and articulate in front of an audience. I am grateful for the opportunity to have developed these skills and I believe it has contributed to my growth." says Sibongumusa Dube.



"One of my favourite experiences at PVTC was 'Common Action' - a Saturday morning activity from 8 am to 10 am where students would come together to clean the college, from dormitories to classrooms and the surrounding environment. I also got to help out on the construction site, carrying materials. Through 'Common Action', I learned the importance of teamwork, discipline and keeping our environment clean. It also taught me to be punctual. These habits have stuck with me and I still practice them today." Says Tinovimba Gambe



"Before starting my attachment, I was part of a core group overseeing apiculture production. As students, we would rotate participation on various Income Generating Projects (IGPs) at such as aquaculture, apiculture, garden farming and poultry. My favourite was rabbit production. Through these IGPs, I gained valuable insights into business ideas and income generation. I also developed hands-on skills that will help me diversify my income streams in the future, beyond my work in Motor Vehicle Maintenance." Says Belinda Mandaza



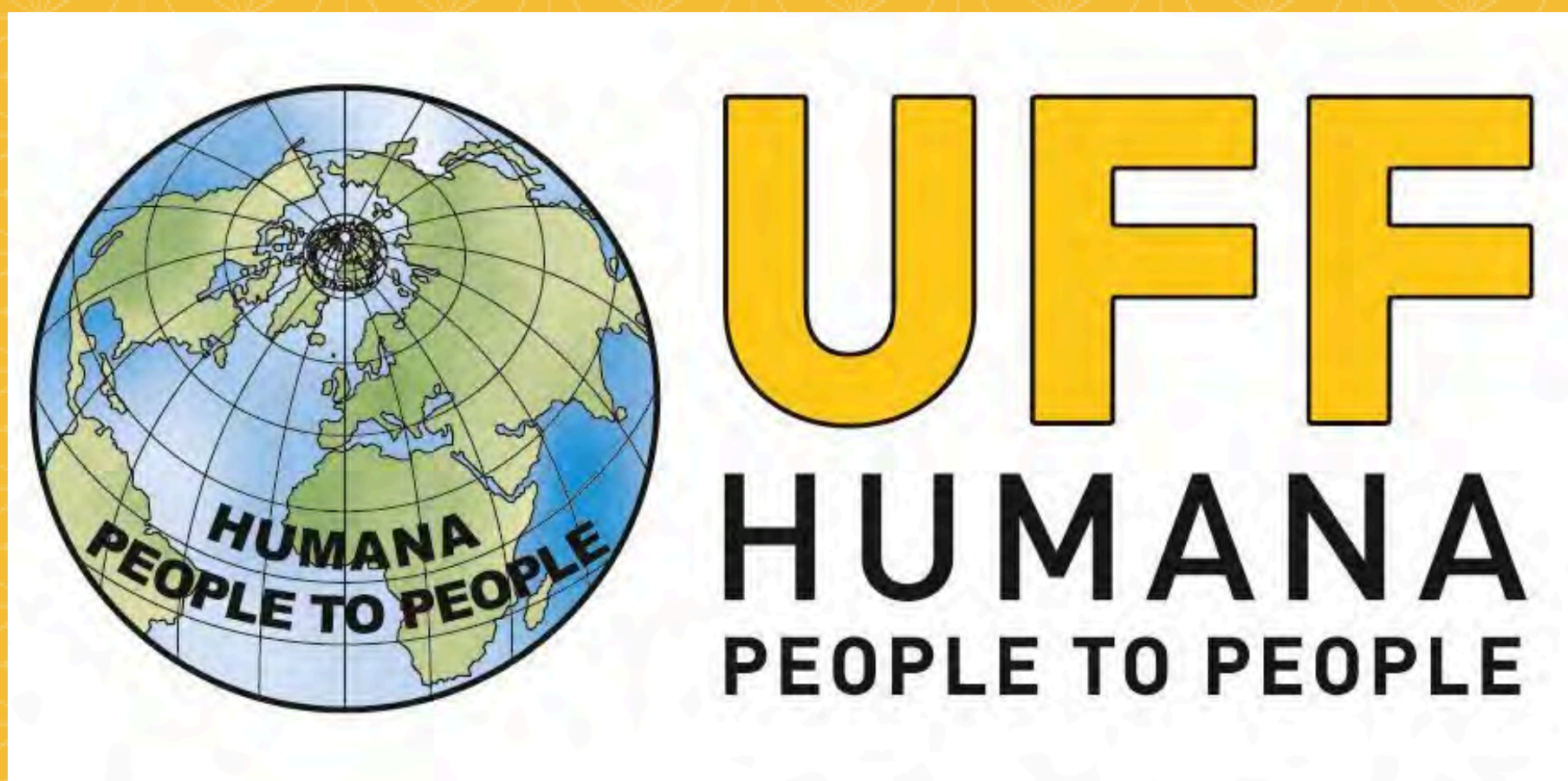
"One of the most exciting activities at college for me was sports, which took place three days a week after lunch. I loved playing volleyball and the college gave me an opportunity to shine. We would play every three days, competing against each other and sometimes even against neighbouring schools and the community. It was great to see my friends participating in other sports like football, handball and netball, I enjoyed watching them play. For me, the best part was staying physically fit through volleyball." Says Nyasha Saini



"I loved the hands-on learning beyond the classroom at the college. Every Monday from 4 pm to 5 pm, I participated in 'Green Hour', where we would focus on climate action activities. As part of a core group with nine other students and our teacher, I would help with the college's food production especially gardening and farming, which was rewarding since I was there during the farming season. We also did gully reclamation in nearby communities and environmental cleanups. This experience has truly shaped me and I will continue participating in community development activities where I am." Says Christabel Mpofu



"Campaigning for a spot on the Student Representative Council (SRC) was a game-changer for me. I had to step out of my comfort zone and develop my social skills to connect with my fellow students. It was a great opportunity to showcase my leadership skills and I am thrilled that it paid off since i was selected deputy Secretary. As an SRC member, I have gained confidence in public speaking, which is huge for someone who's naturally shy. This experience has been one of the highlights of my time at PVTC and I value the leadership skills I have developed." Says Prudence Kabayadondo



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