

## **Abstract**

This research investigates how the taking on of different roles in the fictional world can be used to explore and rehearse possible ways of dealing with issues of sexual exploitation and violence affecting young women in the Hatcliffe Extension community, in Zimbabwe. It is a direct response to the Sistaz in Solidarity's Talk is not Cheap Project which faced limitations in its verbal approaches such as force field analysis, used for analysing this situation in the same community. This research was conducted through the theoretical lens of role theory which recognises that any individual plays a number of roles in life, similar to actors carrying out their roles on stage. Considering that role-play in the fictional world draws from everyday life, this research argues that assuming roles in the fictional world can be instrumental for the rehearsal of real life situations. Fictional roles can help people to re-imagine both themselves and their situations. The fictional world on the other hand provides distancing of both time and emotional connection for participants to safely feel and express their challenging situations. It is on this note that the research investigates how assuming roles in the fictional world can help the young women to explore their stories of sexual exploitation and violation.