



**ZIMIZABWE PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
2026-2028**



*Mental Wellness for a Brighter Zimbabwe*

# Zimbabwe Psychological Association (ZPA) Strategic Plan 2026–2028

## Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Organizational Background
- Environmental Analysis
  - External Environmental Analysis
  - Internal Environmental Analysis
- Vision, Mission, and Values
- Objectives and Strategies
  - Objective 1: Develop a Sustainable Organizational Structure and Capacity
  - Objective 2: Strengthen Membership and Professional Development Opportunities
  - Objective 3: Advance Psychology Practice and Research in Zimbabwe
  - Objective 4: Advocate for Mental Health and Social Justice Policy
  - Objective 5: Promote Culturally-Responsive Psychology and Decolonization
  - Objective 6: Expand International Partnerships and Collaborations
- Implementation Plan
  - Phase 1: Planning and Initial Implementation (2026)
  - Phase 2: Major Implementation and Scaling Up (2027)
  - Phase 3: Evaluation and Refinement (2028)
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Conclusion

## Introduction

The Zimbabwe Psychological Association (ZPA) is a national professional body of psychologists, psychiatrists, and allied mental health professionals in Zimbabwe. Established to advance the science and practice of psychology, the ZPA has played a key role in promoting mental health and well-being, professional development, and policy advocacy in the country. This strategic plan outlines the ZPA's vision, mission, and objectives for the period 2026–2028. It is grounded in an environmental analysis of the internal and external context, including socio-economic factors, the healthcare system, regulatory environment, and the broader mental health landscape in Zimbabwe. The plan sets forth clear objectives and strategies to guide the ZPA's activities and provides an implementation roadmap with milestones for 2026, 2027, and 2028. It also includes a monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure the plan's goals are met and progress is tracked. By following this strategic plan, the ZPA aims to fulfill its mission of serving as the unified voice for psychology professionals and improving mental health outcomes for all Zimbabweans.

## Organizational Background

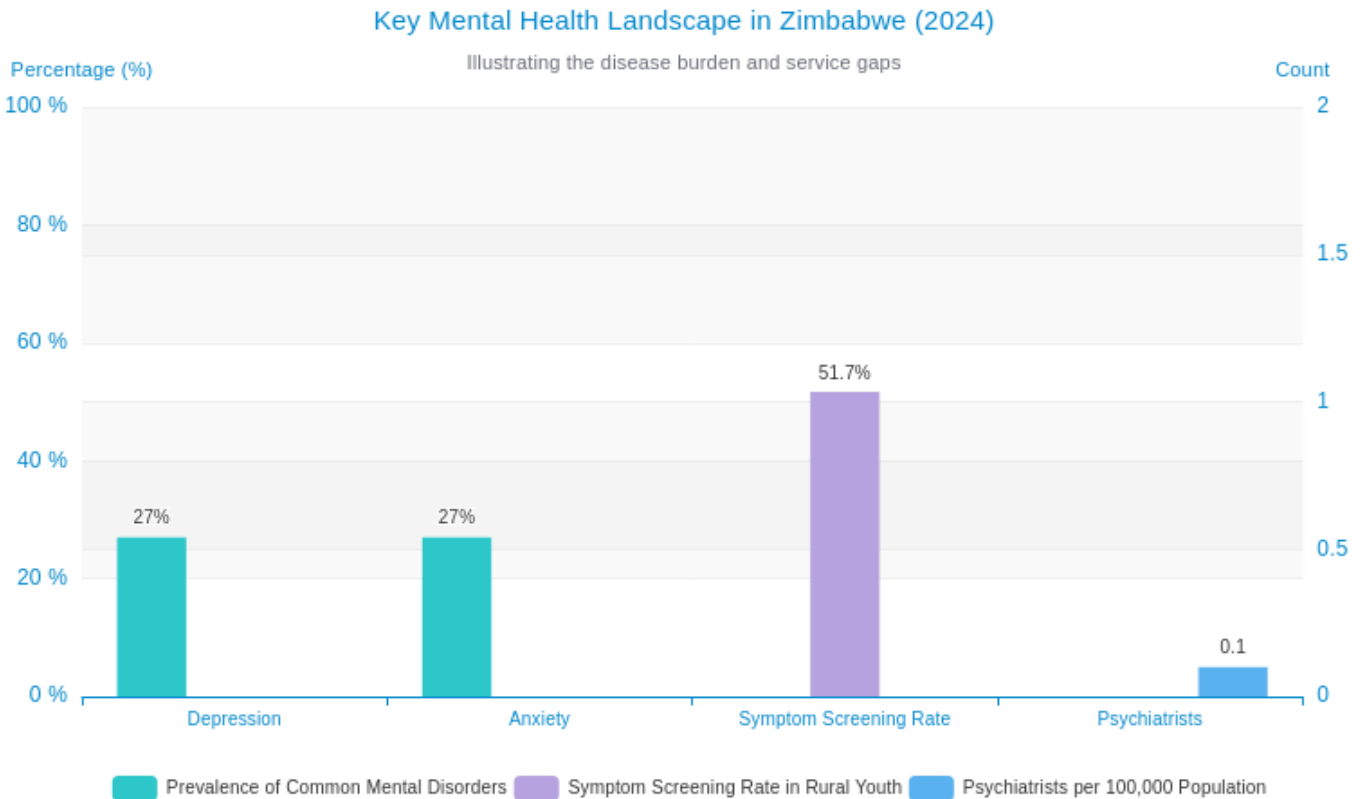
The ZPA was founded in 1993 as an association of psychologists and mental health professionals, and it has since become a vital member of the international psychological community. It is a founding member of the Pan African Psychology Union (PAPU) and is recognized as an Adhering Member of the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS). The ZPA's membership includes psychologists, psychiatrists, and other mental health professionals, as well as students and related institutions. As of the latest available data, the ZPA had **approximately 2,066 members** in 2021, a 22% increase from the previous year. This growth reflects the ZPA's expanding influence and the increasing interest in psychology as a profession in Zimbabwe. The ZPA's executive committee and council are composed of distinguished psychologists and mental health advocates who lead the association in its mission. Over the years, the ZPA has organized conferences, workshops, and training programs to enhance professional standards and knowledge. It publishes journals and newsletters and engages in policy advocacy to influence mental health and social policies. The ZPA's organizational structure includes a membership division, training division, research and publication committee, and advocacy and public policy committees, among others. This structure supports the ZPA's various functions, from member services and professional development to research dissemination and policy engagement. The ZPA's annual conferences, such as the 2024 conference themed "Decolonising Psychology: Reclaiming the African Psychology of Well-being," have provided platforms for sharing knowledge and fostering professional networking. Overall, the ZPA stands as a cornerstone of psychological practice and leadership in Zimbabwe, bridging local professionals with international counterparts and advocating for evidence-based, culturally relevant psychological services.

## Environmental Analysis

An analysis of the internal and external environments provides the context for the ZPA's strategic planning. Below is a summary of key factors influencing the ZPA's operations over the 2026–2028 period.

### External Environmental Analysis

- **Socioeconomic Factors:** Zimbabwe faces significant socioeconomic challenges that profoundly impact mental health and access to psychological services. High unemployment (estimated around 85% among youth), poverty, and a struggling economy create stressors that contribute to common mental disorders. The COVID-19 pandemic and climate change have further exacerbated mental health issues, with young people bearing a heavy burden – roughly **27% of youth (15–24) experience depression**. The mental health situation is critical: nearly **35% of adults** in Zimbabwe have some form of mental illness, but only a fraction receive professional help. The prevalence of specific disorders, such as depression and anxiety, is significant, but treatment access remains limited. The table below illustrates some of the key mental health indicators and service gaps in Zimbabwe.



Data Source: , ,

- The economic crisis has led to **financial barriers** for accessing mental health services – many cannot afford fees for therapy or medication. This is compounded by **transport and infrastructure challenges** in rural areas, where mental health services are scarce. Moreover, **cultural and social stigma** remains a pervasive barrier to seeking mental health help. Many view mental illness as a moral failing or spiritual affliction, leading to shame and reluctance to seek professional support.

Overall, the socioeconomic context means that psychological services are urgently needed, but the population’s capacity to pay and cultural attitudes create significant access challenges. The ZPA must address these realities in its strategic efforts, ensuring that services are affordable, culturally appropriate, and accessible to all segments of society.

- **Healthcare System:** Zimbabwe’s healthcare system is under-resourced and faces numerous challenges that affect mental health service delivery. The public health sector struggles with shortages of trained personnel and infrastructure. There is a **severe shortage of mental health professionals** – the country has only about **18 psychiatrists** (0.1 per 100,000 population) and **6 psychologists** serving the entire public hospital network (0.04 per 100,000). In fact, the ratio of psychiatrists to the population is one of the

lowest globally, with only 1 psychiatrist per 500,000 people . This stark shortage means the vast majority of the population lacks access to specialized mental health care. As a result, most mental health services are concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural communities underserved. The primary care system, while extensive in terms of primary healthcare clinics, has minimal capacity to address mental health issues. Community-based mental health programs are limited, and there is a **high treatment gap** – the majority of people with mental disorders go untreated due to lack of financing and support . The government’s health budget allocations for mental health are insufficient; historically, mental health has received only a small fraction of the health budget, and current allocations struggle to meet even basic needs. The limited availability of psychotropic medications and other mental health resources in public facilities further restricts care. Despite these challenges, the healthcare system has some positive elements: a network of public hospitals and clinics, a cadre of general practitioners and nurses, and the presence of NGOs and international organizations providing mental health services. For example, the Friendship Bench, an evidence-based community mental health program, has been piloted in primary care settings . Overall, the healthcare system context for the ZPA is one of **limited resources and capacity**, which necessitates creative approaches (such as task-sharing and integration) to deliver psychological services. The ZPA must work with the government and partners to improve the mental health workforce, infrastructure, and resource availability, while also leveraging existing programs and networks to expand access.

- **Regulatory Environment:** Zimbabwe has a mental health regulatory framework and some policies that influence psychological practice and services. The country has a **Mental Health Act (1996)** and a National Mental Health Policy (introduced in 1999) that aim to guide mental health service delivery .

These policy documents emphasize decentralization of mental health services and the integration of mental health into primary healthcare . However, in practice, the regulatory environment has faced challenges in implementation. There is a need to update the mental health legislation to align with modern standards and human rights principles . Currently, mental health services are mostly delivered in hospitals and specialized units, with limited community involvement. The **mental health workforce** is regulated by the Zimbabwe College of Psychiatrists (which oversees psychiatrists) and the ZPA (which regulates psychologists and other mental health professionals). The ZPA is the professional body responsible for registering psychologists and setting professional standards and ethical guidelines for practice in Zimbabwe . It works with the government to promote high standards of practice and to advocate for the inclusion of psychology in healthcare reforms. The regulatory environment also includes laws related to healthcare financing, insurance, and disability rights that indirectly affect mental health care. For example, there are laws protecting persons with disabilities, which ZPA can use to advocate for the rights of people with mental illness. Additionally, there are ongoing discussions around mental health parity in insurance and legal protections for people with mental illness. The ZPA operates within a context where **government policies** and legal frameworks are in place but often underfunded or under-enforced. Therefore, the ZPA’s advocacy and professional leadership are crucial to influence the regulatory environment. By engaging with policymakers and stakeholders, the ZPA can push for improved mental health legislation, better funding mechanisms, and policies that support community-based and primary care mental health services. The regulatory environment analysis indicates that while foundational frameworks exist, their effectiveness depends on implementation and political will. The ZPA’s strategic plan will address this by supporting evidence- based policy reforms and ensuring that professional standards are aligned with the country’s mental health needs.

- **Mental Health Landscape:** The broader mental health landscape in Zimbabwe is characterized by a significant disease burden and limited service availability. Mental, neurological, and substance use disorders are a leading cause of disability and illness in the country, accounting for a substantial portion of the disease burden. Depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are common among adults and youth, yet many go without treatment. There is **widespread stigma** and misconceptions about mental illness – often attributed to supernatural causes or moral failings. This stigma discourages help-seeking and can lead to social marginalization of people with mental health conditions. Community support systems for mental health are weak; traditional healers and faith-based organizations sometimes play a role in addressing mental distress, but they may not always align with biomedical approaches. The country has a few specialized mental health facilities, such as psychiatric hospitals and units in major hospitals, but these are understaffed and overburdened. The government’s **mental health strategic plan (2019–2023)** identified key objectives like improving patient care, awareness, and workforce capacity. However, progress has been slow due to resource constraints. International organizations and NGOs have played important roles in filling gaps – for instance, the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners have supported mental health interventions, and local NGOs like the Zimbabwe National Association for Mental Health (ZIMNAMH) provide advocacy and community support. The mental health landscape also includes challenges such as **inadequate data and research** on mental health in Zimbabwe, which limits evidence-based decision-making. Despite these challenges, there are positive developments: a growing recognition of mental health as a public health priority and the emergence of innovative community-based models (like Friendship Bench) that show promise in improving access. The ZPA’s strategic plan will leverage these developments by integrating them into its professional leadership efforts. Overall, the mental health landscape context underscores the need for the ZPA to collaborate widely – with government, NGOs, international agencies, and communities – to expand services, reduce stigma, and improve mental health outcomes in Zimbabwe.

### **Internal Environmental Analysis**

- **Organizational Strengths:** The ZPA has several strengths that position it well to achieve its strategic goals. First, it has a strong membership base and a growing network of psychologists and allied professionals, which provides a ready pool of expertise and support. The ZPA’s diverse membership (including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and students) brings together a broad range of skills and perspectives. Second, the ZPA has a solid foundation of professional standards and ethics. It sets and maintains standards for practice, ensuring that psychologists in Zimbabwe adhere to high ethical and professional guidelines. This helps build trust and credibility in the field. Third, the ZPA has experience in advocacy and policy engagement. Over the years, it has successfully influenced mental health policies and practices, for example by advocating for mental health in the national HIV/AIDS strategy and participating in mental health reform discussions. Its presence in international bodies (IUPsyS, PAPU) also provides a platform for sharing knowledge and aligning with global best practices. Fourth, the ZPA has a committed leadership and active committees. The executive committee and council members are dedicated professionals who guide the association’s direction, and various committees (training, research, publication, advocacy, etc.) ensure that the ZPA covers a wide range of functions. The ZPA’s training division, for instance, develops and accredits high-quality workshops and CPD programs, which helps maintain and enhance

professional competence. Fifth, the ZPA has an established network of chapters and contacts across the country. While membership is currently concentrated in urban areas, the ZPA has been working to expand its reach to rural and underserved regions through workshops and training initiatives. These internal strengths – a skilled membership, strong standards, advocacy experience, active committees, and an expanding network – form a solid base for the ZPA’s strategic plan. The challenge will be to leverage these strengths to overcome external obstacles and drive meaningful change in the field of psychology in Zimbabwe.

- **Organizational Weaknesses:** Despite its strengths, the ZPA faces certain internal weaknesses that need to be addressed. One major weakness is the **limited financial resources** and funding instability. The ZPA relies on membership dues, occasional grants, and sponsorships to fund its activities, but financial constraints often limit the scope of its programs. This has historically constrained the ZPA’s ability to conduct large-scale training, research, and advocacy campaigns. Another weakness is the **small size of the membership** relative to the country’s needs. While membership has grown, the ZPA still represents a minority of psychologists in the country, and not all professionals are registered members. This can hinder the association’s influence if a significant portion of practitioners are not engaged. There is also a **geographical imbalance** in membership and activity – most members are based in Harare and Bulawayo, with fewer in rural areas. This means the ZPA’s outreach and impact are skewed towards urban areas. The ZPA’s capacity in terms of staff and infrastructure is another concern. It operates with a small staff (often volunteers) and limited administrative support, which can make it challenging to implement complex initiatives. Additionally, the ZPA’s **internal processes and structures** could be improved. For example, membership recruitment and retention strategies might need refinement to attract and retain more young and rural-based psychologists. There may also be gaps in communication and coordination between different committees, which could affect the efficiency of delivering services. Lastly, the ZPA’s **membership demographics** might not be fully representative of the diverse Zimbabwean population. Ensuring that the association reflects the experiences of all segments (including women, youth, people with disabilities, and professionals in various settings) is important for relevance and inclusivity. Addressing these weaknesses will be a key part of the ZPA’s strategic plan – for instance, by seeking additional funding sources, strengthening membership outreach, improving internal governance, and diversifying its membership base. By doing so, the ZPA can enhance its effectiveness and better fulfill its mission to support all psychologists and promote mental health in Zimbabwe.

- **Organizational Opportunities:** The ZPA is situated in an environment with several opportunities to advance its goals. A significant opportunity is the **growing recognition of mental health as a public health priority**. There is a rising awareness globally and in Zimbabwe that mental health is essential for overall well-being and economic development. This presents an opportunity for the ZPA to engage in national and international discussions on mental health and to position psychology as a key contributor to health systems. Another opportunity is the **development of community-based and task-shifting models** in mental health. Innovative programs like the Friendship Bench (which trains community health workers to provide psychological support in primary care) have demonstrated success in improving access to basic mental health services. The ZPA can partner with such initiatives, integrate them into training and practice guidelines, and advocate for their inclusion in government health programs. This not only expands the reach of psychological services but also showcases the role of psychologists in collaborative care models. The ZPA also has an opportunity to

**leverage international partnerships.** As an IUPsyS member, it can tap into global networks for training, research, and funding. International collaborations can bring technical expertise and resources to Zimbabwe. For example, partnerships with organizations like the African Psychological Association or international NGOs can provide mentorship, funding for research, or exchange programs for Zimbabwean psychologists. The increasing availability of **digital and telehealth technologies** is another opportunity. Telepsychiatry and online mental health platforms are emerging in Zimbabwe, especially in the private sector and with NGOs, and the ZPA can play a role in promoting their use in a regulated manner. This could help overcome some of the geographic barriers and increase access to mental health services for remote populations. The ZPA also has an opportunity to **expand its professional development offerings.** There is demand for continuing education and training in specialized areas (e.g., trauma therapy, clinical psychology, organizational psychology, etc.). By offering more advanced courses, workshops, and certifications, the ZPA can attract more members and enhance the skills of its practitioners, thereby improving service quality. Additionally, the ZPA can capitalize on **research and evidence generation** opportunities. As the association, it can facilitate research projects on mental health in Zimbabwe, publish findings in its journals and newsletters, and disseminate them to policymakers. This evidence base can strengthen the ZPA's advocacy efforts and support evidence-informed practice. Finally, the ZPA has the chance to **engage youth and new generations** of psychologists. Encouraging student chapters and young professionals' involvement can infuse new energy into the association and help build a pipeline of future leaders. In summary, the internal strengths combined with these external opportunities create a favorable landscape for the ZPA to achieve its strategic objectives. By seizing these opportunities – such as partnerships, community-based models, digital innovations, and enhanced professional development – the ZPA can significantly amplify its impact in the coming years.

- **Organizational Threats:** The ZPA must also be mindful of potential threats that could impede its progress. One major threat is the **limited funding and resource constraints.** Without sustained financial support, the ZPA's ability to implement large-scale programs or conduct advocacy campaigns will be constrained. Funding threats include competition for donor grants (mental health is a relatively new priority area with limited global funding), and government budget cuts that could reduce support for mental health initiatives. Another threat is the **brain drain of mental health professionals.**

Zimbabwe has lost many trained mental health workers to better opportunities abroad, which exacerbates the shortage of psychologists and psychiatrists. This talent exodus can limit the ZPA's pool of members and professionals in the field. The ZPA must work to retain and attract professionals, but competition from countries with better working conditions is a continuous threat. **Stigma and resistance to change** also pose a threat. Despite increasing awareness, deep-seated cultural stigma and negative attitudes towards mental illness can slow progress in integrating mental health services into the mainstream health system. There may be resistance from some stakeholders who view mental health as less important or who are skeptical of psychological interventions. Political and economic instability can also threaten mental health efforts – political uncertainty or economic crises can lead to budget reallocations away from health, including mental health, and disrupt programs. For example, economic downturns can reduce funding for NGO mental health projects and make it harder for professionals to practice due to low incomes. Additionally, the **legal and regulatory environment** could be a threat if there are policy changes that undermine mental health services. For instance, if there were cuts in mental health services or new laws that inadvertently restrict

professional practice (e.g., if insurance regulations make it harder for psychologists to provide services), it could impede the ZPA's work. The ZPA also faces threats related to **misinformation and public perception** – if there are negative public perceptions or misinformation campaigns about mental health, it can discourage people from seeking help and create an unfavorable climate for the association's advocacy. Finally, **internal organizational challenges** like infighting or lack of consensus among members could threaten the association's unity and effectiveness. In summary, the ZPA must navigate these threats by building resilience – for example, diversifying funding sources, advocating for improved conditions for professionals, addressing stigma through education, and maintaining strong internal cohesion. By acknowledging and proactively managing these threats, the ZPA can better safeguard its strategic plan and ensure that it can fulfill its mission despite external challenges.

## ↳ Vision, Mission, and Values

**Vision:** The ZPA envisions a future where psychology is deeply embedded in Zimbabwean society, promoting mental health and well-being for all. The ZPA's vision is that **“Psychology Enhances the Lives of All Zimbabweans”**. This means that by 2028, the impact of psychological science and practice will be widely recognized and accessible, contributing to healthier individuals, families, and communities across the country. The vision emphasizes that psychology is not just a profession for a few, but a discipline that influences policy, education, and everyday life in Zimbabwe. It calls for a society where mental health is a priority, stigma is reduced, and people have equitable access to quality psychological services. Essentially, the ZPA's vision is to create a Zimbabwe where psychological knowledge and interventions are harnessed to improve the overall quality of life for every citizen.

**Mission:** The ZPA's mission is to **“advance psychology as a science and profession for the betterment of Zimbabwean society.”** In pursuit of this mission, the ZPA undertakes several key activities: it serves as the unified voice for psychologists and mental health professionals, upholding ethical standards and advocating for the interests of its members and the public they serve. The ZPA promotes professional development, research, and the application of psychological knowledge in various settings. It also engages in public outreach and advocacy to raise awareness about mental health, reduce stigma, and influence policies that support mental health and psychological practice. In summary, the mission is to support psychologists in providing high-quality services, to advance the field through research and education, and to ensure that psychology contributes to the well-being and development of Zimbabwe.

**Values:** The ZPA is guided by a set of core values that shape its approach to professional practice, advocacy, and member engagement. These values include:

- **Professionalism and Ethics:** The ZPA upholds the highest standards of professional ethics and practice. It values integrity, accountability, and the well-being of clients. Psychologists are expected to adhere to ethical guidelines in their work, and the ZPA plays a role in maintaining and enforcing these standards. This value ensures that psychology in Zimbabwe is practiced with competence and care, building public trust in the profession.

- **Excellence and Lifelong Learning:** The ZPA is committed to excellence in all its endeavors. It values continuous learning and professional growth for its members, encouraging psychologists to stay updated with the latest research and best practices. This value drives the ZPA's training and development programs and fosters a culture of innovation and improvement in the field.
- **Equity and Inclusivity:** The ZPA is dedicated to promoting equity and inclusion in psychology. It values diversity in its membership and the client populations it serves. This means the ZPA works to ensure that psychological services are accessible to all, regardless of background, and that the profession reflects the diversity of Zimbabwe. Equity also guides the ZPA's advocacy for fair treatment and rights of people with mental health conditions.
- **Collaboration and Partnership:** Collaboration is a core value for the ZPA. It recognizes that addressing mental health challenges and advancing psychology requires working together across sectors and with different stakeholders. The ZPA values partnerships with government, NGOs, international organizations, and other professional bodies. By collaborating, the ZPA can leverage resources and expertise to achieve greater impact than it could alone.
- **Social Responsibility and Advocacy:** The ZPA believes in the social responsibility of psychologists to contribute to the community. It values advocacy on behalf of mental health and the public good. This means the ZPA actively engages in policy dialogue, public education, and social change efforts to improve mental health outcomes for the population. Advocacy is seen as a vital part of the ZPA's mission to make psychology relevant and beneficial to society.
- **Respect for Culture and Context:** Recognizing the importance of cultural context in psychological practice, the ZPA values respect for local cultures and values. Psychologists are encouraged to tailor their interventions to the cultural beliefs and norms of Zimbabwean communities. This value ensures that psychological services are culturally sensitive and appropriate, aligning with the country's traditions and values.

These values form the foundation of the ZPA's strategic plan and guide how the association operates. They ensure that the ZPA's work is not only effective but also ethical, inclusive, and aligned with the needs of the Zimbabwean society. By upholding these values, the ZPA aims to build a strong, respected, and impactful professional association that truly serves the public interest and the field of psychology in Zimbabwe.

## Objectives and Strategies

Building on the vision, mission, and values, the ZPA has identified six overarching objectives for the 2026–2028 period. Each objective is supported by specific strategies and actions to achieve them. The following chart provides a high-level overview of the key objectives and their corresponding strategies.

## ZPA Strategic Plan 2026-2028: Objectives & Strategies



Data Source: Markdown Document – ZPA Strategic Plan 2026-2028

The objectives are structured to address critical areas of the ZPA’s work: organizational development, professional development of members, promotion of psychology practice and research, advocacy for mental health policy, culturally responsive practice, and international engagement. Each objective is described below, along with the strategies to attain it.

### Objective 1: Develop a Sustainable Organizational Structure and Capacity

**Objective:** Strengthen the ZPA’s internal capacity and governance to ensure its long-term sustainability and effective functioning. This includes improving membership management, financial stability, and organizational efficiency.

- **Strategy 1.1: Enhance Membership Management and Outreach:** Implement strategies to increase membership enrollment and retention. This will involve targeted outreach to underrepresented groups (rural psychologists, young professionals, etc.) and improving communication with members. The ZPA will develop membership recruitment campaigns, possibly including student chapters and affiliate memberships for allied professionals. It will also streamline membership processes (renewals, online registration) to make it easier for members to engage. By expanding and diversifying its membership base, the ZPA will ensure a larger and more representative membership, which in turn strengthens the association’s influence.
- **Strategy 1.2: Secure Financial Sustainability:** Develop a sustainable funding model for the ZPA. This will include seeking additional sources of income such as grants, sponsorships, and partnerships. The ZPA will explore collaborations with international psychology associations or organizations that support mental health in developing countries. It will also work on increasing membership dues contributions and possibly creating a membership development fund. The strategic plan will outline a financial plan for

2026–2028, with targets for income and expense management. Ensuring financial stability is critical for the ZPA to carry out its programs and advocacy efforts without interruption.

- **Strategy 1.3: Strengthen Organizational Governance and Efficiency:** Improve the ZPA’s internal governance and operational efficiency. This will involve reviewing and updating the association’s constitution and by-laws to ensure they align with best practices and current needs. The ZPA will establish clear roles and responsibilities for committees and working groups to enhance coordination. It will also invest in administrative capacity – for example, exploring the possibility of hiring a part-time administrator or using virtual tools to improve communication and record-keeping. Additionally, the ZPA will conduct regular organizational assessments to identify areas for improvement and implement corrective actions. By strengthening governance and efficiency, the ZPA will become a more agile and effective organization, better equipped to serve its members and achieve its objectives.
- **Strategy 1.4: Build an Alumni Network and Mentor Program:** Create an alumni network for former students and members to foster ongoing professional development and connection. The ZPA will encourage past members (graduates of psychology programs, past ZPA leaders, etc.) to stay engaged. This could include periodic reunions, online forums, or mentorship programs where experienced psychologists mentor younger or new practitioners. By building this network, the ZPA can tap into a pool of expertise and experience that can support current members and the association’s initiatives. The mentor program will help new psychologists transition into practice and will also help retain talent by keeping alumni connected to the profession.

## **Objective 2: Strengthen Membership and Professional Development Opportunities**

**Objective:** Provide comprehensive professional development opportunities for ZPA members to enhance their skills, knowledge, and professional standing. This objective aims to improve the competency of psychologists in Zimbabwe and to increase member engagement.

- **Strategy 2.1: Expand Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programs:** Develop and offer a variety of high-quality CPD workshops, training courses, and conferences. The ZPA will focus on topics relevant to current practice needs, such as trauma-informed care, cultural psychology, and emerging trends in psychology. It will also consider partnering with international organizations or universities to bring specialized training to Zimbabwe. By expanding CPD offerings, the ZPA will ensure that members have access to continuous learning opportunities that support their professional growth. This will also help maintain high standards of practice across the profession.
- **Strategy 2.2: Support Specialization and Advanced Training:** Encourage and facilitate members’ pursuit of specialization and advanced degrees. The ZPA will provide information and resources on advanced training opportunities (e.g., postgraduate diplomas, master’s degrees, PhD programs in psychology). It will also advocate for the recognition of advanced training in the Zimbabwean context (for example, ensuring that psychologists with specialist qualifications are integrated into healthcare teams appropriately). By supporting advanced training, the ZPA will build a cadre of highly skilled psychologists who can contribute in specialized areas like clinical psychology, counseling, industrial-organizational psychology, etc., thereby enriching the overall capacity of the profession.
- **Strategy 2.3: Promote Research and Publication:** Foster a culture of research and publication among ZPA members. The ZPA will support research initiatives by providing research grants or funding

opportunities for members conducting mental health research in Zimbabwe. It will also publish the results in the ZPA's journal or newsletter, and possibly encourage members to publish in international journals. The ZPA will organize research workshops and networking events to help members develop research skills. By promoting research, the ZPA will enhance evidence-based practice and contribute to knowledge generation that is relevant to Zimbabwe's context.

- **Strategy 2.4: Member Engagement and Leadership Development:** Engage members actively in the association's activities and provide leadership development opportunities. The ZPA will establish mechanisms for members to volunteer and contribute, such as committee memberships, working groups, and leadership positions. It will also run leadership development programs (e.g., workshops on leadership, advocacy, and strategic thinking) for members who are interested in taking on roles within the ZPA or in the broader mental health sector. By involving members in leadership and decision-making, the ZPA will ensure that the association's programs reflect the needs and perspectives of its members. This will also help in building a pipeline of future leaders in psychology and mental health.

### **Objective 3: Advance Psychology Practice and Research in Zimbabwe**

**Objective:** Promote the application of psychology in various settings and improve the evidence base for psychological practice in Zimbabwe. This includes advocating for the integration of psychology into healthcare, education, and social services, and supporting research that addresses local mental health challenges.

- **Strategy 3.1: Integrate Psychology into Health and Social Services:** Work with the government and other stakeholders to integrate psychological services into the primary healthcare system and other sectors. The ZPA will advocate for the inclusion of psychologists in multi-disciplinary teams in hospitals and clinics, for example, by proposing the establishment of mental health clinics in primary care facilities. It will also collaborate with NGOs and community health workers to expand access to psychological support in rural and underserved areas. Additionally, the ZPA will promote the use of psychology in education (e.g., school counselors, psychological support in schools) and in workplaces (e.g., workplace wellness programs). By integrating psychology into various settings, the ZPA will ensure that psychological interventions are available where people need them most, thus reducing the treatment gap.

- **Strategy 3.2: Develop Practice Guidelines and Standards:** Develop evidence-based practice guidelines for common psychological conditions and settings in Zimbabwe. The ZPA will convene experts to draft guidelines on topics such as treating depression and anxiety in primary care, counseling for trauma, and psychological support in schools. These guidelines will be informed by international best practices and adapted to the local context. The ZPA will then disseminate these guidelines to practitioners and incorporate them into training programs. By setting standards and guidelines, the ZPA will help ensure that psychological interventions are delivered with quality and consistency, improving the overall quality of care in the country.

- **Strategy 3.3: Strengthen Collaboration with Allied Health Professionals:** Foster partnerships with other mental health and allied health professions to improve integrated care. The ZPA will collaborate with organizations like the Zimbabwe College of Psychiatrists, the Zimbabwe Therapist Association (which includes social workers and counselors), and nursing associations to share knowledge and coordinate services. It will participate in multi-sectoral mental health committees and task forces to contribute

psychology's input. For example, the ZPA could join the government's mental health task force or an HIV/AIDS mental health task force. By strengthening these collaborations, the ZPA will leverage the expertise of other professionals and create a more holistic approach to mental health services.

- **Strategy 3.4: Conduct Local Research and Evaluation:** Support and facilitate research on mental health in Zimbabwe. The ZPA will identify priority research areas (such as mental health in rural communities, the impact of economic stress on mental health, the effectiveness of local interventions) and encourage members to conduct studies. It will also collaborate with universities and research institutions to conduct national surveys or program evaluations. The ZPA will use the findings to inform policy and practice. For instance, if research shows high levels of trauma among certain groups, the ZPA can advocate for trauma-informed care programs. By generating and disseminating local research, the ZPA will ensure that psychological practice is grounded in evidence relevant to Zimbabwe's population.

#### **Objective 4: Advocate for Mental Health and Social Justice Policy**

**Objective:** Influence mental health and social policies to improve mental health services and the rights of people with mental illness. This objective focuses on policy advocacy at national and local levels, including engagement with government, parliament, and civil society.

- **Strategy 4.1: Engage in Policy Development and Advocacy:** Actively participate in policy discussions related to mental health, education, and social issues. The ZPA will establish a policy committee or task force dedicated to advocacy. It will monitor relevant government policies and draft submissions or position papers on mental health matters. For example, the ZPA will provide input on the national mental health strategic plan, budget allocations for mental health, and any proposed legislation affecting mental health (such as amendments to the Mental Health Act or policies on disability rights). The ZPA will also engage with parliament by submitting briefings or statements to parliamentary committees on issues like mental health funding, de-stigmatization campaigns, and mental health in schools. By engaging in policy development, the ZPA will ensure that the voice of psychology is heard in shaping policies that impact mental health services.

- **Strategy 4.2: Increase Public Awareness and Stigma Reduction:** Conduct awareness campaigns and public education initiatives to reduce stigma and increase understanding of mental health. The ZPA will partner with media, community organizations, and schools to disseminate information about mental health. This could include public service announcements, workshops, and social media campaigns. The ZPA will also encourage members to engage in community outreach, such as visiting schools or rural clinics to talk about mental health. By increasing awareness, the ZPA will help change public attitudes towards mental illness, making it more acceptable to seek help. This, in turn, will create a more supportive environment for implementing mental health policies and services.

- **Strategy 4.3: Support Community and User Advocacy:** Strengthen the involvement of people with lived experience of mental illness and their families in advocacy efforts. The ZPA will collaborate with organizations like ZIMNAMH and other mental health user groups to form a coalition for mental health advocacy. It will support the formation of user-led support groups and ensure that their voices are included in policy discussions. For example, the ZPA could organize forums where persons with mental illness share their experiences with policymakers. By involving the community, the ZPA will advocate for policies that respect the rights and dignity of people with mental illness, and that improve their access to

care and social inclusion.

- **Strategy 4.4: Monitor and Evaluate Policy Impact:** Establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of mental health policies and evaluate their impact. The ZPA will collect data on mental health service utilization, coverage, and outcomes, and use this to inform advocacy. If, for instance, data shows that the government's mental health program is not reaching certain regions, the ZPA will use this evidence to push for targeted interventions. It will also engage in research or surveys to assess public perception and access to mental health services over time. By evaluating policy impact, the ZPA can hold policymakers accountable and make evidence-based arguments for further policy improvements. This will ensure that advocacy efforts are effective and aligned with real needs.

#### **Objective 5: Promote Culturally-Responsive Psychology and Decolonization**

**Objective:** Promote the application of culturally sensitive and contextually relevant psychological approaches in Zimbabwe. This objective focuses on decolonizing psychology, incorporating indigenous knowledge, and ensuring that psychological practice is attuned to local cultural norms and values.

- **Strategy 5.1: Decolonize Psychology Curriculum and Practice:** Work with psychology training institutions and professional bodies to decolonize psychology education and practice. This will involve reviewing and revising curricula to include indigenous African theories, philosophies, and knowledge systems. The ZPA will collaborate with local academics to develop courses or modules on African psychology and cultural psychology. It will also encourage psychologists to incorporate cultural humility and respect for local beliefs in their practice. For example, psychologists will be trained to ask about cultural explanations of distress and to integrate those into their assessment and treatment. By decolonizing psychology, the ZPA will ensure that the profession is more inclusive and relevant to Zimbabwean clients, reducing the cultural gap in service delivery.

- **Strategy 5.2: Incorporate Indigenous Knowledge and Healing Practices:** Collaborate with traditional healers, community leaders, and indigenous experts to integrate culturally appropriate healing practices into mental health services. The ZPA will host forums or workshops where psychologists and traditional healers can discuss and learn from each other. It will support pilot projects that integrate traditional healing with biomedical approaches, such as referral systems between psychologists and traditional healers. The ZPA will also promote research on the effectiveness of combined approaches. By incorporating indigenous knowledge, the ZPA will address the fact that many people in Zimbabwe first seek help from traditional healers for mental health issues

. Bridging these two systems can improve access and outcomes.

- **Strategy 5.3: Foster Cross-Cultural and Interdisciplinary Learning:** Encourage cross-cultural learning experiences for psychologists and other professionals. The ZPA will facilitate exchanges with psychologists from other African countries or with diaspora psychologists who have Zimbabwean roots. It will also partner with cultural institutions (like museums, cultural centers) to provide cultural sensitivity training. Additionally, the ZPA will support interdisciplinary collaborations – for instance, linking psychology with sociology, anthropology, and traditional medicine – to gain a holistic understanding of mental health. By fostering cross-cultural and interdisciplinary learning, the ZPA will enrich the knowledge base of its members and enable them to better serve diverse populations.

- **Strategy 5.4: Promote Local Psychometric Development:** Develop and validate psychological assessment tools that are culturally appropriate for Zimbabwean populations. The ZPA will

collaborate with local researchers and academics to create or adapt psychological tests and questionnaires that align with local idioms and contexts. This could involve translating and adapting international scales into Shona or Ndebele, or developing entirely new scales for local constructs. By promoting local psychometric development, the ZPA will ensure that assessments are reliable and valid for Zimbabweans, which is crucial for accurate diagnosis and treatment planning. This strategy will also empower local experts to contribute to global psychological knowledge.

#### **Objective 6: Expand International Partnerships and Collaborations**

**Objective:** Strengthen international partnerships and collaborations to enhance the ZPA's capacity and impact. This includes leveraging global networks for training, research, and advocacy, as well as promoting Zimbabwean psychology on the international stage.

- **Strategy 6.1: Strengthen Global and Regional Links:** Increase the ZPA's engagement with international psychological associations and organizations. The ZPA will renew and deepen its membership in IUPsyS and other global bodies, and it will actively participate in their activities (e.g., World Congress of Psychology, regional meetings). It will also maintain strong ties with the Pan African Psychology Union (PAPU) and engage in continental initiatives. By being more visible and active globally, the ZPA will stay updated on international best practices and gain access to resources and funding opportunities. It will also seek to host international conferences or events in Zimbabwe in the future, which would bring international experts to the country and showcase Zimbabwean psychology.
- **Strategy 6.2: Establish Exchange Programs and Scholarships:** Develop exchange programs and scholarship opportunities for ZPA members to engage in international learning and training. The ZPA will partner with international universities or training programs to send psychologists for short-term training, internships, or study visits. It will also seek to host visiting scholars or trainers from abroad. For example, the ZPA could arrange for a visiting professor from a Western university to teach a workshop in Zimbabwe on an advanced topic, or send a Zimbabwean psychologist to a mentorship program in another country. Additionally, the ZPA will apply for scholarships or fellowships on behalf of its members, such as those offered by IUPsyS or other organizations. By facilitating these exchanges, the ZPA will expose its members to global perspectives and skills, and it will also build a network of international contacts for future collaborations.
- **Strategy 6.3: Collaborate on Research and Publications:** Form research collaborations with international institutions and researchers. The ZPA will encourage members to join multi-country research projects on topics relevant to Africa, such as global mental health studies or cultural psychology research. It will also seek to publish ZPA members' research in international journals, possibly through special issues or partnerships. Furthermore, the ZPA will support the development of an international journal or publication series that features research from African psychologists. By collaborating on research, the ZPA will contribute to the global evidence base and also gain access to international expertise and funding. This will enrich the quality of research done in Zimbabwe and increase the visibility of Zimbabwean psychology in the global community.
- **Strategy 6.4: Advocate Internationally for Mental Health in Zimbabwe:** Use the ZPA's international links to advocate for support and resources for mental health in Zimbabwe. It will engage with international NGOs, development agencies, and the WHO to highlight the mental health needs in Zimbabwe and the role of psychology. For instance, the ZPA could partner with the World Federation

for Mental Health or the African Federation of Mental Health to jointly advocate for policy changes. The ZPA will also share its experiences and success stories (like the Friendship Bench model) with the global community to inspire others and potentially attract support. By amplifying its voice internationally, the ZPA can attract funding, technical assistance, and collaborations that directly benefit Zimbabwe's mental health sector. This strategy will complement the advocacy efforts at the national level by bringing in global perspectives and support.

Each of these objectives and strategies is designed to address a specific need and opportunity identified in the environmental analysis. By pursuing these, the ZPA aims to transform its professional practice, influence policy, and enhance its organizational capacity over the 2026–2028 period. The next section outlines how these objectives will be implemented in practice, with a timeline and milestones for each year.

## Implementation Plan

The implementation of the ZPA's strategic plan will be phased over the three-year period, with key activities and milestones scheduled for 2026, 2027, and 2028. The following timeline provides a high-level overview of the major implementation activities across the three years.

### 2026

#### Phase 1: Planning and Initial Implementation

In the first year (2026), the ZPA will focus on planning, preparatory activities, and the initial rollout of key initiatives. This phase will set the foundation for the next two years. The following activities are planned for 2026:

- **Strategic Planning and Launch:** The ZPA will conduct a strategic planning retreat or series of meetings in early 2026 to finalize the implementation plan for 2026–2028. This will involve aligning all objectives and strategies with the ZPA's current capacity and available resources. The plan will be formally launched at the ZPA's annual general meeting or conference in 2026, with clear communication to members about the objectives and how they can contribute.
- **Objective 1 Implementation:** In 2026, the ZPA will kick off efforts to strengthen its organizational structure. This will include conducting a membership needs assessment to identify areas for improvement in membership management. The ZPA will then develop a membership growth plan and possibly recruit a membership coordinator or volunteer to lead outreach. Financially, the ZPA will begin diversifying income sources – for example, by applying for a small grant for a specific project (like a training program) and by increasing membership dues collection efforts. Governance-wise, the ZPA will hold elections for new committee members and possibly form a new advocacy committee as part of the strategy implementation. By the end of 2026, the ZPA aims to have a more organized structure, with

updated by-laws, a clearer division of tasks among committees, and a plan for long-term funding sustainability.

- **Objective 2 Implementation:** In 2026, the ZPA will start implementing its professional development programs. It will organize at least one major CPD workshop or training event (e.g., a workshop on trauma-informed care or cultural psychology) to be held in the first half of the year. This workshop will be open to all psychologists and will count towards CPD points. The ZPA will also begin planning for a national psychology congress or conference in 2027 (to be held in late 2027 or early 2028) – the 2026 planning will include identifying a venue, themes, and possibly keynote speakers. Additionally, the ZPA will start a mentorship pilot program: matching experienced psychologists with early-career psychologists or students to provide guidance and support. By the end of 2026, the ZPA will have a pipeline of upcoming training events and a framework for continuous learning opportunities.

- **Objective 3 Implementation:** In 2026, the ZPA will begin advocating for the integration of psychology into healthcare. It will form a working group with the Ministry of Health and Child Care to discuss the inclusion of psychologists in primary care teams. The ZPA will also collaborate with the Zimbabwe College of Psychiatrists and the Zimbabwe Therapist Association to create a joint statement on integrated mental health services. On the research front, the ZPA will identify a priority research topic (perhaps “Mental Health in Rural Zimbabwe”) and call for research proposals. It may partner with a local university to conduct a small-scale study on this topic. By year-end, the ZPA will have started to build a case for the inclusion of psychology in health policy documents and will have at least one research project underway or planned.

- **Objective 4 Implementation:** In 2026, the ZPA will launch a national awareness campaign on mental health. This will involve producing materials (brochures, posters) in local languages and possibly securing media partnerships for public service announcements. The ZPA will also engage with parliament by submitting a brief on the importance of mental health in the national budget. Additionally, the ZPA will convene a stakeholder meeting to discuss the formation of a mental health user group coalition. By 2026’s end, the ZPA will have created initial awareness content and begun dialogue with policymakers on mental health issues.

- **Objective 5 Implementation:** In 2026, the ZPA will start the process of decolonizing psychology education. It will organize a workshop with psychology educators at universities to discuss incorporating African psychology content into curricula. The ZPA will also initiate a project to translate an indigenous healing concept (like “Ngozi” in Shona) into a psychological framework. Additionally, the ZPA will collaborate with traditional healers to plan a pilot workshop on integrating traditional healing with psychotherapy. By the end of 2026, the ZPA will have developed a draft plan for curriculum changes and will have started discussions with key partners for the integrated healing project.

- **Objective 6 Implementation:** In 2026, the ZPA will reach out to international partners to establish initial collaborations. It will contact the IUPsyS secretariat and other African psychology associations to express interest in joint projects. The ZPA will also explore

opportunities for exchange visits – for example, by inquiring about IUPsyS travel grants for its members. Additionally, the ZPA will prepare a short report on Zimbabwe’s mental health situation to share with international organizations. By the end of 2026, the ZPA will have identified at least one potential international partnership (perhaps a collaborative research project or training exchange) and will have begun the process of formalizing it.

## 2027

### Phase 2: Major Implementation and Scaling Up

The second year (2027) will be the main implementation phase, where most of the strategic activities will be carried out. The ZPA will focus on scaling up programs and ensuring that key strategies are fully operational. The following are major activities planned for 2027:

- **Objective 1 Implementation:** In 2027, the ZPA will solidify its organizational improvements. Membership outreach efforts will intensify, with the aim of reaching more rural psychologists and increasing the overall membership by a certain percentage. The ZPA will also seek and secure at least one major grant or sponsorship to fund a multi-year project (perhaps a community mental health project or a training program). Financial management will be strengthened with the help of a financial advisor or consultant to ensure sustainable income. Governance-wise, the ZPA will hold elections for new positions and possibly introduce term limits for some roles to ensure fresh leadership. By the end of 2027, the ZPA should have a more robust financial base and a clear structure for ongoing operations, allowing it to move into a more sustainable phase.
- **Objective 2 Implementation:** In 2027, the ZPA will run multiple CPD workshops and training courses to meet the professional development needs of members. This could include workshops on emerging topics like online therapy, forensic psychology, or organizational psychology. The ZPA will also plan and execute the national psychology congress or conference in late 2027 or early 2028 – likely themed around one of the strategic objectives (perhaps “Psychology in Rural Zimbabwe” or “Cultural Psychology and Decolonization”). The congress will provide a platform for members to present research and share experiences. The mentorship program will be expanded, with more mentees and mentors participating. By the end of 2027, the ZPA will have delivered a series of training events and a major professional gathering, thereby significantly enhancing the professional capacity of its members.
- **Objective 3 Implementation:** In 2027, the ZPA will deepen its efforts to integrate psychology into services. It will work with the Ministry of Health to advocate for the inclusion of psychologists in primary care facilities – possibly by submitting a proposal for a pilot mental health clinic in a district hospital. The ZPA will also start implementing the integrated care model: for example, partnering with a rural clinic to train a community health worker in basic psychological support. On the research front, the ZPA’s research project (started in 2026) will progress, and results will be compiled for dissemination. The ZPA will also begin drafting practice guidelines – perhaps starting with guidelines for managing depression in primary care – which will be refined through consultations with experts. By the

end of 2027, the ZPA will have laid groundwork for at least one integrated service (e.g., a clinic with a psychologist) and will have produced a draft set of practice guidelines.

- **Objective 4 Implementation:** In 2027, the ZPA will continue and expand its advocacy and awareness activities. It will organize a national mental health awareness week or campaign, possibly in collaboration with other mental health organizations. This could include radio talk shows, school assemblies, and community dialogues on mental health. The ZPA will also actively engage with parliament – for example, by briefing members of parliament on mental health budget needs. It will continue to work with the mental health user group coalition to ensure that user perspectives are part of advocacy efforts. By year-end, the ZPA will have contributed to significant policy discussions (perhaps influencing the government’s mental health budget allocation or inclusion of a mental health component in a new social policy) and will have seen an increase in public awareness and dialogue about mental health.

- **Objective 5 Implementation:** In 2027, the ZPA will advance the decolonization and cultural integration efforts. It will conduct a workshop on decolonizing psychology for psychology students and young professionals, aiming to raise awareness and generate ideas. The ZPA will also launch the integrated healing pilot: for instance, in one district, partnering with a traditional healer and a psychologist to offer joint consultations for mental health cases. It will document the outcomes of this pilot for learning. Additionally, the ZPA will collaborate with a cultural studies department to develop materials for cultural sensitivity training for psychologists. By the end of 2027, the ZPA will have made tangible progress in incorporating indigenous practices into services and will have begun developing educational resources for decolonization.

- **Objective 6 Implementation:** In 2027, the ZPA will intensify its international partnerships. It will formalize at least one major partnership – for example, signing a memorandum of understanding with a foreign psychology association for collaborative training. The ZPA will also send members on exchange visits (with support from grants) – perhaps sending a psychologist to a mentorship program in another country and inviting an international expert to conduct a workshop in Zimbabwe. It will engage with the WHO and other global organizations to seek funding for a joint project (e.g., a project on “Mental Health in Conflict Settings” given Zimbabwe’s history). By the end of 2027, the ZPA will have solidified at least one partnership and will have established a network of international collaborators, positioning itself to leverage these for future projects.

## ● 2028

### Phase 3: Evaluation and Refinement

The third year (2028) will focus on evaluating the progress of the strategic plan, consolidating achievements, and planning for the future. This phase will ensure that the ZPA learns from its implementation and can refine its approach for the next cycle. Key activities for 2028 include:

- **Strategic Plan Evaluation:** The ZPA will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the 2026–2028 strategic plan in early 2028. This evaluation will assess whether each objective and strategy was achieved, what outcomes were realized, and what challenges were faced.

The ZPA will use a mix of quantitative data (membership numbers, CPD hours, number of policy briefs produced) and qualitative feedback (surveys of members, stakeholders) to evaluate the plan. The evaluation will be conducted by an independent panel or a sub-committee of the ZPA council, ensuring objectivity.

- **Objective 1 Evaluation:** By 2028, the ZPA will evaluate the success of its organizational strengthening efforts. It will review membership growth figures, financial statements, and governance changes to see if the objectives for membership and sustainability were met. For example, did the ZPA reach its target membership increase, and is it financially self-sufficient or on a path to self-sufficiency? If not, the evaluation will identify why and suggest corrective measures. The evaluation will also look at improvements in internal efficiency – were the committee processes streamlined, and is the organization functioning more effectively?
- **Objective 2 Evaluation:** The ZPA will evaluate the impact of its professional development initiatives. This will include measuring member satisfaction with training programs, tracking the number of members completing CPD hours, and assessing if members' skills have improved as a result. It will also evaluate the success of the mentorship program (e.g., did mentees report improved confidence or career progression?). The national congress or conference will be evaluated for its impact on knowledge sharing and networking. The evaluation will ensure that the professional development strategies have achieved their goal of enhancing the competence and engagement of members.
- **Objective 3 Evaluation:** The ZPA will evaluate how well it advanced psychology practice and research. This will involve assessing whether psychology services were indeed integrated into any new settings (were any primary care clinics equipped with psychological support, for instance). It will also evaluate the effectiveness of practice guidelines (did practitioners use them, and did it lead to better outcomes?). The research projects will be evaluated for their findings and contribution to knowledge. The ZPA will also assess the impact of its advocacy on practice – did any policy changes (e.g., funding increases for mental health) occur, and to what extent did the ZPA's efforts contribute?
- **Objective 4 Evaluation:** The ZPA will evaluate the outcomes of its advocacy and awareness efforts. It will review public perception surveys or indicators of stigma reduction, and assess if there were any changes in attitudes towards mental illness. It will also evaluate the influence on policy: did the ZPA succeed in getting mental health on the national agenda, and did any specific policy gains (like a new mental health unit in a hospital) result from its work? Additionally, the impact on user groups will be evaluated – did user-led advocacy increase, and did any policies reflect user needs (like inclusion of user representatives in decision-making)?
- **Objective 5 Evaluation:** The ZPA will evaluate the success of its culturally responsive initiatives. It will assess if any changes in practice or policy were made as a result of the decolonization efforts – for example, if any training institutions revised their curriculum, or if any service providers started integrating indigenous healing methods. It will also evaluate the community's response to these initiatives (e.g., did clients report feeling more

understood or comfortable with culturally sensitive services?). The ZPA will compile lessons learned from the integrated healing pilot and share them with other stakeholders.

- **Objective 6 Evaluation:** The ZPA will evaluate the outcomes of its international collaborations. It will review what projects were completed through partnerships and their impact (e.g., did the exchange program lead to improved skills for members, or did the collaborative research yield any publications?). It will also evaluate the visibility and influence of Zimbabwean psychology on the international stage – did the ZPA’s involvement in global forums result in any funding or support coming to Zimbabwe? The evaluation will help the ZPA understand the value of its international links and inform future partnership strategies.
- **Future Planning and Conclusion:** Based on the evaluation, the ZPA will develop a report summarizing the achievements and lessons of the 2026–2028 plan. This report will be presented to the ZPA council and members. The evaluation findings will also guide the development of the next strategic plan (for 2029–2031). In 2028, the ZPA will celebrate its achievements during its annual conference or a special event, recognizing members and partners who contributed significantly. It will also conclude any ongoing projects by year-end and prepare to hand over any new initiatives to the next leadership if needed. By the end of 2028, the ZPA will have a clear understanding of what worked well and what needs improvement, setting the stage for continuous growth and adaptation in the future.

This implementation plan is dynamic and flexible, allowing for adjustments as needed based on progress and new opportunities. The ZPA will regularly monitor progress through mid-year reviews and quarterly meetings of the council and committees. By following this phased approach, the ZPA will ensure that each year builds on the previous one, leading to a successful realization of the strategic objectives by the end of 2028.

## ▾ **Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure that the ZPA’s strategic plan is implemented effectively and that its goals are met, a robust monitoring and evaluation framework will be established. This framework will track progress against the objectives and strategies, provide feedback for course correction, and ultimately measure the impact of the plan on the field of psychology and mental health in Zimbabwe.

**Monitoring Mechanisms:** The ZPA will implement a regular monitoring system to track the progress of each objective on an annual and quarterly basis. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be identified for each objective:

- **Objective 1:** Membership growth rate, number of active members, income diversification, financial surplus/deficit, and number of members engaged in leadership roles.
- **Objective 2:** Number of CPD events held, number of members attending CPD events, number of members completing CPD hours, number of advanced training enrollments, and member satisfaction

with professional development programs.

- **Objective 3:** Number of psychologists integrated into healthcare teams (e.g., clinics with a psychologist, school with a counselor), number of practice guidelines developed and disseminated, number of research projects completed or in progress, and changes in mental health service utilization or outcomes (e.g., percentage of people with mental illness who accessed psychological services).
- **Objective 4:** Number of policy briefs or submissions made, number of media or public outreach events held, change in public awareness or stigma levels (measured through surveys or media sentiment analysis), and number of policy or legislative changes influenced.
- **Objective 5:** Number of psychologists trained in cultural sensitivity, number of traditional healer-psychologist collaborations initiated, changes in clinical practice patterns (e.g., increased use of culturally adapted interventions), and feedback from clients or communities on culturally responsive services.
- **Objective 6:** Number of international partnerships established or renewed, number of members participating in international exchanges or programs, number of publications or presentations by ZPA members at international forums, and any tangible outcomes from international collaborations (e.g., funding secured, new projects initiated).

These KPIs will be tracked through the ZPA's records and regular reports. For example, the membership committee will track membership numbers and growth, the training committee will track CPD events and participant numbers, and the advocacy committee will track policy inputs and outcomes. The ZPA will also maintain a project management tool or dashboard to compile these data in one place, making it easy to monitor progress. Quarterly meetings of the council will review these KPI reports and discuss any deviations from the plan. If any objective is not on track, the council will analyze the reasons (e.g., lack of resources, unforeseen challenges) and decide on corrective actions. The monitoring mechanism will ensure transparency and accountability within the association, and it will provide early warning if any strategy needs adjustment.

**Evaluation Process:** The ZPA will conduct a comprehensive evaluation at the end of the 2026–2028 period, as outlined in the implementation plan. This evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluation team or a sub-committee of the council (to ensure objectivity). The evaluation will assess the extent to which each objective was achieved and what outcomes were realized. It will also evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used and identify lessons learned. The evaluation will use both quantitative and qualitative data:

- **Quantitative Data:** Membership statistics, CPD participation rates, financial data (income and expenses), number of research projects completed, number of policy briefs or media articles, number of people reached by awareness campaigns, etc. These will be collected from the association's records and possibly from external sources (e.g., health ministry data on mental health service coverage).
- **Qualitative Data:** Feedback from members and stakeholders through surveys, interviews, or focus groups. For instance, the ZPA will survey members to get their satisfaction with the association's programs and their perceived impact on their practice. It will also interview policymakers or partners

to gather their views on the ZPA's advocacy efforts. Qualitative data will provide insights into the perceived value of the ZPA's work and any qualitative outcomes (like changes in attitudes or behaviors).

- **Case Studies:** The evaluation may include case studies of specific successful initiatives or projects (e.g., a case study of the integrated healing pilot or a case study of a policy change influenced by the ZPA). These case studies will illustrate the impact and effectiveness of certain strategies.

The evaluation findings will be compiled into a detailed report that will be presented to the ZPA council and members. The report will highlight the achievements, challenges faced, and recommendations for improvement. It will also serve as a basis for the next strategic planning cycle (2029–2031). The ZPA will be transparent about the evaluation results, sharing them with the public and relevant stakeholders as appropriate. This will not only demonstrate accountability but also inform future advocacy and resource allocation decisions.

**Continuous Improvement:** The monitoring and evaluation framework will not be a one-time exercise but an ongoing process. The ZPA will use evaluation findings to continuously improve its operations. After each annual review (mid-year or end-of-year), if certain strategies are not yielding the expected results, the ZPA will discuss why and adjust the plan accordingly. This could involve reallocating resources, changing tactics, or even revising objectives if needed. By embedding monitoring and evaluation into its culture, the ZPA will ensure that it remains agile and responsive to the changing needs of the profession and the community.

In summary, the ZPA's monitoring and evaluation mechanism will provide a structured way to track progress, assess success, and learn from experience. It will help the ZPA demonstrate the value of its work to members, donors, and the public, and it will guide the association in refining its approach for future plans. Through effective monitoring and evaluation, the ZPA will be able to measure the impact of its strategic plan and ensure that it is making a tangible difference in promoting psychology and mental health in Zimbabwe.

## ↘ Conclusion

The 2026–2028 strategic plan for the Zimbabwe Psychological Association (ZPA) is a comprehensive roadmap designed to advance the science and practice of psychology and to improve mental health outcomes across the country. By analyzing the internal and external environment, the ZPA has identified clear objectives and strategies to address critical needs, from organizational sustainability to professional development, policy advocacy, and culturally responsive practice. The plan is grounded in the ZPA's vision of psychology enhancing the lives of all Zimbabweans and is guided by its mission and values. Over the next three years, the ZPA will implement these objectives through a phased plan, with milestones set for each year. It will monitor progress closely using KPIs and evaluate results rigorously to ensure accountability and continuous improvement. By executing this strategic plan, the ZPA aims to significantly strengthen its role as a professional body and a leader in mental health. It will empower its members to deliver high-quality psychological services, influence policies that support mental health, and create a culture of evidence-based, culturally sensitive practice. The ZPA's efforts will contribute to

closing the mental health treatment gap, reducing stigma, and fostering a society where mental well-being is prioritized. The success of this strategic plan will not only benefit the ZPA and its members but also the broader community of Zimbabweans who will have access to better psychological support and care. The ZPA is committed to this journey, and with the support of its members, partners, and stakeholders, it is confident that it will achieve its goals and leave a lasting positive impact on the field of psychology and mental health in Zimbabwe. The 2026–2028 strategic plan is a testament to the ZPA's vision, mission, and dedication to excellence, and it sets the stage for a more mentally healthy and resilient Zimbabwe.

## Reference

- [1] APA Membership Types: International Affiliate  
<https://www.apa.org/members/your-membership/international>
- [2] Zimbabwe psychological Association  
<https://www.facebook.com/p/Zimbabwe-psychological-Association-100064621212305/>
- [3] Zimbabwe Psychological Association - Zimbabwe ...  
<https://zpazim.org/>
- [4] Barriers and enablers to help-seeking for common mental ...  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12588522/>
- [5] Barriers and enablers to help-seeking for common mental ...  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12588522/>
- [6] Mental health in Zimbabwe - PMC - PubMed Central  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6734988/>
- [7] Mental Health in Africa: The Next Frontier for Public ...  
<https://acrhealth.com/2025/11/04/mental-health-in-africa-the-next-frontier-for-public-health-and-human-development/>
- [8] Bridging the Treatment Gap Through Innovation, Task ...  
<https://zpazim.org/bridging-the-treatment-gap-through-innovation-task-shifting-and-resilience/>
- [9] A comprehensive review of mental health services across ...  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11977099/>
- [10] Lessons learned in developing community mental health ...  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2948731/>
- [11] Zimbabwe Psychological Association - Zimbabwe ...  
<https://zpazim.org/>
- [12] Mental health in Zimbabwe - PMC - PubMed Central  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6734988/>

- [13] Zimbabwe Psychological Association - Zimbabwe ...  
<https://zpazim.org/>
- [14] Mental health in Zimbabwe: a health systems analysis  
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(17\)30128-1/supplemental](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(17)30128-1/supplemental)
- [15] Evaluating implementation research outcomes for a task ...  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12231309/>
- [16] Training Division  
<https://zpazim.org/training-division/>
- [17] Mental Health Advocacy in Zimbabwe - PMC - PubMed Central

- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5015838/>
- [18] Training Division  
<https://zpazim.org/training-division/>
- [19] APA Leadership Development Institute  
<https://ldi.apa.org/>
- [20] Bridging the Treatment Gap Through Innovation, Task ...  
<https://zpazim.org/bridging-the-treatment-gap-through-innovation-task-shifting-and-resilience/>
- [21] Zimbabwe - UNIATF  
[https://uniatf.who.int/docs/librariesprovider22/default-document-library/zimbabwe-mh-report.pdf?sfvrsn=d\\_6a69766\\_1](https://uniatf.who.int/docs/librariesprovider22/default-document-library/zimbabwe-mh-report.pdf?sfvrsn=d_6a69766_1)
- [22] Zimbabwe Psychological Association - Zimbabwe ...  
<https://zpazim.org/>
- [23] Methodology for task-shifting evidence-based ...  
<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/11/2/e044012>
- [24] Bridging the Treatment Gap Through Innovation, Task ...  
<https://zpazim.org/bridging-the-treatment-gap-through-innovation-task-shifting-and-resilience/>
- [25] ANNUAL REPORT 2021 MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS  
<https://focusing.org/sites/default/files/upload/2022-09/annual%20report%202021%20FINAL.pdf>
- [26] Zimbabwe Psychological Association - Zimbabwe ...  
<https://zpazim.org/>
- [27] Zimbabwe Psychological Association Conference 2024  
<https://www.psyssa.com/zimbabwe-psychological-association-conference-2024-call-for-papers/>
- [28] Breaking the Silence: Mental Health Challenges in ...  
<https://simukaafrica.org/f/breaking-the-silence-mental-health-challenges-in-zimbabwe?blogcategory=2025>
- [29] Barriers and enablers to help-seeking for common mental ...  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12588522/>
- [30] The Rise of AI and Its Impact On Zimbabwe's Youth Mental ...  
<https://allafrica.com/stories/202510310328.html>
- [31] Zimbabwe WHO Special Initiative for Mental ...  
[https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/mental-health/special-initiative/who-special-initiative-country-report---zimbabwe---2020.pdf?sfvrsn=2bb0ac14\\_4](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/mental-health/special-initiative/who-special-initiative-country-report---zimbabwe---2020.pdf?sfvrsn=2bb0ac14_4)
- [32] Mental Health in Africa: The Next Frontier for Public ...  
<https://acrhealth.com/2025/11/04/mental-health-in-africa-the-next-frontier-for-public-health-and-human-development/>
- [33] Zimbabwe's Youth Mental Health Crisis Worsens Due to ...  
[https://www.ollusaintsathletics.com/sports/mbkb/2018-19/bios/Brandon\\_Joseph?s-news-22275526-2025-12-14-zimbabwes-youth-mental-health-crisis-worsens-due-to-limited-impact-of-ai-support-solutions](https://www.ollusaintsathletics.com/sports/mbkb/2018-19/bios/Brandon_Joseph?s-news-22275526-2025-12-14-zimbabwes-youth-mental-health-crisis-worsens-due-to-limited-impact-of-ai-support-solutions)
- [34] Mental health in Zimbabwe: a health systems analysis  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S221503661730128>

[35] Zimbabwe – Mental illness – Social attitudes  
<https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/eoir/legacy/2014/01/06/mental%20illness-social%20attitudes.pdf>

[36] Zimbabwe - WHO | Regional Office for Africa

[https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2023-04/1.-zimbabwe-mental-health\\_investment\\_case\\_report\\_2022\\_%20%281%29\\_0.pdf](https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2023-04/1.-zimbabwe-mental-health_investment_case_report_2022_%20%281%29_0.pdf)

[37] Rural Friendship Bench: A qualitative study in Zaka District

...

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11221631/>

---