**Project Vision** *Elizabeth Viljoen*Dear Mr Toastmaster, fellow club members, and audience members (who are hopefully future Toastmasters), with this speech I hope to accomplish three things: 1. I wish to demonstrate to you how members of Toastmasters learn to speak with confidence in front of an audience. I joined in September last year. During my first speech I was so scared that I shook like a reed, and some members of the audience could not hear me well. After all the evening's speeches, our speeches were evaluated, like Monika von Wietersheim will also do today. I though it would be like a school exam, but these evaluations are always so positive that it will build your confidence, and challenge you just a little, because you *are* here to grow: one small step for the current you, one giant leap towards the future you.

2. A Pathway is a unit of lessons to help new Toastmasters learn how to speak with confidence, step-by-step, and long time members to polish certain skills. I'm here to tell you about the second last project on my first Pathway, which is called the Effective Coaching Pathway. There are many Pathways designed for specific reasons, like the Visionary Leader Pathway. Toastmasters call this project the High Perfomance Leadership project, where you use and demonstrate all the speaking and leadership skills you have acquired on your path. Yes, Toastmasters is about far more than just learning to speak with confidence. You also learn many soft skills that you can add on your CV. For my HPL project I have a vision to record and publish a series of 10 podcasts interviewing dynamic local women.

3. Lastely I would like to invite women in the audience to participate in the series, but I'll tell you more about it later.

Podcasting is the future of marketing: Marketing your business, but also yourself. Most people don't fall for pretty advertisements anymore. They want to get to know you and your product in depth--and how you can add real value--before they buy.

With my HPL project I hope to market some of the skills I have learned at Toastmasters. I have learned to speak with confidence, to use my voice and my words in such a way that it will draw in my audience. I have learned to work together in teams, and sometimes to lead the team. Teamwork means that you never put yourself first. I have learned to be a servant even when I lead, and to be a democrated leader. If you want a team to work, to be successful, you can never put yourself first, and you have to listen to other team members - to their ideas and to their needs. A bulldozer is effective, but not a team leader. When team leaders put themselves first, the whole team will fail, the leader included.

**Team members** I will have two teams to work with: the Toastmasters guidance committee I have asked to oversee my HPL project, and the group of women I wish to interview. With the first I must meet at least five times during the project. At the end of the project, they must evaluate me, and report to Toastmasters. The second team probably won't meet one another. I correspond with them individually, mostly via personal conversations and a WhatsApp Broadcast List. So far I have contacted 14 women, and 8 already confirmed. If there are more than ten women, I'll have more podcast sessions. Some of them are also Toastmasters, therefore I will also ask them to evaluate me at the end of the project.

**Interviewees** While I will be the interviewer during these podcasts, the focus will not be on me, but on the woman interviewed. I wish to show the whole world what interesting, diligent, dynamic, and caring women we have in Namibia. Where will I find such women? I have reached out to my network: friends, co-workers, Toastmasters (who all became my friends), and friends of friends. I'm now also asking you as audience members to consider taking part. You are welcome to talk to me afterwards, if you feel inspired by my vision.

**Topic** I give participants the three questions I'm going to ask, so they won't be caught by surprise. The questions have been chosen to focus the attention on the interviewee and their community:

1. What games do you like to play? (What do you like to do for fun or what rituals do you incorporate in your daily life?)  
2. What obstacles have you overcome?  
3. What contribution would you like to make to help your community?  
It will be a short and informal interview, about 10-15 minutes each.

**Cost and equipment** At first I thought I won't be able to live out this dream. My budget is limited and I don't have fancy equipment, therefore I would need to rent a studio, and interview only women in Swakopmund or pay for travel expenses.

Then I went on a workshop by *Scribing Dynamics*, where I learned that I only need my phone, an App to record my conversations, and a small microphone. The quality of the recordings will not be as good as when you are in a soundproof studio, but it is a start. Personally I like the authenticity of static sound, but my listeners might not.

For long distance interviews, I'm going to use Skype on my phone, and record the interviews. I have downloaded two apps to test: "Call Recorder for iPhone" and "VoiceRecorder", but I'll test more to find the best quality.

I'm going to use the app "GarageBand" to edit the recordings - to cut out silences and add music.

Then I will either publish the series of podcasts on a free site such as iTunes or SoundCloud, or make use of the expert knowledge of Solid Gold Studios for editing and publishing on platforms that generate more traffic.

**Timeline** First I attended a podcast training session at Scribing Dynamics on 21 February, where the seed of this dream was planted. The guidance committee was formed, mostly Toastmasters also doing their HPL projects at the moment, and we had our first meeting on 29 February. So far I have approached 14 women I would like to interview, of which 8 responded - they are all enthusiastic about the project. The others are hopefully still considering the possibility. The next step was to introduce the project at a club meeting, which I'm doing here now.

I hope to have a full team of ten podcast interviewees by 11 March. I would like to record all the interviews by 15 March, so that I can finalise the product on 16 March. I'll be able to report back to the club at the next meeting on 18 March.

I hope this project will be useful to promote our community, and especially the women of Namibia. I hope the skills that I've learned since I became a member of Toastmaster will promote Toastmasters as well as our beautiful country. Even though I'll soon be moving away due to work obligations, my heart will always be here, because the people of Namibia are its biggest asset.

**Where to begin?**Well, let’s just dive right in shall we?

**#1** record good quality audio. Everything else depends on your message being heard, do not let audio quality detract from the content. True sound recording experience takes years and years of real-world lessons. In the absence of this experience, here are some things to focus on (using mics like the ones I recommended)

1. Clip the mics close to each person’s face (but not in direct path of air from their mouth) and avoid being able to hear each other on the other mic (i.e. don’t sit too close together)
2. Make sure the mics do not rub against clothing when you move.
3. Use a room that is quiet (not to your ear, but record some silence in it and listen to what’s REALLY making noise in there. Fridge, aircon, open window, dogs – you’ll be amazed.
4. Sound bounces around like crazy, so use a room with nice plush furniture and thick curtains. The more (irregular shaped) “stuff” there is in the room, especially close to you when interviewing, the better. Flat surfaces cause sound to bounce and come into the mic again with a slight delay (sounds horrid).
5. Install ‘iRig record’ on your phone. It’s a free App and when using the mics I recommended will take care of everything for you.
6. If there’s a problem – STOP! Fix the mics, test the mics, listen to a test recording, then proceed. You cannot go back and re-create a great interview and your guest will question your professional ability if the sound is crappy.

**#2** Back your recordings up! Immediately. And in 2 different places (not 2 directories on the same hard drive!)

**#3** there are no “magic” questions that make a great interview, though there are types of questions that work. Understanding your intention will guide you while chatting. Look to your Toastmasters lessons for the content of a good speech, and help your guest release/reveal their story through your guidance. This is about THEM, help them tell their story. Something that makes an average interview a great one is if you can get them to reveal their “origin story”. The WHY that made all the other stuff happen. Sometimes they don’t even know they have one so listen carefully and probe and encourage.

Here’s an excellent example of an origin story

https://castbox.fm/app/castbox/player/id1478229/id100078650?v=4.1.0&autoplay=1

Get your guests to do this and your series will rock!

**#4** editing is easy, and hard. I use Audacity and I know Garage Band is also an excellent tool. NEVER edit using your original recording. Never! Make a copy, re-name it, include words like “edit in progress” in the folder name etc.

Remove a few ums and ahs, but leave some in so you all sound human. This is not a BBC documentary (yet.) Don’t do sound processing you don’t understand as it may degrade your sound quality. i.e. avoid compressors, normalisers, limiters etc – let a professional do that for you when you’re done.

**#5** Simply putting some audio files on the Internet does not make them podcasts. There are so,so many places you can publish “podcasts”, however it’s the ability to easily locate them on any platform and listen easily that makes them true podcasts. In other words, putting an audio file on Soundcloud and a link to it on your website is not the same as being able to say “Siri, play the Great Naminbian Women podcast Series for me” – THAT’s podcasting! :-)

**#6** Ready, Fire, Aim – fail fast and learn faster. Get your first interview done ASAP. Then edit it. Then listen to it. Then do more from the lessons you’ll learn. No matter how much you plan and prepare, you’ll always (trust me, always) look back on your first episode and say “eish, that was rough” – well yes, compared to what you can do later with experience. This is not a good enough reason not to do it anyway :-D

Be prepared to write off your entire first recording a repeat it. So select this guest carefully and