

ZIMBABWEAN YOUTH OVERVIEW



(Zimbabwean Flag)

BASIC STATISTICS

- * Total population: 11, 365,366 (Ranked 66 in the world by the US Census Bureau).
- * National GDP: \$26.2 billion (1998).
- * GDP per capital: \$2,400.
- * Median Age: 18.9.
- * Infant Mortality: 60.68/1000.

GEOGRAPHY

- * Location: Southern Africa.
- * Borders: Zambia on the north, Botswana on the west, South Africa on the south, and Mozambique on the East.
- * Capital: Harare.
- * Area: 150,800 square miles.
- * Major city and population: Harare, 1,752,000.
- * Topography: Mountains in the east slope down to a large plateau, which comprises most of the country.

DEMOGRAPHY

- * Total population: 11, 365,366 (Ranked 66 in the world by the US Census Bureau).
- * Population density: 75 per square mile.
- * Children 0-14: 38.7%—4,395,811.
- * Teenage 10-19: 28.6%—3,251,667.
- * Youth between 15-24: 25.2%—2,865,131.
- * Seniors Over 70: 2.2%—252,907.
- * Male to female ratio: 102.5/100.
- * Birth rate: 25/1000.
- * Life expectancy at birth: 38.43 for males and 38.7 for females.
- * Infant mortality rate: 60.68/1000 births.
- * Rate of the HIV/AIDS epidemic: Approximately 1/4th of the adult population.
- * Official Language: English.
- * Other primary languages: Shona and Sindebele.
- * Ethno-linguistic Groups: 71% Shona, 16% Ndebele, and 3% Nyanja.
- * Religious affiliations: Syncretic (Christian-indigenous mix) 50%, Christian 25%, Indigenous

beliefs 24%.

* Religious group representation: 67.5% Christian (7,870,379), 30.1% Ethno-religionist (3,516,949), and 1% Nonreligious (112,474). Less than one percent are Muslim, Baha'i, Hindu, Atheist, Jew, Buddhist, Spiritist, or other.

* Education: Compulsory for ages 6-13.

* Literacy rate: 85%.

ECONOMY

* Currency: Dollar.

* GDP per capita: \$2,400.

* National GDP: \$26.2 billion.

* Major Industries: Clothing, mining, steel, chemicals.

* Chief crops: Tobacco, sugar, cotton, wheat, corn.

* Electricity production: (1998) 6.970 billion kWh.

* TV Sets: 12 per 1000 people.

* Radios: 113 per 1000 people.

* Telephones: (1997) 212,000 main lines.

* Daily newspaper circulation: 17 per 1000 people.

POLITICS

* Government type: Republic.

* Head of state and government: President Robert Mugabe.

* International organization memberships: United Nations (UN), the Commonwealth, Organization of African Unity (OAU).

* Historical Background: Rock paintings found in the higher elevations of modern Zimbabwe date back to the prehistoric San hunters. Around 2,000 years ago, the ancestors of the Shona people migrated to the area and developed unique pottery, herded cattle, and mined gold and copper, and traded with those on the coast. From the 11th to the 15th century, small village communities were organized and ruled by chief dynasties known as Karanga. By the early 17th century, the Portuguese with locally recruited armies, defeated the Karanga chieftains. The Portuguese dominance did not last, however. In 1693, the Rozwi chieftain of Changamire forced the Portuguese from the central plateau, and dominated the area until the early 1830s, when the last Rozwi ruler was killed. Soon after, the Ndebele people migrated from the southwest and took control, but by 1850 had granted the Shona peoples of the Karanga chieftains their independence. European ivory hunters' and gold seekers began to take notice of the area beginning in the 1860s and by the 1880s the coastline was divided between Germany, Portugal, and Britain. Tensions increased between African and European interests. By 1893, the British took control from the Ndebele, and named the area Rhodesia in 1895. In 1897, the colonial leadership split it into Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Once the British South Africa charter expired in 1923, the country chose not to join South Africa and instead became a self-governing British colony. During this time, racial tensions progressed between the white controlled government and blacks. After guerilla war and political jousting, Southern Rhodesia officially achieved independence on April 18th, 1979, named itself Zimbabwe, and held elections. During the 1980s, Zimbabwe faced regional tensions involving South Africa's and Mozambique's racial power imbalance, and an revolt in Metabealand where Ndebele dissidents questioned the elections of 1980. In the 1990s, the government rhetoric increasingly evolved from a Marxist philosophy to a capitalist free market. In 1997, the government caused quite a stir by attempting to take large farmlands from the white owners and redistribute the land among the people. Facing strong opposition, the government backed down from this position. In

February 2000, the people voted down a referendum designed to increase Mugabe's power, which would have given him the impetus to enforce the controversial policy regardless of opposing pressure.

TRENDS AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Understanding the trends and social issues of a particular country should always take into consideration the opinions of persons within the country. The Center for Youth Studies is looking for contributors from each country to add to our appreciation and understanding of its culture, potential, trends and critical issues. If you have insight as to what is important to Zimbabweans, please contact us.

We look forward to hearing the insights of native Zimbabweans on what they consider the most important issues facing them. From an outsider's perspective, current issues would include the AIDS epidemic, the governmental leadership, economic development, race relations, and the development of the tourism industry. What are the most important issues for Zimbabwe today? This will be added as we receive this information.

SOURCES

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WEB:

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How important do you see Zimbabwe's role in Africa and in the world?
2. What most impresses you about the above information?
3. Do you take issue with any of the above? If so, how would you express it differently?
4. What strikes you most about the population of Zimbabwe and rate of HIV/AIDS? Why?
5. What do you see as the historical and cultural contributions of Zimbabwe to the world?
6. How has Zimbabwe handled its part in African HIV/AIDS crisis?
7. What can we learn from Zimbabwe and its people?

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