

Session 2

Everyday life for children

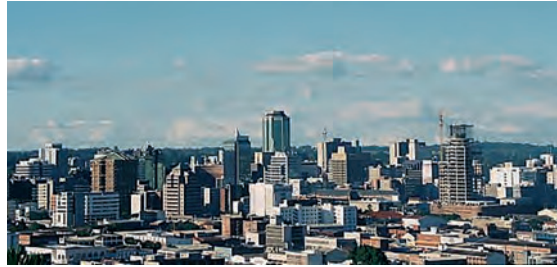


‘The families do not have a fancy life. Some of the parents struggle to pay school fees’

Vimbai Nyamakambo at Falcon Primary School

Homes

How does where you live compare to the capital city of Harare or to a house in rural Zimbabwe? Compare the two pictures of housing. Does it surprise you that they are in the same country?



School

As in this country, the children of Zimbabwe attend school. Children start attending school when they are six years old, and primary and secondary school last 13 years. The school year runs from January to December, each term lasting three months with one-month holidays between them, making a total of 40 weeks of school per year. In urban areas the children are taught in English, while in rural areas teachers switch over to Shona or Ndebele.



Vimbai Nyamakambo is the head teacher at the Falcon Primary school in Harare Metropolitan DZ extension. Commitment for Life gave a grant to the school in 2022 so they could purchase a solar geyser at the school, to provide Green Energy. Vimbai tells us what life is like for many of the children that attend the school:

“When the children wake up, if they are aged nine years or over, they will have some chores to do before going to school. These will include washing plates, sweeping yards and their rooms. After the chores, if there is any food, they will have breakfast. When they arrive at school, Vimbai will ask the children if they have had anything to eat, or if they have something in their bag for break time. Often the answer is no, and the children attend school hungry.”

If they do have breakfast, then it is usually a maize porridge with sugar and peanut butter. Some may have Sadza, which is part of the Zimbabwean staple diet and is a maize porridge mixed into a stiff mixture. It can be had with vegetables or meat such as beef stew or pork if available. Children will often carry with them for break time mapudzi, a popped maize like a popcorn, or biscuits and a bottled drink.

Many of the children must walk anything up to about five kilometres (approx. 3 miles) to get to school, and they don't have very good shoes.



The children in the infant part of the school finish the day at 1pm, while the juniors finish at 3.30pm. When the children get home, they will have more chores to do, like washing plates, before they can do their homework. In any spare time, the children like to play, and will chase each other, play football or different local games like pada (like hopscotch) and tsoro.

Food at supper time will be Sadza. Bedtime for the children is at 8pm. Most of the homes do not have electricity. However, the homes with solar panels may have a TV and a little may be watched before bed. Children do not have access to social media, or mobile phones, unless it is an old phone from their parents.



Bible Link Matthew 6:25-26

“So, I tell you, don’t worry about the food you need to live. And don’t worry about the clothes you need for your body. Life is more important than food. And the body is more important than clothes. Look at the birds in the air. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns. But your heavenly Father feeds the birds. And you know that you are worth much more than the birds.”

- I wonder what is the most important thing in your life
- I wonder if you think Jesus really meant that you shouldn’t make sure people have enough food or whether he meant something else when he said this

Prayer

Dear God, help me not to take my shoes for granted. We remember those in countries like Zimbabwe who struggle to earn enough money to buy shoes or school uniform to wear for school. We thank you for Christian Aid partners who are working with communities, teaching women new skills in leatherwork so they can make shoes for their families. Amen.

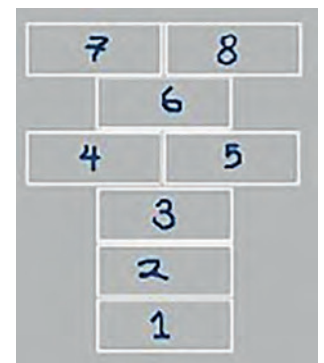


Active Prayer

Using a marker and a piece of paper, draw round your foot or shoe and cut it out. Think about what you have in common with children in Zimbabwe and what is different. Choose one thing to ask or thank God for and draw it on your foot shape. Use the footprints to make a path to a cross.

Game Pada

To play Pada you need one flat stone and ground markings like a hopscotch grid, each box measuring approximately 60cm x 50 cm. Rules are like hopscotch. Players aim to throw the stone into box 1 so that it doesn’t touch the boundary of the box. They then hop into every box except that with the stone in, landing with only one foot in each box and, where two boxes are side by side, landing with one foot in each. When they get to the end, they return in the same fashion, picking up the stone on the way. Then they do the same again, this time throwing the stone into box two. If they fail to get the stone cleanly in the correct box or make a mistake when hopping from box to box or picking the stone up, their turn is over.



Greta Wonders...

- How does your day differ to that of a child that might attend Falcon Primary School?
- What do you eat for breakfast before going to school? How does this differ from what the children in the Falcon Primary School might eat before they go to school?
- Do you have any chores to do before or after school?

Activity

Sadza is probably the most widely known food in Zimbabwe. Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup maize meal (available fairly cheaply online) with $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups room-temperature water to make a paste in the bottom of the saucepan. Bring to the boil then gradually add two cups hot water. Allow to simmer for several minutes then add another $\frac{1}{2}$ cup maize meal, stirring constantly for about five minutes. Leave cooking for 15 more minutes with the saucepan lid on, then uncover and stir again for two minutes. Make sure it doesn’t go lumpy! Form into balls and eat with your fingers with chicken or some other accompaniment.

Action Point

Children in some parts of Zimbabwe do not have access to social media, computer games, television, or smart phones etc. Why not put your phones, laptops, and computer games away for a weekend and, if you can, go outside and play with your friends games such as chase, hide and seek, football or hop scotch. Or read a book or play board games or do some craft activities. Alternatively you could always do some extra chores for your family around the home. Afterwards reflect how it felt not to use your devices for a whole weekend. Do you have old reusable shoes or outgrown items of school uniform that could be given to someone who is struggling financially to buy new shoes/uniform for school?

