

A man with a mustache, wearing a black tuxedo jacket, a white dress shirt, and a black bow tie, stands against a dark background. He is holding a large, green, metal briefcase or suitcase in front of him. The briefcase has a handle and a latch. In the top left corner, there is a green circle with the word "FREE" written in white, bold, sans-serif font.

FREE

mud journal

SAVING POWER

The New Resource Race
Sustainable Careers
Your Mental Health

INTERVIEWS

Simba Tagz
Rashid Jogee
Djembe Monks

LISTS

Best Music of 2019
Best Videos of 2019
Best Slang of 2019

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Photography
Marketing Tips
Jokes

ISSUE NO. 1

INSIDE



ABOUT US

02 Fixing Productions Beyond Tomorrow

CURRENT AFFAIRS

03 A Brief Timeline Of The #2ndRepublic's Hashtags

06 Oliver Mtukudzi's #DhukuForTuku Retrospective

08 Popular Slang Words Used In Zimbabwe Today

INTERVIEWS

10 On The Move With The Travelling Men:

Q & A With The Djembe Monks Band

13 The Champion Of The People:

A Conversation With Abstract Artist Rashid Jogee

17 The Man For All Seasons:

An Interview With Music Producer Simba Tagz

PLAYLISTS

20 My Favourite Zimbabwean Songs Of 2019 So Far

23 Top Zimbabwean Music Videos Of 2019 So Far

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

25 Running The Resource Race On Empty

CAREER AND HEALTH

33 Towards Crafting A Sustainable Career

36 Social Media Marketing Hacks For Beginners

38 Mental Health: Let's Talk About How You Feel

POETRY

41 Grey Matters

42 Save Yourself

SOCIAL MEDIA

43 #SendMeAPicChallenge Collection:

Re-imagining Social Photography

53 The Best Medicine: Social Media Jokes

CONTRIBUTORS

57 Writers, Team, and Contacts

60 Shout Outs and Special Mentions

.ABOUT US.

Fixing Productions Beyond Tomorrow



By Alex Gwaze, Editor-In-Chief, Founder of MUD #AfricansTalk2Africa #BeyondTomorrow



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As part of our community outreach and public interest initiative, **we publish MUD Journal annually**. The Journal is delivered through social media in electronic form (pdf) and available for browser download from our website. Each publication provides sustainable creative solutions from our contributors. MUD is committed to providing visionary insights that in turn give rise to originaive DIY concepts that thrive beyond tomorrow.



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A Brief Timeline of The #2ndRepublic's Hashtags

Compiled by **Alex Gwaze**, *Researcher* #ZimSituation #ZimYacho #ShortStories

August 6, 2017– #NewAlliance - Zimbabwe's opposition launches MDC Alliance ahead of the 2018 general elections. MDC Alliance is an electoral bloc formed between 7 political parties.

October 6, 2017– #PoisonedChalice - Reports surface that Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa fell ill at a political rally led by President Robert Mugabe in August, and had to be airlifted to South Africa for treatment.

November 6, 2017– #G40vsLacoste - After a campaign of public insults against Mnangagwa and the military leadership, Mugabe fires his long-time deputy. Mnangagwa flees the country.

November 13, 2017– #ZBCTakeover - Army Commander General Constantino Chiwenga calls a press conference and warns politicians to stop denigrating the army.

November 14, 2017– #CoupNotCoup - Military officers deny a coup. In an overnight declaration on state television, they say Mugabe is safe and they are "only targeting criminals around him". Tanks are seen moving on the outskirts of the capital.

November 15-20, 2017– The army enters the homes of twenty other people, including Minister of Higher Education Jonathan Moyo. Catholic Cleric Father Fidelis Mukonori and others, negotiate Mugabe's exit.

November 18, 2017– #MugabeMustGo - Large groups of people pour into the streets of Harare, Gweru, and Bulawayo, calling on Mugabe to step down.

November 22, 2017– Mnangagwa returns to Zimbabwe and announces a "new and unfolding democracy".

November 24, 2017– #2ndRepublic - Mnangagwa is sworn in as the second executive President. He pledges to revive the country's economy and create jobs for its unemployed masses in a speech to mark his inauguration.

February 14, 2018– Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai dies after a battle with colon cancer. He leaves behind a disintegrating party and contested leadership. Three deputy presidents, Thokozani Khupe, Elias Mudzuri, and Nelson Chamisa, are engaged in a vicious internal struggle.

March 18, 2018– MDC Alliance Vice President Thokozani Khupe announces that her camp is breaking away from new MDC-T-Chamisa-led group, adding that she would be joining Joyce Mujuru's Rainbow Coalition.

March 24, 2018– #Spaghetti - On the election campaign trail Chamisa promises, "bullet trains, spaghetti roads, and village airports".

June 16, 2018– Chamisa is reportedly forced to register the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance as a fully-fledged political party, pending a court outcome over the use of names and logos by a splinter group.

June 23, 2018– #NotMyTime - A grenade explodes at White City Stadium in Bulawayo. The blast occurred at a ZANU-PF campaign rally. Mnangagwa is unharmed but at least 49 are injured, including Vice Presidents Constantino Chiwenga and Kembo Mohadi.

June 27, 2018– The Zimbabwe Defence Forces states that they had arrested an individual on the day of the attack. Two more suspects are later arrested, but released without charges.

July 30, 2018– #HistoricElection - A general election is held in Zimbabwe to elect the President and members of both houses of Parliament. A record-breaking 23 people put themselves forward to lead the country's historic elections (first election with MDC and ZANU contesting without Mugabe or Tsvangirai on the ballot).

August 1, 2018– #Pfee - The election commission announces that ZANU-PF has won most of the seats in parliament. It does not give the results for the presidential vote. The opposition cries foul, alleging fraud, and EU observers say the elections were held on an "un-level playing field".

August 1-3, 2018– #SoldierChallenge - The opposition accused the government of rigging the vote. Protesters pour into the streets of Harare. The army is deployed to quell the riots. Six people are killed after troops open fire on protesters. The government says the army was deployed in central Harare to help police restore order.

August 3, 2019– #OpenForBusiness - Mnangagwa wins presidential election. Mnangagwa receives 50.8% of the vote to MDC Alliance's Chamisa's 44.3%. Mnangagwa announces plans to stabilise the economy and encourage foreign investment.

August 6, 2018– Mnangagwa tells Sky News' Alex Crawford he has "no problem" with former leader Mugabe, and he is #AsSoftAsWool.

August 10, 2018 – Mnangagwa's inauguration is delayed after Chamisa petitions to challenge the election results in court.

August 24, 2018– The Supreme Court of Zimbabwe dismisses Chamisa's challenge and officially declares Mnangagwa the winner.

August 26, 2018– President Mnangagwa's inauguration and official swearing-in is held.

January 12, 2019 – Mnangagwa (accompanied by Chiwenga and Finance Minister, Mthuli Ncube, announces at a press conference that the price of petrol has been increased from \$1.32 per litre to \$3.31 and diesel from \$1.20 to \$3.11.

January 13, 2019– The president of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions calls for a 3-day nationwide stay away. The MDC Alliance joins the call with the party's Youth wing urging Zimbabweans to stay away. Popular #ThisFlag activist, Pastor Evan Mawarire calls on ordinary citizens to join in the stay away in solidarity with the ZCTU.

January 14, 2019– #ZimShutdown - Roads into city centres are barricaded with rocks and burning tires as protestors attempt to stop anyone from going to work or school. Choppies supermarkets around the country are looted. Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) trucks, Makoni Police Station, a tollgate along Harare-Masvingo road, a ZUPCO bus, a Puma fuel station, and a Zuva fuel station are burnt. A man with a gun is seen along the Bulawayo - Harare road.

January 14, 2019– #ZimBlackout - Around 12 midday, Econet, NetOne, Telecel, TelOne, and ZOL Liquid Telecom shut down the whole internet, plunging Zimbabwe into an internet blackout.

January 15-17, 2019– #PrayForZimbabwe - The army is deployed to quell civilian disturbances leading to loss of life, serious bodily injuries, and other human rights violations. Reports say at least 12 people (including some police officers) are killed and scores treated for gunshot injuries. More than 600 people are arrested in relation to the protests, including Mawarire.

January 23, 2019 – #DhukuForTuku - Oliver Mtukudzi, the musician fondly known as Tuku, dies at the age of 66.

January 24, 2019 – Mnangagwa declares Tuku a national hero.

February 4, 2019 - Chiwenga is airlifted to a South African hospital for emergency medical treatment after his health had deteriorated over the weekend.

March 11-21, 2019- #CycloneIdai - Cyclone Idai causes extensive flooding and loss of life in the eastern provinces. 634 in Zimbabwe are killed. Mnangagwa declares a state of emergency soon after the storm and deploys the National Army and Air Force by 17 March.

April 16, 2019- #ZUPCO - Mnangagwa launches a new Zimbabwe United Passengers Company (ZUPCO) bus fleet which provides cheaper transport and modernises the local transport system.

April 17, 2019- #ManShallNot - The parallel foreign currency market / black market pushes the prices of basic consumer goods like bread beyond the reach of many Zimbabweans. Inflation is at 66.8%.

April 18, 2019- #BlackMarket - Mnangagwa issues a statement warning business people to desist from sabotaging the country's economy by hiking prices of basic commodities unnecessarily.

May 1, 2019- #Econet - Econet Wireless, Zimbabwe's biggest mobile telecommunications provider, increases tariffs (voice, sms and data) by 250%.

May 3, 2019- #ItWillWork #Simple - Chiwenga gives a stern warning to those practising financial terrorism in the country.

May 8, 2019- #ZESA - The Zimbabwe Electricity Distribution Company's (ZETDC) starts stage 1 load shedding (8-hour daily power cuts).

June 12, 2019- #Queues - The Zimbabwean government hikes the price of petrol to \$5.26 per litre.

June 14, 2019- #ZESA - The Zimbabwe Electricity Distribution Company's (ZETDC) starts stage 2 of load shedding (16-hour power cuts).

June 20, 2019- #500Loaves - Armed robbers at Speciman Shopping Centre in Harare's Glen Norah suburb hijack a Lobels delivery truck and get away with \$3000 worth of bread (500 loaves).

June 24, 2019- #PricesMustFall - Mthuli Ncube re-introduces the Zimbabwean Dollar. The 'new' ZWD is now the only accepted legal tender in Zimbabwe.

July 1, 2019- #ZimbabweGems - The Zimbabwean diaspora organisation (#MadeInZwe) and companies in the UK come together in a show of support for the Zimbabwean National Netball team ahead of the World Cup in Liverpool. The self-funded team finishes in 8th place.

July 22, 2019- #ZimDollar - Fuel prices increase to between \$7.45 to \$10.80 per litre.

August 4, 2019- #Zesa - ZETDC increases the electricity tariff from ZWD 0.0986c/kWh to ZWD 0.45/kWh.

September 6, 2019- #RIPMugabe - Former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe dies in a hospital in Singapore where he was being treated for cancer.

September 8, 2019- #Plumtree - ZETDC finally restores power and water supplies to Plumtree border town, ending a month long blackout that saw the town running dry.

September 19, 2019- #2%Tax - High Court Justice Happpius Zhou rules that that 2% transactional tax imposed by Mthuli Ncube last year was illegal and unconstitutional. The case was argued by Former Finance Minister Tendai Biti. However Mthuli says the 2% tax will still be levied.

September 30, 2019- #NoEcocash - The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe bans cash-in, cash-out and cash-back services in an effort to combat illegal money traders who are not banking cash-in ZWD, but are using the mobile banking services to charge high commission rates on ZWD cash-in, and subsequently using the ZWD hard currency to buy forex. This ban inadvertently makes it difficult to pay wages, pay commuter bus operators, and purchase groceries for a significant proportion of the population who use EcoCash and have no access to the scarce ZWD hard currency, or traditional bank accounts.

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.OLIVER MTUKUDZI'S #DHUKUFORTUKU RETROSPECTIVE.

They Lowered Him Down As A Chief

By Elspeth Chimedza, Founder of Groove Magazine international, #DhukuForTuku

It was a black Friday with a twist, when the Minister of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation, Kirsty Coventry, declared the 25th of January, 2019 - 'Dhuku for Tuku' day - in honour of Dr. Oliver Mtukudzi.

Zimbabweans had just come out of the #InternetBlackout and #ZimOnFire protests as the memo for Dhuku for Tuku day circulated on social media and popular messaging platform, WhatsApp.

Unexpectedly, a viral campaign rose as fans across the board started using the hashtag, #DhukuForTuku.

The mandate of the #DhukuForTuku campaign was for women to dress in all black and include the traditional head dress / scarf, locally known as a 'dhuku'. The men were encouraged to replicate Samanyanga's signature style of African print shirts and head dress as well. This act would pay homage to Tuku's legacy of preserving Zimbabwean traditions and his popular hit song 'Neria' which dealt with women's rights in contemporary patriarchal societies.

Before long, corporations and celebrities (including SABC's soapie Isidingo), had paid tribute to Tuku. Nonetheless, it was #DhukuForTuku that exemplified how Zimbabweans honoured their 'voice of the people'.

Dr. Oliver Mtukudzi, affectionately known as Tuku, had passed on January 23rd, 2019 from a diabetes related illness. His evolutionary career and expansive output spanned over four decades and 59 albums; transcending generations and racial barriers. Bidding farewell to such an influencer, mentor, and campaigner for social justice, seemed unreal for Zimbabweans and Africans worldwide. Thus the #DhukuForTuku campaign spread so fluently. The campaign followed in the same fashion as the South African homage paid to the late nationalist, Winnie Mandikizela Mandela.

However, unlike Winnie, Tuku, was not a politician, he was a cultural icon. He was the most widely known singer from Zimbabwe but he did not make 'pop' music or hip-hop, in fact he predominately sang in 'deep' Shona. His husky voice and songs of traditional values with western jazz and blues undertones was as Zimbabwean as it gets.

Tuku embodied some of the best qualities of Zimbabweans and President Emmerson Mnangagwa rightfully declared him a national hero. By right he should have been buried at the National Heroes Acre, but he wasn't. He was laid to rest "kumusha" in Madziva without the specious fanfare. On the 26th of January 2019, 43 buses ferried thousands of mourners and to his rural home to lay him down as a Chief.

Those that couldn't make it posted their pictures wearing their dhukus. Women across the nation dressed in all black and covered their hair. Hair has always been a symbol of power, youth and beauty. For women long, thick, unbound, and free hair, is culturally associated with seducing men. To cover one's hair with a dhuku is to lose one's power, signify marriage or done in remembrance of a loved one.

So the dhuku has always been a symbol of both oppression and rebellion. In the context of the former, the dhuku was imposed on African female workers by white colonials. They found African female hair offensive hence forcing them to cover their heads with a head dress.

Eventually the dhuku was adopted into African culture and became a symbol of respect. The dhuku has been worn at traditional wedding ceremonies, funerals and in the homes by married women. In the modern context, the dhuku is worn as both a fashion statement as well as a cultural symbol.

In the context of #DhukuForTuku, the head wrap was a show of respect, an act of piety and a symbol of love for our 'local' man and his values. Tuku was a hardworking, down to earth human rights activist who often challenged the status quo through his music.

He unified Zimbabweans from all walks of life because he always called Zimbabwe home. And this was so even in his untimely passing. While social media is often used to celebrate luxury brands, consumerism and excess, it was refreshing to see it being used for to promote our traditions and champion a social cause, just as Tuku used Tuku music to comment on everyday Zimbo experiences.

#DhukuForTuku happened at a time when the country was experiencing perilous hardships. The women who wore the dhuku honoured a true father figure, and in retrospect, our solidarity gave some power back to the voiceless.

Other icons we lost:



Charles Mungoshi - author (71) died 16/02/2019

Stephen Chifunyise - cultural consultant, playwright, writer (70) died 05/09/2019

Robert Gabriel Mugabe - former president of the Republic of Zimbabwe (95) died 06/09/2019

.RE-DEFINITION: THE STREET DICTIONARY.

15 Popular Slang Words Used In Zimbabwe Today

By Terai Moyo, Journalist, Indigo Saint, Rapper, and Alex Gwaze, Researcher #Ngulugae

Slang can be defined as constantly changing informal words and expressions, often considered not appropriate for formal occasions because they are deemed to be "lowbrow" or vulgar. This is why most of the time slang is spoken before it is contextualized, archived or published. However, slang is an integral part of the communal human experience. Cultural groups and subcultures frequently create their own kind of colloquial language that "determines who is in the know and who is out" - #IfYouKnowYouKnow. This is because we speak before we learn to write, so slang allows us to re-define the meaning of our daily experiences. Some argue that slang exists because "we must come up with ways to define new experiences that have surfaced with time and modernity". While the words may change, the thematic areas (sex, drugs, crime, insults, etc) have remained unwavering for half a millennium, because they show us at our most human and capture elements of humanity that are not recorded elsewhere. The exact explanation or the meaning of a 'new' word, phrase or expression may be debatable because it changes in specific social contexts, but slang does a great job of "condensing so many emotions and attitudes in a concise and powerful way". This is why we thought it would be "funny" to see how our slang would look if we added it to Shona, Ndebele or English dictionaries in that 'sciency', formal, academic style ;)

Crusty

Adjective / Verb.

1. Dishevelled, untidy and ungroomed in appearance
2. Unwashed, grubby and ashy
3. Dirty and unattractive

Feebie

Adjective.

1. Requiring mental concentration to comprehend or physical effort to accomplish
2. A hard and uncomfortable moment
3. Feeling tense or uneasy

Fere

Noun.

1. An informal request for information about the current situation or events
2. Reflecting on the latest information or changes
3. One's state or condition at that particular time

Gauro

Noun.

1. The most common means of exchange for goods or services rendered
2. The national currency issued by the reserve bank
3. Money or legal tender

Jest

Noun.

1. The staple food for Zimbabweans known locally as Sadza, Isitshwala or 'Pap'
2. A meal or food made from ground corn or mealies

Kosso

Noun.

1. A girl or young woman whom a man is romantically involved with
2. A beloved or special young woman
3. A close female friend

Kubaya

Noun / Verb.

1. Departing or going from one place to another
2. Proceeding purposefully forward
3. Changing locations

Muface

Noun.

1. A male who is the lover of a young woman
2. An informal term for a male youth
3. Urban male youth.

Salala

Noun.

1. An individual occupying the highest socio-economical position in society
2. In a higher social status and of good or upper-class lineage
3. Classy, fashionable, modern

Tonaz

Noun.

1. The central business district of an urban area
2. An administrative division of a county
3. An urban municipality

Zinto / Zvinhu

Noun / Adjective / Verb.

1. An inclination to want luxurious items, such as fast food, clothes, cars, gadgets, jewellery or mansions.
2. Affected with excessive sexual desire
3. Corrupted or perverted envy or jealousy

Editor's sidenotes:

Please contact MUD Journal on social media and submit other "unique words and expressions" that Zimbabweans are using - and help us build our database.

Ma1

Noun / Adjective.

1. To be in a difficult situation or bad state
2. Problematic, vexed, perplexed
3. Tight, knotty, tricky

Murra

Noun / Verb.

1. A deceitful statement that perverts or deviates from the truth
2. Pretend with the intent to deceive
3. To be false or dishonest

Stonyeni

Noun / Verb.

1. Activities associated with sexual intercourse
2. Vulgar term for female genitals

Yizo

Noun / Interjection / Verb.

1. Indicating a favourable or affirmative response
2. Consenting or agreeing to an activity proposal or statement
3. Express or signify understanding or approval

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.Q & A WITH THE DJEMBE MONKS BAND.

On The Move With The Travelling Men

By Alex Gwaze, Researcher #Touring #ZimLiveBands #MAD

For as long as I can remember the Djembe Monks have always been "on tour". Over their 8-year career the band has released 3 albums and travelled across Zimbabwe and as far afield as the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans in Maun, Botswana for the Okavango Delta Music Festival.

Although they are not-yet-international globe trotters like their counterparts, Mokoomba, they are part of the travelling trinity of local troubadours known as **#MAD: a reference to Mokoomba, Amy and the Calamities, and Djembe Monks**. In this digital age, very few Zim musicians know the value of being on the road.

They are more concerned with releasing a track (mp3) and a music video (on YouTube) to gain likes, views and plays for the sites - yet their wallets remain regrettably empty. More and more people are streaming, downloading or sharing music online, so "touring is important for today's artists because it is the best way to make money and is nearly guaranteed to make you more than streaming or merch sales".

Even the so-called-biggest-band-in-the-world, the Rolling Stones still tour despite a combined age of 294 years. And beloved folk-rock genius, Bob Dylan, began his Never Ending Tour on the 7th of June, 1988. Furthermore, Jay-Z and Beyoncé's 'On the Run II' worldwide tour grossed over US\$250 million in 6 months.



Photograph of Djembe Monks from Djembe Monks

To put this US\$250 million figure in perspective, Beyoncé would need twenty billion plays on Jay-Z's own music streaming site Tidal (Tidal is the 2nd highest paying site for streaming, and pays \$0.01250 per stream) to amass the same earnings. So, these Bulawayo boys are headed down the right path.

In Zimbabwe, the Monks are a local hit and the launch of their own self-titled craft beer with the River Brewing Company in Victoria Falls is a testament to their hard work, faithful fan base, and local relevance.

According to the Monks' percussionist Emmanuel 'Rootz' Nkomo, "Zimbabweans travel far and wide fending for their families in lands miles away from home. So, music travels without passports and we're sharing our experiences on how it is to be Zimbabweans through music". With their recent album called 'Bantu Migrant', the Monks music reflects their constant motion.

Some might refer to them as a Tribal house band, but to me they are the band on the move in all the right ways - The Travelling Men. But for those who have never seen them live you are probably wondering -

Who are the Djembe Monks?

"Djembe Monks are a collective from Bulawayo. We combine African primal sounds with electronics to create house / techno and afro fusion".

*Established in 2011 the band is made up of Emmanuel 'Rootz Kolossal' Nkomo, Ngqabutho 'Slimzar Wa Africa' Ncube, and Khotso 'Torture Drum' Nare.

What does the name Djembe Monks mean?

"Djembe is an African drum we identify with. It's the foundation of our initial experimental stages and the first instrument we ever owned and played. We actually developed the name Djembe Monks from there - plus our meditative sound and intense ritualistic drumming.

Today the name speaks to our collaborative efforts; Slimzar Wa Afrika in the DJ Section and Khotso Seromola and Emmanuel on the ethnic percussions. Our oneness is informed by our common love for contemporary music, ancient sounds, and folklore passed on from generation to generation".

Who are your greatest musical influences?

"Mostly African artists, some international. Specifically, Bundu Boys, Youssou N'dour, Sekouba Bambino, Ray Phiri, Sankomota, Assam Thiam, Afrika Revenge, Black Coffee, Cool Crooners, Mokoomba, Salif Keita, DJ Fresh, Pablo Fierro, Boddhi Satva, Kususa, Mackay Brothers, Enoo, Gregor Salto, Da Capo, Jonathan Kaspar, Mann Friday, Diamond Musica, Revolution. The list could go on".

So, what do you think is the future of traditional music amidst a contemporary scene populated by Hip-hop, Trap, Afro-pop, and House?

"Hip hop, Trap, Afro-pop, and House are all modern mixes of traditional sounds. Sounds keep evolving all the time - that is the mystery of music. You might think the Monks are all traditional and stuff, but we are already in the future".

Zimbabwean music does not seem to be popular outside of the two Rivers Zambezi and Limpopo. Yet American, Nigerian, and South African music is; what's the problem?

"A lot of products from Zimbabwe other than music are not popular right now. We just have to be as authentic as possible and continue making our music and perfecting our craft. They will come to us on their own. Give it time".

As an instrumental band and frequent collaborators, what skills have you learnt that aid you in translating your ideas and intentions to others?

"Just listen. Listening is the most important part of collaborating".

You guys are "always" on the road performing live, what is your favourite experience so far?

"Performing on the Hidden Rock in Juliasdale, Nyanga with Mokoomba".

*Along the way, the Monks have also shared the stage with Amy and the Calamities, Fiddlelicious, Gemma Griffiths, and Rob Burre - just to name a few.

Finally, do you guys have any life-altering tips you would like to share?

"Practice. The more you practice the closer you get to #perfect".

Editor's Sidenotes and Further Reading:

There is a growing need for entertaining local artists to take to the stage. This will curb local promoters' reliance on international and regional performers to draw in our crowds. But in order for this proposition to flourish, musicians really need to hone their live performance acts. Furthermore, in addition to touring, local venues must offer musicians residency gigs. "Residency at a local venue allows an artist to perform on a regular basis at the same venue. This gives local acts a great way to 'stretch out' musically, build a more loyal fan base, and get some weekly or monthly financial relief".

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(Accessed June 25, 2019)



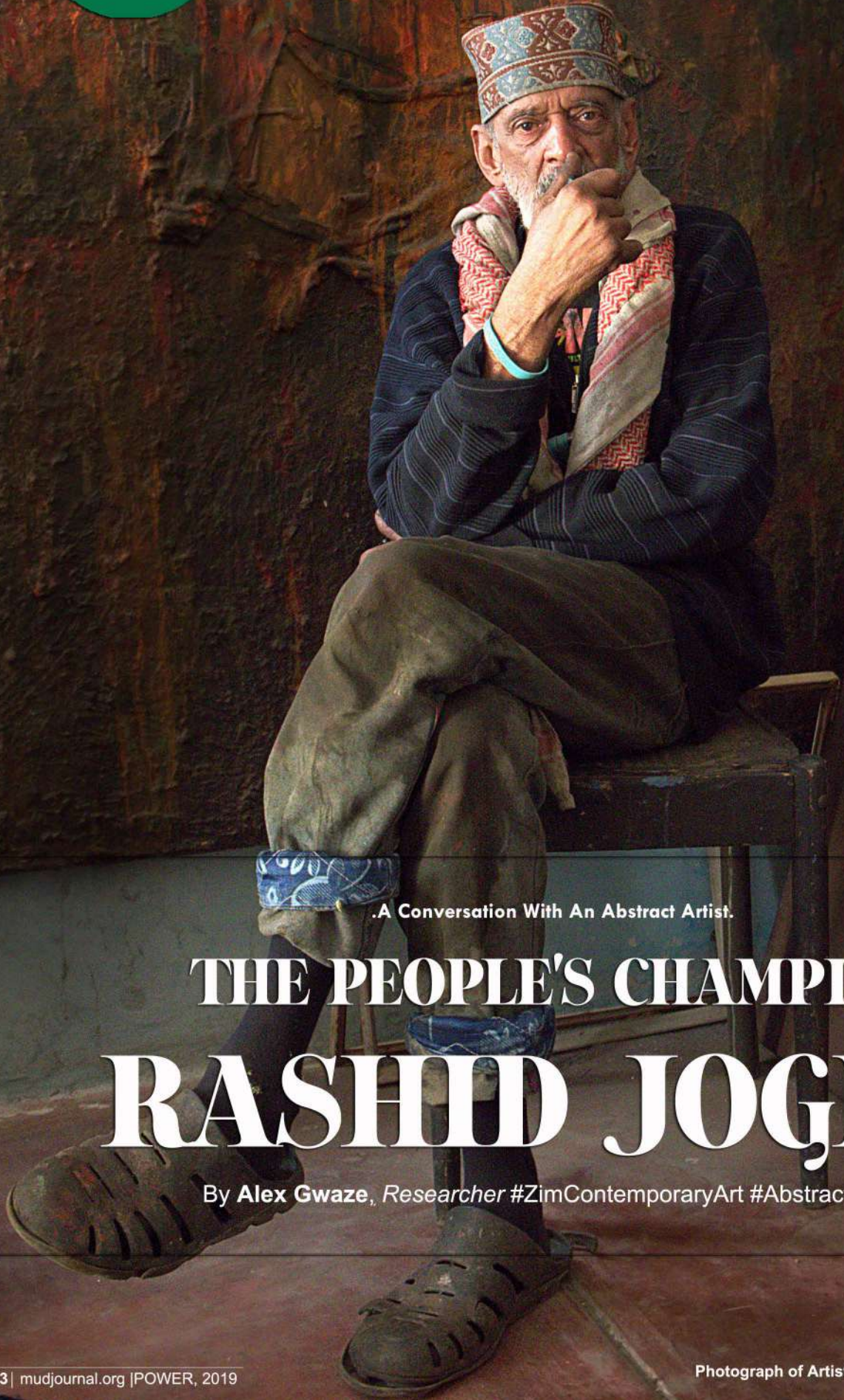
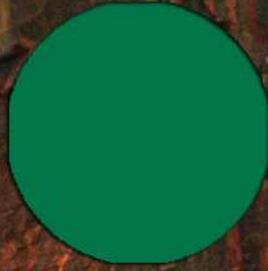
Preview Djembe Monks on iTunes at:
<https://music.apple.com/us/album/bantu-migrant/1450329579>

Stream Djembe Monks on Spotify at:
<https://open.spotify.com/album/3IRlulusM40cXu00zRboZa>

Buy Djembe Monks album on Amazon at:
<https://www.amazon.com/Bantu-Migrant/dp/B07N195X46>



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www.twitter.com/TheDjembeMonks



.A Conversation With An Abstract Artist.

THE PEOPLE'S CHAMPION RASHID JOGEE

By Alex Gwaze, Researcher #ZimContemporaryArt #AbstractArtist

On a recent winter afternoon, we (myself and Joanne Peters) gathered around a pot of hot lemon tea to interview Rashid Jogee. Rashid had made the tea himself and picked the fresh lemons from his garden. As soon as he put the tea down, he was busy with another task: making a "rollie".

Considered one of the godfathers of Contemporary Art in Zimbabwe, Rashid is one of the few practising Abstract artists. In his 30-year career he has taught at the Mzilikazi Arts and Craft Centre and he headed the Art Department at Founders High School in Bulawayo. As an artist Rashid has had over 48 exhibitions in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Italy, England, United States, Denmark, Germany, and Sweden. In the 90s, former President Robert Mugabe honoured him with the Presidential Award for his contributions and his dedication to the development of the Visual Arts in Zimbabwe.

However, Rashid doesn't rest on his laurels, stating, "In any artistic endeavour you always reach a horizon. You pop your head out the water and it looks lekker. Then you dunk your head down again and swim. Then you arrive at a new horizon. And if you are doing well, in time you will pop your head out again and arrive at a new realm of understanding".

Rashid is a painter, sculptor, poet, guitarist, teacher, and a handyman who describes himself as "the champion of African people" - amongst other things. Over the course of the next 2 hours, it is only when I bring up his achievements that he digs into a dusty box and pulls out his papers - awards, certificates and honours, for us to see.

The man rarely talked about what he has done. Instead he gushes about other artists who shaped his career such as, Marshall Baron, Stephen Williams, Voti Thebe, Doreen Sibanda, Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Helen Frankenthaler, Paul Goodwin, Derek Sherwood, Derek Huggins, Helen Lieros, and Raphael Chikukwa.

There is a comforting honesty in his humility but his work quickly reminds you that he is in a league of his own. Jogee has never been considered restrained, he is an eccentric with the politest of manners. His lifestyle is a walking advertisement for working with your hands and when he travels, he gets around on a bicycle. The walls of his home are littered with artworks, most of them his, but some from his peers. The first thing you see when he opens the door is a painting called 'Not Yet Uhuru'.

According to Rashid, his home has always been a cultural point since his childhood; "political discussions with his peers would take place under the watchful eye of his parents and sisters". His sisters are still heavily involved in his art, often providing financial and emotional support. "I'm all for women's emancipation, equal pay, equal opportunities. Without my very capable sisters I wouldn't be able to survive", he adds.

Many who know Rashid personally will tell you there is nothing economical about his choice of words. Rashid can talk. We had come to see him to do a quick interview but ended up talking for hours. In fact, we had been talking for almost 35 minutes before I asked my first question: **how did you get into Art? To this Rashid replied,** "At an early age in primary school, other kids in my class would come to me to draw anything artistic, from diagrams to maps for rubbers, fountain pens, pens, pencils, you know". Ironically, his journey to Abstract Art started because, as Rashid stated, "First of all, I couldn't draw very well, although later I found that drawing is very important. You can't paint if you can't draw".

When I asked him how he paints since he "can't draw so well", his revelation of his process was just as informal as our surroundings. His main influences in all his artistic works come from Eastern cultures - especially Sufism and the writings of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, Indian percussionist music, popular music, Poetry, and African music. Somewhere between telling us which artists he listens to the most, Rashid breaks off into a Shona resistance song; which unfortunately I was not familiar with. "I love Shona music, Andy Brown - I taught him at Founders - and I knew Chiwoniso personally", he said. An avid music fan, Rashid cannot create without the eclectic mix of Bob Dylan, Beyoncé, Cliff Richards, The Beatles, Rihanna, Michael Jackson, Miles Davis, Stevie Wonder, and Abdullah Ibrahim. "Musicians", he adds "are the most respected artists in all African cultures".

Rashid's methodology is steeped in the rich history of Art. "To be a good artist you must have a good sense of composition. Where to put things. Tone. Texture. These are the composite elements of abstraction," he informed us.

Despite his aesthetically pleasing compositions, Joguee makes the kind of Art that can only be constituted for a purpose, rather than the pursuit of profit. "Art must be reflective of your environment. Whether it is a positive or negative vibe, you must try as hard as you can to get your message across in your Art. A decorative picture does not mean anything. It has got no truth in it. You can't travel with it, it has no baggage. You just sit and enjoy it with your eyes. It's on the surface. Real Art must be relevant to you and your environment", he asserted.



There is a certain romanticism in Rashid's outlook on Art and what it is supposed to do to the viewer. His approach to creating Art seems natural, 'loose', and 'heroic', but it is derived not only from observation and practice, but also active participation in the subject matter; "Getting your hands dirty," as he called it.

No stranger to danger, Rashid was conscripted as a medic in the Rhodesian Défense Force (RDF), and recalls one scene when he had to pick up a human torso rived by a landmine and put it in a bag. This incident was explored in his work called, 'Landmine'. "In Art there is always the retrospective elements. Sometimes after you have produced something, you can identify its sources", he said. Rashid's work is Abstract but it is deeply rooted in current affairs and the political situation in Zimbabwe.

As he gave me a tour of his home - which also functions as a free open gallery - I couldn't help but notice the titles of his works are inspired by major political figures or events in Zimbabwe - in fact he even has a picture of President Emmerson Mnangagwa opposite a painting dedicated to the First Lady called, 'Auxilia', on his living room wall. When I asked him about all his political references, he told me that, "Politics is Art, Art equals Politics. Artists are the documenters of the political events". Rashid's work is full of authentic ideas about everyday life, passionate love, politics, family, traditions, and musical undertones. He is a visionary, and I suppose that is why his work seems abstract. He is a man trying to paint the future with meagre tools from the comfort of his home. Rather than blaming his tools or "the situation" he soldiers on, trying to heal all those who gaze upon his work with his bright - muted colours and vivid non-objective scenes.



When I asked him, what motivates him to continue to paint, especially in this uncertain unstable economy, he replied, "For me it's necessity. Personally, to express myself and my feelings. Painting allows me to be vocal and give people ideas. It allows me to represent how others are feeling". Rashid also counts local radio presenters as people that "really keep you going, especially in these troubling times when it's hard to even find bread and paints".

This might sound strange due to the nature of his kind of Art (Abstract) - but Rashid is a storyteller. As abstract as his works might seem, what he does best is bring it all down to Earth. "Water always finds its own river. So, when you get the response or reply from others, saying that person is like me, that's my great reward", he said.

Painting, according to Rashid, is a way of finding someone who is similar to you - someone you can relate to and share experiences. "Sharing and bartering will always be a necessity for our people. You always paint with others in mind because you learn from each other and strengthen each other's commitment. And increase your knowledge. When you are being oppressed by anything, you have to fall on learning and educative processes to liberate yourself. Because they can take your home or your car but they cannot take away your knowledge", Rashid said.

There is a Delphian quality to Rashid and his artworks. When we left, I felt as if I had come down the mount's slopes with a clearer vision of the future of Zimbabwean Art. For example, when I asked him how he felt about "the Zimbabwean Situation", he began by giving me a history lesson about his existential interactions with the different Zimbabwean governments over the decades, from the Rhodesian Front to ZANU PF to MDC.

For years he says he has encountered the question, "How are they going to give the people power? That's the problem in Zimbabwe. Africans grew up with a forced inferiority complex. Africans were categorised as inferior, so in everything they do they start from the position of they can't. This is what I am totally against". To drive his point home, in true abstractionist form, he borrowed the words of famed Sufi writer Jalāl-ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī to illustrate his outlook on life: "Rumi says, if there is a flea in the blanket, don't burn the blanket, remove the flea. In other words, don't be extreme in your actions. You've got to be a man of the world and a man for all seasons".

Information:

Rashid's artworks can be viewed at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Harare and Bulawayo, and Gallery Delta.



Sidenotes by Joanne Peters:



Sitting behind the camera with my cup of tea, I was captivated by his stories. Rashid is a very welcoming and insightful figure, full of wisdom and inspirational knowledge. It was almost impossible to break any attention as I heeded his advice, his insights, and his references to some historical figures. I felt like I was downloading.



Watch Rashid's interview directed by Alex Gwaze and filmed by Joanne Peters at: <https://youtu.be/ghvc5s1xpYo>



.AN INTERVIEW WITH MUSIC PRODUCER SIMBA TAGZ .

The Man For All Seasons

By Alex Gwaze, Researcher #TagzMusic #Empawa #ZimProducers

Simba Tagz is a producer / artist and the founder of Showtime Records Africa. "The line between producer and artist was blurred in the early '90s", and since then artists such as Kanye West, Dr. Dre, Q-Tip, Pharrell, J Dilla, Travis Scott, RZA, and Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs, have become household titans in both fields.

A producer is a lot of things; initially he / she can function as a creative consultant who aids an artist in achieving a certain sound / vibe or aesthetic. Most times they are known as the beat makers who supply ready-made instrumentals that musicians add melodies and lyrics to.



Photograph of Producer / Artist Simba Tagz from Simba Tagz (top)

Whilst Tagz is an accomplished artist who has released 2 solo albums, it is his work as a producer that has made him one of the leading voices of the Zimbabwean contemporary experience on the continent. What sets Tagz apart from other producers is that his production focuses on the artist rather than "branding" himself - this is evident in his reciprocal relationships with other artists.

Over the years **he has worked with the likes of Mr Eazi, Ice Prince, Lady Zamar, Skwatta Kamp, EX-Q, TeamBho, F-eezy, Tehn Diamond, Reason, Zubz, Young Nations, Junior Brown, and Kabomo,** just to name a few.



Photograph of Simba Tagz in the studio with Singer Shekkinah from Simba Tagz (bottom)

Simba's work as a producer has given him access to local and regional artist's varying styles and musical ideals. His ability to fuse trending 'stylistic preferences' - as well as add a Zimbabwean 'feel' to the myriad of trending rhythms spawning from Africa - has made him one of the driving forces spearheading the new African beat. Music is, after all a form of communication.

However, if it's not released into the world, it is a monologue. So once you put it out there the conversation starts not just with your fans but other artists, musicians, writers etc. At this point the ego can take over and one can easily use music to 'preach' or acquire some unearthed 'wants'.

Tagz isn't needy or 'preachy', instead he is a 'bridge' whose collaborations create a dialogue between the listeners and the artists. In his own words, "my involvement with Mr Eazi's emPawa team is really not to do with my own career; what we are trying to do is spotlight all these upcoming artistes".

Simba's extensive collaborations show that he is a man who is ready to cope with any contingency and whose behaviour is always appropriate to the occasion - he is a man for all seasons. So when I had a chance to chat with him, I wanted to know what drew him to behind-the-scenes work.

So, what initially drew you to music, specifically producing?

"It was always something I could just sense. I remember, if people around me sang a song wrongly, I'd try to correct them. So when I started making music it felt very natural for me to try to bring the best out of those around me".

As a well-travelled artist, how do you rate African producers?

"African producers are representing. Not just in Africa but in the whole world, I would say. We are moving forward and we have people in every aspect of the industry. Plus, we have what it takes to break onto the world stage".

In your opinion, what are the top 5 albums ever made? And why?

"This one for me changes every year. Because I'm a music lover".

You are known as a producer / artist? Which do you prefer - to produce or to perform?

"For me there isn't an aspect of music that comes before the other because it's all my expression. I'm linked to music I produced, and to music I sang in the same way".



Photograph of Simba Tagz performing with Rapper Tehn Diamond from Simba Tagz (top)

You collaborate often. Can you describe the process?

"That really depends on time. Some collaborations take minutes in the studio and others, well. For example, 'My Lover' with Mr Eazi took months, due to touring schedules. I didn't mind because I understand artists and how we work".

With so many great artists out there, how do you choose who to work with?

"At this stage in my musical career I choose artists that I feel would push me beyond my boundaries. I just try to be better than before. We can do it for new markets (money), but for me it's about pushing Africa further along the way to international recognition".



Photograph of Simba Tagz and Producer Diplo from Simba Tagz (bottom)

You have worked with Nigerians, and South Africans, how do you overcome some of the language and cultural barriers?

"Music is the first universal language. We speak in melodies and harmonies before all else. So I just let the music do the talking".

Are there any lessons / tips / concepts you have learnt from your international peers?

"Call me, DM me, work with me - I'll tell you".

What does Zimbabwean music mean for you in the global context?

"Our expression, which I feel due to globalization - are just as important as any other country's expression right now. Zimbabweans are listening to Zim music just as much as they do to international artists these days".

Finally, is there a "Zimbabwean sound" or vibe? If yes, can you describe it?

"That's very subjective. I do agree that it exists and in some ways we've left it out. But also, in some ways we've incorporated it into our music. We should just let it carry its natural course out into the mainstream. Don't force the vibe".

Editor's Sidenotes and Further Reading:

"A producer is someone who is actively involved in the writing and recording of the music. Calvin Harris, for instance makes millions building the beats for songs like his #3-peaking Rihanna collaboration, "This Is What You Came For" (as a producer), and then he makes millions upon millions pressing play on that song at nightclubs and festivals (as a DJ)".

However, due to digital technologies, it has become easier to distribute your music to the public and garner a fan base. This has also made it easier for anyone to 'pirate' your work, so when you are starting out - in an unpredictable economy - you have to develop several strategic revenue streams.

Firstly, start by charging clients an hourly fee for studio sessions and consultation. Secondly, advertise yourself and your beats on social media. Create and sell "type-beats" for a fixed price range with a non exclusive lease or exclusive tiers from \$50 and up, depending on the quality of the beat. Thirdly, create exclusive sample kits, customized drum kits and synth samples to sell to other producers. Fourth, don't just make beats, offer mixing and mastering services. And lastly, conduct music lessons.

Selected Sources:



[[Robbie Ettelson (2012)
The 23 Best Rappers Who Started As Producers

In: www.complex.com Available at:
<https://www.complex.com/music/2012/10/the-best-rappers-who-started-as-producers/>
(Accessed on June 29, 2019)

[[Kennedy Nyavaya (2019)
Simba Tagz to use global links to promote local music

In: www.thestandard.co.zw
Available at: <https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2019/03/10/simba-tagz-use-global-links-promote-local-music/>
(Accessed on June 29, 2019)

[[Chris DeVille (2016)
The Rise Of The Producer As A Lead Artist
In: www.stereogum.com
Available at: <https://www.stereogum.com/1891681/the-rise-of-the-producer-as-a-lead-artist/franchises/the-week-in-pop/>
(Accessed on June 30, 2019)

[[12 Smart Ways to Make Money as a Music Producer (n.d)

In: www.audiomentor.com Available at:
<https://www.audiomentor.com/audioproduction/12-smart-ways-to-make-money-as-a-music-producer>
(Accessed on June 30, 2019)



Listen to Simba Tagz on iTunes:
<https://music.apple.com/zw/album/natural-selection/1181004430>

Preview Simba Tagz's music on Spotify:
<https://open.spotify.com/artist/4NdzyWZREwfd991qOTTUf>

Stream Simba Tagz's music on Deezer:
<https://www.deezer.com/us/artist/5844052?autoplay=true>



www.facebook.com/pg/simbatagz
www.instagram.com/simbatagz
www.twitter.com/simbatagz

.#ONTHELIST.

My Favourite Zimbabwean Songs Of 2019, So Far

By Nonsi Tshabangu, Event Organizer and Dancer, #UrbanGrooves, #ZimDanceHall, #ZimHipHop



Since the emergence of Urban Grooves in the late 90's, Zimbabwean music has grown up.

The foundation laid by the likes of ExQ, Decibel, King Pinn, Betty Makaya, Maskiri, Roy and Royce, Roki, Mizchif, M'Afriq, and David Chifunyise - just to list a few: has developed into three proper genres - Zim Dancehall, Zim Hip-hop, and Afrofusion.

In their prime other pioneers like Sanii Mhakkhalima, Stunner, Leonard Mapfumo, and Shinsoman struggled to make and distribute their music due to the high cost of music production. But today's artists can create nice music at home and share it via their phones to the whole world. Today it's now easier to create and share your own music, but Zim still has no streaming platform for local artists to host their songs. Local artists still rely on international platforms that don't pay good money - eish. Despite this issue more and more Zimbos are listening to #ZimMusic - and as the crowds grow the music just gets better and better. So anyway, **here are my picks of Zim songs released in 2019** that are on heavy rotation #OnTheList. My list is arranged by #vibe, BTW.

1

#ProudlyZimbo #MTM

Tamy Moyo_ Kwandinobva - *Let start it right, I'm from Zimbabwe* #Usaderere
Jah Prayzah_ Dangerous
Trevor Dongo ft Andy Muridzo_ Mutumbu Nyekete
Tahle WeDzinza ft Tocky Vibes_ Ndibhambise Tione - #WeDontLikeThat
Winky D ft Gemma Griffiths_ MuGarden - *We bringing it down to Earth* #Imajeni

2

#MaFeels #ZveMoyo #EmoOverload

Takura_ Zve Moyo - *zveNoise zvava nhorondo* kkk
Simba Tagz ft Mr Eazi_ My Lover - *We got* #Naijalove #Choppin
EXQ ft Mr Eazi & Simba Tagz_ Teddy Bear Remix - #BigLove kkk
Kazz aka Mr Boomslang ft Tytan_ Chimoko - #UKLove
Berita_ Ndicel'iKiss - #SALove
Ammara Brown_ Loyal - #HreLove
Mimi Tarukwana_ Selfish - #ByoLove - *Malavu lavu muZim*

3

#MaRappers

Takura_ Noise
Denim Woods_ No Playin'
Indigo Saint ft T Mak_ Tatenda Taibu - *Rappers don't catch feelings*
A.S.A.P.H_ V.I.C - #TheVibelsCorrect
Ti Gonzi_ Kufamba Murima - #ImJustADreamer & #ImASinner #Boyz
Cal_Vin_ Kele Jwetse Ha Kae - #TheStoryteller
EXQ ft Ti Gonzi_ Zuva Rese - #MrPutiti

4

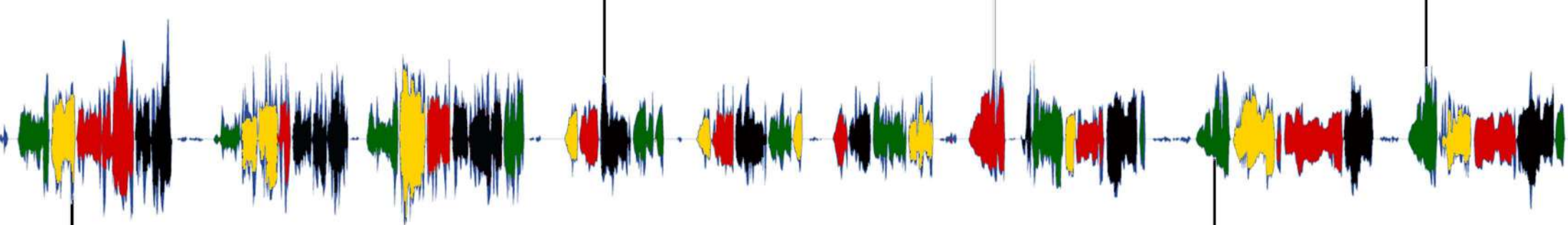
#TurnUp #SkrrPa #iPapoPapo #Hatinzwaro

T Jeketera_ Badgyal - #FormerPresidentsWife
Enzo Ishall_ Bhiza Rinoda Mutasvi - *Mabhiza, #kaNjiva,*
Coco weAfrica_ Gokamu - *Enzo ane chirugu paden guys kkk*
Killa T_ Ghetto Rinenharo - #MaFacts
T Jeketera ft Keith C_ Moto Emoji
Freeman ft Alick Macheso_ Ngaibake
Enzo Ishall_ Gwati - #Dead Too Funny kkk

5

#TakeEmToChurch #Conscious

Buffalo Souljah ft Enzo Ishall_ Fear No Man
Coco weAfrica ft Flame B & Yung Nyale_ Blessed
Jah Signal_ Ishe
Indigo Saint ft Beth The Guitar_ Amandla
Vuyo Brown_ Thula Wazi



Editor's Sidenotes and Further Readings:

According to Digital Music News the top streaming websites for Artists are:

Site	What Streaming Music Services Pay per play	Total plays needed to earn \$US1,472.	Ranked
Napster	\$0.01900 per stream	77,474 plays	1
Tidal	\$0.01250 per stream	117,760 plays	2
Apple Music	\$0.00783 per stream	200,272 plays	3
Google Play Music (GPM) / YouTube Music	\$0.00676 per stream	217,752 plays	4
Deezer	\$0.00624 per stream	230,000 plays	5
Spotify	\$0.00473 per stream	336,842 plays	6
Amazon	\$0.00402 per stream	366,169 plays	7

[See: <https://www.digitalmusicnews.com/2018/12/25/streaming-music-services-pay-2019/>]

.WHAT I'M WATCHING.

Top Zimbabwean Music Videos Of 2019, So Far

By **Rasquesity Keaitse**, *Director*, #MusicVideos. #ZimVideos, #Trending

The music video industry remains at an embryonic stage due to Zimbabwe's current economic situation which has seen most videos being produced within extremely limited budgets. However, there are some technically and financially resourceful local filmmakers that have managed to overcome these obstacles, and have produced creative and entertaining visuals that I personally find both interesting and marketable. Two such producers are Angel Arts and Slimaz. These two are the godfathers of Zim music video production. They introduced DSLRs to music video production and paved the way for celebrated directors like Andy Cutta and Blaqs to make their mark on channels such as TRACE Africa. Directors such as SimDoc, Aaron Mheta, and Leoy V also deserve a special mention.

These young filmmakers are creating and producing great work with severely limited resources. Furthermore the fledgling music industry should also be credited for pushing local directors to create visuals that not only represent contemporary Zimbabwean culture, but also advertises the new sounds emerging from local studios. So with all the issues I have mentioned in mind, the music videos I have selected are based solely on the concepts, creative execution, and "vibe", not views on YouTube. We all know that data in Zimbabwe is hard to come by, so views are not representative of quality or relevance. **The videos on my list are restricted to videos released in 2019**, and should be considered early contenders for the 'music video of the year' title. My list in no particular order is:



Tamy Moyo - Kwandinobva
Directed by **Andy Cutta**
Published on May 14, 2019
228,275 + views
Song produced by DJ Tamuka
www.youtube.com/watch?v=FidQXrs7sLo



Jah Prayzah - Kunerima
Directed by **Blaqs**
Published on Feb 12, 2019
1,201,865 + views
Song produced by DJ Tamuka
www.youtube.com/watch?v=cm89uUm8dpc



Takura - Zvemoyo
Directed by **Director AM**
Published on Apr 20, 2019
513,345 views
Song produced by Young Nash and Spirit Fingers
www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY94gA65oiY



Coco weAfrica - Gokamu
Directed by **SimDoc**
74,149 + views
Published on Feb 15, 2019
Song produced by Angeo Pablo and DJ Tamuka
www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHL3Zqg3R_4



Enzo Ishall - Bhiza
Directed by **Studio Art Pictures**
Published on Jun 14, 2019
153,186 + views
Song produced by DJ Tamuka
www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYk2azEFk9E



Takura - Noise
Directed by **Director AM**
Published on Feb 8, 2019
332,028+ views
www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJurSFm7cVI



Ti Gonzi - Kufamba Murima
Directed by **Dir X Leoy V**
Published on Apr 8, 2019
213,148 views
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nf7I0K8Y0sM



ASAPH - V.I.C.
Directed by **Urban Legend Pictures**
Published on May 31, 2019
4,928 + views
Song produced by AyKay King
www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaZGIP6XPyA



Winky D x Gemma Griffiths - MuGarden
Directed by **Sos Media Pro**
Published on Feb 14, 2019
2,921,730+ views
Song produced by Oskid
www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXWMqXWfwK0



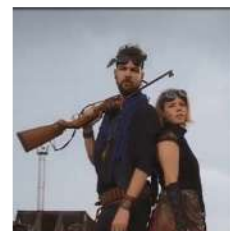
Ishan and Ti Gonzi - Kure
Directed by **Dir X Leoy V**
Published on Feb 23, 2019
1,230,798 + views
www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mAF22mAHsl



Jah Prayzah - Chikomo
Directed by **Blaqs**
Published on Mar 25, 2019
954,731 + views
Song produced by DJ Tamuka
www.youtube.com/watch?v=nG-kLrvCmOY



Gary Tight x Ti Gonzi - Zviroti
Directed by **Studio Art Pictures**
Published on Jun 26, 2019
61,288 + views
Song produced by Mars on Tha Beat
www.youtube.com/watch?v=-V5YVqMSKzQ



Amy & The Calamities - Bless
Directed by **Kalai Faye Barlow**
Published on Mar 7, 2019
6,549 views
Song produced by Corentin Fanuel
www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGL8vpKpBAM



Fish F McSwagg - ETHULINI
Directed by **Urban Legend Pictures**
Published on Jun 23, 2019
485 + views
www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvbhPgDGN6s



Berita - Ndicel'ikiss
Directed by **Makere**
Published on Apr 4, 2019
66,594 + views
www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xVhy_YmISM



Tahle Wedzinza x Tocky Vibes - Ndishambise Tione
Directed by **Dir X Leoy V**
Published on Jul 22, 2019
36,400+ views
www.youtube.com/ZC3esvZp80Q



Editor's Sidenotes and Further Reading:

All these videos are available on YouTube, but YouTube has the worst per-stream payouts. At US\$0.00074 per stream, these artists would need over 2 million views to make US\$1500. With local music video directors charging between US\$250 to US\$2000 (plus low views due to data issues), only Winky D would be able to break even on this list. Therefore, I encourage music video directors and musicians to send their videos to local broadcasters and regional channels such as ZBC, TRACE Africa, Channel O, Sound City and Zambezi Magic. This will allow them to maximize the visibility of their music and visuals, and get more 'change' for their efforts.

[[See: <https://www.digitalmusicnews.com/2018/12/25/streaming-music-services-pay-2019/>

Running The New Resource Race On Empty

By Alex Gwaze, Researcher #FutureZim #GreenIsTheNewBlack #SavePower



Bread:
between
ZW\$8.00 to
ZW\$12.00
a loaf

Fuel:
between
ZW\$15.00 to
ZW\$18.00
a litre

Wood:
between
ZW\$5.00 to
ZW\$35.00
a bundle/s

Photograph of The New Trinity
(Part 1 of 4) by Alex Gwaze
(Selfie on phone timer)

Nearly four decades after its independence, Zimbabwe is facing something it has never seen before. Its adversaries are economical, technological, and emotional. Yes, emotional. Whilst it might seem familiar to some - 2008 Reloaded - the situation now is different. The current Zimbabwean narrative is no longer about race, western sanctions, the government or land grabs; the Zimbabwean story now has a new character - it's people. Zimbabweans have developed an unhealthy fear of the future and opt for temporary solutions for urgent problems. We repair and maintain rather than innovate and sustain - and we are happy when something that was meant to work yesteryear, works today. **We now live in a rich country made poor by our inability to conceptualise 'new futures'.**

Although there is a smidgen of commendable efforts to make Zimbabwe "great" again by the government and other stakeholders [In 1000 AD, Shona people from the Kingdom of Mapungubwe settled on the plateau near Masvingo and begin building on the site of Great Zimbabwe. By 1220 AD Great Zimbabwe housed large herds of cattle and controlled the gold and ivory trade with the east coast]. These ideals of a 'greater Zim' are marred with nostalgia and thus inadvertently dredge up painful memories of persistent shortages of electricity, water, fuel, hard currency, food, and medicine; plus, hyperinflation, long queues, and the loss of all your savings to commercial banks 'black holes' [On February 2, 2009, then Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Gideon Gono, cut 12 zeroes on the Zimbabwean Dollar, effectively wiping out bank savings overnight].

Because of these painful memories, daily reminders, and prolonged stress, it's now difficult to originate new solutions, produce / develop new industries, support each other, or prosper.

"You have become the Jews of Africa", a Nigerian friend of mine said to me.

I asked him what he meant by that and he said, *"There is always a Zimbabwean somewhere behind someone making big news, but rarely in your own country".*

Well this is because our people go outside and study, but never return. In fact, some are encouraged to never come back by their own parents. So they grow 'others' economies, build 'others' industries, maintain 'others' interests, spread 'others' ideals, and consolidate 'others' wealth - then they send the 'change' home to mummy, daddy, sisi, bhudi, aunty and their kids - -- via Western Union, Ecocash, and Mukuru.

"Be careful not to shame people for leaving your country to seek greener pastures elsewhere; especially when they are helping you survive", my friend cautioned.

Yes, the diaspora is definitely aiding locals, in fact in 2017 Zimbabweans sent US\$698,9 million home, accounting for 49% of total international remittances (US\$1,4 billion). Diasporas remittances are "arguably one of the most important sources of foreign currency in Zimbabwe. When the economy tanked back in 2003, there was a surge in the number of people who left Zimbabwe looking for greener pastures. Those people often left their dependants back in Zimbabwe. Most send back money for the sustenance of these dependants on a regular basis". Currently those in the diaspora send about US\$650 million annually to Zimbabwe.

"And what did you locals do with all that money", he asked.

After we bought groceries, paid bills, school fees, and the likes - we 'did the most'. In the "dollarization" / multi-currency period (2009 to 2019), Zimbabweans bought more cars (fancy and second-hand Japanese cars), more clothes, more pizza, more homes, and even did more 'sexting' on our iPhones. We got blissfully drunk on Hennessy, Two Keys and other foreign beverages, while we ogled imported "pantie-less" dancers.

When we were done partying, we went on shopping sprees in South Africa, Dubai, China, or Thailand. We discarded our Zim Dollar and trusted the moribund US-dollar-fuelled vacuity and celebrated our survival of the 2008 phenomena by seeing the world we had been sanctioned from - all the while looking to oligarchs for temporary solutions for long term problems.

"See, that's your problem right there. 1. You are under sanctions. 2. You are in a consumer-based economy; but you spend all the forex outside your country just as fast as it came in. A dollar must circulate in the community for years to wash out all debt, before it ever sees a money changer. Especially if you are not exchanging it for your local currency. You effectively shot yourself in the foot by giving the forex back to the foreigners in record time", he remarked.

Not all the money left the country. Those in the informal sector (vendors, freelancers, students, domestic workers, and small-scale farmers) are now sending and receiving money using the mobile banking facilities introduced by Ecocash, OneMoney, TeleCash, and Mukuru, without the use of banks, whilst South Africa's eWallet and M-Pesa system still relies on the existing archaic bank deposit model. However, Zimbabweans inadvertently entered the plastic / swipe/ digital money age, so there are many still suffering from the "hard currency hangover" and will not put any cash in 'black-hole-banks'. Furthermore, those with bank accounts spend on average, 4 to 8 hours a day queueing to get their fixed amount weekly cash rations [Banks give a weekly cash allowance of between ZWD 50 to ZWD 300 a week]. In addition, those who solely use the mobile banking facilities are also affected by the daily power cuts which hamper network accessibility.

"Zimbabweans sound power hungry", my friend joked.

Yes, but we shouldn't be. Whilst there are several solar powered geysers visible on Zimbabwean homes, and some solar powered traffic lights in the city, Zimbabweans need to be fully committed to the de-carbonisation of the energy sector and adopt a clean and reliable energy policy to become future proof.

Imagine those solar panels on our homes generating not only energy that heats our bath water - but pumps power back into the grid, that is credited to your ZETDC accounts. "Countries like Germany, Chile, and Egypt are now benefiting from solar electricity fed into the grid from IPPs at less than 5c per kilowatt hour (kWh).

"These renewable energy things cost a lot of money to set up, especially in Africa", he stated.

Of course, but this is a plausible option to address Zimbabwe's power needs. In fact, "Econet, through its energy business, Ugesi Energy, launched a \$45 million solar power rural electrification programme targeting 100 growth points across the country. The Ugesi mini grids will typically provide power to an area within a radius of five kilometres and will be supported by individual prepaid meter. But they are not the only players in renewable energy development in Zimbabwe. Other power projects in development are: ZPC's Batoka Gorge Hydro Electric Scheme (Victoria Falls), Distributed Power Africa (Countrywide), Community Electricity Supply Company (Gwanda). Zimbabwe Power Company Solar (Gwanda, Insukamini, Munyati), the International Renewable Energy Agency from the United Arab Emirates (five identified potential sites in Zimbabwe), Lupane Coalbed Methane (Lupane), Gairezi Hydro Electric Scheme (Gairezi River in Manicaland), Budiriro Polytechnic (Harare), Schweppes / Coca-Cola, and the Renewable Energy Association of Zimbabwe (nationwide).

"What you are talking about are not up and running projects. And funding them is unrealistic in your current situation, you know that, right?", he insisted.

The reality is we have to get out of survival mode and into 'forever' mode. **The first step is to realise that a sustainable economy is the bridge between despair and wealth.** Wealth is generational and breeds prosperity. So we need to open our eyes and realise we are in a global resource race. **The 'old black standards' - oil and coal - are not efficient, productive or the best option.** Green is the new black; and the resource race, not the rat race, is the future. We have nothing to fear. It's not like we do not have the resources.

"Yeah, you Zimbos have a lot of natural resources", he agreed.

firewood

This is the most commonly found natural source of renewable energy, but the average Zimbabwean tree takes 15 to 30 years to grow.

Photograph of The New Trinity (Part 2 of 4) Firewood by Alex Gwaze
Model and Make up: Espina Mtonza

fossil
fuels

*This is a
scarce source of
expensive
non renewable energy.*

Typically fossil fuels have an average age of **650 million years** and require a complex process to extract them and turn them into petroleum.

Photograph of The New Trinity
(Part 3 of 4) Fuel by Terai Moyo
Model: Alex Gawze
Make up: Espina Mtonza

We have arable land that accounts for 10.34% of Zimbabwe's total land area, about 40% of Zimbabwe's land is covered in forests, and we have mineral deposits such as coal, gold, diamonds, and iron which earn the country roughly \$1.8 billion in exports. Furthermore, the whole country sits between two major freshwater rivers, the Zambezi and the Limpopo.

However, **right now we are running on empty - we have no fuel and no water**, and we are fighting persistent Cholera outbreaks. We cannot make it into the future if we are busy surviving yesterday's problems, now.

"You have some of the most literate and educated people in Africa, Zimbabwe has one of Africa's highest literacy rates at over 90%. Your population is usually better educated than average African, making the people one of the greatest assets of your country. In fact, you get jobs everywhere you go. You don't have a war, disease outbreak or terrorists in your country; how come you can't solve your problems in-house?", my friend asked.

Look, you can have the greatest minds on Earth, in the offices, thinking up solutions to several immediate crises, but you still need practical people on the ground who understand your vision so they can implement solutions that will bear fruit in the hearts and minds of the common man. In other words - Bob, Biti, Gono, Tsvangirai, Prof Moyo, Welsh, Mujuru, Grace, Mthuli, Chamisa or ED cannot fix the country without the willingness of the people to participate in the stabilising efforts.

"I understand what you are sayin; in order to find a solution to your problems in-house, you have to start with the people. However, you now sounding like you blaming the people", my friend remarked.

In such an obviously difficult governance situation, it is unreasonable to redistribute responsibility to the powerless who have no resources to solve the problems - but governments work for the people's interests. The amount of chickens clucking in illegal coops in the suburbs tells me we are traditionally resourceful, but we have become professional hustlers, not entrepreneurs or innovators.

We have to go beyond the economics of a middle income vision and imagine a future with no power cuts, no bread queues, or transport issues - and what it will look like. We are in a power struggle for basic commodities, but the bigger picture is that we are really in a fight for sustainable resources. **Petrol, bread and firewood are stone age tools. We must move beyond our perishable bread and butter struggles.** We have just entered the plastic / swipe age, but we need to be in the digital age - yesterday. Restoration and maintenance of our national assets is a paramount exercise, but we need to look light years into the future to leapfrog the current #ZimSituation. Zimbabwe needs to disrobe the old regalia and don a new "sexy", modern efficient image - fashioned from our shared imagined future.

"You seem to have a 'sexy' plan to fix everything", he scoffed.

Not a plan, and not everything - just a legitimate proposal. Honestly, the Zimbabwean government is dealing with people that don't know whether they want to go back to "Rhodesia is Super" or adopt the "Open for Business" mantra. This chronophobia, anxiety, and uncertainty is not unwarranted. Weekly changes in the cost and availability of fuel, bread and water have made everyone fearful of what tomorrow may bring. Especially when it takes over 3 hours to get a "pinch" of your hard-earned cash back from the banks' coffers or risk losing it to the 'black hole of hyperinflation', slashed zeros or 2% transaction tax. Power is the inherent requisite for any modern society yet it feels more like an afterthought than a priority. The reality is you cannot get anything done with daily 8 / 16-hour power cuts. A lack of electricity hampers socio-economic growth. What we are seeing right now are symptoms of the impending "green" future, and our lack of preparedness for it, multiplied by our stunted growth.

"Multiplied by your stunted growth?", he retorted.

Let me expand - Zimbabwe has spent most her life under "smart sanctions" for close to over two decades - from 1965-1979, and 2001/2 to present. Sanctions are the instruments of stagnation, this is why they have succeeded in stunting the growth and development of Zimbabwean interests and isolating Zimbabwe from the global economy. Zimbabwe's lifeline through the decades of sanctions has been the SADC region. Our main trading partners are our immediate neighbours, South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique and Malawi - but they don't have to be the only Africans we trade with. Since we are running a resource race not a rat race, **#TheFutureIsAfrican.**

Zimbabweans need to rekindle their sense of #Hunhu. The diasporic community has to be attracted back to the country through a cosmopolitan future-forward vision that incorporates some of the goods and services they have experienced outside the country and come to expect in Zimbabwe today.

"People want to come back home, and it's not just Zimbabweans - other Africans do too", my friend added.

Yes, in fact in 2007 the Ghanaian government initiated the Joseph Project (similar to Israel's policy of reaching out to Jews across Europe and beyond following the Holocaust) to encourage people of African descent abroad to bring home financial and human resources to accelerate nation building.

In addition, Ghana's parliament passed a Citizenship and Immigration Act which provides for a "Right of Abode" for any "Person of African descent in the Diaspora" to travel to and from the country "without hindrance". They also made provisions for dual citizenship.

"Now you want everyone to come to Zimbabwe. You sound naive", he remarked.

As naive as that sounds, to answer my Nigerian friend's original question, *"Why can't Zimbabwe solve its own problems in-house?"*. I pose this question - *"Why does she have to amidst globalisation and digital currencies?"*.

The Zimbabwean people cannot exist in isolation of other nations. The US dollar / multi-currency "blood transfusion" - which allowed certain industries to stay afloat, and certain individuals to grease their pockets with struggling citizens hard-earned dollars - showed us we need other nations' aid in order to survive. However, this dependency on borrowed economic power (US dollars) and neighbour's energy (Eskom) - when we have all the necessary resources, is redundant and unsustainable. Zimbabweans need to become financially, intellectually, and emotionally invested in a shared imagined vision of an "all-powerful" green future that we can sustain. This is the bright future that those "with power" and the multitudes "in the darkness" can wholeheartedly invest in.

Editor's Sidenotes and Further Reading:

The Zimbabwean government's plans to boost the electrification rate to 85% by 2020 through building another coal-fired power plant with a capacity of 1,400 MW, expanding the capacity of Hwange Power Station by 600 MW, and adding 300 MW to the Kariba Dam Hydroelectric Power Station; have all stalled due to lack of investment. Nonetheless, the Zimbabwean energy sector presents immense investment opportunities in power development, petroleum supply, and renewable energy. Zimbabwe currently has 26 billion tonnes of coal reserves available for power generation, translating to an estimated 8 000 years of use at the current consumption of 3 million tonnes per annum. Furthermore, the potential for bagasse co-generation from sugarcane in Zimbabwe is estimated to be 633 GWh. In other words, Zimbabwe is sitting on the power needed to propel itself into the future, yesterday.

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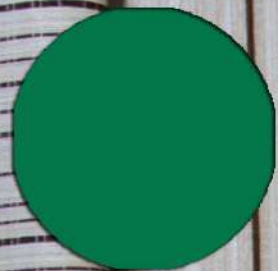


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wheat

This is the most widely grown (220 million hectares) and traded, perishable cash crop used in the production of bread, pastas, beer, and cereals. It is a water intensive commodity that takes 4 to 8 months to mature, increasing the demand on the global water supply and threatening biodiversity.

Photograph of The New Trinity
(Part 4 of 4) Wheat by Alex Gwaza
Model: Terai Moyo
Make up: Espina Mtonza



Taking Your First Steps Towards.

CRAFTING YOUR SUSTAINABLE CAREER

By Phiona Martin, Career Strategist #Jobs #Entrepreneurs #SustainableCareers

Photograph of Designer Yolanda Ngwenya, Founder of Bakhar by Alex Gwaze

You have been looking for a job. The job searches have been gruelling and the rejections painful. The days turn into months and months turn into years, yet you are still unemployed. **Maybe it's time to explore a sustainable career option, perhaps self-employment is your destiny.** The world of work is transforming from an ecosystem in which workers seek long-term or permanent employment to sustainable career paths, informal employment, micro- entrepreneurship, freelancing, and self-employment. It is now not uncommon for individuals to venture into a business completely unrelated to their field, e.g. an engineer opening a restaurant. A common reason for corporate workers who were once formally employed to enter the entrepreneurial world is as a result of a business that is no longer sustainable due to economic stagnation, and other factors. For some, corporate jobs are the polar opposite of their personality, values, interests, and work style. Whatever the circumstances that leads you on the "sustainable career path" it is important to consider the type of personal growth you are looking for, along with the financial gains and mental wellbeing in the workplace.

When you make a career decision linked to your values, interests, personality and strengths (V.I.P.S), **the first step is to ask yourself questions like** - Who am I? Who inspires me the most? (family, friends, authors, artists, leaders, etc)? Which qualities inspire me in each person? What do I love to do in my free time? What do I care about? What are the skills that come to me without thought and effort (e.g. creative writing, working with numbers)? What things do people ask me to help with or do for them (consider you an expert on)? These may seem like very basic questions, but they play a crucial role in making sustainable career decisions.

If you find the prospect of asking yourself intimate questions daunting, a good exercise is to set yourself a challenging goal unrelated to the world of work or formal education. Spend some time doing other activities not related to your job search e.g. set some fitness goals or learn a new skill. This will not only give you a sense of purpose, but it will ignite hidden "driving forces" and interests that aid you in becoming "self-aware".

Once you have become "self-aware", the logical first step is to define what your speciality is; preferably based on the skills that you already possess and something you are passionate about. This will help you identify the "expertise" you need to possess to offer clients a marketable product or service. Identifying your "expertise" is an important springboard for refining your ideal job and your career trajectory, as well as what new skills and formal education you need to acquire. One element I consider to be a valuable metric to my professional growth and development is continuous learning and up-skilling. This means keeping up with industry trends through activities such as professional conferences, seminars, formal training, extra certifications, etc. Therefore, you must establish a "training budget" for yourself. If you invest in the right training and development for yourself, this investment will pay for itself many times over.

However, if you cannot financially invest in your formal education, find yourself a "mentor" through internships, job shadowing, volunteer work, or apprenticeship. A mentor can help you develop your skills, identify and achieve your career goals, advise you on your job and work-life balance, enable you to enhance your life skills, help you think more strategically and get the big-picture view, and assist you to access a variety of people and resources. Access to a variety of people is important because it helps you discover the hidden job market.

Tapping into the hidden job market is not only about talking to people in senior positions within companies, it is about talking to as many people as possible to uncover potential job leads. It's not about who has power, but who has information! Interact with many people daily (taxi drivers, hairdressers, security guards etc) because you may come across information that leads to your next job.

Besides interacting with potential leads, it is essential you become proactive and expand your networks and broaden your horizons through attending industry conferences and events. This will help you establish relationships with people within your industry and through this you may get to hear about unpublicised needs. Certain events will often activate opportunities within a company. Additionally, make use of online platforms such as LinkedIn and Instagram to connect with people working at your target companies and develop a relationship with them through requesting information, asking for advice, and engaging with their posts.

The best way to tap into the hidden job market is to be proactive. This means you need to “fish out” these opportunities by making unsolicited or speculative applications. This requires approaching an organisation to ask whether they have suitable vacancies or needs and submitting applications when no opportunities for what you are providing has been announced. As an entrepreneur / freelancer, the goal of making unsolicited or speculative applications is to generate the attention and interest of a client in the hope that a need / role may exist in the company or one will be created based on your application. Some jobs / services do not exist until the right person appears!

So be resourceful and research hiring managers’ email addresses through LinkedIn, personal networks and company websites. Collect information about the types of companies who hire people in your desired role and make a list of them, use this list to research actual people working at these particular companies. Try find some commonality or something ‘personal’ between you and the company that you can use in your interactions, e.g. “I noticed that we both attended ABC conference”. This demonstrates real interest in the company or person you are approaching and illustrates your resourcefulness. After you have made the connection, maintain positive, productive relationships with people who can help you to access opportunities.

Probably one of the trickiest things to consider once you have entered the sustainable career space is setting a fee for your services. This is something that you should research well by speaking to other freelancers in the market and individuals within your network. The first step is to identify which type of companies will make use of your services and can afford to pay your rates. Consider the decision makers within these businesses and how you can connect with them. Take into account other costs such as administration, marketing, travel, rent etc. You need to be aware of taxes and other legal implications within the country. Determine if you will be trading as a business entity or as an individual and the tax implications thereof. Consider your business goals and assess the benefits that come with how you decide to legally trade. Finally, following the news is another great way to speculate opportunities. Pay close attention to developments in your industry and to the strategic direction of your career.

“Following current affairs allows you to understand your career’s core competencies - the parts of its operation that drive its competitiveness in the marketplace - and enables you to make sure you play a contributing role”.

In conclusion, even if you are forced to close your business, the experience you would have developed during your entrepreneurial years can be of much value to the corporate world. When you re-enter the formal employment sector, it is your role to sell the value of the skills you gained as a freelancer, such as understanding the pressures of meeting payroll, branding, and paying bills, for example. In addition, you can solidify your credibility by providing references to corroborate your performance using your clients and suppliers. To reiterate, crafting a sustainable career means being proactive, maintaining a positive mindset and a collaborative tone. It is about creating your own solutions and not being a victim of circumstances.

Editor’s Sidenotes and Further Reading:

With an “unofficial” unemployment rate of 95%, Zimbabwe’s growing youth are restless and idle. Although the informal / parallel market provides the much-needed “transfusion” that keeps the system going, it is outside regulation and taxation, and its ripple effects can be felt in the rising cost of goods; Therefore, since we all cannot be “hustlers / salespersons” or civil servants - this lack of formal employment can provide the “born free” generation with an opportunity to craft non-traditional career pathways and industries in line with what they can really do and what they love to do.

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.LET'S SOCIALIZE MORE.



Social Media Marketing Hacks For Beginners

By **Vimbai Gwaze-Mukaro**, Founder of VIP Shopping AE #TIPS #SocialMedia #Marketing

Photograph of PR Agent
Gilmore Tee (Paper Bag Africa)
by Alex Gwaze

Starting a business or side hustle in the 21st century can be such a daunting experience! While social media has been a blessing for small business owners in many ways - it has also presented new challenges that business owners before the social media age did not have to grapple with. All of a sudden you need to manage professional business pages on popular social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram on top of running the day-to-day background processes like keeping up with updating your financial records and managing actual sales. You also need to worry about the social media content you need to post on your pages, how to craft and design visually appealing posts and pictures and generate enough interest to get a respectable amount of social media followers.

To be honest, it's easier for most of us to turn a blind eye and neglect the whole concept all together. All we do is open a Facebook and Instagram page - design a website or outsource the job - and then we are happy to think we have hacked the minimum requirements for running a 21st century business. As a new small business owner, I have become all too familiar with the realities of trying to manage social media marketing, and that's why **I have decided to share a few tricks and tips to help** someone in the same boat!

1 Invest in social media marketing courses.

I cannot stress this enough. Rather than going into the whole thing blindly, it would be wise of you to actually invest in affordable social media marketing courses to help you get your head around the concept. Thanks to the digital age, you do not need to find someone locally. There are lots of options available online.

Use Facebook advertising. You really need to focus on generating interest and raising awareness about your business. While you can rely on free advertising on your own personal page or encourage your friends and family to spread the word on theirs, this is simply not enough. Here's a quick fact- very rarely will your own friends and family actually buy anything from you. Most of your clients will be complete strangers. Facebook advertising will help you to share your business page and concept with individuals who are not in your social circle and who will be more likely to support your business financially.

3 Use free applications and software programmes online to design social media images, videos and posts. There are a lot of free software programmes online to help you design good quality visually appealing images. My favourite are Canva for visually appealing images and Lumen5 for videos - I have even invested in the paid versions as it has made my life easier. You can also try out others like Crello and Powtoons. These software programmes have free editable templates which you can use to design visually appealing posts, videos and images without outsourcing. They are also relatively easy to use and navigate around and offer a lovely range of diverse options.

4 Plan your social media calendar in advance. You can actually plan your social media posts in advance and design the accompanying images and content which can be posted at a later date. This will allow you to focus on background processes and the actual day-to-day running of your business without compromising your social media marketing strategy. You can set aside some time to plan ahead and design all posts and images for the specified time period once a week or month. In order to track my social media calendar and automate my posts - I use Trello.com. This is another free software programme online that can make your life easier.

5 Generate useful content. One of the social media marketing strategies I actually came across was that 80% of what you post should be free information and tid-bits that will add value to your ideal client in some way (obviously topics in line with your business) and only 20% on advertising your services and products. This is still something I am currently trying to work on- I haven't quite reached the goal yet. In order to find out what your ideal client would be interested in - all you have to do is hang around where your target market likes to spend time on social media - join the groups and highlight the topics that they talk about - especially the ones which you know your business can address directly. You can then craft all your social media posts and content in line with those topics to ensure they grab the attention of your ideal clients.



There you have it - these are the few tricks and hacks I have used on my own social media marketing journey. I wish you all the best on your journey- and hope these tips will help you socialize more.

.MENTAL HEALTH CHARITY.

Let's Talk About How You Feel

By **Zenani Masuku**, *Mental Health Activist* #MentalCharity #StartTheConversation #StopTheStigma



Photograph of Lifestyle Coach Zenani Masuku by Alex Gwaze

“We need to Talk”

- that dreaded statement.

There are things we wish to say but cannot say and things that must be said but are hard to say. Creating dialogue is challenging when trying to communicate or describe an illness to someone - or anyone for that matter - especially those who live in an environment engulfed by the cloak of religion and biased traditional views. Such surroundings distort the truth about mental health, emotional well-being, and mental illness. **Misconceptions** make it difficult for individuals to share their stories about their mental well-being, because they feel ashamed.

So before we begin to open up about how we feel about life, love, jobs, everyday experiences or even what we dislike - we need to first educate ourselves about the differences that exist between mental illness and mental health. Once people are clear about such differences then the affected persons can easily share their stories without facing any stigmatization stemming from ignorance.

Mental health and mental illness are not the same thing. Mental health is influenced by life experiences, environments, relationships with others, and physical health. “It refers to our emotional and psychological state, our social well-being, how we feel about ourselves, and how we interact with others”. However, poor mental health can lead to physical and mental illnesses such as depression, substance abuse, anxiety, bipolar disorders, mood swings, addiction, schizophrenia, and eating disorders.

Ignorance and a general lack of understanding in our communities - coupled with myths about demonic possession and the general “disgrace” unjustly applied to mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorders - leads to many who need help not being treated at all or being treated late. Generally, people suffer in silence because it is hard to reveal one's emotional and psychological state to others who lack understanding or do not display any empathy.

Therefore many do not enjoy the comfort and catharsis of sharing their experiences in a place of trust and safety because they fear the backlash from their community and families, who may not understand their symptoms or illness.

Fear is our biggest inhibitor when it comes to expressing our mental state. Our inability to overcome prejudices, insecurities and misconceptions surrounding mental health issues cripples us as a community. Many believe that mental health issues only exist in Europe or America because “black African communities” don't get affected by foreign “emotional illnesses” because apparently, Africans do not have feelings or private thoughts.

By **consenting** to such restrictive notions about the “human experiences” of African cultures and people, we unwittingly resolve to being binary peoples capable of only feeling happiness or sadness. We defeat our “whole” selves by not expressing our full emotional spectrum and will not see the effects of shelving our thoughts or shunning others' feelings until it's too late. We mustn't be afraid to **start “the conversation”**.

I think the most amazing thing about talking openly about your mental state is the realization that you are not alone. Having that opportunity to say:

“Hey,
Today is messed up for me,
I am feeling low and
I just don't know what
to do!”



And receiving responses like:



“It will be okay,
I don't know what to say,
but can I give you a hug?
You wanna talk about it?”

Such simple expressions offer relief and support to someone with mental health issues. There is a reason why the stereotypical representations of therapy (be it psychiatrist couches or group sessions) involve people talking openly. It is because **dialogue is a crucial element of the healing process. Talking to someone is often the first step to take when you know they are going through a difficult time.** Sometimes people don't actually need to talk, but we need to listen, connect and support each other. Just reassuring each other that a bad situation or persistent problem or horrible situation, will be all right, things won't always stay the same, is of value. It's not a matter of toughening up, it is a matter of **accepting and understanding** what someone is saying to you.

In order to help you listen and respond better, here is a quick **FIVE STEP MENTAL CHARITY PLAN** to aid you in initiating a conversation about mental health:

- ☒ Firstly, you got to create the time for you to talk with no distractions or imminent appointments. Find a comfortable space you can talk in without interruptions.
- ☒ Keep questions open ended and do not direct the conversation. Give them time to share what they want with you at their own pace.
- ☒ Be a good listener. Respect and acknowledge their feelings by repeating what they have said back to them to ensure them you have heard, understood, and respect their feelings. Avoid judgement and confrontation.
- ☒ You are not an expert so do not try to diagnose how they feel or offer solutions. Instead talk about ways to de-stress and reduce any defensiveness by sharing your feelings. Look for common ground.
- ☒ Finally, genuinely express your concern and give the person hope for recovery by offering them encouragement and support. However, if you feel there is an urgent need to act, refer them to, or contact a professional immediately.

Alternatively, you can adopt the three-K therapy strategy employed by the grandmothers who have been volunteering at the Friendship Bench Project in Harare, for the past 10 years. They say, “if someone is suffering from kufungisisa, or “thinking a bit too much” - the Shona language equivalent of “depression” - what we do is use a three-step therapy strategy - 1. Kuvhura pfungwa (open the mind), 2. Kusimudzira (uplift them), and 3. Kusimbisa (strengthen them)”. Zimbabweans have always been oral people, therefore if our grandmothers can learn to speak the mental charity lingo fluently - in “vernacular”, we all can.

Editor's Sidenotes and Further Reading:

The World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that around 450 million people currently suffer from mental health conditions. 1 in 4 people in the world will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at somepoint in their lives. In 2017 WHO figures showed that Zimbabwe is ranked number 19 in the world in terms of deaths by suicide, with suicide deaths reaching 1 641 of total mortalities in the country. And according to the National Alliance of Mental Health (NAMI) in the USA, more than 90% of people who die by suicide show symptoms of a mental health condition. “Zimbabweans have been urged to open up and seek counselling instead of resorting to suicide to solve problems emanating from gender-based violence, malignant illnesses, joblessness, and others”. However, there is a gap in Zimbabwe's healthcare services. There are only 10 psychiatrists and 15 clinical psychologists serving a population of approximately 15 million.

Selected Sources:



-]] See: <https://magellanhealthinsights.com/2018/05/23/mental-health-vs-mental-illness/> <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/supporting-someone-mental-health-problem>
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.POETRY.

Grey Matters



By **Brilliant Bimhah**, *Blogger* #ExplainingMyDepression #StopTheStigma

My favorite color is Grey,
But I don't know what Grey is,
I never did.
I either eat too much or I starve myself.
I sleep for 14 hours or have insomniac nights,
I fall in love too hard or I hate with a passion.
I don't know what Grey is,
I never did.

It's like I have two brains.
An irrational brain and a rational brain.
I'm never sure which me is me.
Is it the wild, impulsive and crazy one or
The shy, desperate, suicidal and tired one.

Sometimes my friends ask if I'm alright,
And my answer is always yes, I'm alright,
I don't want you to worry, I hope you don't worry.
You don't have to worry, I wish you did worry!
I wish you did worry about how,
Sometimes my eyes dry out so,
I force my wrists to cry instead,
Because I'd rather be in pain and know why,
Than to be in pain and not know why.

It's like my life is an echo,
An echo of lives that came before.
Bouncing on things I can't unlearn,
Things I can't unhear,
And just hoping to land on something more.
But sometimes,
I just want that sound to stop travelling,
I want my body to stop moving,
I want to stop feeling,
I want to stop feeling unseen.
And my attempt to die.
Is an attempt to be seen.

And dare you say I want attention,
I'll laugh right in your face!
Cause a girl like me,
Has no desire to hear a word you say!

.POETRY.

Save Yourself



By **Zie Nyathi**, *Poet* #SavingPower #PowerForThePeople

Holy cow!
Cried Israelites,
headed to Canaan.
Plunged into darkness,
they floundered.
Fear ramming lungs,
dead on rib cages.
The Sea behind,
now schizophrenic and calmer.
Ahead, Canaan wide and far,
a dream!

The Moses is a Pharaoh!
Cried they, not out loud of course,
Lest he heard and it displeases him.
Moses broke God's tablets in rage once -
What's a mortal if he fears not the Lord?
Plunged into darkness,
the Israelites wept.

The Holy bush is burning!
Cried they,
bewildered yet excited.
Gasps of smoke smouldering by their tents.
Darkness befallen their day in broad daylight.
All reason lost,
they mumbled nonchalant-
If firewood is not manna,
then what is?

We are lost!
Cried they,
livid and rampant.
Darkness makes hands idle,
Bitterness brews the ape-rage.
Never in the future -
Would the house of Solomon fall thrice?
Nor would David swell to a Goliath!
The saviour is not yet born,
they mourned.

The children of God,
must save themselves!

#SENDMEAPIC CHALLENGE

By Lungile Zelembe, Production Assistant and Alex Gwaze, Researcher
#SocialPhotography #SocialMedia #OnlineSafety

Photograph of ZIM National Rugby Player (Sables)
Ngoni Chibuwe by Zorodzai Chibuwe

Launched on the 10th of April, 2019 at the Dominican Convent Girls High School in Bulawayo; the **#SendMeAPic Challenge** asks social media users to think differently about the phrase, "send me a pic" or "can you send me a picture".

Whilst digital technology and Social Photography have made it easier to share a variety of images with each other, the term "send me a pic" is often associated with texting and dating - more specifically sexting, nudes, porn, and online bullying.

The pressures to fit in, plus some "instagrammers", "twelebs", and socialites posting practices - have throttled the diversity of social images, stifling individuality, creativity, and personal "goals".

The #SendMeAPicChallenge attempts to broaden the term by re-imagining what the phrase should look like. As part of the challenge, we asked social media users to share some "pics" with us of anything that interests them. **Here is our selected collection of the "pics" we received:**

Photographs of
ZIM Women's Rugby
Selection Friendly (top)
by Rutendo Taruwinga

and
Dominican Convent
Sportswomen (bottom)
Sibo and Tafadzwa
by Nyasha



Photograph of Singer
Tahle WeDzinza (top)
by Lion Iris Media



Photograph of Singer
Gemma Griffiths
and Mom (bottom)
by Zorodzai Chibuwe
(Fokus Media)



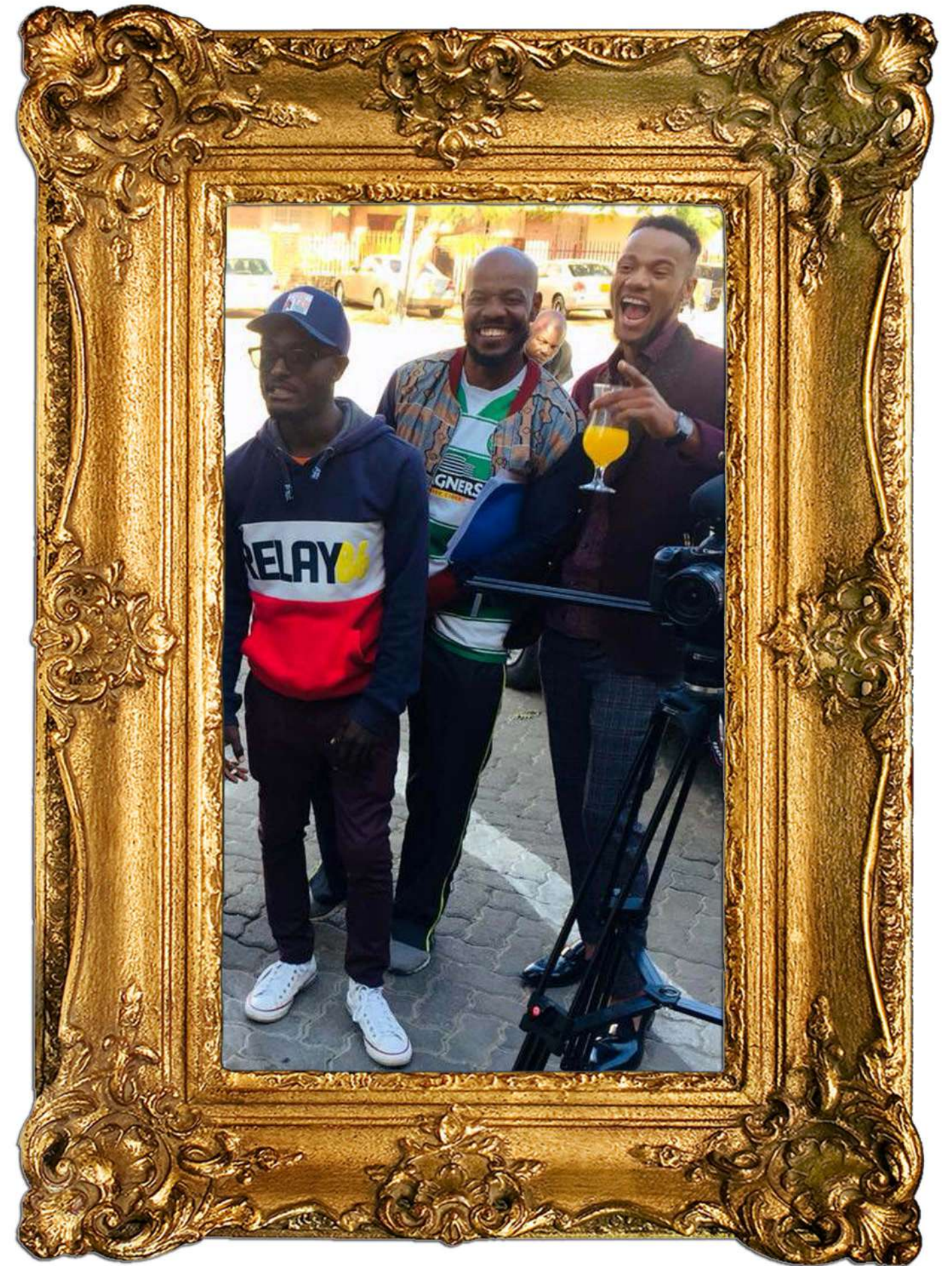
Photograph of Singer
Tamy Moyo
by Elton Maregedze
(Optimass Art)





Photograph of the Minister of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation, Kirsty Coventry and child (top) by Mgcini Nyoni

Photograph of Rapper EXQ and wife Mandisa (bottom) by Zorodzai Chibuwe (Fokus Media)



Photograph of Filmmakers Rasquesity Keaitse (Keaitse Films) and Johane Mpofu (Multimedia Box) with actor Calvin Madula by *****



Photograph of Shearwater
Elephant Rides in Victoria Falls (top)
by Shantel Mudala

Photograph of Yoga Poses
with Wellness Coach
Claudia Ndlovu (bottom)
by *****



Photographs of
Baby Amahle (top)
by Lungile Zelembu

Noah's Ark Day Care
Students (Gweru) (middle)
by Jacqueline Gwaze

Baby Azania (bottom)
by Nonchalant Ngwenya



**Photograph of Bulawayo City Centre Vista
near the City Hall** by Alex Gwaze
Bulawayo's population = aprox 1,200,337

The Best Medicine

Compiled by **MaForty 40**, Comedian #SocialMediaJokes #ZimSituation

I am not going to give away my material, but we all need to laugh a little and have some light-hearted fun in these dark times. So here are some funny bits that I did not write but I collected from posts circulating on social media:

**Coming soon
Zupco Beer
0.50c
It will work, you won't walk
#Simple.**



Dear Aunty Thandie,
My name is Buhle Ncube.
Kuryt yini ukuthandana
lejaha ohlangane lalo
ebhasini ye 50c?



Whites: Your daughter is beautiful.
Ndebeles: Lokhu kuzahlupha.



Hwindi after seeing a couple eating apples ko hyper, "Adam loEve, liyanda yini?"
Abo hwindu I can't.



**The way Zim is corrupt,
You even need connections
To get into relationships
These days.**



Sometimes you just need to confuse the devil by pushing a trolley when you are going to buy airtime ...
Can I go deeper?



Zim will humble you,

GRADE 1:
I want to be a doctor
FORM 1:
I am going to be a pilot
FIRST YEAR:
I am studying engineering
10 years later,
for all your weaves, bags and shoes, contact me.



Ko kana uchida kuti imbwa yako ipinde basa ku ZRP ishande nemapurisa, CV unoendasa kupi? Economy iyi yoda tose tishande.



My worst fear as of now is someone breaking in to steal our firewood. Imagine they hijacked Lobels bread truck ... if they find out about our firewood. No, I can't deal. I sleep with my eyes open, maybe I should stack the lot in my wardrobe.



Nobody hates a broke man more than a lady with no future ...
I won't go deeper.



If you look at water lustfully, you have bathed.



**Chinos and his son
vachifamba vakaona ndege**

Son: Indege ya president kani?
Chinos: Dai yanga iri ya president waona zvimudhudhudhu mberi.



Tomorrow just wake up, wear your formal clothes, go to any company and start working. If they call the police, go to the police station and start working there too. We are tired of sending CVs.



Kana urikuchema stage 2 ye load shedding, ko pachasvika stage 5 yekuti vanhu veZESA vanenge vachipinda mudzimba dzenyu kuzodzima macandle ne gas enyu.



For those who do not understand the new currency; It's like staying with a maid for a long time and everyone calls her sisi (bond note). Then eventually father marries her - Now you call her mom (Zim dollar).



**Zesa neEconet
varikurova partnership
yekupedzisa tuma
relationship turi mu ICU.**



Vicks is just spicy Vaseline
#IfYouKnowYouKnow.



**My last one is a
MaForty 40 original:**

Offline
Fixing the country.





Zimbabwe is currently facing a severe drought caused by poor rains that have affected food harvests, urban water supplies, and the electricity power supply [Zimbabwe relies on hydro electric power from Kariba Dam and Hwange Thermal Station]. In August 2019, the government declared the 2018/19 drought and cropping season “a State of National Disaster” and appealed for international humanitarian assistance. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that at least 2 million people are affected by the drought which has increased the price of basic commodities such as maize, wheat, sugar, and rice. Furthermore, persistent water shortages have led to suburban residents using buckets to bath and store water. In some areas in Harare, the lack of municipal water has resulted in 8535 cumulative cases of Cholera outbreaks.

 See: <https://reliefweb.int/report/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-drought-emergency-19-september-2019>

Got Water?

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