

# #HASHTAG

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CITE YOUTH  
NETWORK

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für die Welt



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Every September, the nature around us reminds us of one simple but powerful truth: growth requires letting go.





# Editor's Note



**Melinda Ncube**  
CITE Youth Network Coordinator

September is a month of shifting seasons, a reminder that change is never just about the present moment.

It is part of a larger journey. That is why this issue of Hashtag Magazine is themed The Bigger Picture.

Too often, we get caught up in snapshots of daily life, trends on our timelines, challenges we face in our communities, or even the personal hurdles that weigh us down.

But when we zoom out, we begin to see the patterns, the opportunities, and the purpose that lies beyond what is immediately in front of us.

In these pages, you will find stories that challenge us to think beyond ourselves and our circumstances.

From youth voices shaping the future of their communities, to conversations about climate justice, mental health, and creativity, this issue is an invitation to pause, reflect, and connect the dots.

The Bigger Picture is not just about seeing more.

It is about understanding more. It is about realizing that our individual actions, no matter how small, contribute to a larger narrative of change, resilience, and possibility.

As you flip through this issue, I encourage you to ask yourself: What does the bigger picture look like for me, for us, for the world we are creating together?

Happy reading

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# Cuben Voice: The Young Artist Turning Doubt Into Fuel



By  
Lethokuhle Mpofu

**1** . At 17, you've done so much already. What drives you to keep pushing boundaries? More than love for the art, it's the fear of amounting to nothing. I don't want to waste my potential. Knowing I can do more but holding back would break my spirit.

2. When you think of the bigger picture, what impact do you hope to leave? I want to show my peers that passion can put bread on the table. My goal is to revolutionize poetry and mbira to make them global, fresh, and beautifully African.

3. Who or what inspired you to start making change, and was there a defining moment?

The first poet who showed me poetry was more than Shakespeare was Huwa. Later, I joined WeCre8te Afrika, which shaped me. I look up to Delah Dube as a poet, and in advocacy, people like Nozinhle Gumede inspire me to grow my art into a brand.

4. What's one challenge you've faced, and how did you turn it into an opportunity?

Being underestimated because of my age. People dismiss my art and effort, so I've learned to use that doubt as fuel to wow them.

5. How do you approach leadership, and what does leading with purpose mean to you?

I've always been headstrong. For me, leadership starts with leading myself toward greatness. Leading with purpose means being driven,

with a clear goal you can't lead people nowhere.

6. How do you stay focused on your goals while still enjoying your teenage years? I know no one else will do this for me. Even when I go out or attend events, they tie back to my art. I only give time to things that push my journey forward. That way, my work feels like joy, not a burden.

7. What's one lesson you've learned that shaped the way you work today? If you don't believe in yourself, you'll go nowhere. You start as the underdog in any industry, so faith in yourself is everything.

8. How important is collaboration in your work, and how do you involve others? Collaboration is key you can't grow in isolation. Oth-

ers bring new perspectives and highlight what you can't see in yourself. Being part of an organization has made collaboration natural for me.

9. How do you define the bigger picture in your life and work? For me, the bigger picture is global. It's my message reaching thousands of hearts and my work poetry, journalism, and advocacy making a real difference.

10. What advice would you give other young people who want to make a difference? Don't be afraid to try. Yes, being a doctor or lawyer is cool, but so is being an artist or journalist. Traditional jobs don't guarantee security anymore; only you can. So take the risk.



# WhatsApp Groups: The Real Parliament of Zimbabwe



By  
Tafadzwa Gumunyu

**A**t 7:05 in the morning, before Bulawayo is fully awake, the “Family Matters 2024” WhatsApp group is already buzzing. Auntie Nomsa shares a joke about the rising cost of bread, Cousin Tinashe sends a long voice note about politics, and Uncle Themba posts a serious message about the behaviour of today’s youth. Within minutes, the group has more than 50 unread messages.

Scrolling through the chat feels less like a family conversation and more like watching Parliament. People interrupt each other, take sides, make jokes, and argue about the same things over and over. This is Zimbabwe in 2025. Data is expensive, Wi-Fi is rare, and there are fewer places to talk publicly, so WhatsApp has become the main space where people argue, share news, and make decisions. It has become like a real parliament in your pocket.

Zimbabwe has about 5.5 million internet users, and most of the data people buy is used on WhatsApp. The app has become the shop, the news source, the church notice board, the emergency line, and even the classroom. “WhatsApp is our lifeline,” says Sipho Dube, a university student in Bulawayo. “If you’re not on the group, you miss out on everything, from assign-

ments to news about strikes.” But WhatsApp can be tricky. Sometimes false stories spread fast. A 2022 Pew Research Center study found that closed apps like WhatsApp can create “echo chambers,” where people only hear what they already believe and rumours spread with-

out challenge. In Zimbabwe, during the 2018 elections, messages about voter intimidation and rigging spread through WhatsApp and caused fear and mistrust.

Experts have noticed this too. Professor Nhamo Mhiripiri from Midlands State University said in *The Sunday Mail*: “Social media use in Zimbabwe is growing, but you have to take it with a pinch of salt. Not all people have been able to access social media. Connectivity is limited; fewer people can afford the internet.”

Professor Admire Mare, a media scholar at the University of Johannesburg, told *NewsDay Zimbabwe*: “I don’t think a social media law will address the ethical lapses that have accompanied a world of digital abundance and infinite choice. Politicians must proactively churn out relevant public interest information.”

Even with these challenges, WhatsApp has helped people in Zimbabwe do good things. In 2019, during Cyclone Idai, communities in Chimanimani used WhatsApp to organise food, clothes, and help for people affected by the storm. Volunteers shared information about where help was needed, coordinated with NGOs, and made sure resources went to the right people. Tendai Chikore, a volunteer, said, “WhatsApp allowed us to share real-time information about where help was needed most. We could or-

ganize quickly and make a difference.”

WhatsApp also helps small businesses. Vendors post pictures of vegetables, clothes, and airtime in local groups, and people order directly. Professor Mhiripiri explains that tools like WhatsApp allow small business owners to reach customers without spending on ads, which can help them survive in Zimbabwe’s tough economy.

In Bulawayo, everyone seems to have their own version of WhatsApp parliament. Lungile, (22) student at Hillside Teachers’ College, says her class group is both useful and stressful. “Sometimes I learn more from WhatsApp debates than from lecturers. People share articles, podcasts, and their own opinions. But it also gets toxic people insult each other, and you see how divided we are.”

Mr Mpofu, a 57-year-old man from Mzilikazi, said the groups are more about safety. “When thieves were breaking into houses, we used WhatsApp to warn each other and share pictures. The police came late, but the group saved us.”

This is not just a Zimbabwe story. In Nigeria, WhatsApp helped organise the #EndSARS protests, and in India, it has been used both for civic action and for spreading false rumours. In Zimbabwe, too, WhatsApp groups reflect both the strengths and the problems of society.

As Professor Mare says, “WhatsApp groups are mirrors of our society. They show our fears, our humour, our prejudices, and our hopes. To ignore WhatsApp is to ignore the heartbeat of Zimbabwean life today.”

Every ping, every forwarded message, every emoji in a WhatsApp chat is more than casual chatter. It affects how we think, who we trust, and what we do. In the bigger picture, Zimbabwe’s real debates are no longer happening only in Parliament or in newspapers but they are happening in the palm of our hands.



# All Hail Her Majesty



By  
Privilege Mathema

*I am the Queen who shuns casting her pearls to swine, but works hard like a donkey—to dine and shine, not whine in all splendor.”*

Being an individual who exudes energy and uniqueness has its perks, but it also comes with challenges.

You see, one minute I am speaking to a large crowd, telling them how a mixture of my difficult and joyful life experiences has shaped me. Yet, there is always this feeling that it is not enough. I feel the need to do more, to fill a void, a space, or emptiness in my life.

Another minute can be spent under the unforgiving hot African sun, trying to convince people to buy a packet of chips or ice-cold water while dozens of other competitors are doing the same thing. People may wonder: why do I do this? How do I find the time to attend events? Am I getting paid? What is the purpose of all this? Allow me to explain.

Welcome to the world of a 22-year-old Zimbabwean woman who understands that no knight in shining armour is coming to rescue her, and no great sympathiser will fund her lifestyle for the greater good.

In my world, survival of the fittest reigns supreme. To make

it, I need to fight for what I believe is mine. With unemployment rates so high and jobs scarce, I did not allow this reality to dismay me. Instead, I found a solution: “*Make Mahewu when life gives you Hufu.*” Lemons are expensive, so life cannot always give me lemonade. I took it upon myself to open a small stall (umsika) with financial support from my parents. I looked at my surroundings, identified a need snacks and refreshments for students and seized the opportunity.

Some may say, “There are dozens of stalls everywhere; why you? Why assume you are different?” My answer is strategy. When you are strategic and intentional, things can work out for you.

Here are some secrets I’ve learned:

- 1. Be presentable:** People prefer buying from someone who looks clean and confident.
- 2. Keep your stall tidy:** A well-organized space attracts customers and builds trust.
- 3. Stock fresh products:** Always have extra inventory to show care for customers and maintain presentation.
- 4. Offer excellent service:** Good customer service ensures people recommend you to others.

This may seem trivial to some, but for me, it is the foundation of an empire—unshakable, indestructible, and irreplaceable. When I approach my stall, I see not a small business, but a growing enterprise that provides my bread and butter, a legacy for future generations, and a key to financial independence. Previously, I had a dependency syndrome that limited my choices. Now, with my business, I can shape my own life, invest wisely, and

live without feeling guilty or beholden to others.

To my fellow young people, practice financial independence, even with little, and you will see the greater achievements that follow.

I also emphasize the importance of attending boot camps, workshops, and mentorship programs. I refuse to limit myself to umsika standards all my life because the world is evolving digitally. I make it a point to attend AI and Robotics training to learn website creation, editing film scripts, and completing large assignments. I participate in Girls in STEM sessions to understand coding and apply concepts of math and science in my daily life. These programs expand my knowledge and allow me to interact with diverse people, preventing a narrow perspective.

When I envision my future self, I do not see a shy, people-pleasing individual living according to others’ opinions. I see a Queen who has built her empire from scratch, understanding the value of hard work, dedication, and perseverance.

Challenges will arise, and sometimes they will make us want to quit. But that does not mean the road ends, it means we must press on to reach our destination.

I recall the words of Busisile Ncube, an engineer from NUST: “You are a canvas filled with so many creative ideas, so use those ideas.” The sky is no longer the limit. Thinking outside the box is not enough, you must envision who you want to be and dedicate yourself fully to becoming that person.



# Heritage in Every Bead: The Bigger Picture of Restoration



By  
Brandon Ncube

In a time when many young people are chasing the next trend, one young woman from Bulawayo is reminding us that sometimes the way forward is found in looking back. Her name is Patience Malunga, founder of Patie's Arts and Crafts, and her journey is proof that the bigger picture of our future is woven, quite literally, through the beads of our past.

"We cannot be a generation

that remains silent about our indigenous roots, especially when it comes to craft work," she says with quiet conviction. For her, beadwork is not just decoration. It is a cultural marker, a language of the spirit, and a reminder that Africa's beauty lies in the details we too often overlook. Her story began at The Revelation Spiritual Home, where Africa Day is celebrated each month with a flourish of traditional attire. It is here, under the guidance of Inkosi Yomoya, Dr uZwi Lezwe Radebe that Patience finds the confidence and clarity to

pursue her craft and contribute to society. Surrounded by the vibrant colours, she was mainly inspired by the Ndebele, Xhosa, and Zulu dress. Patience felt a stirring question rise within her: "What can I do as Umuntu omnyama to contribute to Africa's restoration?"

At first, the answers did not come easily. Like many youths, she admits she was blank. But then came her unlikely university, YouTube. Through tutorials and endless hours of practice, she taught herself the intricate skills of

beadwork. What began as curiosity soon became a calling.

And the world began to notice. She was interviewed by The Neighbour Magazine in 2023, featured in The Chronicle newspaper in March 2025 under the headline "Human Shatter Barriers and Drive Economic Growth," and showcased at youth empowerment centres from Pumula North to Imiklomelo ka Dakamela eNkayi. Recognition, however, is not her final destination. "I want to inspire other young women," she explains. "I teach some of them the skill and encourage them to be dedicated to the work they do."

Patience's beadwork is more than art, it is a metaphor for resilience. Each tiny bead, fragile on its own, becomes part of something enduring when woven together. Just like communities, friendships, and movements. The black bead that "stops the others from falling off," as she explains, is a reminder that structure and culture keep us from unravelling.

Her message is clear: "We cannot restore Africa, leaving our beadwork behind. So, Africans, let's put back our beads."

In a world obsessed with fast trends, Patience's story zooms out to show us the bigger picture: that culture, spirituality, and creativity are not relics of yesterday but building blocks of tomorrow. Guided by African Indigenous Spirituality(AIS), each bead she threads becomes a step toward a future where young Africans proudly wear their heritage as both memory and the bigger picture of Africa's restoration.



# The mental picture

By Lethokuhle Mpofu

(\*Mommy when I grow up I want to be a doctor  
I want to be an astronaut  
Daddy I want to be like you, a firefighter  
Or police man , i want to be big like you  
So everyone calls me to save them  
When I grow up\*)

There was once a time when dreaming was for little girls and boys  
Realism was in the hands of the government and society  
When goals were met and little kids played house in their backyards mimicking half of what they  
thought were role models

A time when dreams fit inside lunchboxes,  
fueled by pocket money  
When, what do you want to be ?  
Wasn't a loaded question  
Before the world measured our worth in silence and survival  
Now spelling ambition causes a stutter, feels like rebellion  
We grew out of costumes into cautions  
They Taught us to fear the sky for those that fly probably sold a their soul  
our mothers folding our futures into prayers

Because the leaders dream and kids are realistic  
They fanned out that burning fire in our hearts,  
Made it known that we are mere spark and the only fire we had was in our dreams  
reminded us that our country is only for the tyrannies of war  
Now the only dreams that exist are foreign inspired  
Playing house ends in pregnancies  
An 18 year old kid has a first offender record for trying to make ends meet

Ends meant to be tied by our leaders, that is busy dreaming  
Assaulted our senses with the matrix  
Where dreams only look possible via the system

Taught our rage to whisper  
While tightening the leash on our dreams  
But here we are, hot like the ash of a fire put out in a hurry  
Wrestling the same wind that put us out but became a part of us  
Resilient much because making a fire does take a little wind  
And we shall blaze and flare up higher and intensely than before  
Our dreams and reality shall coexist like fire and wind



# Ma1, But We Move

How humor and memes help Zim youth deal with stress and keep perspective



By  
Tafadzwa Gumunyuz

In Zimbabwe, life for many young people is filled with challenges. From unemployment and high prices to constant power cuts and an uncertain future, every day comes with its own struggles. Yet instead of being crushed by the weight of it all, many young Zimbabweans have found a surprising weapon: humour. They laugh, they share memes, and they remind each other, “Ma1, but we move.”

On social media platforms like WhatsApp, TikTok, Facebook, and X, memes circulate at lightning speed. A joke about the latest fuel price hike, a video mocking ZESA’s endless blackouts, or a funny clip about the stress of data bundles instantly gets shared across groups. What might seem like ordinary banter carries a deeper meaning. It is a way of saying: we know life is hard, but we are in this together. The laughter softens the pain, even if just for a moment.

On social media and online news sites, content travels fast. ZimDaily is one publication that has leaned hard into satirical cartoons. One such cartoon though, crossed lines for some: portraying Sengezo Tshabangu as King Lobengula with a bag of sugar which stirred strong reactions about tribalism. ZimDaily eventually took down the image and apologised.

Their editor, Yvonne Muchaka, says the aim was not to upset for the sake of it, but to expose moral failures and hypocrisy, to mirror what people are already talking about in their homes, in cafes, in WhatsApp groups. What makes ZimDaily important in this context is that they show humour can be risky but also powerful.

Scholars have paid attention to this trend. Albert Chibwe and Allen Munoriyarwa, in their study of WhatsApp humour during the COVID-19 lockdown, observed that these jokes helped people confront and rationalise fear, death, and suffering. Instead of denying problems, humour gave people a language to process

them. Media scholar Wendy Willems, writing earlier about Zimbabwean cartoons, noted that laughter not only mocked leaders but also reflected how ordinary people coped with their own feelings of powerlessness. What these studies show is that Zimbabwean humour is never just for laughs but it is also for survival.

Young people themselves say the same. A university student in Harare once explained that when ZESA cuts the power, his friends share memes of people cooking in the dark. “We laugh first, then we complain together,” he said. Another young woman noted that seeing a video mocking the cost of data doesn’t make her bills cheaper, but it makes her anger lighter. Across the country, memes about maize prices, bread shortages, or transport struggles bring communities closer in shared frustration and shared hope.

Creators are at the heart of this new humour culture. On Facebook, Byo\_memes has grown into a popular page, regularly posting skits and memes

about daily struggles in Bulawayo and beyond. One video simply titled “Zimbabweans in Zimbabwe right now” captured the mood of a country living under economic strain and thousands tagged their friends saying, “This is us.” On YouTube, satirist Taffy Theman has found a niche by parodying political speeches, remixing them into comical formats that young audiences eagerly share. Groups like Bustop TV and Magamba TV continue to use humour, sketches, and satire to critique corruption, bad governance, and social issues, while still making people laugh. These platforms prove that comedy and activism often walk hand in hand.

Humour has also played a role in political expression. Movements like #ThisFlag showed how jokes, satire, and creative protest online could criticise corruption and bad governance in ways that felt safer than taking to the streets. Through laughter, young Zimbabweans have found a voice, a way to speak truth without always putting themselves in danger.

The bigger picture is clear: in a society where hardship has become normal, humour has become a coping mechanism, a glue that binds young people together, and a subtle form of resistance. A meme will not end load-shedding or bring down food prices, but it creates a space where people feel less alone and more hopeful. It is a reminder that even when the weight of life feels unbearable, there is still a reason to smile, to share, and to keep moving.

In the end, that simple phrase sums it all up: “Ma1, but we move.”

# Rodrick Moyo Speaks to Young People on Seeing the Bigger Picture



By  
Persistence Nkomo

**A**s young people navigate the complexities of life, it is essential to see the bigger picture and understand the impact they can have on their communities and the world at large. In this article, we feature an inspiring interview with Rodrick Moyo, a social ecologist with over a decade of experience in natural resource management, climate change management, and governance. Rodrick shares his insights on how young people can stay motivated, make intentional choices, and contribute meaningfully to long-term goals.

## Staying Motivated and Inspired

### Q: How can young people stay motivated and inspired to make a positive impact?

“My initial response is the need to have a predetermined, specific goal. A goal is defined by the individual, not by the environment or circumstances around them. As a young person, do you have a vision? What do you want to do? How do you want to contribute to your community, family, or

home?

“What motivates you, gives you energy, and helps you continue even in difficult times is having a vision and a goal. This keeps you rising, even after setbacks, because there is a purpose — a problem in your community or environment that you are determined to solve. You can’t be inspired beyond the level of your aspiration or vision. It is your vision that allows you to see what others cannot, the future and tomorrow you desire.”

## The Role of Daily Choices

### Q: How do daily choices, such as school or work, contribute to long-term goals?

“Our daily choices play a crucial role in achieving long-term goals or visions. Rome was not built in a day; it took years of work and persistent effort to create the civilisation we know today. “At school, the subjects you choose should align with your long-term goals. Your choices shape your skills and define whether you become an entrepreneur, a professional, or a specialist in any field. Daily choices also shape character, which is essential for actualising your vision. You can have

a goal or vision, but without strong character, it is difficult to achieve it.”

## Realising Community Impact

### Q: Can you share a personal experience that made you realise your actions had a broader impact?

“In 2024, after arriving in the Chevening Program in the UK, I worked in Ward 17, where there was a conflict between Hualin Quarry Company and local residents due to the proximity of mining and residential areas. I developed a corporate social responsibility plan to help the company implement initiatives while educating the community on mining operations and their right to participate in environmental impact assessments. “I created an open dialogue platform including representatives from the mining company, local stakeholders, and residential groups. Since 2014, this grievance redress platform has enabled initiatives like setting up water kiosks. This experience showed me that one individual with organised thoughts and a desire to be an agent of change can create real impact.”

## Inspiration and Advice

### Q: What inspiration would you like to share with young people?

“My inspiration is that we never stop striving until dizzying heights become reality. I grew up as an orphan, living with my grandmother and supporting myself from a young age. These challenges taught me resilience and the importance of fighting for my future. “To young people, it doesn’t matter how difficult things are in your community or country. Dare to be agents of change. Don’t let adversity define you; instead, let it fuel your growth

and determination. Orphanhood or hardship does not have to be a place of despair. Fight for your future, and until those dizzying heights become a reality, don’t stop at anything.”

## Strategies for Creating a Better Future

### Q: What strategies can young people use to create their future?

“The most important strategy is developing the skill of identifying problems and creating solutions. Every great invention, from social media to smartphones, started as someone solving a problem. “Building a team is also critical; you cannot do everything alone. Focus on your own path, and don’t compare yourself to others. Develop strong character, learn new skills daily using platforms like YouTube, and don’t fear starting over if needed. Rejection is part of the journey; rise again and continue. Identify mentors to learn from, so you don’t repeat others’ mistakes. These principles build maturity, self-awareness, and resilience.”

## Lessons for Young People

Rodrick emphasizes that purpose fuels resilience and that small, intentional steps lead to meaningful change. His metaphor of building Rome illustrates that achieving goals is about consistent action, not just dreaming. By removing the fear of failure, framing challenges as growth, and making intentional choices, young people can overcome obstacles and positively impact their communities. As Rodrick says, “Until the dizzy heights become a reality, we are not stopping at nothing.”



# Ma1 or Masterpiece? The Future Is In Our Hands



By  
Patricia Moyo

**T**o be honest life right now feels like ma1 half the time. You wake up, check if ZESA blessed you, jump into a quick bucket bath, rush to catch a kombi before the fare jumps from \$1.50 to \$2 mid-route, squeeze in while the conductor shouts “Town la!,” and pray you make it on time. By the time you’re home, your data bundles are crying, Econet is acting up, and you just want to crash. It’s giving survival mode.

But here’s the thing if we zoom out from the drama, all these little moments are actually adding up. Your schoolwork, your hustle, your drip, your squad chats they’re not random. They’re the building blocks of the future Zimbabwe we’re making, piece by piece, even when it doesn’t look like it.

Take school. It’s not just about passing O-Levels or scraping through that uni exam. Think bigger this is where we’re getting the tools to change the game. That agriculture project could turn into an actual solution for drought. That Shona poem you wrote could end up on TikTok and make someone proud of their language again. That boring group assignment might just be the spark that leads you to start a business.

And the hustle? Ah, tisu tisu. No one hustles like Zim youth. We sell thrifted jackets from Mbare, braid hair in the hood, bake cakes, DJ house parties, flip airtime, design logos you name it. Sure, part of it is survival. But also, this is how we build our own economy when the big one feels like it’s sleeping. Every time you buy tomatoes from the corner lady or share your friend’s flyer on WhatsApp, you’re literally growing the economy one swipe at a time.

Then there’s the squad. Yo, friendships are keeping us sane out here. The group chat that’s always active, the friend who calls to say “ndakutsvaga, uri bho here?,” or “how far uyiswiii hamban lapho”, the memes that make you laugh even when life is heavy that’s therapy. That’s mental health care in real time. When one of us wins passes exams, lands a gig, or even just survives a tough day the whole crew wins.

And our style? Don’t even get me started. Whether it’s thrifted drip from ko kothama, or that statement jacket you saved three months to buy, fashion right now is a rebellion. It’s how we say, “Yes, life is hard, but I still look fire.” We are selecting an entire generation’s look soft life or no soft life.

Even activism is getting a remix. It’s not just protests or hashtags anymore. It’s planting trees at school, cleaning up the borehole area, helping a gogo carry her groceries from

the market, sharing legit info during elections instead of fake news. That’s how we build the Zimbabwe we want small moves, but they matter.

Yeah, it gets heavy sometimes. Prices change overnight, kombis strike, power cuts hit at the worst time, and it feels like nothing moves. But listen, every generation has had its storms. They still danced. They still hustled. They still made a plan. So do we. Hope is not just a cute idea it’s the only way we survive.

So keep doing your thing. Go to school. Hustle smart. Check on your squad. Laugh until your stomach hurts. Post that TikTok. Write that verse. Take that rest day. Because when we zoom out, these small daily vibes are literally painting the bigger picture and trust me, we are the generation that’s going to make that picture look good.

# Why Our Daily Moves Matter More Than We Think



By  
Anele Nkomo

Imagine this: You're stressing about data bundles, hustling for transport money, maybe even wondering what's for supper. It feels small, random, day-to-day. But zoom out a little — like stepping back from a painting — and suddenly you see it: every choice, every hustle, every friendship is part of something bigger.

That's what this issue is about. The Bigger Picture.

## School, Hustles & The Future You're Building

Whether you're grinding through exams, juggling a side hustle, or just trying to survive Monday mornings, it's easy to feel like today's struggles are pointless. But look closer:

That extra lesson in maths? Might be the stepping stone to becoming the accountant who saves your fam's hustle.

Selling thrift drip online? It's

not "just vibes" — it's the seed of future entrepreneurship. Helping your friend study? You're already investing in a future leader.

The bigger picture says: today's small moves are building tomorrow's big life.

## Friendships: More Than Just Group Chats

Your crew isn't just for memes, late-night confessions, or deciding where to chill on Saturday. They're your first boardroom, your first support system, your first network.

Think about it: the friend who makes beats could be producing your TED Talk soundtrack in 2035. That shy girl in the back row might be your campaign manager one day. Friendships today = foundations for the bigger picture.

## Activism in the Everyday

Here's the tea: activism isn't only about marching on the streets or trending hashtags. It's in the little things.

Calling out a sexist joke in your WhatsApp group.

Choosing local brands over fast fashion.

Sharing content that uplifts instead of drags down.

Every micro-action shifts culture. The bigger picture? You don't need to carry a placard to change the world. Sometimes all it takes is WiFi and courage.

## Style = Storytelling

Let's be real: what you wear today isn't just drip. It's a reflection of history, creativity, and identity. Rocking braids? That's heritage. Pairing Jordans with thrift jeans? That's innovation. Throwing beads on your fit? That's storytelling.

Today's outfit could be tomorrow's museum exhibit. Fashion is the bigger picture we wear on our bodies.

## Health = Energy for the Vision

Skipping meals, ignoring your mental health, or pulling three all-nighters in a row might feel like "the grind," but the truth is: no health = no hustle. Protecting your body and mind today means you'll have the stamina for tomorrow's dreams.

The bigger picture? Eat, rest, hydrate — your future CEO self is counting on you.

## Artists: Architects of the Bigger Picture

Artists are the proof that everyday creativity builds lasting legacies.

Take a poet scribbling lines on the back of a receipt — tomorrow those words could spark a movement. A rapper recording from a bedroom studio today could be on global stages tomorrow. A

painter experimenting with colors in Mzilikazi could be the name school kids study in the next generation.

> As one local artist put it: "I don't just create for today. I create so someone, ten years from now, will see themselves in my work."

That's the bigger picture: art is culture frozen in time, shaping how the future remembers us.

Zoom Out: Life Is Basically a Meme

Think about memes — how one silly picture of a cat can spark a global trend. That's us. Our little daily moments stack up into collective culture.

That tweet you post today? Could be your "receipts" in 2030. That TikTok you made for fun? Could be the start of your media career. The bigger picture is always recording, and we're the ones making it go viral.

## Wrapping It Up

Life feels chaotic, unfair, even boring sometimes. But every choice we make, from school to style, from hustles to activism — is a brushstroke in a masterpiece we can't fully see yet.

The bigger picture says: today's vibes = tomorrow's legacy.

So next time you're stressing over bundles, hustles, or exams, just remember: you're not stuck in the small picture. You're building something epic, something our generation will hand to the next.

And guess what? It looks good from here.



# Then let's go to the games:

By Brendon Ncube

Then let's go to the games:  
I have a word search

D	A	Y	A	D	N	I	L	E	M	T
J	E	R	S	A	N	H	M	A	L	G
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O	D	M	I	O	A	H	O	O	A	K
L	I	Y	R	M	Y	V	M	T	O	G
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N	I	U	A	K	D	C	A	I	C	G
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E	I	H	L	L	A	H	Y	T	I	C
O	A	L	E	L	D	A	M	R	E	R

# Friendship is infrastructure

## Why your circle builds the future



By  
Amanda Ndlovu

**F**riendships are not just vibes, they are infrastructure. They hold you up, and sometimes drag you out of bed when you've ghosted life for a week. But more than that, they shape how you show up in the world. Your circle is your emotional Wi-Fi: strong signal, strong self. And just like any system, it needs maintenance; it needs honesty, boundaries, and mutual care. Because when friendships are healthy, they become the foundation for everything else.

When you choose friends, choose those who celebrate your wins without competition, challenge your growth without judgment, and respect your boundaries without guilt. You are not just curating a vibe; you are building a culture. Friendship teaches us to listen without fixing, to own your mess and let others own theirs, and to laugh until your stomach hurts — even when life feels heavy. These are not just soft skills; they are survival skills for a better world. They are the emotional architecture of a society that values connection over control.

The way you treat your friends echoes outward. It

influences how you treat strangers, how you lead, how you love. Your circle becomes a microcosm of the society you are helping shape. So when you choose kindness, honesty, and loyalty in your friendships, you are voting for a future that feels safe, inclusive, and real. And when you walk away from toxic dynamics, do not feel guilty about it. That is you saying, I deserve better. We all do.

In a world that feels divided, friendship is radical. It is a space where healing happens, where identities are forged and affirmed, where joy is shared. It's where movements begin — around kitchen tables, in group

chats, at sleepovers, and on long walks. Friendships teach us to care deeply, and caring deeply is how we change the world.

Friendship is not just personal; it's political, it's cultural, and it's foundational. With every house, we know that if the foundation is strong, the house will not be swept away by floods or shaken by earthquakes. The same applies to friendships: if the foundation is solid, the friendship lasts a lifetime.

Zoom out for a second and look at the bigger picture. You will see your circle is not just your support system, it is your forever place of solace.



# Your hustle is a seed not just a side quest

For the dreamers, doers, and deadline dodgers



By  
Amanda Ndlovu

**Y**ou are grinding through school, juggling side hustles, maybe selling clothes or cosmetics even hair and sneakers. It feels chaotic, like you are just trying to survive the week. But step back for a second; what if all this isn't just noise it is the early chapters of your legacy.

We've been conditioned to believe that success is something that happens after; after the degree, after the job offer, after you have figured it out, but that's just a myth. The truth is success is already happening in the small, messy, brilliant moves you make every day. The late-night brainstorm, the awkward

itches, the moments you choose courage over comfort. These aren't just side quests; they're the main storyline.

Yes, hustle culture can be toxic when it glorifies burnout, but purpose culture, now that's a different story. It's about aligning your grind with your values; it's about asking yourself Why am I doing this, What will I gain, Is it worth it. When your hustle reflects your passions, your community and your vision for the future, it becomes a form of activism. You're not surviving, you're shaping the world. Failures are part of the hustle blueprint; they teach you resilience, redirection and realness. The unsold stock, missed deadlines, people not liking your work, the burnout moments they are not detours,

they are data.

Let's be clear, exhaustion is not a badge of honour. Resting and taking time off is not quitting it's a strategy. Hustle culture often glamorises exhaustion; if you not tired enough, then you're not doing the work, but zoom out and you will see longevity matters more than speed. You're not hustling for today only but for a life that feels good tomorrow. Rest is how you recharge your creativity, it's how you stay emotionally available for your goals, and it's how you remember you are a person, not a productivity machine. The most powerful hustle is one that uplifts others. Whether you're mentoring someone, collaborating with friends or creating content that educates or entertains

your grind can be a form of service.

Young people today are redefining what work looks like; we are rejecting rigid career paths and creating hybrid identities. Your hustle is a generational shift toward autonomy, creativity and impact. You are not waiting for permission but you are building the future in real time, brick by brick envisioning the bigger picture of all the small steps you take. So next time someone calls your hustle a phase, just ignore and keep building, because every moment you choose to show up it's all part of something bigger. You're not just hustling, you're planting seeds. And the future is already growing.

# Friendships that build futures

## Why the people you hang with today could shape your tomorrow



By  
Tafadzwa Gumunyu

In Zimbabwe, life is not easy for many young people. Prices keep going up, jobs are hard to find, and every day there are struggles like power cuts and pressure at home. But even with all this, there is something strong that can change the future: friendship. The people you move with, the ones you call friends, can make your tomorrow better or worse.

This is The Bigger Picture!!

On January 27, 2022, UNICEF Zimbabwe shared a story about an 18-year-old girl, Theresa Tsakatsa, from Chimanimani. She said she only got vaccinated after seeing her friends do it first. She explained, “Some people

now want to be close to me because they know I have information that can save them, and they also hope I can help them become youth champions.” This shows that sometimes friends influence us more than adults or officials.

On Facebook, groups are also talking about this. The page Youth Light Zimbabwe posted on May 10, 2025 about their mentorship program, saying it helps make leaders in every community. Under the post, Martha Chido commented, “I am grateful for this program, it shows we youth are not invisible.” Another comment from TogetherWeRise ZW read, “Finally something that puts us first.” These simple words show how much young people value being seen and supported.

On December 2, 2024, 393

Youth Helpline posted, “Be your own boss. Don’t let peer pressure dictate your choices.” In the comments, Brian Chisepa wrote, “This is what we need, friends who push you up, not pull you down.” And Linda Moyo said, “Too much yes from others kills your own path. Thank you for this message.” It is clear that youth know how friends can either build or destroy.

The Youth Advocates Zimbabwe page also shared a story on August 15, 2024 about a young woman called Tholakele who turned her passion into a career with the help of their mentorship program. Precious Nyandoro commented, “I see Tholakele, I see me in a few years, keep pushing!” And Tendai Sibanda added, “If I had a friend group like this when I left high school, things could’ve been

different.” These words show how friendship and support give people courage to dream.

Other programs also highlight the power of peer support. The Leadership, Economic and Mentorship Hubs (LEMHs) run by Tag a Life International bring young women together to share experiences and push each other to stay in school and aim higher. UNICEF has also written about mentor mothers who encourage each other to take medicine, go for clinic visits, and raise their children despite challenges. In Harare, the Youth Friendship Bench gives young people a safe space to talk, and they come out feeling less alone and more hopeful.

All these examples show that good friendships are not just about fun. They can give advice, bring opportunities, and help someone see a better tomorrow. But the opposite is also true. In many high-density suburbs, youth admit that bad circles push them into drugs, crime or dropping out of school. That is why the friends you choose matter so much.

The people around you are shaping your future. The friend who tags you in a scholarship post, who encourages you to keep going, who tells you the truth when you want to give up, that friend is building your tomorrow. In Zimbabwe today, many young people are learning that friendship is more than just company. It is support, direction, and hope. And who you hang out with today could decide where you end up tomorrow.



# Letting go to grow: Lessons from nature's changing seasons



By  
Ruvarashe Munyoro

**E**very September, the nature around us reminds us of one simple but powerful truth: growth requires letting go. In some parts of the world, trees begin to shed their leaves, preparing for a new season ahead. In others, flowers start to bloom as spring makes its entrance. Both moments carry the same lesson. For something new to flourish, something old must be released.

In life, we often hold on tightly to things that no longer serve us: past mistakes, unhealthy friendships, limiting beliefs, or even habits that keep us stuck. Just like how a tree releases every old leaf and still grows fresh ones, we too must learn the art of releasing. Letting go doesn't mean forgetting or pretending something never happened. It means making peace with the past, taking the lessons, it taught us, and stepping forward with lighter hands and an open heart. When you

let go, you create space: space for new opportunities, new relationships, and new growth.

Think about it:

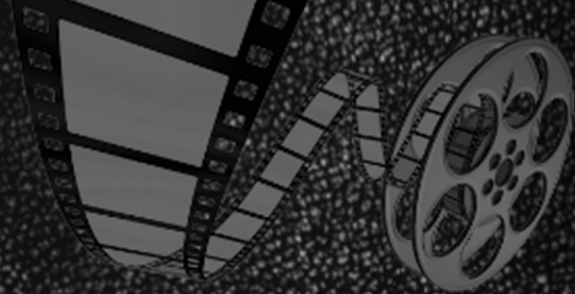
A student who let's go of the fear of failure gains the courage to try again.

A young person who releases toxic friendships creates room for supportive and uplifting ones.

Anyone who decides to drop the weight of self-doubt suddenly finds energy to pursue their dreams with confidence. This September, take inspiration from nature. Ask yourself

What do I need to let go of so I can grow? Maybe it's an old grudge, maybe it's the voice in your head that says "you can't," or maybe it's simply the habit of comparing yourself to others.

Remember, every ending is also a beginning. When you release what holds you back, you free yourself to step into a brighter, stronger, and more authentic version of you. So, as the seasons shift, let's shift too. Let's choose to let go because in letting go, we find room to grow.



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## Annle Ncube's story: A motivation for young people to see the bigger picture



By  
Persistance Nkomo

**A**nnle Ncube is a youth leader and human rights activist from Binga District, Zimbabwe. Growing up in this marginalised area, she endured long daily walks to school and a lack of basic resources. These early hardships sparked a deep passion for justice, equity, and human rights. Through her lived experience, she realised that change doesn't require a title or wealth; it only requires the courage to take action. Her journey as a changemaker began with small, intentional steps rooted in a desire to uplift her community.

"Growing up in Binga District, I witnessed firsthand the harsh realities of marginalisation. As a child, I walked 14 kilometres to school daily, facing extreme weather conditions and resource scarcity. But these challenges ignited a fire within me – a passion for justice, equity, and human rights. My journey began with a simple realisation: individual actions matter. I didn't need a title or vast resources to drive change. What truly mattered was my willingness to act. So, I started small," Annle said.

Her story is a reminder to young people that a smooth daily life is not required to envision a bright future. Instead, our daily struggles shape us into the people we are meant

to become.

### Taking Action

Annle's first step toward change came when she worked as a teacher. Deeply moved by the high number of school-going girls getting pregnant, she recognised the urgent need for intervention. The following year, she mobilised the community and key stakeholders – including the police, local authorities, traditional leaders, councillors, the Binga Rural District Administrator, and the Ministry of Youth, to launch a powerful awareness campaign.

"This was the biggest highlight of my life journey because I changed many lives. We used speeches, poems, drama, and open dialogue to engage the youth and the wider community. What surprised me was the immediate impact that same year, 2024. That was my turning point. I learned that collective action works. When we come together with a shared vision, we can bring real change. This one campaign made a massive difference, and I realised the power of community mobilisation. I've since continued to mentor young girls, run clubs at school, and advocate for human rights and gender equality. This experience has fuelled my passion and confirmed that even small actions can make a big impact, especially when they're driven by purpose and unity," she said.

### Inspiration and Message

Annle wants young people to recognize that even in the face of adversity, they have the power to make a difference. "You don't have to hold a title or have vast resources

to drive change. What truly matters is the willingness to act," she said.

She encourages others to look around their communities for opportunities to make an impact. "Whether it's advocating for a cause, volunteering, or simply standing up for someone who needs support, your action matters. There is no such thing as a small action. What may seem insignificant to you might be life-changing for someone else. One act of kindness, one bold idea, one brave conversation – these are the seeds of transformation," Annle added.

**Setting Goals for the Future** According to Annle, setting clear goals is essential for young people to achieve their future plans. "For me, setting clear goals involves reflecting on my experiences and identifying areas where I can make a positive change. It's about breaking down larger objectives into actionable steps and staying committed to them. Daily choices are crucial, as they determine progress toward those goals. By making intentional decisions and staying focused, I believe it's possible to achieve future plans and contribute to meaningful change," she said.

### Achievements

- Advocate for human rights and equality
- Conducted a youth-led vulnerability assessment project with ActionAid Zimbabwe
- Attended the United Nations Disaster and Risk Reduction Africa Regional Platform in Namibia
- Presented on 3K TV
- Panelist at the SADC Summit in Harare, 2024

# Hustling: A double-edged sword



Compiled by  
Lungisani Moyo

**H**ustling has become a defining trait of today's generation, particularly Gen Z. It's the relentless drive to be productive and achieve professional success above all else. But is this culture of constant striving really beneficial?

## The Good Side of Hustle Culture

On one hand, hustling can be a powerful tool for achieving success. With job security becoming increasingly uncertain, many people have turned to entrepreneurship, freelancing, or side hustles to make ends meet. Social media often glamorises this lifestyle, showcasing individuals who have achieved wealth and success through their hard work. This can be motivating, making us feel like we can achieve anything if we focus, put in the time, and dedicate ourselves.

## The Dark Side of Hustle Culture

However, the constant pressure to be productive can take a toll on our mental and physical health. Burnout, stress, and exhaustion become normalised when we're expected to work around the clock. This culture can also lead to feelings of guilt and inadequacy when we're not constantly working. The idea that busyness is a badge of honour has become toxic, making it difficult to disconnect from work and prioritize self-care.

## A New Way of Thinking

Fortunately, a shift is happening. Many young people are pushing back against the hustle culture, prioritizing balance and well-being. They're learning to set boundaries, saying no to excessive work demands, and embracing the concept of "quiet quitting" – doing their job requirements without sacrificing their personal lives. This new mindset recognizes that life shouldn't revolve solely

around work; instead, work should fit into our lives.

## Redefining Success

It's time to redefine what success means to us. Perhaps it's not just about achieving wealth or status but also about maintaining our physical and mental health, nurturing relationships, and pursuing our passions. By prioritising balance and well-being, we can create a more sustainable and fulfilling lifestyle.

## The Future of Hustle Culture

As we move forward, it's essential to recognise the value of hard work while also acknowledging the importance of rest and self-care. By finding a healthy balance between productivity and relaxation, we can achieve success without sacrificing our well-being. It's time to rethink the hustle culture and create a more holistic approach to achieving our goals.



# Youth skills powering Zimbabwe's green future



By  
Lethokuhle Mpofu

**T**his year's Zimbabwe Climate Change, Sustainability Week and Green Business Expo carried a big theme: "Towards a Green Economy: Zimbabwe's Roadmap to Growth." But honestly? The real action wasn't in the policy speeches or glossy documents it was in the powerful energy of young changemakers who are changing the script on what a green future looks like.

From reviving ancestral food systems to flying drones and reimagining city living, youth proved they're not just "leaders of tomorrow." They're the

main picture, right now.

One standout moment came from the African Food Revolution's LOVE Project. Their mission: to get young people to reconnect with traditional diets and sustainable farming. The spotlight was back on sorghum, millet, finger millet, and even edible insects that once kept African diets strong. "We need to decolonise our food systems," one speaker said, reminding us that knowledge from our grandparents' kitchens matters just as much as what's written in a science journal.

This conversation flowed straight into rural industrialisation. Food, art, agriculture, architecture, spirituality,

these five pillars, exhibitors argued, are the real building blocks of African economies. And if young people start documenting the recipes and practices of their grandparents, they won't just be preserving heritage, they'll be innovating from it.

Technology also had its shine. A young GIS expert dropped jaws with Hiverage Satellite Technology, a project using drones and satellite imagery to monitor carbon and track emissions. Already recognised internationally with a micro-grant in Lyon and mentorship by Mercedes-Benz, the project has mapped Bulawayo's biggest emission zones. His message? With data, we move faster and

smarter.

Even the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service made waves. Their green stand showed how inmates are learning organic farming while serving their time. Instead of punishment, prison becomes a second chance with hands in the soil and new skills for life after release.

One young innovator from Environmental Management Agency presented a green housing system, eco-friendly structures designed for sustainable city growth. Think of affordable homes that don't harm the planet.

Meanwhile, over at Dynamic Waste Management, plastic was turning into profit. This youth-led team collects plastic waste, buys scraps from locals, and transforms them into new products. It's recycling as entrepreneurship cutting pollution while putting money back into people's pockets.

By the end of the expo, the story was clear Zimbabwe's roadmap to a green economy is already being sketched by its youth. Whether it's millet farms, recycling hubs, eco-homes, or satellite maps, these projects prove young people aren't waiting for the future they're building it brick by brick.

And when we zoom out, the bigger picture isn't about policies alone. It's about the energy, creativity, and courage of young Zimbabweans who are daring to green the nation from the ground up.

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