

#HASHTAG

JANUARY EDITION, 2026



PAGE 4

KASI KIDS,
BIG CREATIVITY

PAGE 5

SKILLS OVER
CERTIFICATES: THE
NEW VALUE SYSTEM
OF A NEW GENERATION

PAGE 6

FROM COVID SURVIVAL TO
COMMUNITY IMPACT: HOW ONE
YOUNG ZIMBABWEAN BUILT
SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION
FROM THE GROUND UP



CITE YOUTH
NETWORK

Brot
für die Welt



03 Editor's Note



04

08 THE SPOTLIGHT

January 2026: The Month That Roared Into the Year

January 2026 arrived not with a quiet new beginning, but with bold headlines, thrilling sports, heated politics, cultural moments, and events that energised millions around the globe.

10 January Juggle: How to Crush the Back-to-Routine Chaos

Hey besties
Let's be real, transitioning from December's festive vibes to January's grind is like switching from Sadza and relish to spread sheets and deadlines.

11 Blue Monday: The Theory Behind the "Saddest day of the year"

There is a day in January that the internet has quietly agreed to feel bad about. No national announcement.

12

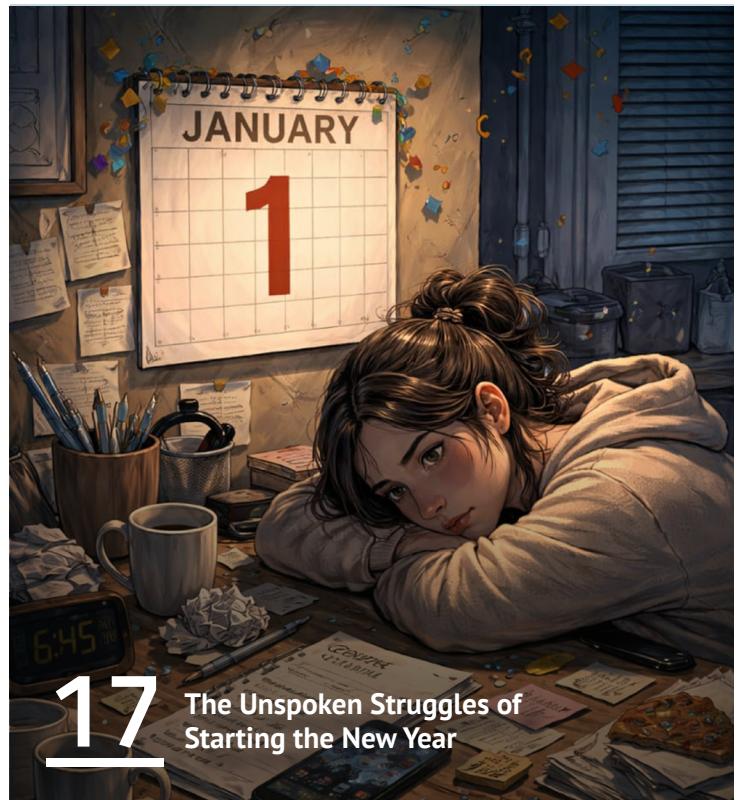
Love, Money and Ambition: Can Youth Have All Three?

14

Results Are Out: A Time for Celebration, Reflection and Compassion

17

Becoming: The Growth Journey



17

The Unspoken Struggles of Starting the New Year

Editor's Note



Melinda Ncube
CITE Youth Network Coordinator

January doesn't ease us into the year, it throws us straight into it.

Expectations are loud. Pressure is real. And for many young people, the year begins with questions rather than answers.

This issue was created with that reality in mind.

Across these pages, you'll find stories that reflect youth as they truly are not perfect, not polished, but powerful in their honesty.

From kasi creativity born out of boredom, to quiet journeys of becoming, to hard conversations about results, love, money, mental health, ambition, and survival, this edition holds space for both the wins and the weight.

We believe youth stories matter whether they come from studios, classrooms, streets, or kitchen tables.

We believe growth doesn't always look like success online. Sometimes it looks like trying again. Sometimes it looks like learning slowly. Sometimes it looks like simply surviving January.

This magazine is not here to tell you who to be. It's here to remind you that wherever you are in your journey, you are not alone, and you are not behind.

Read with an open heart. Question boldly. Take what resonates. Leave what doesn't. And most importantly, give yourself grace as you move through this year.

Here's to becoming, at your own pace.

FOLLOW US
FOR NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENT



@CITEZW | WWW.CITE.ORG.ZW

Kasi kids, big creativity



By
Brandon Ncube

On a quiet dusty corner in Magwegwe West, something unexpected started pulling kids off their phones and into the streets again. It wasn't a PlayStation. It wasn't Wi-Fi. It was a homemade pool table, built from a wooden board, drawn on with markers, and powered by pure imagination.

The "table" itself is simple but genius. A flat board balanced on bricks. Black marker lines carefully mapped out to look like a real pool table. Instead of shiny balls, they use marbles. Instead of fancy cues, they carved sticks from scrap wood. No instructions. No YouTube tutorial. Just vibes, teamwork, and boredom that turned into brilliance.

The boys, around 12 to 14 years old, don't even call it pool. In true kasi fashion, it's just i'snooker.

"Sasibhorekile saqala ukucabanga ukuyenza isnooker (We were bored and we thought of building our own snooker table)," one of them laughed when I first asked how it started. We were bored, so we decided to make our own pool.

And that boredom gave birth to something way bigger than a game.

Every afternoon, you'll find a small crowd forming around the board. Some waiting their turn. Some arguing over fouls. Some just watching, cheering, and cracking jokes. The marbles click against the wood. The sticks scrape. The boys lean in like professionals at a world championship, except

this one happens between houses, under the Bulawayo sun.

What makes it special isn't just the creativity. It's the way it's become a small community hub.

No entrance fee. No winner's prize. Just pride, laughter, and bragging rights until the next round.

You can tell they take it seriously. They've made their own house rules. They argue about shots like real pros. They've even upgraded the board once or twice when the lines faded or the wood cracked. It's not perfect, but that's what makes it perfect.

Watching them play, you realise something powerful: young people don't need expensive things to have fun. They need space, freedom, and a little encouragement

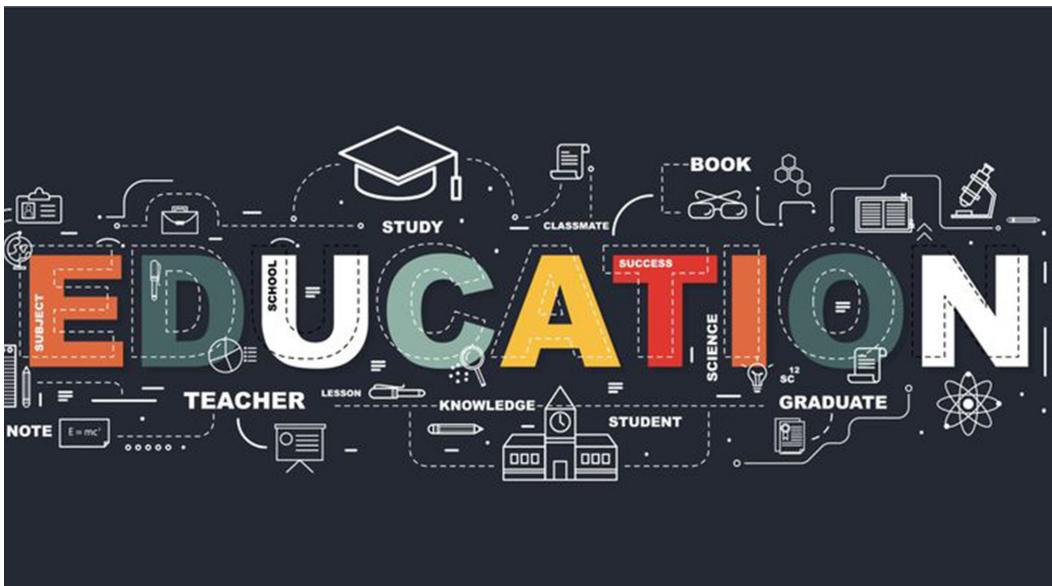
to create.

In a world where everything feels locked behind money, data bundles, consoles, cinema tickets, real pool tables, these boys built their own joy from nothing. That's innovation. That's resilience. That's kasi engineering.

And maybe, just maybe, this tiny wooden board in Magwegwe West is doing more than entertaining kids. It's teaching them teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, and the simple truth that you don't always have to wait for someone to give you something. Sometimes, you build it yourself.

So next time you pass through the kasi and hear marbles clicking on wood, don't laugh. You might just be witnessing the birth of the next great idea.

Skills over certificates: The new value system of a new generation



By
Bradley Sibanda

As December approaches, the holiday season brings with it a familiar rhythm across Zimbabwe. At airports in Harare and Bulawayo, and at border posts, many citizens living abroad are arriving home and some for a short visit, others for good. It is a time of reunion, laughter, memories, and hopeful new beginnings.

There was a time when success had only one language: certificates. Parents believed in them, schools worshipped them, and society protected them like golden keys. If you had the right paper, doors opened. If you didn't, you were told to wait, to fix yourself, to go back and try again. But the world moved, and while many people were still chasing papers, the future quietly changed its rules.

Long before Wi-Fi and smartphones, some people already understood that ability mattered more than titles. Henry Ford once said that “thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it,” and that thinking, not certificates, is what turned ideas into factories, cars, and empires. Even in the old world, paper was never the real power skill was.

Then the internet arrived and shattered the walls of the classroom. Knowledge escaped from textbooks and lectures and flooded phones, laptops, and bedrooms. Today a teenager can learn coding from YouTube, design from TikTok, and business from podcasts. That is why Elon Musk can boldly say he doesn't care whether someone even finished high school; what matters to him is whether they can build and solve. In a world that changes every year, ability moves faster than paperwork.

Mark Zuckerberg understood this when he said that the biggest risk is not taking any risk. He didn't wait to be fully qualified by tradition; he built while he was still learning. That is how the new generation grows: learning by doing, failing forward, and creating while studying.

You see it in real life. There is a young man who never went to college but learned graphic design online. At first, he designed for friends, then for small shops, and now for clients across borders. He doesn't send certificates to clients; he sends his work. There is also a young woman who failed her final exams and was called a disappointment. But she loved baking. She learned from videos, practiced daily, sold through social media, and now runs a business that feeds her family. No one asks her for a report card. They ask for her cakes.

Meanwhile, some people graduate with perfect papers but no practical strength. They know the theory but can't apply it. The world is slowly replacing the question "Where did you study?" with "What can you do?" That is why Warren Buffett says the best investment you can make is in yourself not in your certificate, but in your ability to think, solve, and grow.

Richard Branson, who struggled in school, once said we should not be embarrassed by our failures but learn from them and start again. His success came from communication, courage, and creativity, not from exam halls. Steve Jobs told the world to “stay hungry, stay foolish,” reminding young people that curiosity and action matter more than comfort and titles. This doesn’t mean certificates are useless. Some careers still need them, and they always will. But a certificate should prove your skill, not replace it. A doctor with no real ability is dangerous. An engineer who cannot solve problems is weak. Paper without power is just decoration.

The new generation must understand this early. The phone in your hand can be a weapon of distraction or a tool of growth. You can scroll or you can build. You can copy notes or you can create value. The world will not pay you for what you memorized it will pay you for what you can produce. The old system said success lives in files and frames on walls. The new system says success lives in your hands, your mind, and your courage to try. In this generation, skills speak louder than certificates, and the future belongs to those who can do, not just those who can prove.

From COVID survival to community impact: How one young Zimbabwean built sustainable production from the ground up



By
Lethokuhle Mpofu

Jortham Jele (30) is the founder of Jay's Legacy, a youth-led local production business based in Bulawayo that manufactures detergents, selected food products and petroleum jelly. Established during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jay's Legacy has grown from a survival initiative into a small-scale production operation supplying essential household goods under difficult economic conditions.

Jortham's experience offers insight into a form of youth entrepreneurship that is less visible in Zimbabwe's economic landscape: small-scale local manufacturing developed under constraint. At a time when many young people rely on vending and informal trading to survive, Jay's Legacy reflects an alternative approach grounded in production, quality control and gradual growth. His journey illustrates both the challenges facing youth-led producers and the potential for sustainable production

to emerge even at a modest scale.

When COVID-19 disrupted livelihoods across Zimbabwe in December 2021, survival became the dominant concern for many young people. For Jortham, survival meant responding to two urgent realities at once: the need for clean and safe environments during a global health crisis, and the need to earn an income even if it was just one dollar a day.

That modest goal marked the beginning of his journey into local production. What started as a pandemic survival strategy has since developed into an operation producing everyday essentials that households rely on daily, often without considering where they are made or who produces them.

At the height of COVID-19, cleanliness became a necessity rather than a choice. Jortham identified a gap in the market and sought to meet it locally, not through quick profit, but through consistency and trust. His focus was on producing items people needed and could

rely on, even under unstable economic conditions.

Local production, however, comes with significant challenges. The cost of raw materials remains high, making quality manufacturing expensive. Despite this, Jortham has resisted pressure to compromise standards in order to compete on price alone. In detergent manufacturing, he draws a clear distinction between cutting corners and building credibility. While some producers dilute products to lower costs, his approach prioritises effectiveness and durability, even if it means charging slightly more. Infrastructure limitations further complicate operations. Unlike established companies, Jay's Legacy does not yet have a permanent production or selling space. The business operates on a mobile basis, meaning weather conditions directly affect daily activities. On rainy days, movement is restricted and sales decline, highlighting how environmental and infrastructural constraints shape the survival of youth-led enterprises.

Access to capital remains one of the biggest barriers to growth. There are moments when expansion is possible in theory but not in practice, simply because funds are insufficient to purchase raw materials. Competition in the detergent market is intense, yet Jortham believes long-term relevance can only be sustained through quality rather than price wars.

Beyond income generation, his vision is rooted in community impact. Jortham sees

sustainable production as a pathway to employment for young people, particularly those vulnerable to poverty, drug and substance abuse, gender-based violence and crime. By creating opportunities within production, he believes young people can be drawn into meaningful work that restores dignity and purpose.

When asked what support would make the biggest difference, Jortham points to funding models that reflect the realities young people face. He argues that grants specifically targeted at production could unlock growth, while bank loans should not require collateral or guarantors with payslips conditions that exclude many unemployed youths.

Looking ahead, Jortham hopes to expand Jay's Legacy's product lines, strengthen marketing, secure sustainable funding and employ more young people. Rising input costs and limited resources continue to slow progress, but his long-term goal remains clear: to build a leading local production enterprise while contributing to community development.

Jortham's story reflects the broader reality facing many young Zimbabweans navigating entrepreneurship under uncertain conditions. It is not a story of overnight success, but of persistence of building something practical from crisis, one product at a time and of proving that sustainable production can begin at the smallest scale and still create meaningful impact.

The weight of new year goals on young people



By
Ruvarashe Munyoro

As December approaches, the holiday season brings with it a familiar rhythm across Zimbabwe. At airports in Harare and Bulawayo, and at border posts, many citizens living abroad are arriving home and some for a short visit, others for good. It is a time of reunion, laughter, memories, and hopeful

new beginnings.

January has a way of putting us all under pressure. Suddenly, everyone knows exactly what they want this year. New goals. New plans. New "me." Social media is full of posts that start with "This year I will..." and end with unrealistic expectations. And if you're young, still figuring life out, it can feel like you're already behind before the year even properly starts.

Here's the truth: goal setting as a young

person is messy, confusing, and far from perfect and that's completely okay. We're often told that if we don't have clear goals, we lack direction. But no one really talks about how hard it is to set goals when you're still discovering who you are. Your interests change. Your priorities shift. What you wanted last year might not even excite you anymore and that doesn't mean you failed. It means you're growing.

Another hard truth is that many of the goals we set in January are influenced by comparison. We see people online announcing big plans, achievements, and "glow-ups," and we feel pressured to match that energy. So, we set goals that look impressive instead of goals that actually make sense for our lives. We aim for perfection instead of progress. Real goals aren't always loud.

Sometimes a real goal is simply surviving the year with your mental health intact. Sometimes it's learning discipline, building confidence, or just showing up when things get difficult. These goals don't always make good Instagram captions, but they matter.

As young people, we also forget that goals are not contracts. You are allowed to change your mind. You are allowed to adjust. You are allowed to fail and try again. The idea that you must stick to a goal no matter what can turn growth into pressure and ambition into anxiety. The truth is, goal setting should guide you, not trap you. Instead of asking, "What do I want to achieve this year?" maybe we should also ask: Who do I want to become? What habits do I need to build? What do I need to let go of?

Small, consistent steps often matter more than big promises. Reading one page a day, saving a little money, learning one new skill slowly, these are the kinds of goals that actually change lives over time.

So if this January you don't have everything figured out, you're not failing. You're human. You're young. And you're allowed to take your time. Set goals that leave room for growth, rest, and grace. The real win isn't having the perfect plan; it's staying honest with yourself as you grow into the person you're becoming.

THE SPOTLIGHT

January 2026: The month that roared into the year



By
Bradley Sibanda

January 2026: The Month That Roared Into the Year January 2026 arrived not with a quiet new beginning, but with bold headlines, thrilling sports, heated politics, cultural moments, and events that energised millions around the globe. From protests and parliamentary battles to epic football drama and must-see festivals, the world hit the ground running, and there's still much more to unfold before the month ends.

POLITICS *Power Plays, Protests, and Political Upheaval* The political landscape in January was defined by public pressure meeting government action and, in many cases, head-on confrontation.

Iran's Ongoing Protests and Crackdown

Mass protests in Tehran, Mashhad, and Shiraz continued following economic hardship and political discon-

tent. On January 8, security forces reportedly opened fire on demonstrators in Fardis, killing dozens and sparking international condemnation. Despite government attempts to silence coverage through internet blackouts, news of unrest spread worldwide.

Uganda's Electoral Aftermath In Kampala, clashes between security forces and supporters of opposition leader Bobi Wine intensified after allegations of election irregularities. Protesters demanded transparency and justice days after the controversial 2026 general polls, resulting in multiple deaths and scores of arrests.

U.S. Walkouts Mark Political Resistance

On January 20, thousands participated in the Free America Walkout, a coordinated demonstration across major U.S. cities, against policies associated with the first anniversary of Donald Trump's second inauguration. Organizers said the walkouts were meant

to symbolically withdraw labour, school attendance, and economic participation to protest the political direction.

European Policy Agenda in Motion

The European Union's Council meetings later this month will focus on key issues, including the economic outlook, agricultural policy, rule-of-law debates, and foreign affairs discussions about Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Middle East tensions, all of which promise to shape diplomatic priorities in February.

SPORTS AFCON, Championships, and Major Matchups

January's sport headlines were dominated by the beautiful game but there was excitement across multiple arenas.

AFCON 2025 Final: A Night of Drama and Glory

The Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) final on January 18 will be unforgettable. In Rabat, **Senegal** edged **Morocco** 1–0 in extra time, with **Pape Alassane Gueye** scoring the decisive goal in the 94th minute. The match was stormy, featuring a controversial VAR-awarded penalty for Morocco that was missed and protests from the Senegal team's coach, **Pape Thiaw**.

Looking Ahead in Sport This January

AFCON has ended, other major competitions remain underway or on the horizon: **ICC Under 19 Cricket World Cup** (January 15–February 6) young cricket talent from across the globe battling for youth supremacy.

- **Australian Open Tennis** begins one of tennis's four Grand Slam events.
- **NFL Playoffs & AFC Championship Game (Broncos vs. Patriots)** on January 25 a high stakes American football

clash with teams vying for a Super Bowl berth.

- **WWE Royal Rumble** set for **January 31** in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia one of pro wrestling's biggest annual spectacles.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE Creativity, Festivals, and Digital Life

January 2026 was as much about self-expression as it was about competition and conflict.

Film, Music, and Creativity

- Pop culture chatter on social media reignited long-standing "GOAT" debates about Zimbabwe's greatest musical icons a lively, generational argument that reflects the depth of pride and passion in the nation's music memories and future.
- In industry news, Zimbabwe's **live entertainment sector** received a hopeful signal as event promoters welcomed proposed **reductions in National Arts Council license fees**, which could make concerts more sustainable and accessible for local artists and crews throughout 2026. Music fans around the world buzzed with excitement as **Harry Styles announced his comeback single "Aperture,"** set to drop later this month, a major moment for pop culture and youth audiences globally.

Lifestyle Trends and Global Events

From ice skating festivals and arts exhibitions in **Paris** to adrenaline-filled desert challenges and table tennis championships in **Qatar**, city by city calendars were packed throughout January. Mental health, personal branding, wellness, and digital creativity trends grew stronger among young people as did global conversations about **screen time, AI ethics and digital balance**.



IT'S TIME TO BE SOCIAL WITH ASAKHE ONLINE

OUR SERVICES

- Live streaming
- Social media adverts
- Program sponsorship
- Mobile road shows
- Multimedia
- Photography
- Documentaries
- Sponsored content

CONTACT

 +263 77 640 9488

 tanaka@cite.org.zw

 www.cite.org.zw



Follow us: [@citezw](#)



Address 45 Moffat Avenue, Hillside, Bulawayo

January juggle: How to crush the back-to-routine chaos



By
Nicolette Rigava

Hey besties
Let's be real, transitioning from December's festive vibes to January's grind is like switching from Sadza and relish to spread sheets and deadlines. One minute you're vibing to holiday tunes, the next you're drowning in deadlines and school runs. So, how do you make this transition smoother than a paved road?

School's Back, But...

For students, January means textbooks, assignments, and early mornings. Tips to make the back-to-school grind less painful? Say less:

- Get ahead on your syllabus
- Create a sick study playlist
- Set realistic goals – don't try to become the next Einstein overnight (it's not possible)

Adulting in January

For the working crew, January's got a whole lot of hustle.

You're probably juggling:

- New year, new goals
- Catching up on work after the holiday break
- Adult responsibilities like bills, back-to-school expenses and meal prep

Here are some survival tips to help you get through that:

- Prioritise – what's the one thing you gotta crush this month?
- Schedule self-care like it's a meeting

- Don't be too hard on yourself – Rome wasn't built in a day

January is stressful, but let's flip the script: The Bigger Picture

January's all about setting intentions, but let's not forget to breathe. Take it one day at a time, and always remember it's okay to ask for help. Whether it's a friend, family, or a solid playlist, build your squad and tackle the year ahead.

Blue Monday: The theory behind the “saddest day of the year”



By
Lethokuhle Mpofu

Being part of the CITE Youth Network this year showed me something I did not fully understand before. Youth spaces are not just nice to have. They are necessary. They shape confidence, they shape skills, and they shape the way we see ourselves in the world.

There is a day in January that the internet has quietly agreed to feel bad about. No national announcement. No official decree. Just a shared, almost instinctive sigh across timelines, group chats, and news headlines: “It’s Blue Monday.”

For some, it arrives with moody playlists, dark captions, and a vague sense of emotional heaviness. For others, it passes like any other Monday traffic, deadlines, and tired eyes. But either way, the phrase has stuck: Blue Monday the so-called saddest day of the year.

While people may feel low in January due to financial and social pressures, there is no scientific basis to label one

specific day as the saddest of the year.

What is Blue Monday?

Blue Monday refers to the third Monday of January, which has been popularly labelled the gloomiest day of the year. According to the theory, this is the moment when the glow of December has officially worn off.

The holiday dopamine is gone. The decorations are packed away. The “new year, new me” optimism has met reality.

The theory suggests that a combination of factors makes this day particularly difficult for many people:

- Post-holiday letdown after weeks of celebration
- Financial strain from December spending
- Cold or gloomy weather in many parts of the world
- Quiet disappointment over New Year’s resolutions that didn’t last
- The pressure to suddenly be productive again

Put together, these ingredients paint January and especially

that third Monday as emotionally heavy.

Where did the idea come from?

Contrary to what many assume, Blue Monday did not emerge from scientific research or mental health institutions.

The concept was created in 2005 by UK travel company Sky Travel as part of a marketing campaign aimed at boosting holiday bookings during a slow travel season. The company worked with psychologist Dr. Cliff Arnall, who developed a formula combining weather, debt levels, time since Christmas, and motivation. From that equation, he declared the third Monday of January the “most depressing day of the year.”

In short: Blue Monday was born in a boardroom, not a laboratory a clever mix of psychology and marketing that took on a life of its own.

What’s actually real?

While Blue Monday itself is widely regarded as pseudoscience, the experiences it points to are real. Psychologists note that many people experience

seasonal mood shifts, post-holiday adjustment, and financial pressure at the start of the year all of which can make January feel heavier than other months.

Rather than a scientific fact, Blue Monday functions as a cultural label for a familiar moment: the shift from celebration to routine, when festive energy fades and everyday responsibilities return.

At the same time, experts caution against taking the label too literally. Human emotions do not follow a calendar, and no single day can be objectively declared “the saddest” for everyone. Mood is shaped by far more complex social, economic, and personal factors than any formula can capture.

Why it still matters

Blue Monday sits between marketing and meaning. It began as a campaign, but it endures because it mirrors a broader truth about how many people experience January not as one bleak day, but as a season of adjustment.

The holiday dopamine is gone. Bills are back. Hustle culture says “grind,” but rarely says “rest.” For many, that slow return to routine, combined with social and financial pressures, makes the start of the year feel heavier than any other time.

In that sense, Blue Monday’s significance lies less in its scientific accuracy and more in what it reveals about how we talk about pressure, productivity, and emotional well-being. It reminds us that feeling low sometimes is normal and that acknowledging it is a step toward managing it.

Love, money and ambition: Can youth have all three?



By
Patricia Moyo

In 2026, love is no longer just about emotions it is about survival, growth, and vision. For today's youth, relationships exist in a world shaped by rising costs, loud hustle culture, and constant pressure to "make it." Love now walks hand in hand with money and ambition, and separating the three feels almost impossible. Many young people are quietly asking themselves whether it is realistic to pursue their dreams, build financial stability, and still maintain a healthy relationship.

Love today meets reality very quickly. Feelings are tested by unemployment, long working hours, side hustles,

and uncertain futures. Relationships don't always end because love fades; often, they end because pressure grows heavier than patience. "I love you" now carries unspoken questions about direction, commitment, and financial security. When these questions remain unanswered, love begins to strain.

Money, whether spoken about or not, becomes the silent third partner in many relationships. Lack of money can create insecurity, resentment, and imbalance, while silence around finances breeds misunderstanding. The issue is rarely money itself, but the absence of honest conversations about it. In 2026, strong relationships are built by young people who are brave enough to talk about financial goals,

spending habits, risks, and long-term plans without shame or fear.

Ambition is often blamed for broken relationships, yet ambition is not the enemy. Miscommunication is. Ambition demands time, focus, and sacrifice, and when one partner feels neglected or left behind, love suffers. But choosing ambition does not mean abandoning love. It means choosing alignment understanding each other's dreams and respecting the seasons each person is in. Growth does not always happen at the same pace, and that difference should inspire support, not competition.

Social media adds another layer of pressure. Online, love appears effortless and luxurious trips, gifts, soft-

life aesthetics. Offline, many young people are dealing with debt, stress, and uncertainty. Comparing real relationships to curated online moments steals joy and creates unrealistic expectations. Real love is not performative; it is patient, consistent, and resilient when life is difficult.

So, can youth truly have love, money, and ambition? Yes but not without effort, sacrifice, and maturity. Balance

does not mean giving equal attention to everything at once. Sometimes ambition will demand focus, sometimes love will need more time, and sometimes money will require discipline and restraint. What matters is communication, shared values, and a willingness to grow together.

The real success for youth in 2026 is not choosing one and abandoning the others, but learning how to build all three wisely. Love should not cage ambition, money should not replace affection, and ambition should never erase empathy. With honesty, patience, and shared vision, youth can build relationships that grow alongside their dreams not in competition with them.

ASAKHE

Digital

ASAKHE Digital delivers professional, high-quality live streaming that brings your events to audiences in real time. We combine reliable technology with creative production to ensure your moments reach beyond the room and leave a lasting impact.

OUR LIVESTREAMING SERVICES

- Conferences
- Corporate events
- Church services
- Weddings
- Community events
- Funerals

CONTACT US

+263 77 310 3262
+263 78 808 4339

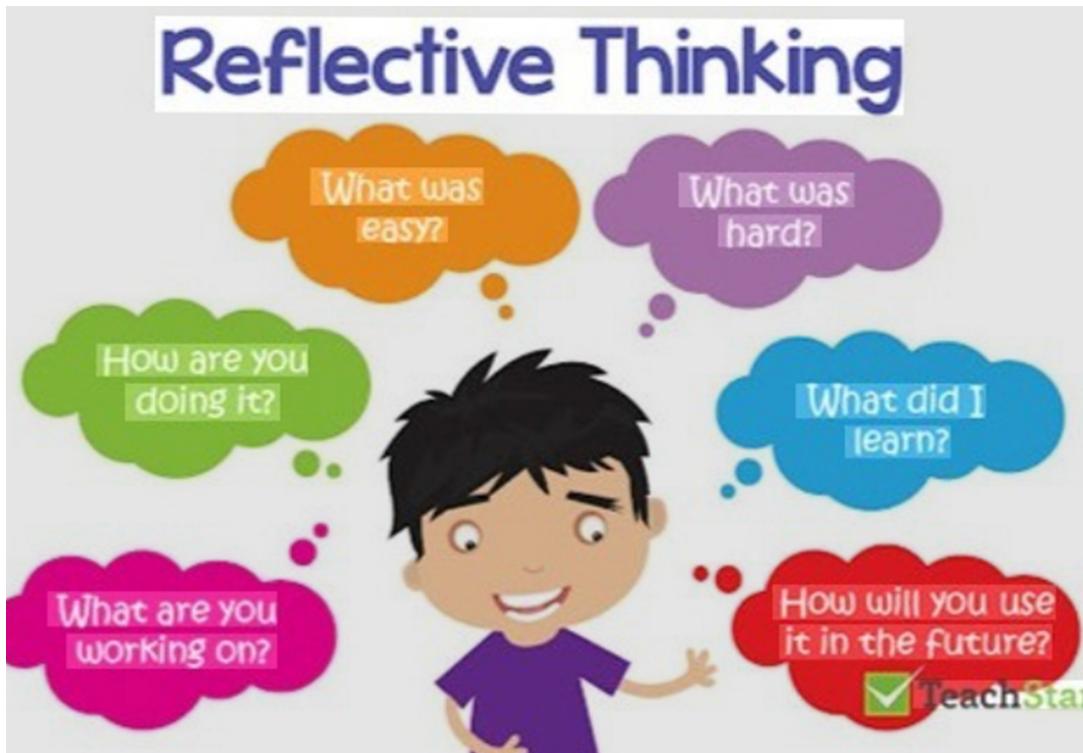
www.cite.org.zw

 [@citezw](https://www.instagram.com/citezw)  [YouTube cite_zw](https://www.youtube.com/cite_zw)

 [@citezw](https://twitter.com/citezw)



Results are out: A time for celebration, reflection and compassion



By
Privilege Mathema

Results are out, and most students performed exceptionally well, scoring many As, Bs and Cs. The hard work and late-night studying finally paid off. Many parents were overjoyed, some even shedding tears of happiness as they celebrated their children's success.

However, there is another group of students who did not perform as well.

The anticipation of good results can quickly turn into shock and disappointment. Perhaps you studied hard and dedicated yourself, but it still did not work out. Maybe deep down you knew you were not an A student, yet you gave it your all—and it still wasn't enough.

When parents, guardians or neighbours ask about your results, you struggle to utter

a single word.

Some young people are beaten because of poor results, others are ridiculed or laughed at. This has led many youths to feel depressed, develop hatred for school, withdraw from others, or even contemplate suicide.

So what really causes poor academic performance? We need to understand that a student is someone who must first be taught the basics and concepts of a subject in order to master it. Not all students have the same grasping ability or learning pace, and therefore patience is essential.

Secondly, learning environments must be conducive. Students cannot learn effectively when teachers are unapproachable, constantly ridicule them, compare them to others, or tell them they will never succeed. While constructive criticism is important, teachers need to

recognise that many learners are extremely sensitive and require careful handling.

Adding to this, some students come from abusive or unstable families. Traumatic experiences may replay in their minds, leading to overthinking, depression and difficulty concentrating in class. Others are bullied by their peers but are afraid to report it due to fear or lack of confidence. Constant comparison, pressure and unrealistic expectations can also result in excessive stress and poor results.

Peer pressure is another major factor. Some students turn to drugs in an attempt to cope or improve focus. Others fall pregnant during or before exams, and the guilt and shame that follow can be overwhelming.

Spiritual challenges, though often overlooked, may also play a role. Some students may experience spiritual at-

tacks simply because they have a promising future. This is why prayer before exams is encouraged—to seek divine protection from illness, fear or unexplained disturbances. Parents and teachers must also accept that not all students are academically gifted. Some excel in languages, sports or practical skills and deserve opportunities in academies that nurture these talents. This is especially important in a developing country, because not everyone is meant for a white-collar job.

Our education system needs upgrading so that students are not forced to study subjects that do not align with their future careers. Many learners lose interest when they hear from peers already in the working world that certain subjects have little practical value. Students' mental health must be taken seriously. Learning environments should encourage correction, growth and effort without fear or humiliation.

Whether a child passes or fails, parents should remain pillars of strength—offering encouragement and reminding them that they can always try again. To every young person reading this: failing is not the end of the road. Delay does not mean denial. Life gives second chances. Start a new chapter, push yourself harder this time, and you will make it.



Who is doing your

DOCUMENTARY Productions?

- ★ High quality
- ★ Cohesive storytelling
- ★ Great artistry
- ★ High end production



CONTACT:
+263 788 084 339



FOLLOW US: @citezw

Zimsec results: The drama, the tea, the passes and fails

By Nicole G. Moyo

The results are out, and Zimbabwe's Ordinary Level
students are feeling all the feels . Whether you're
sipping champagne or crying into your
pillow, we're here for it .

To the The Fail Squad

If you're part of the "I didn't quite make it" crew,
don't sweat it! Failing a subject or three
isn't the end of the world.

It's just a plot

twist in your story. You can retake, regroup,
and come back stronger . Remember, some of the most
successful people didn't ace their exams
we won't name names, but....!!

To the The Pass Squad

If you're beaming with pride and your
parents are throwing a party, congratulations !
You worked hard, and it paid off. Savor the moment you
have earned it Now, what's next? University , college,
or diving straight into
the real world?

Either way, your results don't define you.

It's what you do next that counts .
So, whether you're feeling like a
rockstar or need a hug,
know you're
not alone.

Becoming: the growth journey



By
Tafadzwa Gumunyu

January arrives quietly, almost like it's holding its breath. The fireworks have faded, the music is gone, and the thrill of December's celebrations has settled into memory. For many young people, this is the month when reality returns and school gates swing open, work resumes, responsibilities pile up, and the excitement of the new year can feel heavy.

But in this quiet, there is opportunity. January is not just a reset on the calendar but it's a chance to become.

Becoming is not a flashy, overnight process. It doesn't trend on social media or come with

applause. It is slow, uncomfortable, and often invisible. It is waking up when motivation is low. Choosing discipline when no one is watching. Showing up for yourself even when the world seems indifferent. Growth is quiet, but its impact is undeniable. Across Zimbabwe, youth are learning this firsthand. In Harare, a group of students has turned a corner of their small home into a makeshift studio to learn digital design. In Bulawayo, young entrepreneurs are building side hustles from their bedrooms, selling everything from fashion accessories to tech gadgets online.

Even in smaller towns like Gweru and Mutare, teens are quietly learning new skills, tutoring peers, and taking small steps toward their dreams.

Every act of effort, every silent sacrifice, every small win is part of the journey of becoming.

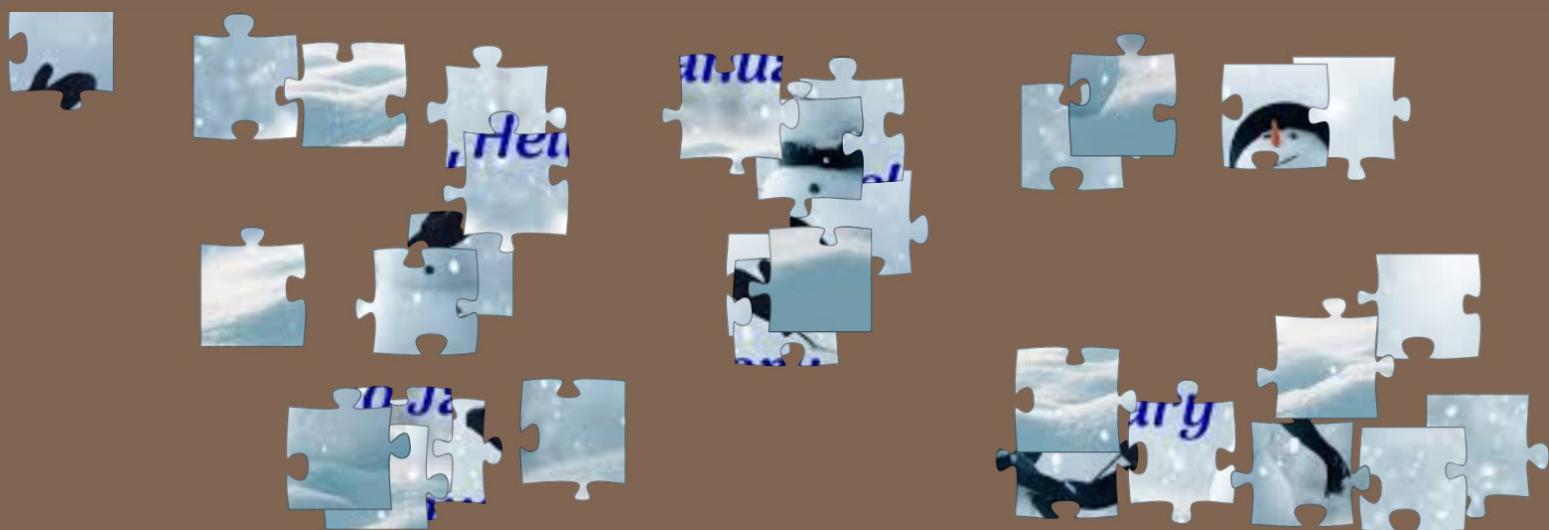
But it's not just about productivity. Becoming is about healing. Healing from heartbreak, from rejection, from failure, from moments when you were told you weren't enough. It's about breaking free from old habits, leaving toxic spaces, and forgiving yourself for the mistakes you cannot undo. This is January's gift and the permission to start anew, to rewrite your story, and to embrace who you are still becoming. The truth is, growth is rarely linear. There will be days of doubt, moments of comparison, and times when progress feels invisible. But January reminds us: this is not a race. Your pace is valid. Your process matters. Every small step builds

the foundation for the person you are shaping yourself to be.

This month, the noise of the holidays fades, leaving space for clarity. The distractions of the past year settle, and the hustle begins quietly, deliberate, and intentional. It is the time to plant seeds, work in silence, and move with purpose. Results may not be immediate, but the effort is never wasted.

By the end of January, you may not be the person you hope to be. And that's okay. You are not finished. You are not yet who you will become. You are on your journey, and every decision, every effort, every lesson is part of the story of growth. January is your season to embrace the quiet, focus on your journey, and commit to becoming.

By Brandon Ncube



The unspoken struggles of starting the new year



By
Amanda Ndlovu

As the clock strikes midnight on January 1st, the world seems to hold its breath. Fireworks light up the sky, social media are flooded with #NewYearNewMe posts, and people everywhere eagerly anticipate the blank canvas of a fresh year. It's a time for new beginnings, big dreams, and positive change. But underneath the excitement and optimism lies a more subtle and often unspoken reality: for many, the start of the New Year isn't as easy, bright, or inspiring as it's often portrayed. In fact, it can bring its own unique set of struggles that deserve more attention.

The Pressure to be Productive

The idea that a new year is a time to do more can be overwhelming. As the calendar flips to January, there's this invisible weight to hit the ground running. The pressure to constantly be "on," to achieve more, and to always be striving for self-improvement is louder than ever. For some, it's a time to set ambitious goals, like losing weight, learning a new skill, or building a side hustle. But for others, the thought of tackling an entire year's worth of goals feels like an impossible task.

The truth is, not everyone feels energized to start fresh. Some might still be carrying the weight of the past year whether it's a difficult job, personal challenges, or linger-

ing mental health struggles. For these individuals, the pressure to "better themselves" can create feelings of guilt, shame, or inadequacy. What about those who just want to take things one day at a time, or who need time to recover from burnout? It's important to recognize that productivity is often glorified as the ultimate measure of success, but it doesn't reflect the fullness of human experience. Taking things slow or giving yourself time to breathe is just as valid as running toward your next big goal. It's okay to have a season of rest.

The Loneliness of "New Beginnings"

For some, the New Year's promise of fresh starts is overshadowed by loneliness. While everyone around them seems to be surrounded by loved ones, making plans or celebrating with friends, there are others who face the reality of being alone whether by choice or circumstance. The images of perfect gatherings on social media can make isolation feel even more pronounced. The silence of an empty apartment or the quiet of a solo New Year's Eve can bring up feelings of sadness or disconnection. The pressure to present a picture of joy during this time can intensify feelings of loneliness, especially when the world expects celebration.

If you're feeling isolated this year, know that you are not alone in your feelings. Loneliness is a universal experience, and it doesn't reflect your worth or the possibility of meaningful connections. In fact, the New Year is an opportunity to reach out to those who may feel similarly, to make plans with people

who care, or even to start new friendships. It's okay to feel lonely, but it's also okay to seek support. Whether that's through connecting with family, friends, or finding community in new places, the New Year can be a time of reinvention in relationships, too.

The Weight of Unmet Expectations

As we reflect on the past year, many of us might carry the burden of unmet resolutions or unresolved personal goals. The optimism of a new year can quickly turn into a reminder of what we didn't accomplish. Perhaps you promised yourself you would save money, finally get that promotion, or go to the gym regularly but here you are, still facing the same challenges.

The weight of expectations, both external and internal, can feel crushing. The world expects us to be constantly evolving, to show progress, to make something of ourselves every year. But what happens when we're not where we thought we'd be? When we don't feel ready to move forward or when things seem stagnant?

The answer is simple: It's okay to let go of expectations. Sometimes, we need to recalibrate our goals, pivot, and reframe what success looks like. It's important to give ourselves permission to fail, to try again, and to start over as many times as necessary. Your worth is not defined by whether or not you meet every expectation or accomplish everything on your list. You are still worthy, exactly as you are.

The Myth of “New Year, New Me”

The phrase “New Year, New Me” is often thrown around, but it carries an underlying myth: that change is something that happens overnight, on January 1st, with a sudden burst of energy and transformation. In reality, change is not an event. It's a process a series of small steps, often involving trial and error. The idea that you need to have everything figured out by the start of the year is a pressure that most people can't live up to.

Some may dive into new routines, workouts, or diets with the hope of becoming a completely different version of themselves. But it's important to remember that growth takes time sometimes years, not just weeks. Instead of focusing on an idealized version of a “new you,” focus on gradual improvement, on building habits, and on celebrating the small wins along

the way. It's okay to start slow and take things one step at a time.

The Complexity of Grief and Loss

The New Year can also be a painful reminder for those who have experienced loss. Whether it's the death of a loved one, the end of a relationship, or the loss of a job, the New Year's fresh start can feel particularly hollow for those grieving. While everyone else is moving forward with excitement, those who are grieving may feel stuck or unable to move past the weight of their sadness. It's important to honor your grief and not expect yourself to “just get over it” because it's a new year. Healing isn't linear, and it's okay to take your time. Grief and joy can coexist, and it's okay to acknowledge the complexity of both. Be gentle with yourself as you navigate this process, and give yourself permission to experience the full range of emotions that the New Year may bring.

You Are Not Alone

As we navigate the unspoken struggles of starting a new year, it's essential to remember that we are all in this together. Social media can make it seem like everyone is thriving, but behind the curated posts, many people are dealing with the same challenges, doubts, and fears. It's okay to not have everything figured out. It's okay to feel overwhelmed, tired, or unsure. The New Year does not have to be a time of relentless self-improvement or constant forward motion.

Instead, let this be a time of self-compassion. Let's show up for ourselves with kindness, recognizing that progress is individual, and that it's okay to go at your own pace. You don't need to have all the answers, and you don't need to rush toward perfection. Here's to a new year, filled with compassion, understanding, and the freedom to be our imperfect selves. May we all take things one step at a time, and may we find peace in the present moment.



Acknowledgements

Editor

Lesley Moyo

CITE Youth Network Coordinator

Melinda Ncube

Writers

Tafadzwa Gumunyu
Priviledge Mathema
Lethokuhle Mpofu
Ruvarashe Munyoro
Patricia Moyo
Brandon Ncube
Amanda Ndlovu
Nicolette Rigava
Bradley Sibanda

Graphic Designer

Wellington 'Cee Jay' Sibanda

Follow us:

@citezw

www.cite.org.zw