STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA AND ASIA (SRERUAA)

Regional Profile

ZIMBABWE
1. **Regional Portrait**

a) Key issues of interest and relevance to the SREURAA

b) Approximate population and key features

c) Essential geographical/environmental features that affect HEIs

d) Economy, industries and employment features
(A) KEY ISSUES OF INTEREST AND RELEVANCE TO THE SREURAA

- **Zimbabwean economy on downward spiral mid-1990s,**
  - Companies closed or down-sized en-masse
  - Massive formal sector unemployment

- **Growth of informal sector**
  - Influx of school leavers from the rural areas into urban areas
  - Large numbers of people joining informal sector

- **+US$7 billion circulating in the informal sector**
  - Universities to provide technical (STEM) and managerial training
(B) APPROXIMATE POPULATION AND ANY KEY FEATURES

![Population Pyramid Diagram for Zimbabwe, 2016](image-url)
ESSENTIAL GEOGRAPHICAL/ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES THAT AFFECT HEI
(D) ECONOMY, INDUSTRIES AND EMPLOYMENT FEATURES

MINING

AGRICULTURE

INFORMAL TRADING AND INDUSTRY

TOURISM
2. **Key Issues & Challenges Confronting Region**

a) Economic issues

b) Social issues including health/welfare/education

c) Environmental issues (including food/water security)

d) Cultural issues

e) Other issues or dimensions
a) **ECONOMIC ISSUES**

- Weak domestic demand
- High public debt
- Tight liquidity conditions
- Drought

- Economic Sanctions retarding growth
- Overvalued exchange rate
- Institutional weaknesses
- Poor infrastructure

- Weak industrial sector
- Lack of a diversified export base

Declining terms of trade - however, gradual economic rebound since multi-currency adoption in 2009

Rapidly growing informal sector but not contributing to the fiscus - no tax remittances
Poor provision of social services

2016, HDII was 0.516 placing the country at 154 out of 193

High rural urban migration

Young population, with age group 15-24 comprising 20% while 77% of population of over 13.4 million is 35 years old and below

Growing unemployment and increasing poverty = restive young population
Harare: a metropolitan and multicultural City; Not easy to develop strategies that embrace different cultures of residents

Diversity of Languages:
- Official language: English
- Predominant indigenous languages are Shona and Ndebele
- 14 other indigenous languages that are recognised officially across the country
Strong political differences between political parties fuelled by harsh economic environment

Period leading to and just after 2018 General Elections likely to raise tension in communities - not ideal for engagement

Informal traders involved in the informal sector have ‘invaded’ spaces in the City - presenting challenge to proper human resource audits, development and planning

Rise in corruption, thefts, and other criminal activities
## 3. Universities & Other HEI Portrait

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>University Name</th>
<th>City</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>University of Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Harare</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>National University of Science and Technology</td>
<td>Bulawayo</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Midlands State University</td>
<td>Gweru</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Open University</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Bindura University of Science Education</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Women's University in Africa</td>
<td>Harare</td>
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</tbody>
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4. Regional Aspirations and Agenda

a) Aspects of regional development and the role of higher education we wish to engage with, focus on and improve on

b) Situation Analysis

c) Areas of special interest to concentrate on in collaboration with other regions

d) Engagement roadmap and strategy
(A) ASPECTS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO FOCUS ON

- Strengthen SME Sector
- Focus on design and technology capabilities - HEIs participate in RIE-SET annually
- Developing capacity of informal sector
- Research and teaching in HEIs which contributes to community and national developmental aspirations
(B) SITUATION ANALYSIS

Communities calling for the assistance of institutions of higher learning in their development and improvement of livelihoods

Universities strive to address issues that affect their communities up to national level and beyond with emphasis on applied rather than basic research in practical oriented disciplines

Rich deposits of minerals and growing agricultural produce need high level human resources and technology for value addition and beneficiation - Research and Development key at HEIs
Engage in areas of special interests

Focus on ‘SME development’ to grow inclusive production sector and reduce unemployment

Strategies needed to capacitate the informal sector to grow into a viable SME sector and contribute more meaningfully to the national economy through increased production of quality goods and improve Government tax collection
- Promote LLL

Develop synergies between formal and informal sectors and create markets, including exports

Engage in areas of special interests
Initial focus on targeted small groups of informal sector operators at selected sites in Harare

Project to snow-ball and include more and more participants

Initial groups gradually weaned off as they become proficient and viable in their operations

Participants may be dropped and new ones adopted based on performance and ethical practices.

Participants attend training at: premises of their colleagues at different locales; in design studios, laboratories and workshops at the University; or other nearest premises

Most training to be carried out on-site through mobile teaching units and e-learning

Processes and practices to be continually documented and analysed

Such documentation should produce publications on lessons and best practices learnt for the development of SMEs

Benchmarking and sharing of experiences among network partners = Collaborative research

(D) ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP AND STRATEGY