

Leonor Fleming

Professor Gomez

DES 283.01

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### **Abstract**

This research focuses on the Zimbabwe culture in hopes of creating a sustainable design solution for an underdeveloped family's everyday way of living. In my findings, the rural parts of this African country are unlike any impoverishment here in America. The need for survival dominates every aspect of their lives, and it is difficult to comprehend the challenges Zimbabweans face on a daily basis. From clean food and water to proper health care and education, the resources available to this people are limited. It is because of outside help that they can continue and strive for a better existence. A proposed concept to support and aid the Moyo family is to offer relief to the mother, who provides selflessly and endlessly to the wellbeing of her family.

## Design for Diversity: Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe culture is unique and has maintained a traditional way of living over many generations. The government offers little to no support to its people who are caught in the cycle of lack and hardship. Most rural villagers live with small possessions, little education, and without the basic needs some take for granted. Research of this country and its people on their lifestyle, culture, social, political, and economic conditions, help identify specific needs in order to create an innovative and sustainable design solution and opportunity for a family in need.

### **Family Profile & Regular Activities**

In typical Zimbabwe fashion, the Moyo family is made up of four people. Itai is a thirty-five-year-old male and the head of the household as husband and father. He works as an agricultural farmer to support his family. Shona is a thirty-three-year-old female married to Itai and responsible for the domestic duties at home. Together they have two children: a ten-year-old boy Ariko, who is a student, and a five-month-old baby girl, Zendeya. Itai and Shona love their family and work extremely hard to provide for them. They mutually agree education is especially important for Ariko and Zendeya

As customary in their culture the men work outside the home and women handle traditional household activities, such as cooking, cleaning, raising children and any poultry they may possess. At an early age of seven or eight, girls begin to help in the house and boys start to learn to herd livestock. Children are encouraged to take on adult tasks from an early age to assist in the daily responsibilities (everyculture). Should children attend school they do so at the age of seven for approximately seven years. They may continue

into secondary school only if they are able to pass the required examinations (Wikipedia). School aged children generally walk up to an hour to primary school and are unsupervised or are not closely watched by adults. However, this is an important way for children to learn self-reliance and sufficiency (everyculture).

Regarding infants, the nurturing and socialization are dependent of the mother. A great deal of time is spent in the company of the mother, being carried on her back in the kitchen and sleeping with her at night (Wikipedia). According to everyculture.com: "Infant socialization takes place mostly in the household through the mother, extended family, and other children. In addition to the strong caring bond between mother and child, other adults and older children develop bonds and assume responsibility in the absence of the mother. An infant or child is seldom lonely and is constantly surrounded by relatives which lays the foundation for behavior in their adult life."

### **Social Activities**

Most socialization takes place outside of the house with other villagers. In the event there is a ceremony or special occasion of sorts, the customary tradition is to roast an ox, cow, or goat for food, to celebrate. The meal "may be slaughtered in the rural areas and depending on the significance of the event, may be accompanied by rice" (everyculture). Marriage is also a significant social activity and ensures the survival and continuation of the family into the next generation. Marriage gives women status and access to the land; however, women and children belong to the husband and the man assumes domestic authority over the household. Family units are composed of the husband, wife, children, and members of the extended family. Elder men and women are viewed as wise and are more respected and influential to handle family affairs. Relationships with maternal kin

are important; although contact may be infrequent, the relationship is normally a close one (Wikipedia). Therefore, the wider the kin group of an extended family, the more extensive it can become.

### **Political and Government Issues**

The Zimbabwe government is headed by President Emmerson Mnagagwa yet does very little to help its people with some of its basic needs. Most of the village support comes from a committee of wards that is responsible for promoting any local initiatives. Also, nongovernmental organizations and churches provide many services that the government cannot, such as rehabilitation of disabled persons and care in the community for the sick. Another major crisis is the access to clean water and sanitation. Although there are many factors that contribute to the crisis, “three major factors are the severely depressed state of the Zimbabwean economy, the reluctance of foreign aid organizations to build and finance infrastructure projects, and the political instability of the Zimbabwean state” (Wikipedia).

### **Economy**

Agriculture has been the mainstay for the economy for over seventy percent of the population. The country also manufactures products ranging from household items to steel and engineering products for the construction industry. The diversified economy provides a solid basis for sustained economic growth, but in recent years it has been underperforming (everyculture). Minerals, gold, and agricultural are the main foreign exports for Zimbabwe. The mining sector remains very lucrative, with some of the world’s largest platinum reserves being mined. The Marange diamond fields discovered in 2006, are considered the biggest diamond find in over a century (Wikipedia). Tourism also plays

a key role in Zimbabwe's economy although it has been failing in recent years. There is the beautiful Victoria Falls and Great Zimbabwe Ruins. Wildlife Safaris are also very popular, but reports indicate a loss in wildlife due to deforestation and poaching.

### **Health & Religion**

Health and religion seem to go hand and hand to Zimbabweans. It is believed if you have a sickness it is directly related to the spiritual realm. Both traditional and modern medication are used; however, there is a major distinction based on the seriousness of the illness. Therefore, treatment for a serious illness may include a consultation with a healer (nchi). Herbal remedies continue to be used widely for minor ailments, and healers are respected for their counseling skills, especially in treating psychological and psychiatric problems (everyculture). Most illness in Zimbabwe are associated with HIV and malnutrition. Regarding a specific religion, Wikipedia indicates: "An estimated 76 percent of Zimbabweans belong to Protestant Christianity, and 87 percent of 12.5 million Zimbabweans follow one of the denominations of Christianity. Christianity is the dominant religion in Zimbabwe."

### **Design Concept**

A different route was established in creating a design solution for the family. Mr. Moyo expressed that his wife does so much, and any support offered to her, would be much appreciated. The suggested concept centers around Mrs. Moyo's ability to get things done while Zandeya is within close proximity yet not attached to mom. After careful consideration, the proposal is to bring education of the dangers of co-sleeping with a baby. Instead the use of a sustainable bassinet is much more beneficial which can also be made and sold to help support the family's financial situation.

In summary, most underdeveloped countries such as Zimbabwe undergo tremendous amount of adversity in all aspects of life. Survival is the only known way of living; however, outside help is needed from time to time. Any relief or support to a people with few means, makes a world of difference. It also helps appreciate the many resources one fails to appreciate on a daily basis. Taking a look outside of our own lives and focusing on others is better for mankind and creates a much healthier place for us to live as people and as a whole.

Work Cited

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DESIGN  
FOR  
DIVERSITY  
ZIMBABWE

MOTHER RELIEF  
WOVEN BASSINET

LEONOR FLEMING

DES 283.01

Due: 9/22/20



# Client Profile

## Moyo Family

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Itai Moyo

Age: 35

Personality: Loves his family and works hard to provide what he can for them. Believes education is important and wants his children to have a better life.

Cultural Background: African

Profession: Farmer



Shona Moyo & Zendaya Moyo

Age: 33 & 5 months

Personality: Shona loves taking care of her family. She handles all of the domestic duties such as: cooking, gardening, raising poultry, and tending to the children.

Cultural Background: African

Profession: Domestic Work



Ariko Moyo

Age: 10

Personality: Enjoys family time and exploring the landfills with his friends. He finds pleasure in learning new things and finding ways to better his family and village.

Cultural Background: African

Profession: Student



# Cultural Research

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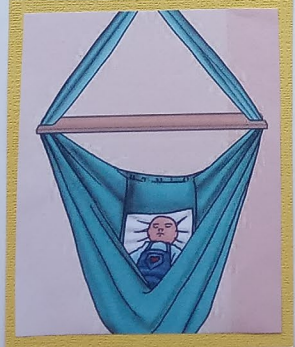
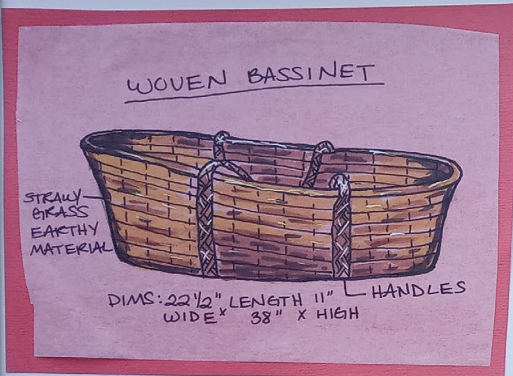


Where the Moyo's live is very rural and impoverished. The family lives in a hut and sleep on woven mats. Most of the nurturing and socialization of infants are the responsibility of the mother. A great deal of the infant's time is spent being carried on the mother's back while performing duties. The infant also sleeps with the mother at night. (everyculture.com)



# Design Concept

## RELIEF FOR MOTHER



The goal of this design was to create relief for the matriarch of the family. Mr. Moyo has expressed that his wife does so much, and any support offered to her, would be much appreciated. My suggestion centers around Mrs. Moyo's ability to get things done while Zandaya is within close proximity yet not attached to mom.

# FINAL CONCEPT RESEARCH- Bassinet

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## SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROM (SIDS)

- Unexplained death, usually during sleep, of a seemingly healthy baby less than a year old.
- Researchers have discovered some factors that might put babies at extra risk. They've also identified measures you can take to help protect your child from SIDS. Perhaps the most important is placing your baby on his or her back to sleep.
- Ideally, your baby should sleep in your room with the parents, but alone in a crib, bassinet or other structure designed for infant sleep, for at least six months, and, if possible, up to a year.
- Adult beds aren't safe for infants. A baby can become trapped and suffocate between the headboard slats, the space between the mattress and the bed frame, or the space between the mattress and the wall. A baby can also suffocate if a sleeping parent accidentally rolls over and covers the baby's nose and mouth. (Mayo Clinic)



Willow Sticks



# Earthy Materials

Straw/Leaves



Pine Needles



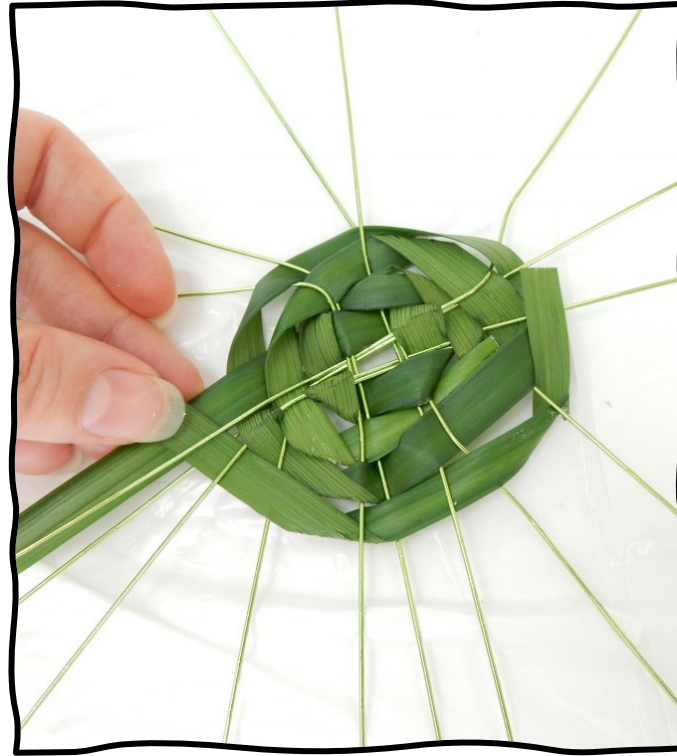
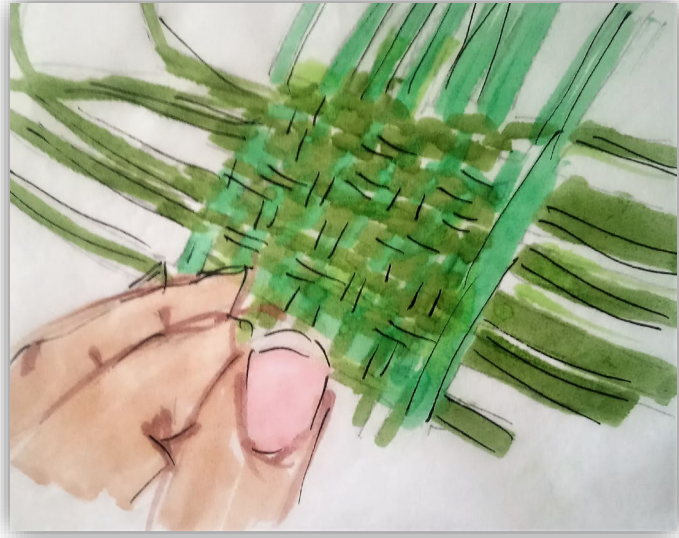
Grass



Wood



# Weaving



NOUN:

the craft or action of forming a basket by intertwining strands of grass or other earthy materials (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)





# Women Working Together

For the sake of one another and their village as a whole  
Beautiful bold African colors separate the bassinets from any other



Specifications:

Dim- 38"L x 22 1/2"W x 11"D

Materials- Straw & Grass



# African Woven Bassinet

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# Selling Bassinets at the Marketplace







Brick Hut w/Hay Roof Model



Country Research Board

# Zimbabwe Presentation

# Work Cited

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