

Muli Bwanji! This is a common Nyanja greeting. Nyanja is spoken by 5-6 million people in Zambia. An important part of the preparation for our trip will be gaining knowledge about the culture and people of Zambia.

GEOGRAPHY

Zambia is slightly larger than Texas and is bordered by Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. The geography of the land is composed of mostly high plateaus with some hills and mountain. The lowest point in Zambia is The Zambezi River. The natural resources of the country include copper, cobalt, zinc, lead, coal, emeralds, gold, silver, uranium, and hydropower.

CLIMATE

Zambia has sub-tropical vegetation and climatic conditions. The weather is characterized by three distinguished seasons: cool and dry season (April to August); hot and dry season (August to November); and warm, rainy season (November to April). October is the hottest month-- humid and cloudy with thunderstorms. The heavy tropical storms last well into March. We will be traveling during the cool, dry winter in July. During this season, temperatures range from 14-32 degrees Celsius. It is typically warm during the day and cool in the evenings. July is typically the coldest month of the year and a sweatshirt or jacket is recommended.

POPULATION

Population of Zambia is 11,262,000: Africa 98.7%; European 1.1%; other 0.2%. Mortality rates due to AIDS results in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, and lower population and growth rates. In 2003, it was estimated that approximately 920,000 people were living with HIV/AIDS in Zambia alone.

LANGUAGE

Although English is the official language, there are 73 officially recognized tribes in Zambia which assumes 73 languages. As stated previously, Nyanja is commonly spoken.

RELIGION

The predominant religion of Zambia is Christianity estimated at 50-75%. Muslims and Hindus make up about 24-29%.

ECONOMY

The economy is currently in a poor state, with a huge national debt and no practical means to pay it off. The unemployment rate in 2000 was estimated at 50% and 86% of people live below the poverty line (less than \$1/day). In some regions, the unemployment rate is close to 90%.

CURRENCY

The official currency is the Kwacha. The exchange rate *fluctuates all the time*. Last year the

exchange rate was about 3000 Kwacha to \$1.00. Volunteers should anticipate exchanging CASH only and using **\$50** and **\$100** bills in new or like-new condition. Smaller bills are difficult to exchange and access to ATMs are very limited.

EATING and DIET

Team members can expect to eat granola, yogurt, eggs, and fruit for breakfast. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are eaten for lunch with fruit. Dinner is prepared and served at a family's home in Lusaka each night. Evening meals typically include rice, potatoes, vegetables, meat (chicken, beef), and nshima. You will find out more information about nshima!

"The people of the world can be seen as a tapestry woven of many different strands. Those strands differ in size, shape, color, intensity, age, and place of origin. All strands are integral to the whole; yet each retains an individuality that enriches the beauty of the cloth. The tapestry symbolizes the cultural diversity among people...One of the many definitions of culture is a system of symbols that is shared, learned, and passed on through generations of a social group. It influences what people perceive and guides people's interactions with each other." (Culture and Nursing Care: A Pocket Guide. Edited by J.G. Lipson, S. Dibble, and P. Minarik).