Fertility in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey 2023-24 Key Findings

What is Total Fertility Rate?

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) represents the average number of children a woman would have by the end of her childbearing years. Fertility patterns in Zimbabwe are a critical component of population dynamics and have far-reaching implications for the country's social and economic development.



Over the past decade, Zimbabwe has experienced a gradual decline in fertility, from **4.0** children per woman in 2015 to **3.9** in 2023–24.

Pregnancy outcomes

In Zimbabwe, fertility trends are reflected in pregnancy outcomes. Among pregnancies in the three years preceding the ZDHS survey:

- **85.7%** resulted in live births
- **12.4%** resulted in miscarriages
- **1.7%** resulted in stillbirths
- **0.2%** resulted in abortions

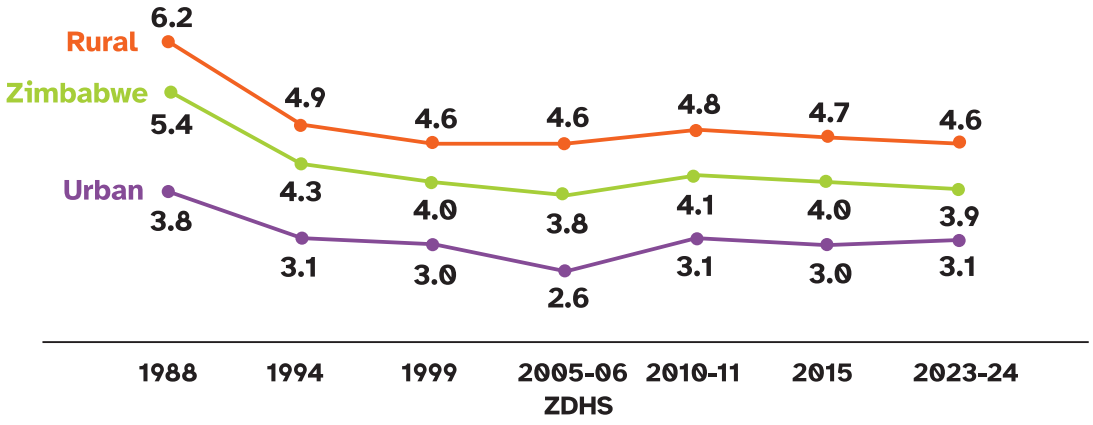
This factsheet provides information on the total fertility rate, age-specific fertility rates, age at first sex, age at first menstruations, age at first birth, sexual and reproductive behaviours of young persons, teenage pregnancy, ideal family size and menopause.

Fertility trends

- In Zimbabwe, a woman has about **four children** on average (**Total fertility rate: 3.9**), a slight decline from 4.0 children per woman in the 2015 ZDHS.
- **Education Impact:** Women with more than a secondary education begin childbearing approximately 7 years later than those with no education (**24.7** years vs. 18.0 years).
- **9.6%** of women aged 30-49 are menopausal. This proportion increases with age, from **3.4%** among women age 30-34 to **38.6%** among women age 48-49

Total fertility rate trends by residence

Average number of births per woman for the 3-year period before the survey



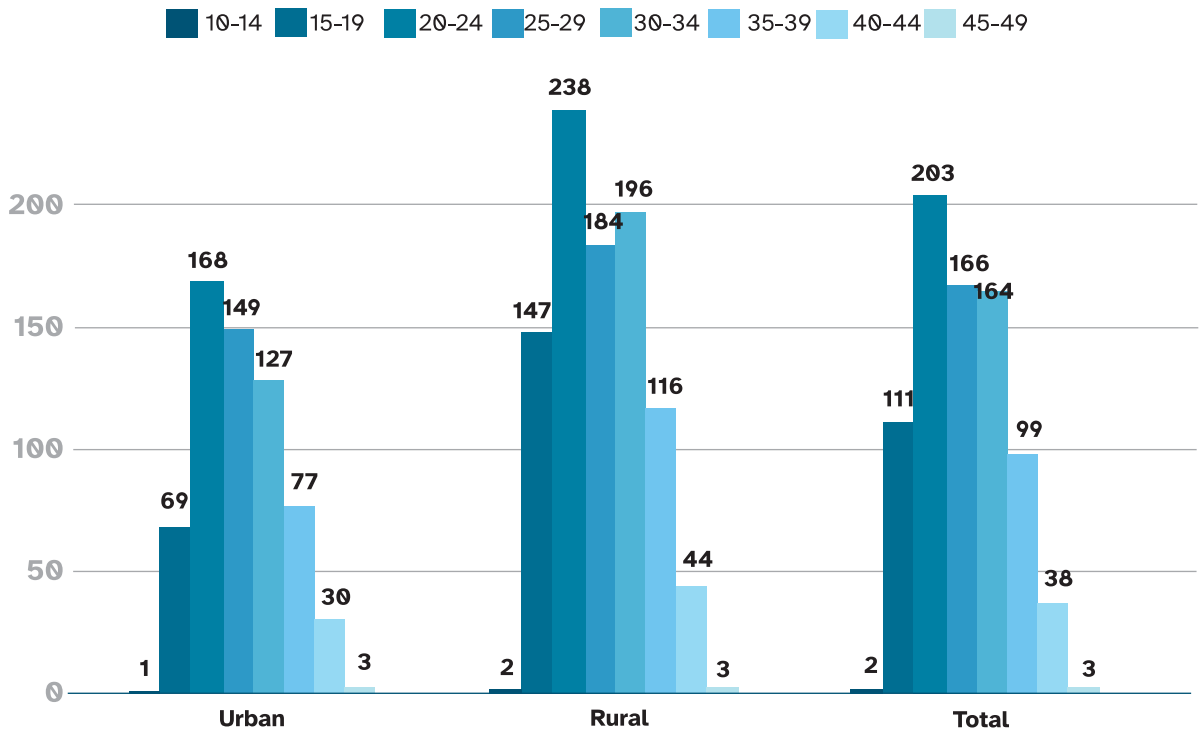
Fertility differentials

Fertility rates vary significantly based on where a person lives in Zimbabwe.

- **Provincial Range:** Fertility is lowest in Bulawayo (2.7 children) and highest in Mashonaland Central (4.7 children).

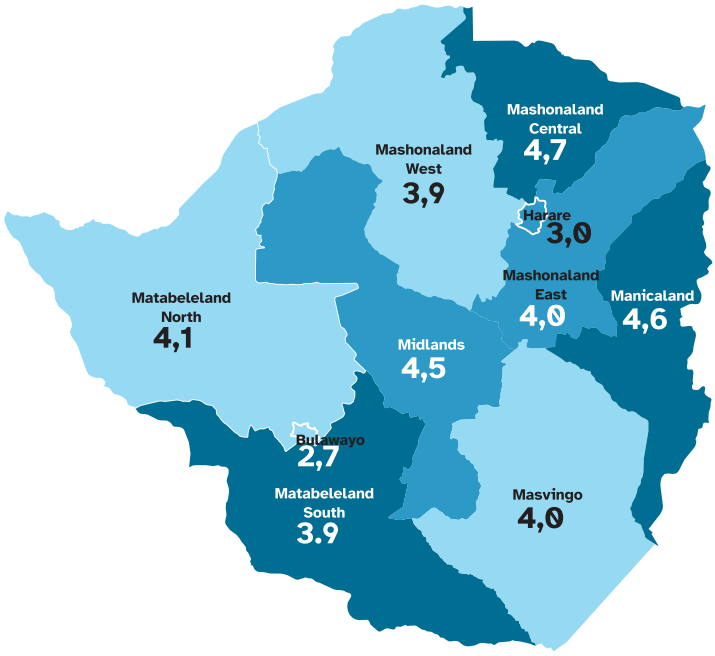
- **Rural vs. Urban:** Teenage pregnancy is twice as high in rural areas **(30%)** compared to urban areas **(15%)**.

Births per 1,000 women for the 3 years preceding the survey



The total fertility rate ranges from a low of **2.7** children in Bulawayo to a high of **4.7** children in Mashonaland Central

Total fertility for the 3 years preceding the survey



Sexual and reproductive behaviour

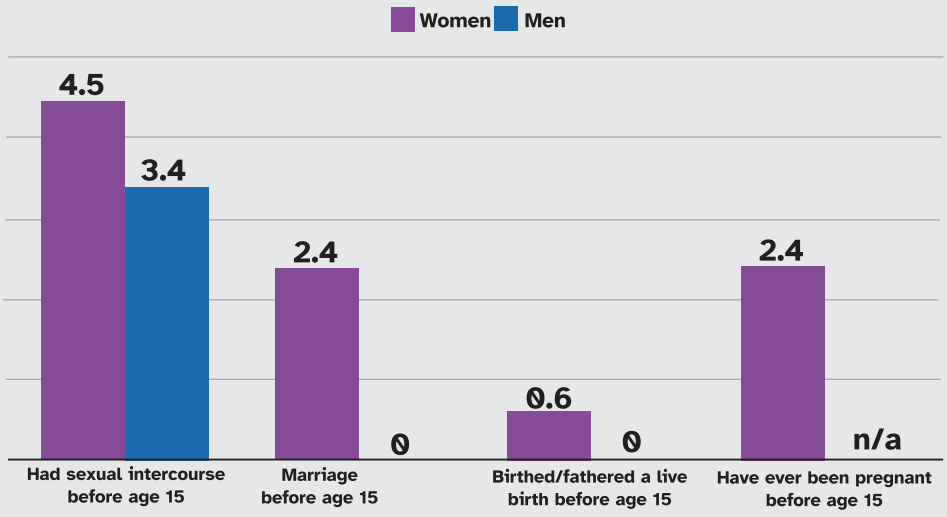
- **Sexual debut:** The median age of first sexual intercourse is **18.5** years for women and **19.9** years for teenage pregnancy
- **Teenage pregnancy:** **23%** of adolescents (aged 15–19) in Zimbabwe have ever been pregnant. (**30%** rural vs **15%** urban)
- **First menstruation:** The mean age at first menstruation is **14.5** years

Teenage pregnancy by province

Percentage of women age 15-19 who:

Province	Have ever had a live birth	Have ever had a pregnancy loss	Are currently pregnant	Have ever been pregnant
Bulawayo	11.1	1	1.3	12.9
Manicaland	14.5	1.8	7.2	20.5
Mashonaland Central	29	4.5	9.5	37.2
Mashonaland East	14.4	4.3	5	20.8
Mashonaland West	25.4	3.5	6.3	30.9
Matabeleland North	18.6	1.1	7.2	25.3
Matabeleland South	18.7	3.1	7	25.7
Midlands	21.2	2.7	6.4	27.5
Masvingo	14.1	0.9	5.1	19.4
Harare	10.4	4.8	2.9	16.4
Total	17.3	3	5.6	23.2

Sexual and reproductive health behaviours before the age 15



Family sizes

Preferences for family size have seen a slight increase in recent years

- **Women's Preference:** The mean ideal family size increased slightly from **3.8** children in 2010-11 to **3.9** children in 2023–24.
- **Men's Preference:** Men generally prefer larger families, with an ideal size of 4.4 children and increase from **4.3** children in 2010-11 to **4.5** children in 2015 before decreasing to **4.4** children in 2023–24
- The proportion of currently married women who want no more children was **41%** in the 2010-11 ZDHS, and increased to **45%** in the 2023-24 ZDHS.

Appreciation goes to the following partners who have provided support to the ZDHS 2023-24

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