



Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI)
Harare, Zimbabwe
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News release

Currency reform: Zimbabweans reject bond notes and rand, prefer either U.S. or Zim dollar

On a pressing issue facing Zimbabwe's new government – currency reform – the country's citizens express a strong preference for using the U.S. dollar or Zimbabwe dollar rather than bond notes or the South African rand, according to a recent public opinion survey.

The U.S. dollar drew the greatest popular support (50%), followed closely by the Zimbabwe dollar (42%), in a nationally representative survey in April-May by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI). Few citizens favoured the South African rand (5%) or bond notes (2%).

Currency reform has been a recurrent topic in Zimbabwe since the government replaced the Zimbabwe dollar in early 2009 with a multicurrency system. Since 2016, this system includes a surrogate currency called “bond note,” theoretically equivalent to the U.S. dollar but in practice worth much less and given to wild fluctuations.

Newly appointed Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube, the focus of high hopes for economic recovery, has indicated he is considering three options: scrapping the bond note and joining the Rand Monetary Union, reintroducing a local currency, or adopting the use of the U.S. dollar.

Key findings

- Asked which currency their country should use, Zimbabweans prefer the U.S. dollar (50%) or the Zimbabwe dollar (42%). Fewer than one in 10 would opt for the South African rand (5%) or for continued use of bond notes (2%) (Figure 1).
- The U.S. dollar is most popular among urban, younger, and better-educated citizens, while the Zimbabwe dollar wins out among rural, older, and less-educated respondents (Figure 2):
 - Significantly more urban (59%) than rural (45%) respondents prefer using the U.S. dollar, but preferences are reversed with respect to the local currency: More rural (47%) than urban (33%) residents prefer using the Zimbabwe dollar.
 - The preference for the indigenous currency increases with age: While only 36% of the youth say they want the Zimbabwe dollar back, this proportion rises to 45% among the middle-aged and to 54% among the senior generation. On the other hand, the preference for the U.S. dollar declines with age, from 56% among the youth to 41% among the elders.
 - The Zimbabwe dollar is least popular among those with post-secondary education (33%), compared to 53% among those with primary education.
- A preference for using the South African rand is significantly stronger among residents of Bulawayo (14%) and Matabeleland South (13%), near South Africa. Harare



residents have the greatest appetite for the U.S. dollar (62%), followed by Mashonaland East (55%) and Manicaland (51%) (Figure 3).

Survey background

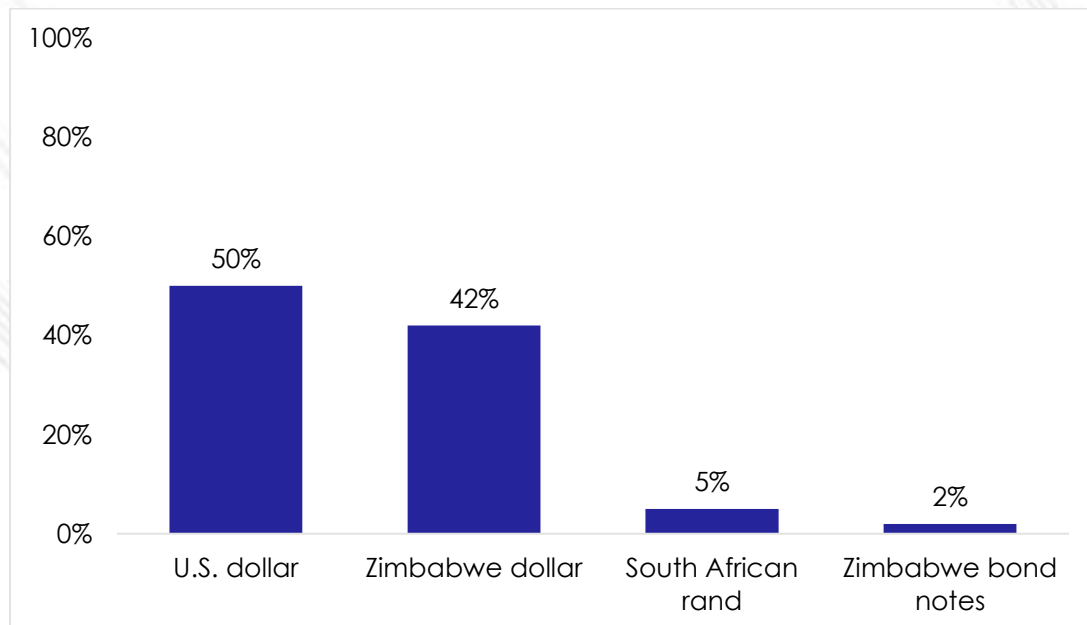
The question about currency reform was part of a pre-election survey commissioned by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Afrobarometer's core partner for Southern Africa, and conducted by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI), Afrobarometer's national partner in Zimbabwe.

Technical support was provided by Afrobarometer, a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in African countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

MPOI interviewed 2,400 adult citizens between 28 April and 13 May 2018 in all 10 provinces of Zimbabwe. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

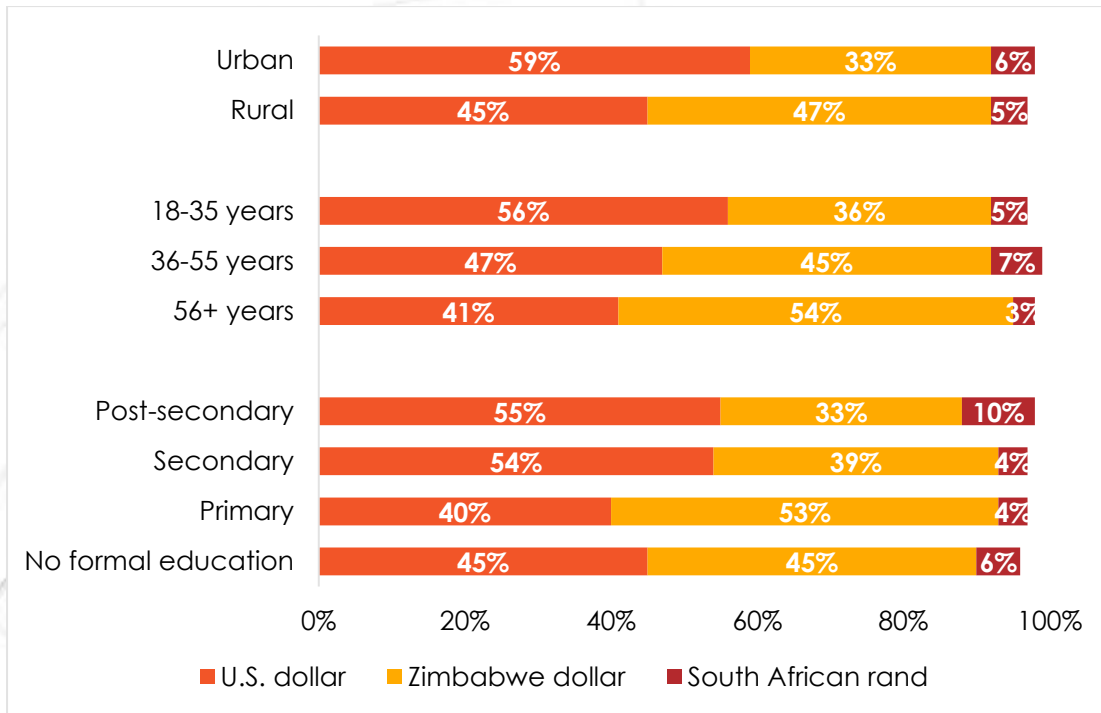
Charts

Figure 1: Popular currency preference | Zimbabwe | 2018



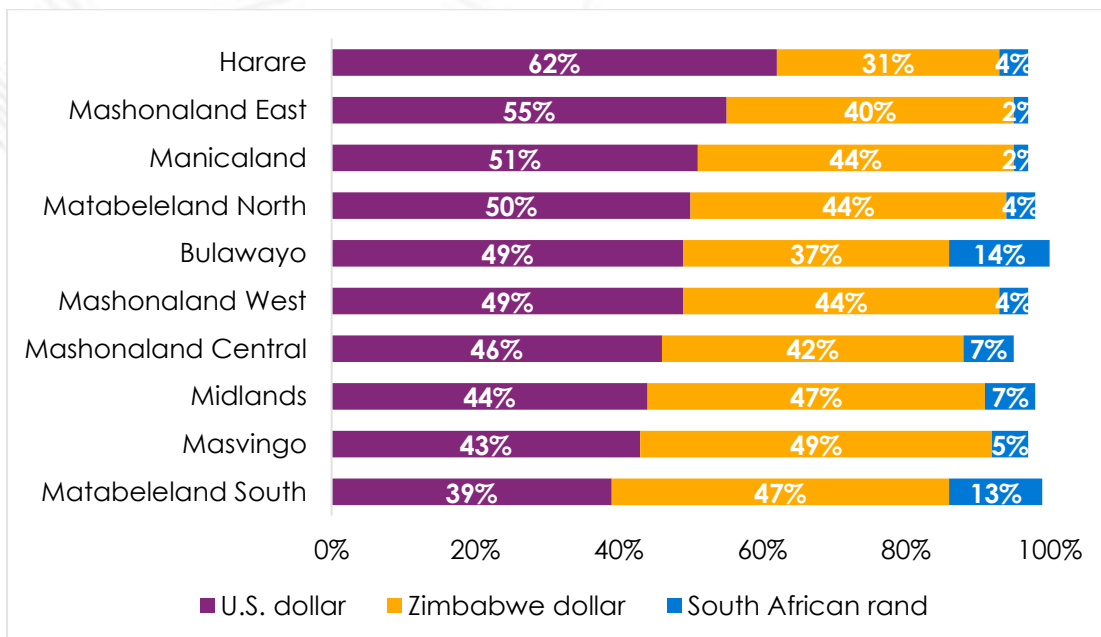
Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, which of the following currencies should Zimbabwe use now and in the future?*

Figure 2: Popular currency preference | by location, age, and education
| Zimbabwe | 2018



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, which of the following currencies should Zimbabwe use now and in the future?

Figure 3: Popular currency preference | by province | Zimbabwe | 2018



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