25SCHOOLS
FREE LEARNING NOTES FOR ZAMBIA

FORM 1

Geography

Urbanisation: Meaning, Causes and Impacts

Lesson notes for learners · Competence-Based Curriculum

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More and more people in the world, and in Zambia, now live in towns and cities. This growth brings good things, such as new jobs, but it also brings problems, such as too few houses, crowded roads and damage to the environment. In this note you will learn what urbanisation means, why people move to urban areas, and how urbanisation affects different groups of people and the environment.

AFTER THESE NOTES YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO

- Explain what urbanisation means and describe its main characteristics
- Describe the physical, social, economic, political and technological causes of rapid urbanisation
- Analyse the impacts of urbanisation on business owners, farmers, town planners and other sectors
- Say why understanding urbanisation helps a country to grow in a sustainable way

KEY WORDS

Urbanisation	The increase in the proportion of people living in towns and cities.
Urban area	A town or city with many people, buildings and services.
Rural area	A countryside area with fewer people, where farming is common.
Infrastructure	Basic facilities such as roads and public transport.
Globalisation	The growing links between countries in trade and business.
Urban blight	The decline of parts of a town or city.

1 What urbanisation means

Urbanisation is the increase in the proportion of people living in towns and cities. It happens when people move from rural areas to urban areas, which leads to the formation of towns and cities. It also happens when a rural area becomes an urban area because of better economic activities or government policies, for example when an area is declared an administrative centre. A third part of urbanisation is the physical spreading of urban areas, which causes cities to grow and creates new urban landscapes.

Urbanisation has several characteristics. Rapid population growth increases the demand for housing, infrastructure and services. Lifestyles change, including diet, transport and the way people mix socially. Economic activity increases, which drives new ideas, small businesses and economic growth. There are also environmental challenges, such as air and water pollution, problems with managing waste and the loss of green spaces.

To help Zambia grow in a smart and sustainable way, we need to understand how urbanisation affects daily life and nature.

2 Causes of rapid urbanisation

The causes of rapid urbanisation are many and linked. The module groups them into physical, social, economic, political and technological factors.

Physical factors push people out of rural areas. Natural disasters such as floods, drought and earthquakes force people to leave. Climate change increases movement from rural areas to cities. Environmental damage, such as deforestation and soil erosion, also makes rural life difficult.

Social factors attract people to towns. These include better education, such as tertiary education, better health care, and better social services such as sanitation, water supply and housing. People also expect a better lifestyle in the city, and urban blight is listed as a factor.

Economic factors include job opportunities, with better job prospects, higher wages and improved working conditions in urban areas. Industrialisation places factories and industries in urban areas. Globalisation increases economic opportunities in cities, and commercialisation, the buying and selling of goods and services, adds to this.

Political factors include government policies on urban development that attract people to cities. Conflict and violence in rural areas can push people to look for safety and security in cities, and greater political freedom can also lead to more movement to cities.

Technological factors include better transport infrastructure such as roads and public transport, and better communication through mobile phones and the internet. Information and communication technology has also made remote work and small business easier, which attracts people to cities.

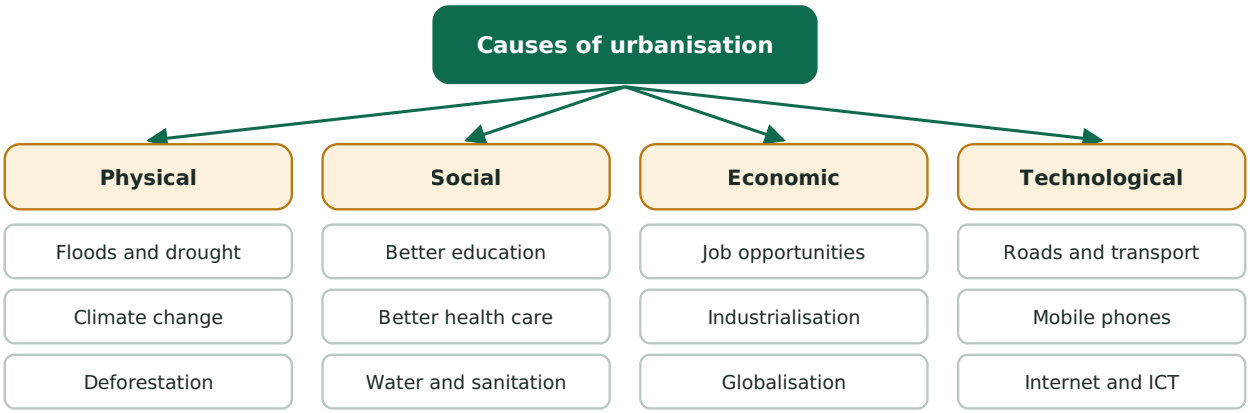


Figure 1. Main causes of rapid urbanisation

3 Impacts of urbanisation

Urbanisation affects different groups in different ways, so it is useful to analyse its impacts area by area.

For business owners, there is greater access to markets and resources, but also more competition, crowded markets and regulatory challenges. For farmers, land use changes and some lose their source of livelihood, while others gain greater access to markets. Farmers also face more competition and environmental challenges such as pollution, water scarcity and climate change.

Town planners face rising demand for services and the problems of high population density and overcrowding. They also find opportunities in sustainable redesign and in greater involvement of the community.

The health sector faces more demand for services and challenges in managing disease, with opportunities for new ways of delivering care for conditions such as cancers and mental health problems. The education sector faces more demand for schooling, problems of access and cost, and a shortage of teachers and training, but also opportunities for new ways of teaching. The environment suffers air, land and water pollution, loss of biodiversity and climate change.

Area	Challenges	Opportunities
Business owners	Competition, crowded markets, rules	Wider access to markets and resources
Farmers	Land use change, loss of livelihood, pollution, water scarcity	Wider access to markets
Town planners	High demand for services, overcrowding	Sustainable redesign, community involvement
Education	Access and cost, teacher shortage	New ways of teaching

Figure 2. Some impacts of urbanisation by area

4 Studying urbanisation

Learners can study urbanisation in groups. They can discuss the concepts, watch videos and write short notes. They can debate topics such as the advantages and disadvantages of urbanisation or how well urban planning strategies work.

Outside the classroom, learners can study their own community to find the causes of rapid urbanisation and write a report. They can interview people, such as business owners and farmers, to learn about the impacts on them. Interview guides help them to ask clear questions.

TRY THIS

Interview one adult in your community, such as a shop owner, a farmer or a teacher, using three questions you prepare. Ask why people move to town, what good things urbanisation brings and what problems it causes. Write a short report of five sentences. Say which cause in your note is the most important one in your community and give a reason.

REMEMBER

- Urbanisation is the increase in the proportion of people living in towns and cities.
- It happens when people move to urban areas, when rural areas become urban and when cities spread outwards.
- Its causes are physical, social, economic, political and technological.
- Impacts differ for business owners, farmers, town planners, the health and education sectors, and the environment.
- Understanding urbanisation helps Zambia to grow in a sustainable way.

? Check yourself

1. A farming family leaves their village after a long drought and moves to a nearby town where a brother has found work. (a) Name the physical factor that pushed them out. (b) Name the economic factor that attracted them. (c) Say whether this is rural to urban movement, and what it does to the town.
2. A district is declared an administrative centre, and a government office, a clinic and a school are built, so a small rural trading place starts to look like a town. (a) Which kind of urbanisation is this? (b) Name the type of factor involved. (c) Give one change that may follow in the lives of the
3. A young woman wants to continue to college and finds that the nearest school with the course she needs and a good clinic are in the city. (a) Name two social factors in her decision. (b) Name one technological factor that could help her stay in touch with her family. (c) Say one problem the city may
4. A town planner is worried that a fast-growing town has too few houses and crowded roads, while a farmer on the edge of town is losing land to new buildings. (a) Name one impact on the town planner. (b) Name one impact on the farmer. (c) Name one opportunity for each.
5. A shop owner in a growing town says that business is better because there are more customers, but that many new shops have opened nearby. (a) Name one benefit of urbanisation for the shop owner. (b) Name one challenge. (c) Name one rule or regulation the owner might have to follow.
6. Your class is asked to study urbanisation in your community and give a report to the head teacher. (a) Name two ways you can collect information. (b) Name two impacts you might ask about. (c) Say why such a study is useful for the community.

ANSWERS

1. (a) Drought. (b) Job opportunities. (c) Yes, it adds to the population of the town and increases the demand for housing and services.
2. (a) A rural area becoming an urban area. (b) Political, from government policy. (c) New jobs, new services or a change in lifestyle.
3. (a) Better education and better health care. (b) Mobile phones or the internet. (c) Housing shortage, crowded roads or pressure on services.
4. (a) High demand for services or overcrowding. (b) Land use change or loss of livelihood. (c) Sustainable redesign and community involvement for the planner, and wider access to markets for the farmer.
5. (a) Wider access to markets and customers. (b) More competition. (c) Any regulatory requirement from local authorities.
6. (a) Interviews and a survey, or reading and watching videos. (b) Effects on farmers and business owners, or pollution. (c) It helps people understand urbanisation and plan for sustainable growth.

Written by 25Schools to follow the Form 1 Geography syllabus of the Zambian competence-based curriculum. Free for learners to read, download and share. More notes and quizzes at 25schools.com.