

Urhobo Historical Society

Urhobo Names and Their Meanings

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Every Urhobo name given to a child has a meaning attached to it. The Urhobo believe that a child lives up to the likeness or meaning of the name that she or he bears. For instance, there is a general belief that if a 'thief' is the name of a child that child may grow up to be a 'rogue.' If, on the other hand, your child is given a name that suggests a 'rich person,' there is the belief that such a child invariably grows up to be a wealthy individual. Urhobo parents are therefore very careful of the names that they give to their children.

For the most part, grandparents or close older relatives have the privilege of giving names to new-borns. This is usually an honor. However, unlike some of their ethnic neighbors, Urhobo people do not have any special naming ceremonies that require performing certain rites. Apart from the parents and grandparents, traditionally Urhobo rarely allowed new-borns to be touched or sometimes seen directly by others until the age of three months. Mother and child are usually strong enough to have an outing at this age. This involves visiting the in-laws and other close relatives. At this time, the child should have an established given name. A birth registry is a recent notion in Urhoboland. Traditionally, Urhobo parents do not “count” the number of their children. Parents are not permitted by Urhobo cultural practices to count their children. The number of fingers often represents a count of one's children.

Urhobo names have deep meanings. Names are not mere labels, as they are in some other societies. Many Urhobo names invoke **SPIRITUAL** or

religious significance. Sometimes we give names to connote a **CHALLENGE** to self or others. Urhobo people thrive best when challenged. We also give names as a celebration and **APPRECIATION** of the gift of a child itself. Several Urhobo names reflect honor and **ACHIEVEMENT**. Certain names are simply **PHILOSOPHICAL**, while others are **GENDER** specific. The Urhobo also give names that emphasize the importance of **PEOPLE** as an important **RESOURCE**. Sometimes names are given to denote **SPECIAL DAYS**, especially if the individual was born on that specific day.

The Urhobo are a very republican people. They work very hard to acquire wealth and fame in an *old-fashioned way*. Your wealth is as good as its source. Urhobo will investigate the source of your wealth. If it is suspect, you stand to lose your respect, dignity and fame. A good number of Urhobo names have to do with **WEALTH AND MONEY**.

Names are also given to denote **COLORS, WEATHER** conditions, **NATURAL RESOURCES** and **PLACE of origin** or where born.

The list that follows contains a sample of some common Urhobo names. It must be pointed out that a few of the names under **GENDER** are not so common any more. The names are placed in categories. Each category contains the long form, short form, gender, and meaning attached to each name. Urhobo names are sometimes sentences or even phrases. The 'long forms' may in fact be the 'short forms' of the actual long names. The 'short forms', therefore, are in some cases doubly short forms of the real names. However, the actual meanings of the names are never in doubt. Some of these names may belong to cross categories warranting repetition in some cases. This is deliberate. Most Urhobo names start with vowels in the initial position except where abbreviated.

Names with SPIRITUAL or RELIGIOUS Significance

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Akpenwoghene	Akpenvwe	Unisex	Praise God
Anaborhi	Naborhi	UNISEX	Be born with good destiny
Edewor	Dewor	Male	Sacred day of worship in traditional religion
Ejiroghene	Ejiro	Unisex	Praise God
Ejokparoghene	Jokpa or Oghene	Unisex	Let's trust in God
Ejomafuvwe	Jomafuvwe or Jomafu	Unisex	Let peace reign in my life
Enohor/Elohor	Nohor or Lohor	Female	Blessing
Erhiaganoma	Erhi or Rhiaganoma	Male	Guardian spirit overpowers the body
Erhimeyoma	Oyoma	Unisex	My guardian spirit (God) is good
Erhinyoja	Rhinyoja or Onyoja	Unisex	Guardian spirit (God) meets our challenges (hears our prayers)
Erhinyuse	Use	Unisex	Guardian spirit (God) answers prayers
Erhiroghene	Erhi or Oghene	Unisex	The spirit of God
Eseoghene	Ese	Unisex	God's gift
Eserovwe	Ese or Ovwe	Unisex	God's grace or Free gift
Oghenebrume	Brume	Unisex	God decided in my favor
Oghenechovwe	Chovwe or Oghene	Unisex	God aided me
Oghenefejiro	Ofejiro or Oghene	Unisex	God is praiseworthy
Oghenegaren	Garen or Oghene	Unisex	God is great
Oghenekevwe	Kevwe or Oghene	Unisex	God gave (provided for) me
Oghenekohwo	Oghene or Kohwo	Unisex	God provides
Ogheneme	Ome or Oghene	Unisex	My God
Oghenemine	Mine or Mimi	Unisex	I look up to God
Oghenenyore	Nyore or Oghene	Unisex	God answers prayers
Ogheneruemu	Oghene	Unisex	God makes things possible
Oghenerukevwe	Rukevwe or Ruks	Unisex	God did this for me
Ogheneruno	Oruno or Runo	Unisex	God has so much (great)
Oghenetega	Tega or Oghene	Unisex	God is worship-worthy
Oghenevwede	Oghenede or Oghene	Unisex	God owns the day
Oghenevwogagan	Gaga or Oghene	Unisex	God provides all strength
Oghenochuko	Ochuko or Oghene	Unisex	God provides my support

Okeroghene	Okeoghene or Oghene	Unisex	God's own time
Omamerhi	Mamerhi or Oma	Unisex	Good guardian spirit
Onakpoma	Ono	Unisex	Who creates life?
Onomavwe	Ono	Unisex	Who is my creator?
Onomine	Ono or Mimi	Unisex	Whom do I look up to?
Onovughakpor	Ono or Onovughe	Unisex	Who can predict what life can bring?
Oyovwikemo	Kemo or Yovwike	Unisex	May our children be blessed
Oyovwikerhi	Kerhi or Yovwike	Unisex	May my guardian spirit (God) be blessed

Names with **CHALLENGE** Connotations

Achojah	Achojah	Male	Rise up to challenge
Aruegodore	Egodo	Male	We have come (established) home
Edojah	Dojah	Male	Day of challenge
Efemini	Efe	Male	Let's see how wealthy you can be
Efetobo	Efe	Unisex	Wealth is achieved
Efetobore	Tobore	Male	Wealth has now been achieved
Etanomare	Tanomare or Nomare	Unisex	Freed from blame (despair)
Ighomuedafe	Igho or Dafe	Male	Money intoxicates the wealthy
Miriodere	Miriode	Unisex	I now have a name
Mitaire	Mitai	Unisex	I have achieved (reached) their match
Mivwodere	Mivwode	Unisex	I now have a name
Oboganriemu	Obogan	Male	Be strong to survive (eat)
Ogbamremu	Ogba	Male	The brave meets a lot of challenges
Ojakorotu	Jakorotu or Orotu	Male	This is a group challenge
Ojanomare	Janoma	Unisex	I have met the challenge
Onajite	Ojite	Unisex	This is sufficient
Onanojah	Onojah	Male	This is a challenge
Onogaganmue	Ono or Ogagan	Male	Who is intoxicated with power?
Onoharhese	Noharhese	Unisex	Who blames good deeds?
Udumebraye	Udume or Dumebraye	Male	My presence gives them heartache (challenge)

Names with **ACHIEVEMENT** Connotations

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Edafetanure	Tanure	Male	The wealthy have spoken

Efemena	Efe	Unisex	Here is my wealth
Efemuaye	Efe	Male	Those intoxicated with riches
Efetobore	Tobore	Male	Wealth has now been achieved
Etanomare	Tanomare or Tanoma	Male	Freed from blame / despair
Etaredafe	Dafe	Male	Words of the wealthy
Ighomuedafe	Igho or Dafe	Male	Money intoxicates the wealthy
Ighovavwerhe	Igho	Male	There is joy in riches
Irikefe	Kefe	Male	First to become wealthy
Miriodere / Mivwodere	Miriode or Mivwode	Unisex	I now have a name
Mitaire	Mitaire	Unisex	I have reached their match
Odafef	Dafe	Male	Rich individual
Odavwaro	Odaro	Unisex	I am contented
Oghomena	Ogho or Omena	Unisex	Here is my respect
Oghonoro	Ogho or Onoro	Unisex	Respect is greater than gold (riches)
Okagbare	Kagbare	Male	Now I have all styles / skills
Omonigho	Omo or Igho	Unisex	Child is greater than riches
Omonoro	Omo or Onoro	Unisex	Child is greater than gold
Onajite	Ojite or Jite	Unisex	This is sufficient
Onogaganmue	Ogagan or Ono	Male	Who is intoxicated with prowess (power)?
Orodena	Orode	Male	The great one

Names with Connotations of APPRECIATION

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Akpenwoghene	Akpenvwe	Unisex	Praise God
Ejiroghene	Ejiro or Oghene	Unisex	Praise God
Eseoghene	Ese or Oghene	Unisex	God's gift
Norioghene	Norien	Unisex	Look at God's judgment
Oghenebrume	Brume	Unisex	God decided in my favor
Oghenechovwe	Chovwe or Oghene	Unisex	God supported me
Oghenefejiro	Ofejiro or Oghene	Unisex	God is praiseworthy
Oghenekevwe	Kevwe	Unisex	God gave me (this child)
Oghenenyerhovwo	Nyerhovwo or Oghene	Unisex	God answers prayers

Oghenerhoro	Oghene	Unisex	God is great
Ogheneruemu	Oghene	Unisex	God makes things possible
Oghenerukevwe	Rukevwe or Ruks	Unisex	God did this for me
Ogheneruno	Runo or Oruno	Unisex	God has done so much (great)
Oghenetega	Tega	Unisex	God is worship worthy
Oghenochuko	Ochuko or Oghene	Unisex	God provides my support
Onoharhese	Noharhese	Unisex	Who blames good deeds?
Oyovwikerhi	Kerhi or Yovwike	Unisex	May my guardian spirit (God) be blessed

PHILOSOPHICAL Names

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Akpobome	Akpobo	Unisex	My own life
Akporofure	Ofure	Male	Life is now peaceful.
Akporovwovwo	Akpovwovwo	Unisex	Good life in later years
Anaborhi	Naborhi	Unisex	Be born with good destiny
Asaroyoma	Sayoma	Female	Comfort zones(people prefer comfort zones)
Ataikiru	Taikiru	Male	Talk (plan) before taking action
Avwunudiogba	Unudiogba	Unisex	Those who profess strength with mere talk
Edaferierhi	Edafe	Male	The rich have good destiny
Edemirukaye	Ede or Demirukai	Male	The day I did them a favor
Eghwrudjakpor	Jakpor or Eghwrudje	Unisex	I have come to stay / Stranded in this world
Eguono	Guono	Unisex	Love
Ejaita	Jaita	Unisex	Let them say
Ejoyovwi	Joyovwi	Unisex	Let it be good (a success)
Emarejedje	Omare or Ejedje	Unisex	The elderly also run for life
Emetitiri	Metitiri	Male	Mine is famous
Emudiaga	Mudiaga	Male	Let's stand firmly
Emuobosa	Muobo	Unisex	Your own thing is precious (unique)
Emuvoke	Voke	Unisex	Every thing has time
Enakpodia	Nakpodia	Male	The way life should (ought) to be
Enita	Nita	Unisex	Watch what you say
Enitekiru	Eniteh	Unisex	Think before you act
Enivwenaye	Nivwenai	Unisex	Compare my achievements with those of my detractors

Erhinyuse	Use	Unisex	Guardian Spirit answers prayers
Erhuvwun	Erhus	Unisex	Beauty
Erukainure	Rukainure or Eruks	Unisex	We have aided them (met their challenge)
Etarakpobuno	Etabuno or Tabuno	Unisex	The world has so much to say (much gossip)
Irorokpaka	Rokpaka	Unisex	Our thoughts went far (deep thoughts)
Isio	Isio	Unisex	Stars
Miriodere	Miriode	Unisex	I now have a name
Oba	Oba	Male	King
Obatare	Atare	Unisex	Destiny
Oborerhinrin	Berhirin	Unisex	It's your destiny
Odirin	Dirin	Unisex	Patience
Ogbeta	Gbeta	Male	Bad talk
Oghomena	Omena or Ogbo	Unisex	Here is my respect
Okiremute	Okite	Unisex	There is time for every thing
Okpako	Kpako	Unisex	Senior
Omafuvwe	Mafuvwe or Oma	Unisex	I am at peace (All is well with me)
Omenasan	Menasan	Unisex	Mine is unique
Onogaganmue	Ogagan or Ono	Male	Who is intoxicated with prowess (power)?
Onoharhese	Noharhese	Unisex	Who blames good deeds?
Onome	Onome	Unisex	This is mine
Onomine	Ono or Mimi	Unisex	Whom do I look up to?
Onoriode	Ono	Unisex	Who knows tomorrow?
Orodena	Orode	Male	The great one
Otevwobrise	Otoibrise or Otobru	Unisex	It's sufficient to make parables
Ovie	Ovie	Male	King
Oviereya	Ovieya	Female	Queen
Oviguera	Ovigue	Unisex	Everyone with his/her own destiny
Ovuevuraye	Ovuevu or Vuevuraye	Unisex	Everyone has his/her own minds/thoughts
Oyabevwe	Oyabe	Unisex	Tired of sojourn
Udumebraye	Udume or Dumebraye	Male	My presence gives them heartache (challenge)
Ufuoma	Fuoma	Unisex	Peace of mind
Ughwubetine	Betine	Unisex	No more deaths (dying)
Uruemuesiri	Esiri or Uruemu	Unisex	Good deeds

Names Based on GENDER

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Emetemedia	Metemedia	Female	I will always remain a lady
Emeterhire	Emete	Female	Girls have arrived
Enajemete	Emete	Female	These are also girls
Esereshareberuo	Ese or Eseberuo	Unisex	Men are hard to please
Eyakodevu	Okodevu	Unisex	Women can very secretive
Inenevwerha	Nene	Unisex	There is joy in motherhood
Okoro	Okoro or Oshare	Male	Man
Okotete	Okote	Male	Little young man
Omote	Omote	Unisex	Girl
Omotejohwo	Omotohwo	Female	A girl is also a human being
Omotekoro	Oro	Female	A girl is like gold
Omotore	Tore or Omote	Female	Girl's birth brings festivity
Umukoko	Okoko	Female	Young woman
Umukoro (Omokoro)	Mukoro or Mokoro	Male	Young man
Umuto	Muto	Female	Woman

Names based on People as an important RESOURCE

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Imonivwerha	Imoni	Unisex	There is joy in having blood relations
Iniovosa	Niovosa	Unisex	Siblings are unique
Odibo	Odibo	Unisex	Disciple (Follower or Servant)
Ohwevwo	Ohwo	Unisex	Good human relationship provides valuable support
Ohwofasa	Ofasa	Male	A person's status should be defined by his/her achievement.
Ohwonigho	Igho	Male	A person is greater than riches
Omodibo	Modibo	Unisex	Young disciple (follower or servant)
Omonigho	Igho	Unisex	Child is greater than riches
Omonoro	Oro or Monoro	Unisex	Child is greater than gold
Omotore	Motore or Omote	Female	Girl's birth brings festivity

Onanefe	Ona or Efe	Unisex	This (child) is greater than riches
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Names that indicate SPECIAL DAYS

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Edeki	Deki	Unisex	Market day
Edewor	Dewor	Male	Traditional religion sacred day of worship
Edidjana	Didjana	Unisex	Sunday
Edore	Dore	Unisex	Day of festivity (festival)
Eduvie	Duvie	Unisex	Glory day (Day of Glory)
Omotore	Tore or Motore	Female	Girl's birth brings festivity

Names Related to WEALTH / MONEY

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Avwunufe	Efe or wunufe	Unisex	Wealthy only by talk not substance
Edafetanure	Tanure	Male	The wealthy have spoken
Efediome	Diome	Unisex	Let riches be mine
Efekodo	Efe or Fekodo	Unisex	Famous with wealth
Efemena	Efe	Unisex	Here is my wealth
Efemini	Efe	Unisex	Let's see how wealthy you can be
Efemuaye	Efe	Male	Those intosticated with riches
Efeturi	Efe or Feturi	Unisex	There are more than 100 types of riches/wealth
Efevwerha	Efe	Unisex	Wealth is joyful
Efurhievwe	Efe	Unisex	Destined to be wealthy
Ejaife	Jaife	Male	Let them be rich (wealthy)
Esisorigho	Esiso	Unisex	Bag of money
Etaidaferua	Taidafe	Male	Words of the wealthy are more acceptable
Etaredafe	Dafe	Male	Words of the wealthy
Igberaharha	Gberaharha	Male	The poor take the blame
Ighofose	Ose or Igho	Unisex	Money can break close male/female relationships

Ighofovwe	Igho	Unisex	Wealth suites me
Ighohwo	Igho	Unisex	Riches make you human
Ighovavwerhe	Igho	Male	There is joy in riches
Irikefe	Kefe	Male	First to become wealthy
Odafe	Dafe	Male	Rich individual
Oghonoro	Onoro	Unisex	Respect is greater than gold (riches)
Omoeife	Omo or Efe	Unisex	Child is wealth
Omonigho	Igho	Unisex	Child is greater than riches
Omovigho	Omo or Igho	Unisex	Child brings wealth (means wealth)
Onofeghara	Efe or Nofeghara	Unisex	Who divides (shares) his/ her wealth with others?
Onoharhigho	Igho or Noharhigho	Male	Who blames riches / wealth?
Uduefebraye	Efe or Uduefe	Male	Wealth gives them challenge (heartache)

Names in Appreciation of COLOURS

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Ahwinahwi	Ahwi	Male	A really black (dark) individual
Obiebi	Biebi	Unisex	Black (dark)
Ododo	Dodo	Unisex	Red
Ofuafo	Fuafo	Unisex	White
Ofuako	Fuako	Unisex	One with white teeth
Omoyibo	Moyibo	Unisex	Little white / fair skinned person
Oyibo	Oyibo	Unisex	White / fair skinned
Oyibonanarhoru	Oyiborhoru or Oyibo or Oyibode	Male	This is a big white / fair skinned person
Oyiborhoru	Oyibode or Oyibo	Male	A big white / fair skinned person
Oyiborode	Oyibode or Oyibo	Male	A big white / fair skinned person

Names in Recognition of Types of WEATHER CONDITIONS

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Edosio	Ede or Osio	Male	Rainy day
Ohwahwa	Hwahwa	Male	Harmattan/cold season
Okposio	Osio	Unisex	Heavy rain
Osio	Osio	Unisex	Rain
Uvo	Uvo	Male	Dry/Sunny season

Names in Recognition of Significance of NATURAL RESOURCES

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Egbo	Egbo	Male	Forest
Emeni	Meni	Male	Small elephant
Emerho	Merho	Male	A special type of (small) catfish
Eni	Eni	Male	Elephant
Erhue	Erhue	Male	A special breed of cow used for traditional ceremonies
Ogoro	Ogoro	Male	Frog
Okpogoro	Ogoro	Male	A big toad
Uloho	Loho	Male	Iroko tree
Urhie	Urhie	Male	River

Names in Honour of Cities and Places of BIRTH

NAMES	SHORT FORMS	GENDER	MEANINGS
Agbarha	Agbarha	Male	Born in Agbarha
Emetisiorho	Isiorho	Unisex	Children born in diaspora
Okpara	Okpara	Male	Born in Okpara
Ometeko	Eko	Female	Girl born in Lagos/Eko
Omorogun	Omo or Morogun	Unisex	Child born in Orogun
Omotughele	Motughele	Female	Girl from Ughelli
Omotukane	Motukane	Female	Girl born in diaspora (Ikale-Yoruba)
Orogun	Orogun	Unisex	Born in Orogun
Sapele	Sapele	Male	Born in Sapele

Uhwokori	Kokori	Male	Born in Uhwokori
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