

HSRC RESEARCH OUTPUTS

6247

# **International Review on Assessment Systems in Zambia**

## **National READ Meeting**

**12-13 January 2010, Lusaka, Zambia**

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## Presentation outline

- **Background and context**
- **Purpose of presentation**
- **Examinations**
- **School based assessments**
- **Office of Standards**
- **National assessment system**
- **Questions / Comments**



# Background and context

- READ project – TA to improve education assessment system in 7 countries
- Process:
  - SD conducted by countries
  - Action plan
  - Implementation of Action Plan
  - Review and Monitoring
- Support by READ Country team, WB Team Leader + READ Technical Advisory

Group

# **Purpose of presentation**

- **Share findings of the National Education Assessment System Review**

- **Obtain input and comment on SD report**

- **Revise and update report**

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# Approach

- READ Launch October 2010
- READ SD report by Zambia Team
- December 2009 –
  - Review of Grade 9 marking - Lusaka
  - Interviews with ECZ & MoE – Lusaka & Livingstone
  - Update SD report
- January 2010 –
  - Review of Grade 12 marking – 3 Centers
  - READ SD consultation -

# Process

## **BRIEF”**

Provide an critical review of current assessment system with a view of identifying specific areas of improvement –

**Director - ECZ**

- Review of relevant documentation
- Site visits to MoE, ECZ, marking centers
- Interviews with different staff members
- Observations of marking process
- No school visits for any interview or observations

# Overview of Findings

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# Process

- Visits and interviews include:
  - ECZ departments and staff
  - MoE – different directorates
  - District office – Monza
  - Provincial office – Livingstone
  - Teacher education college – Livingstone
  - Examinations centers – Grade 9 and 12
- Schools were all closed for the end of year break



# EXAMINATIONS - 1

- Clear policy directives for the different examinations currently administered
- Used for selection and certification purposes
- Conducted annually in all subjects at the end of Grade 7, 9 and 12
- Also Teacher examinations - “unusual”
- Well established structures and systems:
  - Setting papers, administration, marking,

certification.

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# EXAMINATIONS - 2

- Challenges:
  - Weak data entry, storage and access systems
  - Limited secondary analysis of exam scores
    - No school level results
    - No trend analysis reported to schools
    - Limited feedback to schools
    - Disaggregation of results by province, district, etc
  - Paper based system for item banks
  - Need information on predictive validity of exams scores



# Classroom Assessments - 1

- Clear and well defined policy directives
- National curriculum for different grades and subject areas
- Relatively new initiative – <10 years
- Developed comprehensive material – at Grades 5, 6 and 7
  - Teacher guides on CA – information on preparing and administering assessment tasks, curriculum outcomes and performance indicators, and
  - Continuous assessment tasks – comprising assessment tasks for six learning areas arranged according to the school terms
- Pilot study to determine effect of CA on learning outcomes
  - evidence that CA makes a positive difference

# Classroom assessments - 2

- Key Issue –
  - Policy focuses on school based assessment with a dual role
  - Practical challenge – difficult to implement effectively
- Limited information on the extent to which CA implemented in all schools
- Also limited knowledge on:
  - Teacher assessment beliefs, understanding, expertise, experience and practices across different grade levels, school types
  - Support structures and process for improving CA
  - Feedback practices and its effect on learner performance



# Assessment surveys

- The National Policy on Education specifies that the “Ministry of Education will establish a more systematic approach to the use of research in the support of its key activities of policy formulation and evaluation of policy” (p. 149).
- NA effected through the Basic Education Subsector Investment Program (BESSIP) that outlined the rational, frequency, management and methodology

## ■ Manifested in

- Grade 5 NA
- SACMEQ Regional assessment
- 20011 – Grade 9 NA

# National Assessment

- **Objective:** To measure Grade 5 mastery in literacy and numeracy
- Provide information on regional, gender, and geographical disparities to improve learning achievement in schools.
- Conducted in 2001, 2003, 2006 and 2008
- Produced a number of reports and some leaflets
- Stratified two stage sampling procedures employed to ensure representation of urban and rural schools, while learners selected across the grade
- Analysis based on descriptive statistics and regression analysis to identify factors affecting performance
- Achievement scores analysed using CTT

# National assessment - 2

- **Areas of further improvement:**
  - Update items use in Grade 5 assessment – i.e. increase item pool
  - Use of IRT based methods to enhance comparability of scores across time, e.g. equating scores
  - Application of advanced HLM methods to determine factors impacting on learner performance
  - Developing a conceptual (indicator) framework to guide questionnaire development and reporting
  - Long term implementation program
  - No information on non-cognitive outcomes
- **Enhance dissemination** –
  - Reports for specific audiences - teachers, school heads, policy makers,
  - Policy briefs
  - Workshops with relevant officials
  - Newspaper articles

# SACMEQ

- Conducted in collaboration with UNESCO by MoE
- Third round in 2007
- Produced two reports to date
- Challenges:
  - Limited dissemination of results
  - No additional research or analysis
  - Weak links between SACMEQ and NA



# Office of Standards - 1

- Role and responsibility clearly specified in policy:
- That is to establish, evaluate and promote the highest standards of quality in educational provision
  - Regular M&E classroom teaching
  - Ensures correct educational materials used
  - Ensures the dissemination of policy decisions and guidelines
  - Prepares inspection reports to provide information for decision making; and
  - Carries out general inspection of the school infrastructure.
- Structure decentralized at province and district level

# Office of Standards - 2

## ■ Challenges

- Inadequate use of available information for monitoring and evaluating functions
  - NB – set of key indicators and improve instruments
  - Increasing access to, and improving involvement of, standards officers at all levels of the system in the analysis, dissemination and effective utilization of examination results, continuous assessment and national assessment surveys.
- Limited capacity/skills to analyse available information to support M&E function at different levels of the system
- Improving reporting and feedback processes between and within school, district, province and national levels
- Obtain consensus on indicator framework for the monitoring and evaluation of schools.

# Unknown issue/s

- To what extent does/will challenges like limited resources and capacity impact on the effective implementation of the national education assessment system in Zambia

## Next Steps

- Update and revise SD report
- Finalise Action Plan
  - Expand Action Plan to outline activities and timeframes
- Complete Grant Funding Requests
- Finalise logistics for TA



# **Questions? Comments?**

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'n Paar waarhede...

Die beste manier om iemand terug te kry is om te vergeewe...

Voed jou geloof en jou twyfel sal stert van die honger...

Hartseer kyk terug, bekommernis rondom heen en gelooft  
vorentoe....

Sukksesvolle huwelike is nie om die regte persoon te vind nie maar  
om die  
regte persoon te wees...

Dit is nie verkeerd om so nou en dan op jou selfbejammery's pols  
te sit  
nie, maak net seker dat jy dit spoel wanneer jy klaar is...

As die gras groener is aan die ander kant van die draad kan jy  
verseker wees

dat die waterrekening ook hoër is...

Woede is 'n toestand waar die tong vinniger werk as die verstand...

Jy kan nie die verlede verander nie, maar jy kan die huidige ruineer  
deur te  
bekommer oor die toekoms...

Alle mense glimlag in dieselfde taal...

'n Drukke is 'n groot geskenk ..... "one size fits all"...

Almal verdien om bemin te word... veral hulle wat dit nie verdien  
nie...

Die werklike maatstaf vir 'n man se rykdom is wat hy bele het in die  
lewe hierna...

Elke een het skoonheid maar nie almal sien dit nie...

Dank God vir wat jy het en vertrou Hom vir wat jy benodig...

Indien jy jou hart vul met verwyte oor gister en die bekommernisse  
van môre,

het jy geen vandag om voor dankbaar te wees nie...  
indien iemand iets slegs van jou se, leef so dat niemand dit glo nie...  
Geduld is die vermoë om jou "engine te laat idle" rennyl jy voel jy  
wil jou  
gears strip"...  
Harde woorde breek nie bene nie maar wel harte...  
Liefde word versterk deur saam deur konflik te werk...  
Om uit die moeilikheid te kom, moet mens gewoonlik daardeur...  
Ons neem as vanselfsprekend die dinge aan waarvoor ons moet  
dankie se ...  
Liefde is die enigste ding wat verdeel kan word sonder dat dit  
minder word..  
Neem tyd om te lag want dit is die musiek van die stel..