



**Monitoring
Learning
Outcomes:
Towards
Understanding
the Impacts of
the COVID-19
Pandemic**

**Experiences:
Zambia**

UIS Webinar: 21st January, 2022



Zambia



Background

- Zambia was among five other African countries;
- The Examinations Council of Zambia was the National Centre;
- Institution mandated to conduct educational assessments;
- Experience from national and international such as PISA-D;
- ECZ supported by UIS and ACER successfully undertook the Covid-19 MILO Study.

Activities Undertaken

Initiation of the Study

(NC, NPM, Agreement)

Test Administration Preparation

(Sample, Instruments, Communication, Recruitment of TA, SC, QM + Training, procurement, Pilot, shipment)

Test Administration

(Monitoring, Actual data collection, shipment)

Data Capture, Cleaning and Submission

- All activities in line with the Technical Standards endorsed by UIS and as provided in the NPM manual and support from ACER.



Success Stories

- All Covid-19 MILO study technical standards met;
- Response rate was high
 - 249 out of 250 schools
 - Over 90 % for learners
- Capacity Built for:
 - National Centre
 - Teachers, Curriculum and Assessment officers;
- Despite closure of schools, special authority was granted to collect data in sampled schools;
- Support from central government;
- Support from district education staff;
- Commitment from TA and SA;
- Support from UIS & ACER to NC.



Challenges

- Second closure of schools due to second wave during time of data collection;
 - Learners sent home
 - Assembly of people banned
 - No sharing of items
 - Additional costs for PPEs
- Accessing remote sampled schools;
- Conducting the study when Covid-19 cases were rising in the country during the deadly variant;
- Isolated cases of refusal to participate in the study;
- Limited ICT skills among teachers to participate in online standard setting activity.

21st June, 2021

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To All Provincial Education Officers

RE: SPECIAL AUTHORITY TO COLLECT DATA FOR THE COVID-19 MILO ASSESSMENT STUDY IN THE SAMPLED SCHOOLS

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Reference is made to the above subject matter.

As you are aware, the Ministry of General Education through the Examinations Council of Zambia is undertaking the COVID-19: Monitoring Impacts Learning Outcomes (MILO) assessment study in 250 Primary schools sampled across the 10 Provinces of the country.

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This is to inform you that the Ministry of General Education through the Permanent Secretary, Technical Services and the Secretary to the Cabinet has given special authority for the study to go ahead after the closure of the schools due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

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The data collection was supposed to start on Monday, 21st June, 2021 and end on 2nd July, 2021, however, with this slight delay, the data collection will start from Thursday, 24th June to Friday, 9th July, 2021.

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The ECZ already trained the Test Administrators (PRCCs and DRCCs) and School Coordinators (Teacher from the sampled school) and selected 20 Grade 5 learners in each of the sampled.

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The selected 20 grade 5 learners in each school were already identified before the closure of schools and therefore they should be informed of the new assessment dates determined by the School Coordinator. They are expected to attend the assessment sessions on two days only.



Impact, Lessons & Next Steps

- Learning poverty has been high in Zambia over the years with only about 30% of learners reading at appropriate level;
- Difficulty for children to learn across the curriculum;
- It was not known the extent the pandemic had impacted learning outcomes;
- No technical study to bring out the extent to the fore.
- Zambia was the first post pandemic nation to default on sovereign debt (Funding to education amidst pandemic was a challenge);
- Technical ability to design such a cross nation study;
- No funding to measure effect of pandemic and how best to respond and be on track to achieve SDG 4.1;
- Covid-19 MILO Study was an opportunity for Zambia;
- In Zambia, new government ushered in after 12th August, 2021 polls;
- Covid-19 MILO Study Findings to act as benchmark for new Admin.;
- Various stakeholders looking forward to Covid-19 MILO Study results;
- Covid-19 MILO study was a very good initiative;
- Looking forward to another round to check progress to be made.