



WG/GAML10/MS/5

EXPERIENCE OF ZAMBIA WITH AMPL IMPLEMENTATION

Tenth meeting of the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML)

Paris, 6 - 7 December 2023



1. Background

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has collaborated with the Ministry of Education in Zambia to generate data which is used to track the progress towards SDG 4.1.1. Among the notable collaborations include the COVID-19: Monitoring Impacts of Learning Outcomes (MILO) study and the Assessment of Minimum Proficiency Levels (AMPL) at end of lower primary and end of primary school levels. Further, the UIS and partners has collaborated with the Ministry of Education in Zambia to track the progress being made to meet the SDG 4.1.1 indicators by means of the Policy Linking workshop. This outline presents the experiences from Zambia under the collaboration with UIS in undertaking the AMPL a & b.

The UNESCO Institute of Statistics worked with the staff at the National Centre in Zambia (Examinations Council of Zambia) to develop the budget and terms of reference. The UIS supported the budget while the ECZ contributed in terms of displacement time for the staff involved in the project and overall management of the project with other stakeholders in the country.

2. Study design in Zambia

In Zambia two grade were selected and assessed during the AMPL study in early 2023. The grades were grade 4 (AMPL a), the end of lower primary and grade 7 the end of primary school (AMPL b). AMPL a was administered to learners both in grade 4 and grade 7. This was to determine the proportion of grade 4 learners who were able to operate at the required level and further to determine the proportion of grade 7s who had not acquired the competencies for the lower primary level. This design would give more insights on the progress of learners across grades and the acquisition of the required competencies. AMPL b was administered to the grade 7s. A new feature of the AMPL a, which was a good initiative was the assessment of listening comprehension. Audio devices were procured, and the audios recorded and played to the learners during the assessment.

3. Notable Experiences

Working with the Australia Council for Education Research (ACER) and the UIS, the team at the National Centre in Zambia, the Examinations Council of Zambia held online meetings to plan for the assessment and trained on how to execute each of the phases of the study. This included sampling of schools and learners, data management, field operations, data capture and cleaning. The ACER had provided detailed and clear manuals for the National Project Manager (NPM), Data Manager, Test Administrators and School Coordinators.

With the ensuing, Zambia therefore successfully undertook the study and submitted the data to the ACER and the data was accepted. Upon submission of the data the NC was requested to nominate practicing teachers, curriculum and assessment specialists and reading and mathematics experts to take part in the pairwise activity organised by the ACER.

Further, the project team in Zambia were capacity built in two modules which high preferences by all the participating countries. The ACER has since issued certificates for the participants.

The ACER and UIS invited the Zambian team and other stakeholders to a meeting in November, 2023 where the preliminary results for Zambia were shared. The results showed that the country is making very good progress in terms of the percentage of learners who were meeting the minimum proficiency levels both in mathematics and reading since the MILO study.

4. Overarching Benefits to Zambia

1. Unlike other countries with data gaps, Zambia's collaboration with UIS and its partners has generated data which can not only be used to track progress towards the SDG 4.1.1, but also for decision making in the country.
2. In developing economies like Zambia, there are competing needs in which government needs to meet such as provision of teaching and learning materials with a very limited resource envelope. As such, it would be very difficult for governments alone to allocate resources to undertake equally important activities such as the AMPL study. Zambia is therefore thankful to UIS for the collaboration and support to undertake such initiatives in the country.
3. The collaboration with ACER has enhanced the capacity of the staff at the National Centre and other staff who work to collect the data, the school coordinators, and practicing teachers and experts who took part in the pairwise activity.
4. The capacities which have been developed in the country by UIS and its partners are now being applied on other projects such as the PISA 2025, national assessments and public examinations.
5. With the collaborations we have had with UIS and its partners, Zambia is therefore confident that it can share its rich experiences and expertise in conducting cross-national large-scale learner assessments with some of its peers in the region and beyond.